

extending an invitation



The Trinity & The Great Commission

Sunday, 5/31 @ 10am, on-site & online via Zoom

Connect at www.NeedhamUCC.org

The Congregational Church of Needham, *United Church of Christ*

1154 Great Plain Ave, Needham MA 02492 / Tel 781.444.2510 / www.NeedhamUCC.org / IG @NeedhamUCC

Rev. John Gage, *senior minister*
Valerie Becker, *director of music*
Darlene Wong, *director for children & youth*
Robin Bevilacqua, *church operations manager*
Cindy Sullivan, *financial administrator*
Tom Mollerus, *moderator*
Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

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Welcome! Please take a moment to let us know you're here, whether you are an official church member, a frequent guest, or a first-timer. **Scan this QR code with the camera on your phone and follow the link to sign-in.** *There's a paper sign-in sheet in the foyer, if you prefer.*

Our Church Covenant *At the Congregational Church of Needham, United Church of Christ, we strive to be a joyful, welcoming Christian Community. We seek to be faithful in a world torn by suffering, injustice, oppression, and war. We are inspired by God, Christ's Ministry, and the examples of other faithful people. We join together in worship and song, fellowship, study, and mission to embrace the risks and challenges of continuing Christ's ministry. We struggle to live out our faith in the world by furthering justice and peace, witnessing to the truth, and proclaiming God's love and mercy for all people.*

Our Open and Affirming Covenant *We believe that all people are created in the image of God, who loves each of us as we are. Following the example of Jesus, we welcome and affirm all people, including those of every age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; every racial, ethnic and cultural identity, and country of origin; every faith background, family configuration and economic situation; every mental and physical ability and health status; every life experience and circumstance. We strive to be an example of God's extravagant welcome and to live these beliefs in our worship, language, actions and relationships. We invite all people who desire to join us in this journey of faith to share in the full life and ministry of this church.*

If you are a guest with us today, a special welcome to you! We'd love to know that you're here. Please sign in using the QR code at the top of this page or the physical attendance sheet in the lobby. If you'd like to learn more about our church or what it means to be a member here, please reach out to Rev. John at revjohn@needhamucc.org.

Children of all ages are always welcome in worship! Quiet books and pew pals (soft toys) are available in the narthex/foyer just outside the sanctuary doors. All accessible bathrooms have **changing tables**.

WIFI in the sanctuary: UCC_Guest, password: needhamucc

FOR TODAY:



There is Sunday school today for kids in grades K-5. After the Time Especially for Children, they may accompany their teachers to the classroom just down the hall.. Our last regular Sunday school for this program year will be NEXT SUNDAY, June 7.



Baby Basics Groceries Ongoing Food Collection

Every Sunday we collect specific proteins for the groceries we give to the families accessing diapers through Baby Basics every other month. In June, we're looking for large jars of all natural **peanut butter**.

May 31, 2026: Trinity Sunday

Come when the nights are bright with stars/ Or come when the moon is mellow;/ Come when the sun his golden bars/
drops on the hay-field yellow./ Come in the twilight soft and gray,/ Come in the night or come in the day./ Come, O love,
whene'er you may,/ And you are welcome, welcome./ You are sweet, O Love, dear Love,/ You are soft as the nesting
dove./ Come to my heart and bring it to rest/ As the bird flies home to its welcome nest./ Come when my heart is full of
grief/ Or when my heart is merry;/ Come with the falling of the leaf/ Or with the redd'ning cherry./ Come when the year's
first blossom blows,/ Come when the summer gleams and glows,/ Come with the winter's drifting snows,/ And you are
welcome, welcome.

– “Invitation to Love,” by Paul Laurence Dunbar, African-American poet (1872-1906)

PRELUDE

Prelude in D Major by J.S. Bach

Valerie Becker, *organ*

WELCOME

Rev. John MacIver Gage

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS & OWNING THE COVENANT

One: ...Let us, the members of this Congregational Church of Needham, United Church of Christ, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ:

Current

Members: We welcome you with joy as members in this expression of the body of Christ. We promise you our friendship, fellowship, and prayers as we share the work and worship of God in the way of Jesus. Grounded together in grace, we ask God to help us grow in new directions, that we and the world may be transformed in love.

