



# The Congregational Church of Needham

*An open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ*

## **The Third Sunday of Advent - Gaudete (Rejoice!) Sunday Interfaith Hanukkah Observance**

**December 17, 2017**

*Welcome to our worship service.*

*Please join us for refreshments and time for fellowship immediately following the service.*

*full text of* **Denise Levertov's Annunciation**

Annunciation

*Hail, space for the uncontained God*

*From the Agathistos Hymn,*

*Greece, VIc*

We know the scene: the room, variously furnished,  
almost always a lectern, a book, always  
the tall lily.

Arrived on solemn grandeur of great wings,  
the angelic ambassador, standing or hovering,  
whom she acknowledges a guest.

But we are told of meek obedience. No one mentions  
courage.

The engendering Spirit  
did not enter without consent.

God waited.

She was free  
to accept or to refuse, choice  
integral to humanness.

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Aren't there annunciations  
of one sort or another  
in most lives?

Some unwillingly  
undertake great destinies,  
enact them in sullen pride,  
uncomprehending.

More often  
those moments  
when roads of light and storm  
open from darkness in man or woman,  
are turned away from

in dread, in a wave of weakness, in despair  
and with relief.  
Ordinary lives continue.

God does not site them.  
But the gates close, the pathway vanishes.

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She had been a child who played, ate, slept  
like any other child—but unlike others,  
wept only for pity, laughed  
in joy not triumph.  
Compassion and intelligence  
fused in her, indivisible.

Called to a destiny more momentous  
than any other in all of Time,  
she did not quail,  
only asked  
a simple, 'How can this be?'  
and gravely, courteously,  
took to heart the angel's reply,  
the astounding ministry she was offered:

to bear in her womb  
Infinite weight and lightness; to carry  
in hidden, finite inwardness,  
nine months of Eternity; to contain  
in slender vase of being,  
the sum of power-  
in narrow flesh,  
the sum of light.

Then bring to birth,  
push out into air, a Man—child  
needing, like any other,  
milk and love -

but who was God.

This was the moment no one speaks of,  
When she could still refuse.

A breath unbreathed,  
spirit,  
suspended,  
waiting.

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She did not cry, 'I cannot. I am not worthy,'  
Nor, 'I have not the strength.'  
She did not submit with gritted teeth,  
raging, coerced.  
Bravest of all humans,  
consent illuminated her.  
The room filled with its light,  
the lily glowed in it,  
and the iridescent wings.  
Consent,  
courage unparalleled,  
opened her utterly.

## **PRELUDE**

O Come All Ye Faithful  
*arr. Llyod Larsen*

The Friendly Chimers under the direction of Crosby Goshgarian Jr.

## **WELCOME SONG** (*see insert*)

**Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child**

## **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. Jim and Rev. Heike

## **CONGREGATIONAL GREETING**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

God of hope,  
you call us home from the exile of selfish oppression  
to the freedom of justice,  
the balm of healing,  
and the joy of sharing.  
Make us strong to join you in your holy work,  
as friends of strangers and victims,  
companions of those whom others shun,  
and as the happiness of those whose hearts are broken.  
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## **\*OPENING HYMN #102** (*Black, New Century*)

**O How Shall I Receive You**

## **TIME FOR CHILDREN**

*Children leave for Sunday School after the Lighting of the Advent Wreath Liturgy.*

## **ADVENT WREATH LITURGY - The Candle of Joy**

In a world of despair,  
where depression rates run high,  
where there has been so much sadness  
and loss, God, we call upon you to come.

**In a world where joy is a distant memory,  
we call upon you, Great God of Joy, to come.**

In this season of Advent, we wait for the coming of Joy into our world. We await the birth of the Anointed One, the Promised Child, who comes into our lives in a new way.

