

Year W Listening to voices of women, girls, & the divine feminine in the Bible



choosing
Chosen People



Luke 1:26-38; Genesis 16:7-13
11/27 @ 10am, LIVE! On-Site & Online
Connect at www.NeedhamUCC.org

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

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Rev. John Gage, *senior minister*

Rev. Maddie Foster, *minister for Christian education & youth*

Valerie Becker, *director of music*

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Cindy Sullivan, *financial administrator*

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First Sunday in Advent

12 CAROLS OF CHRISTMAS, 1/4

Valerie Becker, *organ*

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice
Away in a Manger
Joy to the World*

WELCOME

Rev. John MacIver Gage

ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN

LIGHTING CANDLES FOR ADVENT

One: The season of Advent reminds us of the hope we have in the humanity of Jesus. God came to us, leaving behind the glory of heaven to be a person feeling pain, joy, loss, and love.

Many: Today, we light the candle of hope, because in Jesus, heaven came to earth.

One: Let us pray...

HYMN

O How Shall I Receive You (see below)

SCRIPTURE

*from the Gospels, Luke 1:26-38
from the Pentateuch of the Hebrew Bible, Genesis 16:7-13*

SERMON

“Choosing People”
Rev. John MacIver Gage

HYMN

In a Deep, Unbounded Darkness (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 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

People Look East, trad. French, arr. M. H. Helvey
Chancel Choir

*People, look East, the time is near
of the crowning of the year.*

Make your house fair as you are able.

Trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look East and sing today:

“Love, the Guest, is on the way.”

*Furrows, be glad, though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.*

*Give up your strength, the seed to nourish;
that in course, the flow’r may flourish.*

People, look East, and sing today;

“Love, the Rose, is on the way.”

*Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
guard the nest that must be filled.*

Even the hour when wings are frozen,

He for fledging time has chosen.

People, look East, and sing today;

“Love, the Bird, is on the way.”

*Stars, keep the watch, when night is dim,
one more light the bowl shall brim;*

Shining beyond the frosty weather,

bright as sun and moon together.

People, look East, and sing today;

“Love, the Star, is on the way.”

*Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set ev’ry peak and valley humming
with the Word, the Lord is coming.
People, look East and sing today;
“Love the Lord, is on the way.”*

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE PARTNERS IN THE GOOD NEWS

SINGING OUR THANKS & PRAISE

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
Praise God, all creatures here below!
Praise God above, you heavenly hosts—
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!**

CHARGE & BLESSING

POSTLUDE

NOTE FROM THE OFFICE: While we work to fill the vacant church office manager position, our longtime financial administrator, Cindy Sullivan will assist us by picking up some extra hours. The office will be open reduced hours in the interim: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays @ 8am-2pm and Thursdays @ 8am-12noon. *As always, it’s best to email or call ahead if you need to come by.*

A REMINDER that Rev. Maddie is away from all church business on parental leave until the middle of January. Please

direct all questions to Rev. John, who will engage the members of the Christian Education and Youth Committee.



A Christmas Serenade: Concert with Choir & Chimes

12/4 @ 4pm, LIVE! on-site & online via Zoom

The Chancel Choir and Friendly Chimers will usher in advent by filling the sanctuary with a program of beautiful music for the soul. Give yourself the gift of a break from the cares of the day. While the concert is 100% free to all, donations will be accepted with gratitude. Opportunities to sponsor the event are still available and will be acknowledged in the program. Send your donation to the church office, payable to The Congregational Church of Needham, and send your dedication (if any)

debraham@comcast.net.



Christmas Pageant: Sign Up NOW! (BEFORE 12/1)

There are many ways to get involved - onsite or online (live or pre-recorded -- a great way for traveling families to participate!) - as we plan for a hybrid service:

- On-site actor (i.e. Mary, Joseph, Innkeeper families)
- Live/Pre-recorded Zoom actor (i.e. Angel Gabriel, Scary Angel)
- Pre-recorded actor (i.e. angel chorus)

Whether your family will be able to worship on-site or online, your presence and participation will make this a special and unique worship service!