One: And now, as one body, members together, let us own—that is, affirm—the holy covenant under which we gather:

All: We will strive to be a joyful, welcoming Christian community. We will seek to be faithful in a world torn by suffering, injustice, oppression, and war. We will seek to be inspired by God, Christ's ministry, and the examples of other faithful people. We will join together in worship and song, fellowship, study, and mission to embrace the risks and challenges of continuing Christ's ministry. We will struggle to live out our faith in the world by furthering justice and peace, witnessing to the truth, and proclaiming God's love and mercy for all people.

One: We believe that all people are created in the image of God, who loves each of us as we are. Following the example of Jesus, we welcome and affirm all people, including those of every age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; every racial, ethnic and cultural identity, and country of origin; every faith background, family configuration and economic situation; every mental and physical ability and health status; every life experience and circumstance.

All: We will strive to be an example of God's extravagant welcome and to live these beliefs in our worship, language, actions and relationships. We invite all people who desire to join us in this journey of faith to share in the full life and ministry of this church.

HYMN

We Are Your People (see below)

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN PEACE (“Peace be with you / **And also with you**”)

SUNG PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Godlief Soumokil, Indonesia



Ha - le - lu - ya!
Ha - le - lu - jab!

Ha - le - lu - ya!
Ha - le - lu - jab!



Pu - ji - lah Tu-han-mu
Praise the Lord for e - ver-more

s'la-ma-nya ha - le - lu - ya!
Praise the Lord, ha - le - lu - jab!

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

from the Gospels, Matthew 28:16-20

TIME ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN

SERMON

Extending an Invitation

Rev. John MacIver Gage

HYMN

You Are Called to Tell the Story (see below)

SHARING OUR PRAYERS (“O God, hear our prayer”)

THE LORD’S PRAYER (using these or whichever words are closest to your own heart)

Our Father/Mother in heaven, holy is your name. Your reign come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

ANTHEM

Light of a Clear Blue Morning by Dolly Parton

Chancel Choir

It's been a long dark night And I've been a waitin' for the morning
It's been a long hard fight But I see a brand new day a dawning
I've been looking for the sunshine You know I ain't seen it in so long
But everything's gonna work out just fine And everything's gonna be all right That's been all wrong

*'Cause I can see the light of a clear blue morning I can see the light of a brand new day
I can see the light of a clear blue morning Oh, and everything's gonna be all right It's gonna be okay*

It's been a long long time Since I've known the taste of freedom
And those clinging vines That had me bound, well I don't need 'em

Oh, I've been like a captured eagle, you know an eagle's born to fly
Now that I have won my freedom, like an eagle I am eager for the sky *REFRAIN*

INVITATION TO DEEPER RELATIONSHIP

Feeling like you might like to make this congregation your church home? Curious to learn more about who we are and how we practice our faith and what membership means here? Reach out to Rev. John at revjohn@needhamucc.org

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

SINGING OUR THANKS AND PRAISE

**All praise to you, dear Love, today!/
All praise, dear Light, who guides our way!
All praise for Liberation won!/
Praise Christ, Creator, Spirit–One!**

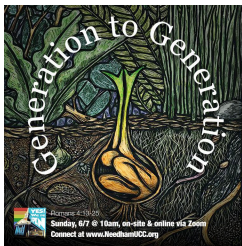
WE GO OUT TO INAUGURATE OUR NEW ELEVATOR!