## **Come, Messiah, Come, and Save Us**

*Light the pink candle*

**Prayer: Dear God, we pray for the joy that is found  
in Jesus, that those who seek it may truly find it.  
May we celebrate in the joy found in You. Amen.**

*Light One Candle*

Don't let the light go out , its lasted for so many years.  
Don't let the light go out, let it shine though our love and our tears.

*Lighting the Menorah for Hanukkah*

Jane Clayton Matthews

## **SELECTION OF READINGS**

Epistle      Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in God always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. God is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## **ANTHEM**

Gaudete  
*arr. Michael Burkhardt*

Gospel      Luke 1 46-55    Mary's Song of Praise

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Holy One, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for God has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is her name.

God's mercy is for those who worship God from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; she has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; She has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. God has helped God's servant Israel, in remembrance of god's mercy, according to the promise God made to our ancestors, to Abraham and Sarah and to their descendants for ever.

## **Music For Reflection**

**Breath of Heaven**  
*by Chris Easton and Amy Grant*  
Heather Salerno and Cici Hunt

*Do you wonder as you watch my face  
If a wiser one should have had my place  
But I offer all I am  
For the mercy of your plan  
Help me be strong  
Help me be  
Help me*

**SERMON**

“The power of Her Yes”

Rev. Jim Mitulski

**HYMN** (*see insert*)

**No Wind at the Window**

**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

Antiphonal for Advent  
*Joel Raney*

**\*Doxology**

Pilgrim Hymnal #128 v. 4, adapted  
Text: Christina Rossetti (1872) Tune Gustav Holst (1906)

***What shall I give thee, poor as I am  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
What I can I give thee, give my heart.***

*Prayer of Dedication*

**CLOSING HYMN #130** (*Red, Pilgrim*)

**Joy to the World! the Lord is Come**

**BENEDICTION**

## POSTLUDE

Joy to the World  
*arr. Lloyd Larsen*

*Worship Assistants:* Gretchen, Olivia, Mia Allen

*Deacons:* Lee McNally, Charles Baker

*Altar Guild:* Denice Koljonen

*Ushers:* Jim Conroy, Mike Normile, Janet Jankowiak, Bob Everts

*Flowers:* Connie Kaufman

*Flower Delivery:* Caryl Johnson

*The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory  
of our parents from Brad and Connie Kaufman.*

### **Covenant**

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.

### **Open and Affirming Statement**

As a covenant community we are committed to the belief  
that all people are created equal before God.

In affirmation of the inclusive love of Christ Jesus, we welcome persons of any race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability and economic circumstance to full participation in our community life and ministry.

We strive to reflect these beliefs in the language and content of our worship and in our lives together.

*(This statement adopted in 2000, reflects the welcome of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and their friends and families.)*

Welcome to all who are new or here for the first time! If you are interested in learning more about our church, please email Rev. Jim at [revjim@needhamucc.org](mailto:revjim@needhamucc.org), Rev Heike at [revheike@needhamucc.org](mailto:revheike@needhamucc.org) or call the office at 781-444-2510 to set up a conversation.

For updates on church life, our family ministries, Christian Education and Youth Ministries follow us at: **@NeedhamUCC on Instagram**

**Congregational Church of Needham UCC on Facebook**

**@needhamucc on Twitter [www.needhamucc.org](http://www.needhamucc.org)**

Please silence your cell phone before attending the service. You can Check In on Facebook and let people know you are here. Feel free to Tweet, Snapchat, or Instagram during the service. If you would like or need a hearing device an usher will be able to assist you. Children's Childcare is offered for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers in the Nursery located downstairs during the service.