Sign-Up ONLINE by 12/1:

<https://forms.gle/YBaqSEQj1zJghcqe6>

Rehearsals: with Teresa for live on-site actors will be held Sunday, December 11 & 18 following worship and Saturday, 12/24 @ 2pm prior to service at 4pm.



The Giving Tree: Family Promise MetroWest

November 20-December 11

Family Promise MetroWest in Natick provides four core programs to families with children who are facing homelessness: a Shelter Program in a newly renovated on-site shelter in downtown Natick; the SAIL Program to support families who have graduated from shelter to permanent housing; the LIFE program to help families avoid homelessness; and the Steps to Success Program which offers education and employment support. Our congregation has long supported the work of Family Promise, but the need now is greater than ever.

For this year's Giving Tree, we ask you to consider your own blessings and make a gift to support the families served by Family Promise MetroWest, to brighten their holiday season and help them far into the new year, as need arises. **To make your donation via PayPal, go to www.NeedhamUCC.org and select "Giving Tree: Family Promise" from the drop-down menu.**

You also may send your check made out to "The Congregational Church of Needham" with the memo: "Giving Tree" to the church office at 1154 Great Plain Ave., Needham, MA 02492. **Donations must be received by Monday, 12/12.**



Donate & Deliver Christmas Flowers

In past years we've asked for donations for poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary, but recently we made a shift: Your donation this year will go to buy beautiful and resilient Christmas cacti to be delivered by volunteers to remind members of our church family they aren't alone in this holiday season but remain in our hearts. **You can make your donation any time before 12/11 via the PayPal link on our website at www.NeedhamUCC.org (simply choose "Christmas Flowers" from the drop-down menu) or by sending your check made out to "Congregational Church of Needham" with the memo: "Christmas Flowers" to the church office at 1154 Great Plain Ave., Needham, MA 02492. If you'd like to **help make deliveries after worship on 12/11**, please add your name to the [sign-up list here](#).**



For when the holidays are hard...

Blue Christmas / Longest Night Thursday 12/22 @ 3:30-4:30pm LIVE! online

The Christmas Season is primarily known for hope and joy, focused on community and familial gatherings of celebration and thanksgiving. However, for some, the winter holidays season may be difficult due to personal loss and grief. Please join us for a special Christmas service in which we acknowledge pain and mourning during the holiday season and lift up prayers for hope, peace, and affirmation that God "is near the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18). **Register** for this "Near the Brokenhearted" Zoom webinar worship service with the national staff of our United Church of Christ denominational family at this link:

https://ucc.zoom.us/webinar/register/6016479567418/WN_Mow_xz_ABRdmD9P8kkpK44w

O How Shall I Receive You

O how shall I receive you, how meet you on your way,
Blessed hope of ev'ry people, my soul's delight and stay?

O Jesus, Jesus give me now by your own pure light,
To know whate'er is pleasing and welcome in your sight.

Love caused your incarnation, love brought you down to me;

Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.

O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
In love, all love's excelling, our oh-so human race.

You come, O Christ, with gladness, in mercy and food will,
To bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.

In patient expectation we live for that great day
When a renewed creation your glory shall display.

In a Deep, Unbounded Darkness

In a deep unbounded darkness long before the first light shone,
You, O God, beyond all merit,
worked a wonder faith makes known:
In your mercy, in your mercy, you embraced us as your own,
Evermore and evermore.

Though our world is ever-changing, you are constant, firm, and sure,
Faithful to your cov'nant promise.
Trusting you, we live secure:
Singing praises, singing praises, long as heart and breath endure,
evermore and evermore.

Joy transforms our lips to boasting only in your matchless grace,
Sending Christ to dwell among us,
Word made flesh, in time and space:
Friend and Savior, Friend and Savior,
in whose life we glimpse your face,
Evermore and evermore.

God of Hagar, God of Sarah, God of nomad Abraham;
God of Miriam, God of Moses,
Fiery Pillar, Great I AM:
Lead us homeward, lead us homeward,
to the lovefeast of the Lamb,
Evermore and evermore.