



The Congregational Church of Needham

An open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ

December 11, 2016
Third Sunday of Advent

Students begin in worship with their parents and will be dismissed to Stevenson Hall by the ministers.

PRELUDE

He Shall Feed His Flock
G.F. Handel

MUSIC FOR GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Jim and Rev. Heike

CONGREGATIONAL GREETING

INVOCATION

written by Fr. Henri Nouwen

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness,
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.
We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.
We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.
We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.
We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.
We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.
To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

***OPENING HYMN #104 (Black, New Century Hymnal)**

We Hail You God's Anointed

INTRODUCTION OF FAMILY

The Priaulx and Rock Family
Sharmon, Shawn, Brendan, and Katherine

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

One: In this season of Advent, we celebrate God's joy.

All: Knowing that Christ is coming, to bring healing and wholeness to the world, is a source of genuine delight!

One: When we gather for worship it is a celebration, an opportunity to rejoice in all that God is doing among us and beyond us.

All: Our lives are marked by laughter and friendship, as we love our neighbors with wide smiles and open arms.

One: Even when we face difficulty and trouble we sing a song of faith, confident that Jesus is able to redeem our suffering world.

All: Together, we are a sign of God's joy for the world. (The candle is lit)

One: Let us pray

All: God of transformation, we rejoice that you lift up the lowly and fill the hungry with good things. We marvel at your power to change hearts and lives. Fill us with your Spirit this season so that our voices declare your goodness and our lives proclaim your mercy in Jesus Christ. Amen.

ANTHEM

Amen, Go Tell It

Arr. Moore

Shepherd's Staff Choir, Soloist Theresa Blume

SELECTION OF READINGS

Isaiah 35: 1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. God will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. God will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Matthew 11: 2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

HYMN #107 (Black, New Century Hymnal)

**Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn
vs. 1 & 2**

Call to Prayer

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Concerns and Celebrations

Prayers for Our Friends and Families, Our Church, Our Community, and the World.

Lord’s Prayer (please pray whatever form is familiar to you; many choose to pray Our Father, Our Mother, Our Father and Mother, Our Creator, or Our Maker, or Father/Mother God...debts/debtors or trespasses/those who trespass...)

OFFERING OF TITHES AND GIFTS

In each of our pews today is a black friendship book which we encourage you to fill out and pass to the person next to you during the offering. If you have been with us before, just put down your name, but if you are new today, please let us know who you are. Thanks!

Offertory Anthem

Gaudete
Arr. Michael Burkhardt
Joseph Rondeau, hand drum

***Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication

***CLOSING HYMN #132 (Black, New Century Hymnal)**

Joy to the World

BENEDICTION

Rev. Jim and Rev. Heike

POSTLUDE

Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying By
J.S. Bach, arr. Lawrence Grant

****You are invited to stand***

*Worship Assistant: Brendan Rock Deacons: Sally Fitzgerald, Stephanie Oddleifson
Altar Guild: Laura Cullen Ushers: Alex Cullen, Nancy Lane, Eric Slosser, David Libby
Flowers: Connie Kaufman Flower Delivery: Jean Veigas*

The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Larry Meehan from the Baker and Brennan Families.

- Welcome to all who are here for the first time.
- Please silence your cell phone before attending the service.
- Please Check In on Facebook and let people know you are here.
- You can Tweet or Instagram during the service.
- Please ask an usher if you would like or need a hearing device.

Attendance and Offerings

12/4/2016 Worship Attendance 136 people = *12/4/2016 Collection = \$5,458.36

Please contact the church office 781-444-2510
or office@needhamucc.org to find out how you can give electronically.

November pledges donated electronically \$10,272.50

* *Collection & Pledge amount does not include additional pledges received electronically.*

Village Fair

The Village Fair Committee members are very, very pleased to announce that the profit from the Fair, after expenses, is just over \$10,000.00. This represents lots of hard work, fellowship and the support of our church family. Please consider this a heartfelt "thank you" to all involved.

Rev. Jim Mitulski's Office Hours

Please contact the church office to schedule an appointment during his office hours of Tuesday & Wednesday 2-6pm;
Thursday 2-5pm

*If these times do not work for you please contact
the office for alternate availability.

Staff

Interim Senior Minister
The Rev. Jim Mitulski
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The Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton, Pastor Emeritus

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Flower Offering Envelopes Are Now Available

We are collecting donations in memory of loved ones for the poinsettias that decorate the church at Christmas time. Christmas Flower Offering envelopes will be available in the church pews or the church office. Please return envelopes to the office by December 19. After the Christmas Eve services, many of the plants will be given to people in our congregation who are sick, homebound or in need of a little extra attention.

A conversation in the manner of Let's Talk, Let's Listen—December 14 at 7pm, Chapel.

How are we doing as a community? How are we feeling about the past? The present? the future?

Blue Christmas at the First Baptist Church December 18 at 7 pm

Blue Christmas- a contemplative service recognizing that sometimes the Holidays can be hard. Combining with our friends at FBC as part of our ongoing relationship deepening with them.

Guatemala Partner-Family Letters Due January 1st: It's time to write your partner-family letter for your family in Santa María Tzejá, so that they can be translated in time to be packed up and delivered to eagerly awaiting hands in February! Deadline: January 1st. Please send your letter to Dave Johnson: davebjohnson77@gmail.com. Thank you.

