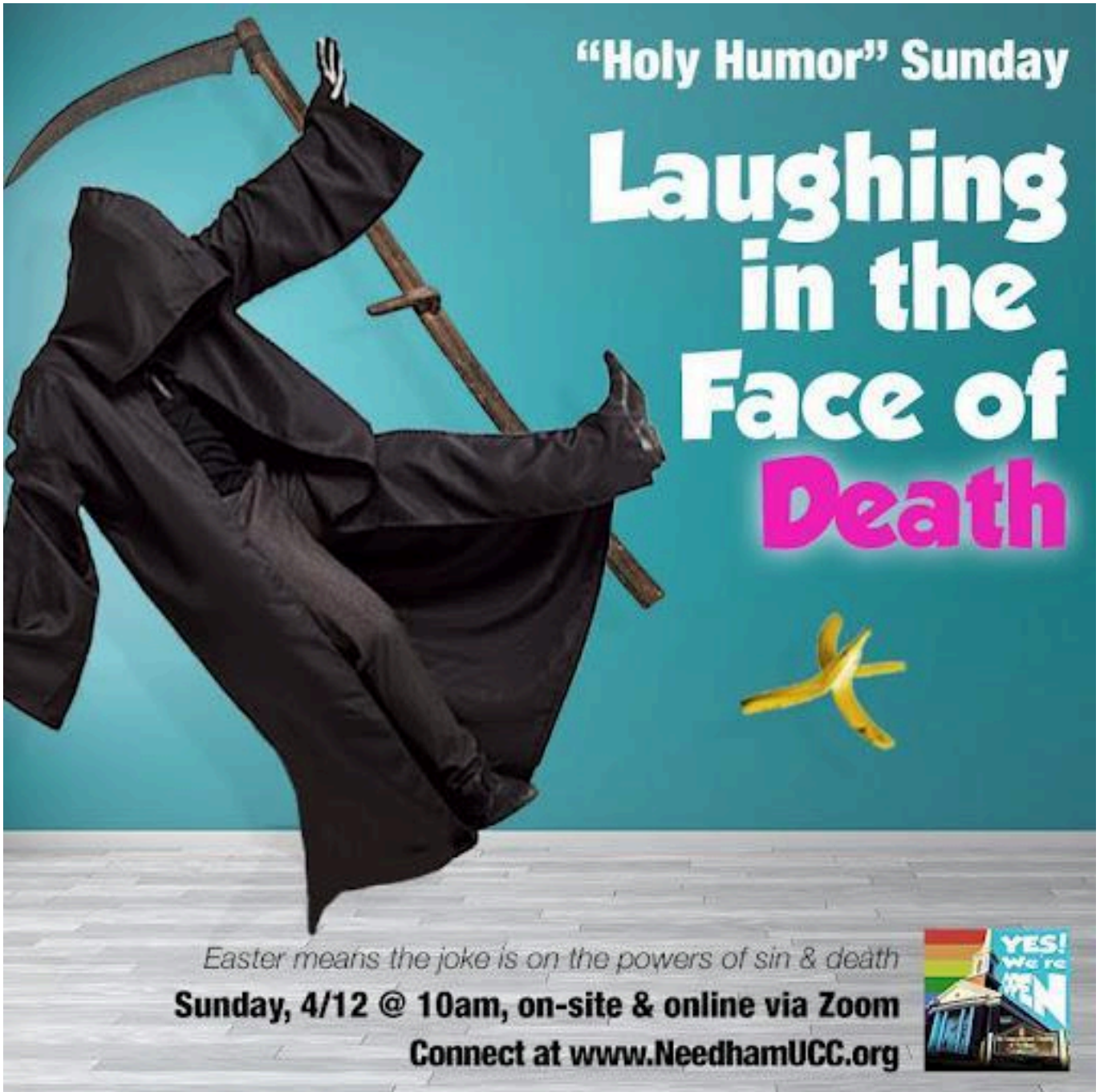



LARGE PRINT

A person in a black hooded robe, representing the Grim Reaper, is shown from the back, holding a scythe. They are standing on a light-colored wooden floor. A banana peel is on the floor in front of them. The background is a solid teal color. Text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“Holy Humor” Sunday
Laughing
in the
Face of
Death