#### **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 Evening hours are also available by appointment.

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

#### **Staff**

Interim Senior Minister—The Rev. Jim Mitulski  
[RevJim@needhamucc.org](mailto:RevJim@needhamucc.org)  
781-444-2510, ext. 106

Associate Minister—The Rev. Heike Werder  
[RevHeike@needhamucc.org](mailto:RevHeike@needhamucc.org)  
781-444-2510, ext. 105

Director of Children & Youth Ministries—Madelyn Downer  
[Youth@needhamucc.org](mailto:Youth@needhamucc.org)  
781-444-2510, ext. 104

Organist/Accompanist—Sangyoung Kim

Housekeeper—Sanira Alchaar

Church Administrator—Danielle Jurdan  
[Office@needhamucc.org](mailto:Office@needhamucc.org)  
781-444-2510, ext. 101

Office Assistant & Bookkeeper—Cindy Sullivan  
[Office2@needhamucc.org](mailto:Office2@needhamucc.org)  
781-444-2510, ext. 100

Music Director—Valerie Becker  
[musicdirector@needhamucc.org](mailto:musicdirector@needhamucc.org)

Handyman—Bill Donovan

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*The Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton, Pastor Emeritus*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

**December 17, 2017**

**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 and the church office. Please return envelopes to the office by December 18. 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.

**Request for Altar Flower Donation** Altar flower donations are needed for Sunday, January 14th. The cost of the arrangement is \$50 with a check payable to the Congregational Church of Needham. You may call the church office or contact Mary Lou Hughes at 781-449-1520 to receive more details if you are interested in remembering loved ones with flowers on the altar.

**Transition Team Update** The Transition Team has several goals in the process of preparing our Church Profile. While the survey completion was critical, we also are striving for as much transparency as possible. With that in mind, here is our weekly bulletin update, which is based on questions generated from the congregation. Thank you in advance for your contributions and involvement in this process.

Look for and frequently check the “Transition Team” page on the church website where each week’s message will be archived. Stop by the Transition Team table each week during Coffee Hour to ask questions or share concerns.

**TODAY** Please stop in the chapel at 11:30 (if you were unable to attend at 9:00) to hear the survey report back from the Transition Team’s meeting with the representative from Holy Cow Consultants.

Small group sessions in January are also being planned for more interactive discussion and exchange of ideas as the team continues to receive your input in preparing the Church Profile.

**Please be in touch with us at [transitionteam@needhamucc.org](mailto:transitionteam@needhamucc.org) if you have a question or want to meet with a team member. We welcome all opinions!**

Your Transition Team; Deb Abraham, Carl Madsen, Alan Clayton-Matthews, Rev. Jim Mitulski, Diana Conroy, Barbra Morton, Claudia Darmofal, Heather Salerno, Frank Luppino

**Calling all Bakers!** As part of our Membership care efforts, the desire has been expressed to improve upon our coffee hour offerings. And what better way than to offer home baked and nut

free goodies, including also gluten free items. Rev. Heike invites anyone to a monthly afternoon of baking at the church. The next date is **December 20, 2017 in the 1154 GPA kitchen**. We can bake a lot in one afternoon and then freeze the goods for Sunday's coffee hour. If you wish to contribute to coffee hour but cannot help us bake, we gratefully accept donations. Please contact Rev. Heike if you want to help or donate.

**Lost and Found** There are a few items in the lost and found basket located in the office copy room. Please stop by to see if any of the items belong to you. Any items not claimed by December 31st will be donated or thrown away.

**Calendars on Sale to Benefit Santa María Tzejá:** Please stop by the Guatemala table during Coffee Hour on Sundays in December to purchase a colorful NISGUA calendar for yourself or as a gift. Cost: \$20. Note: Ali Durbin's youngest daughter appears in one of the monthly photos that focus on human rights/social justice issues.

**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 (or teacher) showing that your gift was given in his or her honor. Your donation will support education in our partner village, Santa María Tzejá. See the gift cards at the Guatemala table after worship in Fellowship Hall during December.

Partner Family Letters to Guatemala: Ho, ho, ho, it's time to write your letter to your partner family in Santa María Tzejá. Fill in the family about your Christmas celebrations and traditions. Deadline for letters is January 2, 2018. Please send to: [davebjohnson77@gmail.com](mailto:davebjohnson77@gmail.com).