January Diversity Book Group with First Baptist Church: Date To Be Determined

MARCH: Book 3 - a graphic novel by Congressman John Lewis (suggested by John Kirk.) This book just won the National Book Award https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost/graphic-novel-march-book-3-wins-national-book-award/2016/11/17/eeb497aa-ac7b-11e6-8b45-f8e493f06fcd_story.html?utm_term=.cb8289d0f36c You have plenty of time to read it even if you have never read a graphic novel. Be adventurous! Take a risk!

2017 Calendars to Support Santa Maria Tzeja

NISGUA Calendars to benefit our partner village in Guatemala will again be available after worship every Sunday in December. Find us at the Guatemala table to buy one for yourself or as a gift: \$18 each or 2 for \$30.

Alternative Giving

Looking for a meaningful gift to give? Consider a donation (in any amount) to the Guatemala Partnership and receive a card to give to a loved one showing that your gift was given in his or her honor. Your donation will support education in our partner village, Santa Maria Tzeja. See the gift cards at the Guatemala table after worship in Fellowship Hall.

Pastoral Review Committee News

As was mentioned in the November Focus, the pastoral review committee (a subcommittee of the deacons) is working with each of the ministers with their annual review. Currently the committee is working with the ministers to finalize their goals. Once finalized, the goals will be shared with the congregation. If anyone has any questions regarding the annual review process of our ministers, please reach out to any of our committee members who are Charlie Baker, Claudia Darmofal, Susan Lively, Carol Miller, Kristin Mollerus (Board Member) and Scott Stewart.

Youth News

Stay Connected Follow @NeedhamUCC on instagram for updates on church life, particularly from our family ministries including Christian Education and Youth Ministries!

Senior High Holy Homework : Join us for fellowship, homework, and dinner! The first and third Thursday of each month. This month December 15. 6:00-8:00 PM in the youth room.

Junior High Youth Group: Most Sundays from 5:00 - 6:30 PM. We meet for discussion, activities, and group games. Our regular meetings are on hiatus until after the pageant - join us at the all youth events and Christmas pageant!

Epiphany Party : Mark your calendars now to join us in celebrating Epiphany on **Friday, January 6 from 6:30-8:30**. Come for any/all of the evening. We will serve pizza and salad as well as King Cake. We'll have singing and blessings and fun activities for all ages. Go through your closets and bring any gently worn coats you may have as we will be collecting coats for One Warm Coat. And... if you want to dress to impress, wear your shiniest outfit! We're celebrating the kings arriving underneath that brilliant, shining star after all! RSVPs are not required but are helpful --Email Maddie at youth@needhamucc.org

Christian Education/Sunday School : Volunteer teachers needed. It takes a village! We need teachers for all of our classes! Sign up to teach at: <http://www.tinyurl.com/SignUp2Teach>

CALENDAR DECEMBER 11—JANUARY 8

Sunday, December 11th	10:00am 11:30am 12:00pm	Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i> Bible Study, <i>1154 Reception Room</i> Pageant Rehearsal
Monday, December 12th	9:00 am 7:00 pm	Cancer Support Group, <i>1154 Reception</i> Finance Team Meeting, <i>1180 GPA</i>
Tuesday, December 13th	7:00 pm	Board Meeting, <i>1180 GPA</i>
Wednesday, December 14th	7:00 pm	Let's Talk, Let's Listen, <i>Chapel</i>
Thursday, December 15th	12:00pm 6:00 pm 7:30 pm	Advent Lunch, <i>1180 GPA</i> Holy Homework, <i>Youth Room</i> Choir Practice, <i>Linden AB</i>
Sunday, December 18th	8:15 am 10:00am 11:30am 12:00pm 7:00 pm	Men's Breakfast, <i>Library</i> Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i> Bible Study, <i>1154 Reception</i> Pageant Rehearsal Blue Christmas, <i>First Baptist Church</i>
Monday, December 19th	9:00 am	Cancer Support Group, <i>1154 Reception</i>
Thursday, December 22nd	12:00pm 7:30 pm	Advent Lunch, <i>1180 GPA</i> Choir Practice, <i>Linden AB</i>
Saturday, December 24th Christmas Eve	4:00 pm 9:00 pm	Christmas Pageant, <i>Sanctuary</i> Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, <i>Sanctuary</i>
Sunday, December 25th Christmas Day	10:00am	Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i>
Sunday, January 1st	10:00am	Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i>
Monday, January 2nd New Year's Day		Office Closed
Tuesday, January 3rd	6:00pm	Community Dinner, <i>Linden Hall</i>
Thursday, January 5th	12:00pm 6:30 pm 7:30 pm	Lunch with Heike, <i>1180 GPA</i> Music Team Meeting, <i>Conference Room</i> Choir Practice, <i>Linden AB</i>
Friday, January 6th	6:30 pm	Family Epiphany Party
Sunday, January 8th Epiphany Service	10:00am 11:30am 11:45am 7:00 pm	Epiphany Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i> Welcoming Church Forum w/ <i>First Baptist Church</i> Youth Committee Meeting Guatemala Meeting, <i>Library</i>

* *The church office is closed December 24-January 2.*