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED: May 31, 2026



Ministerial Review Survey

Each year, the congregation has the opportunity to contribute feedback to the Ministerial Review process with the goal of supporting our collective future growth, church and pastor. By contributing meaningful feed to Rev. John to help him grow and be successful in his ministry, we are, in turn, ensuring the same for our Church. To participate in this annual review process, you can either speak to us in person in an interview format, or you can respond online. The Ministerial Review Team will compile and anonymize the feedback, and share it with Rev. John later this summer. If you have any question or concerns about this process, please talk to one of the members of the Ministerial Review Team (Nancy Lane, Randy Kreml, Clark Curtis, and Tom Mollerus). **To respond online, please fill out the survey at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/2026-needhamucc-survey>** To schedule a time to speak to us in person, please use the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/2026-needhamucc-interview>.



Generation to Generation

**6/7 @ 10am, on-site & online via Zoom at <http://zoom.us/j/907548568>
with an all-church cookout to follow!**

This Sunday, we'll celebrate the life and growth of our congregation and particularly the youngest among us, as the children of the church complete another program year, our first with our Director of Children & Youth Ministries, Darlene Wong. **The kids will help serve communion, including communion biscuits they made and grape juice boxes, and we, in turn, will give them each an age-appropriate Bible or Bible story book. And afterward, we'll share a celebratory cookout with hotdogs and vegan hotdogs and more.** Make plans to join us (and if you'd like your child to receive a Bible—whether you can make it this Sunday or not—reach out now to Darlene at childrenandyouth@needhamucc.org)



Volunteer Support Needed for Family Promise Metrowest

Family Promise Metrowest is an organization in Natick which the Church has supported for over 15 years. They house a shelter for families with children and run programs to support families transitioning from shelter and to help families avoid becoming unhoused. Family Promise supported families with 205 children in 2025. **Our church is responsible for providing meal support to families in the shelter—purchasing groceries and delivering them on June 15 and delivering meals for about 6 people on June 15 and 17.** Vance Fernandez is our member liaison. Contact her at vancefernandez@hotmail.com to volunteer.



The UCC Marches with Boston Pride on Saturday, 6/6

Churches from our Metropolitan Boston Association of the United Church of Christ (and beyond) will march together to celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride with Boston Pride for the People. **We'll gather in front of Old South Church, UCC (645 Boylston St., at Copley Square) at 10:15 to prepare to step off at 11am.** Please let Rev. John know at revjohn@needhamucc.org if you plan to attend and if you'd like to carpool (or trainpool) downtown. *Needham's Annual "Family-Sized" Pride Event!*



RALLY! MARCH! PARTY!

Saturday 6/13 @ 3-5pm, beginning at First Parish in Needham, UU, 23 Dedham Ave & ending at The Congregational Church of Needham, UCC, 1154 Great Plain Ave

Join us to celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride month with a joy-filled event created with the whole family in mind, especially kids of all ages. We'll begin with a kid-friendly RALLY on the lawn at First Parish in Needham, UU, with some flags, chanting, "glitter blessings," and local speakers. Then we'll MARCH (safely, on the sidewalk, as a group) down to The Congregational Church of Needham, UCC for a PARTY, including games, crafts, snacks, giant-bubbles, and a special story time

featuring local **drag queen (and UCC pastor) Marge Erin Spread. TO VOLUNTEER: Contact Kathie Carpenter at kacarp@comcast.net**

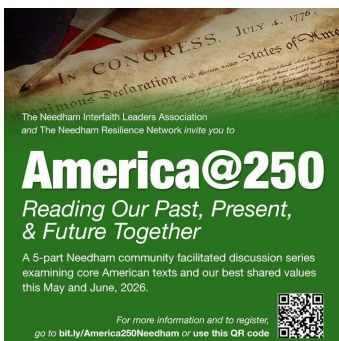


Guatemala Partnership "Farm-a-thon"

Saturday, 6/6 @ 9am-12 noon, Natick Community Organic Farm, 117 Eliot St., Natick