Easter means the joke is on the powers of sin & death
Sunday, 4/12 @ 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

revjohn@needhamucc.org
musicdirector@needhamucc.org
childrenandyouth@needhamucc.org
office@needhamucc.org
finance@needhamucc.org
moderator@needhamucc.org
prc@needhamucc.org



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 narthex/foyer. 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 no Sunday school today. Kids are invited to remain in worship with their families to enjoy worship today. There are special pew activity bags available in the lobby. Ask a greeter for help locating one.

For today's celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion / The Eucharist / The Lord's Supper, those in the sanctuary who wish to participate will be invited to come down the center aisle to receive a piece of gluten-free bread and a small sip of non-alcoholic juice in a compostable cup. Folks participating online, we hope you prepare something to eat and drink to participate with the body. **ALL ARE INVITED TO SHARE, INCLUDING CHILDREN.** You need not be a member of this church or any church to participate but simply desire to receive this blessing in your life.



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. We're asking for large jars of natural (no sugar added) **peanut butter**; small cans of **tuna in water**; large cans of **chicken**; and bags of **dried beans**.

One: Forgive us, God, when we take ourselves too seriously, when we don't claim the happiness that is ours as your children and share it with our neighbors,

Many: **when we forget that you will always have the last laugh over sin and death, and that your purpose is always joy for the world.**

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

HYMN

Joy to the World! (see below)

LAUGHTER BREAK

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN PEACE

("Peace be with you / And also with you")

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

El Señor Resucito

A - le - lu - ya! A - le - lu - ya! A - le - lu - ya! A - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

lu - ya! A - le - lu - ya! A - le - lu - ya! El Señ or re - su - ci - to!
lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Yes, the Lord is ris'n in - deed!

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

from the Gospels, John 16:16-22

LAUGHTER BREAK

REFLECTION

Laughing in the Face of Death

Rev. John MacIver Gage

HYMN

Siyahamba (“*We Are Marching in the Light of God*”)

(see below)

LAUGHTER BREAK

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

SINGING THE LORD’S PRAYER *(see below)*

MUSICAL OFFERING

Sonata No.1 in g minor, *Andante*, by G.F. Handel

Alan Clayton-Matthews, *recorder*; Valerie Becker, *piano*

LAUGHTER BREAK

SHARING THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

For today’s celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion / The Eucharist / The Lord’s Supper, those in the sanctuary who wish to participate will be invited to come down the center aisle to receive a piece of gluten-free bread and a small sip of non-alcoholic juice in a compostable cup. Folks participating online, we hope you prepare something to eat and drink to participate with the body. ALL ARE INVITED TO SHARE, INCLUDING CHILDREN. You need not be a member of this church or any church to participate but simply desire to receive this blessing in your life.

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

PARTNERING IN THE GOOD NEWS

HYMN

Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna! (see below)

LAUGHTER BREAK

WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

POSTLUDE



Help Us Nurture Faith with the Youngest Among Us

Every Sunday we need two non-related adults—a teacher and an assistant—to staff our Sunday School classroom. Ms. Darlene Wong, our Director for Children & Youth, is our teacher. Will you be the assistant? No experience is needed.

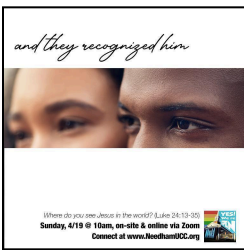
Please **sign up here** to help.

Questions about our Children & Youth Ministries? Email Darlene Wong at **childrenandyouth@needhamucc.org**

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED: April 12, 2026



Guatemala Partnership Delegation Report-Back Postponed
New Date and Time TBD



And They Recognized Him
4/19 @ 10am, LIVE! on-site & online via Zoom at
<http://zoom.us/j/907548568>

We're reminded that Jesus' Easter resurrection isn't the end of a story but the beginning of a whole new story. The Spirit of Christ is freed to show up whenever and wherever and to whomever God directs. The disciples attempting to flee Jerusalem and their own grief at Jesus' death along the road to Emmaus are surprised to recognize him in the ordinary act of breaking bread. How do we recognize Jesus in our everyday lives today? Are we even looking? (Luke 24:13-35)



An All-Ages, Hands-On SermonCraft for Earth Sunday
Gorilla Gardening
4/26 @ 10am, LIVE! on-site & online via Zoom at
<http://zoom.us/j/907548568>

On this Earth Sunday, when we celebrate the goodness of creation and our call to work for climate care and climate justice, members

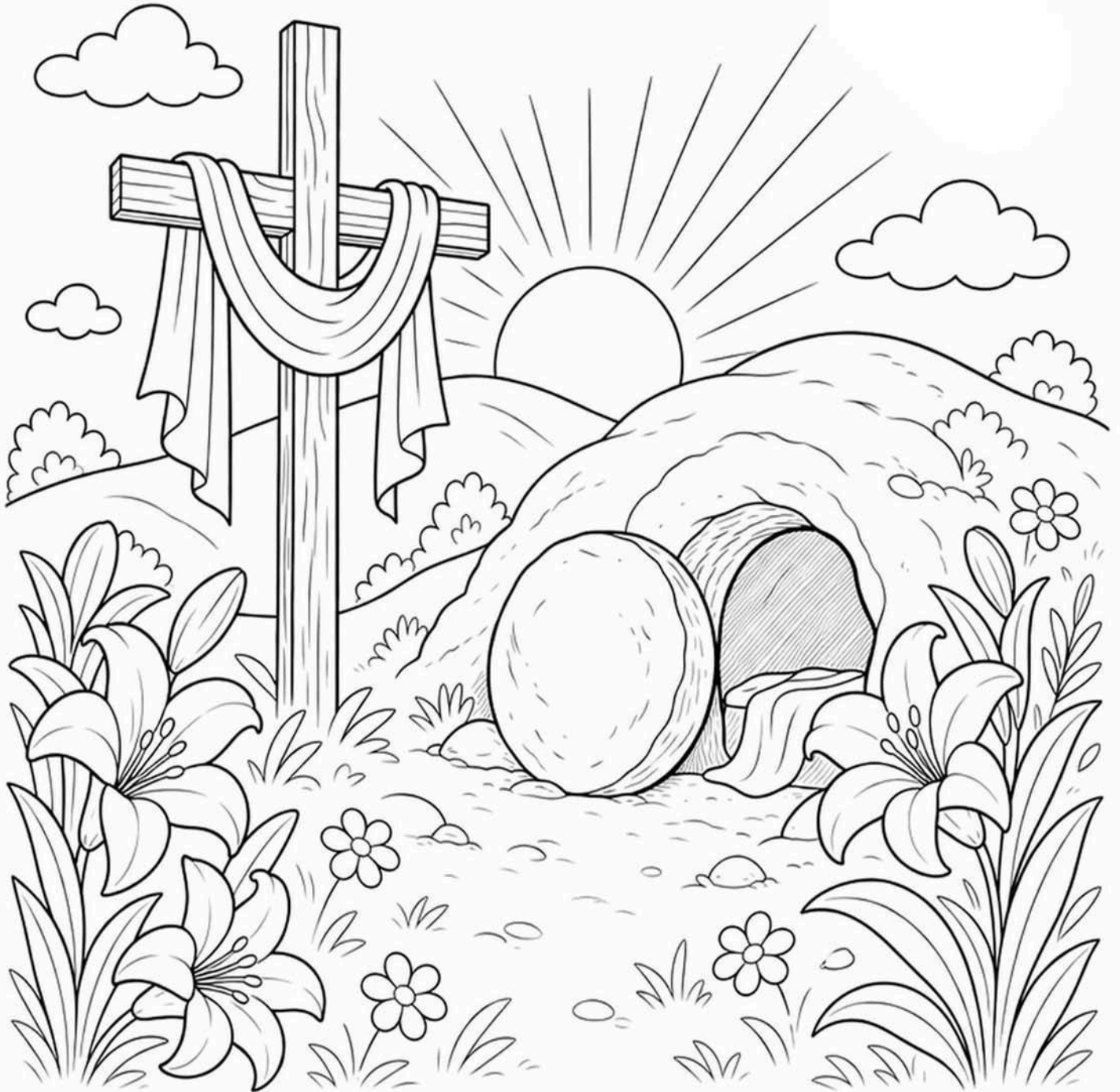
of our Environmental Ministries Team will lead an environmentally-themed worship service they've helped create and everyone, young and old, will get our hands dirty, literally, making "seed balls"--balls of clay, soil, and the seeds of native flowering plants--to take out into the world to do some "guerilla gardening" (get it?) in vacant lots, forest trails, and even our own backyards. Go forth and grow forth, people of God!