Once again, the Guatemala Partnership team from our congregation and First Congregational Church of Natick, UCC, for our 5th annual Farm-a-thon fundraiser for education and development in our partner village of Santa Maria Tzejá. **We need both participants and sponsors:** Participants will engage in hands-on work at the farm that day, as well as gathering pledges and donations from sponsors. Sponsors donate, either via check (payable to Congregational Church of Needham with "Guatemala Farm-a-thon" in the memo line or safely and easily online via Paypal by

going to <https://www.needhamucc.org/paypal.html>, clicking on the PayPal button and selecting "Guatemala Farm-a-thon" from the drop-down menu. **To become either a participant or a sponsor, contact Brenda Metzler (bmetzler7@verizon.net) or Alan Clayton-Matthews (a.clayton-matthew@northeastern.edu).**



America@250: Reading Our Past, Present, & Future Together

A 5-part Needham community facilitated discussion series

Remaining Dates: Discussions on Thursday, 6/11; Thursday, 6/25, and a Needham Civic Ritual of Renewal and Celebration on Tuesday, 6/30, all 7-8:30pm.

** Participate in one, some, or all of the discussions.*

Where: Sessions on 6/11 & 6/25 will take place at The Center at the Heights, 300 Hillside Avenue, Needham. **The Needham Civic Ritual of Renewal and Celebration on Tuesday, 6/30** will take place in **The Great Hall at Needham Town Hall, 1471 Highland Avenue**

Sponsors: The Needham Interfaith Leaders Association, The Needham Resilience Network, and The Needham Human Rights Committee. **Questions:** Email Rabbi Jay

Perlman, jperlman@tbsneedham.org, or call 781.444.0077

Register: Go to <https://bit.ly/America250Needham>

At a time of deep division, we need opportunities to come together and to be strengthened by that which unites us. Join us for the **Needham America@250 Discussion Series**, a community-wide program that will enable us to reflect upon the aspirational values at the heart of our nation. Each session will include guided, small-group, engaging conversations around some of America's most powerful and inspiring texts. Together, we will explore these works not as reflections of American perfection, but as expressions of our enduring ideals and of our commitment to bring them closer to reality.

- "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus (Thursday, 5/28),
- "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglas (Thursday, 6/11), and
- and "America the Beautiful" by Katherine Lee Bates (Thursday, 6/25)

Our series will culminate in a moving and joyful **Needham Civic Ritual of Renewal and Celebration on Tuesday, 6/30 at The Great Hall at Needham Town Hall. All are welcome!**

We Are Your People

We are your peo - ple, Spir - it of grace,
 Joined in com - mun - i - ty, trea - sured and fed,
 Rich in di - vers - i - ty, help us to live
 Glad of tra - di - tion, help us to see
 Give, as we ven - ture jus - tice and care
 Spir - it u - nite us, make us by grace,

you dare to make us Christ to our neigh - bors,
 may we dis - cov - er gifts in each oth - er,
 clo - ser than neigh - bors, o - pen to stran - gers,
 in all life's chang - ing, where Christ is lead - ing,
 (peace - ful, in - sis - ting, risk - ing, re - sis - ting)
 wil - ling and read - y, Christ's liv - ing bod - y,

of ev' - ry cul - ture and place. lead and be led.
 wil - ling to clash and for - give.
 a - ble to ef - forts should be.
 where our best know when and where.
 wis - dom to whole hu - man race.
 lov - ing the

You Are Called to Tell the Story

You are called to tell the stor - y, pas - sing words of life a - long,
You are called to teach the rhy - thm of the dance that nev - er ends,
You are called to set the ta - ble, bles - sing bread as Je - sus blessed,
May the One whose love is broad - er than the meas - ure of all space

then to blend your voice with oth - ers as you sing the sa - cred song.
then to move with - in the cir - cle, hand in hand with strang - ers, friends.
then to come with thirst and hun - ger, need - ing care like all the rest.
give us words to sing the stor - y, move us out - ward from this place.

Christ be known in all our sing - ing, fil - ling all with songs of love.
Christ be known in all our danc - ing, hold - ing all with hands of love.
Christ be known in all our shar - ing, feed - ing all with signs of love.
Christ be known in all our liv - ing, fil - ling all with gifts of love.

Text: Ruth C. Duck (1992); Tune: REGENT SQUARE (Smart)