Annual Women's Retreat: Friday & Saturday, 5/8 & 9
Open all women--cisgender & transgender--as well as nonbinary people who feel aligned with a women-centered space

Join us for an overnight stay and three meals at the Craigville Retreat Center in Centerville on Cape Cod. The theme this year is "What Matters." The space can hold up to 23 people in a dorm-like setting and the cost per person is \$160. Events include meals together, beach walks, yoga, music, group discussions, a craft, a communion service and overall camaraderie. To reserve your spot, please mail or drop off a check made out to the Congregational Church of Needham, with "Women's Retreat" in the memo section, as well as a note listing your email address, phone number, and any food allergies or dietary restrictions you may have. Since space is limited, reserve your spot now. Two weeks before the program you will get an email with more specifics. Questions? Feel free to reach out to Stephanie Oddleifson, a member of the planning team, at soddleifson@gmail.com.

**Can you find Jesus in this picture
of the tomb on Easter morning?**



Why not?

Because,

as the angel said,

He is

not here.

He has been

raised!

Joy to the World!

Joy to the world! The Lord's alive!
Awake, rejoice, and sing!
It's just as he had said.
He's risen from the dead.
Salvation now he brings,
salvation now he brings,
salvation, salvation now he brings.

Joy to the world! The empty tomb
proclaims a victory!
By love compelling a great dispelling
of sadness in the world,
of sadness in the world,
of sadness of sadness in the world.

Joy to the world! Our Savior reigns.
Let heav'n and earth proclaim
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of God's love,
and wonders of God's love,
and wonders, and wonders of God's love.

Siyahamba

(“We Are Marching in the Light of God”)

Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos', si - ya -
We are march - ing in the light of God, we are
danc - ing
laugh - ing
hop - ing

1. - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos. 2. - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen kha -
march - ing in the light of God. march - ing in the light of God,

- nyen' kwen - khos' si - ya - ham - ba ham - ba, si - ya -
we are march - ing, march - ing, we are

Oo
- ham - ba ham - ba si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
march - ing, march - ing, we are march - ing in the light of God.

The Lord's Prayer

Our God in heav-en, ho - ly is your
name, your reign come, your will done, on earth as in heav-en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread, and help us for - give, as
we have been for - giv - en. In the time of tri - al
lead us in - to light, for yours is the king - dom, and the pow - er, and the
glo - ry, for - ev - er. Our God, in heav-en,
ho - ly is your name, ho - ly is your name.

WORDS: Matt. 6:9-13, adapt. by Mark A. Miller and Laurie Zelman
MUSIC: Mark A. Miller

Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!

Christ is risen! Shout Hosana!
Celebrate this day of days!
Christ is risen! Hush in wonder:
all creation is amazed.
In the desert all surrounding,
see a spreading tree has grown.
Healing leaves of grace abounding
bring a taste of love unknown.

Christ is risen! Raise your spirits
from the caverns of despair.
Walk with gladness in the morning.
See what love can do and dare.
Drink the wine of resurrection,
not a servant, but a friend.
Jesus is our strong companion.
Joy and peace shall never end.

Christ is risen! Earth and heaven
nevermore shall be the same.
Break the bread of new creation
where the world is still in pain.
Tell its grim, demonic chorus:
“Christ is risen! Get you gone!”
God, the First and Last is with us.
Sing Hosanna, everyone!

Text: B. Wren (1986); Tune: HYMN TO JOY