**NEEDHAM UCC FAMILY COOKBOOK:** Submit Your Recipes Now! Our Youth Groups will be compiling recipes through January for a new Congregational Church of Needham cookbook! You are invited to contribute your favorite recipe to be included. You can email the recipe to [youth@needhamucc.org](mailto:youth@needhamucc.org) or bring a printed copy and put it in Maddie's mailbox in the copy room! Additionally, if you'd like to share one or two sentences on a memory related to your recipe we will include that as well! Recipes will be collected through January 31. The cookbooks will be released in time for preparing your Easter dinner!

**Bible Study** Please join us in the reception room from 11:30-12:30 for Bible Study. We gather to read and discuss a few chapters of the Bible each week. This fall we will be reading Revelations. No advance reading required, so please drop by if you would like to try us out! For questions, contact Sunu Yeh at [dormouse99@gmail.com](mailto:dormouse99@gmail.com).

**What are you doing Sunday morning?** Would you like to contribute to the life of our church, but are worried that you might not have the time? Consider ushering! Ushers serve one Sunday per month, and need to be in the sanctuary from about 20 minutes before and 20 minutes after service. Interested? Please speak with Eric Slosser or email him at [eric@slosser.net](mailto:eric@slosser.net).

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL & FAMILY MINISTRIES ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

Our rehearsal schedule is listed below; participants need to be able to make at least one rehearsal prior to Christmas Eve along with the Christmas Eve rehearsal and service. Please come to Maddie, our youth director, with any questions!

Sunday, December 17: Lunch and rehearsal 11:30 (costumes distributed)

Sunday, December 24: Rehearsal 2:30-3:30, worship begins at 4

### **YOUTH MINISTRIES ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **SR HIGH LOCK-IN: Friday, January 5-Saturday, January 6, 2018**

Senior High Youth Group students gather for their winter lock-in here at the church at 7:00 pm on Friday. On Saturday, we will head to snow tubing at the Nashoba Valley Tubing Park before returning at 2 PM. Meals: Students will eat dinner on Friday and breakfast and lunch on Saturday. The cost to students is \$50. If this event is cost-prohibitive for your student or family, please reach out to Maddie at [youth@needhamucc.org](mailto:youth@needhamucc.org). Friends of youth group members are welcome to join! RSVPs for this event are due Sunday, December 3, 2017 on the signup sheet outside Maddie's office. We are in need of 1 adult chaperone for overnight on Friday and 2 drivers on Saturday. Minimum of 6 students.

12/10/2017 Collections\* = \$6,701.75

12/10/2017 Worship Attendance = 99 people

November Electronic Pledge Amount: \$12,085.21

Please contact the church office 781-444-2510 or [office@needhamucc.org](mailto:office@needhamucc.org) to find out how you can give electronically or pre-paid 2018 pledge money. \*Collection amount does not include additional pledges received electronically. Our current pledge amount for 2017 is \$367,804.00. This represents a budget shortfall of \$56,459.00 for the year.

Sunday December 17th	8:15 am 8:30 am 9:00 am 10:00 am 11:30 am  4:00 pm 6:30 pm	Men's Breakfast, <i>Library</i> Chancel Choir Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Transition Team Reportback, <i>Chapel</i> Worship, <i>Sanctuary</i> Christmas Pageant Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Transition Team Reportback, <i>Chapel</i> Junior High Youth Group Senior High Youth Group
Monday December 18th	9:00 am 7:00 pm	Cancer Support Group, <i>Reception Room</i> Transition Team, <i>Library</i>
Wednesday December 20th	7:00 pm	Advent Vespers, <i>Chapel</i>
Sunday December 24th	8:30 am 10:00 am 2:00 pm 4:00 pm 9:00 pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Worship, <i>Sanctuary</i> Christmas Pageant Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Christmas Pageant, <i>Sanctuary</i> Candlelight Worship & Communion, <i>Sanctuary</i>
Monday December 25th — Tuesday January 2nd		Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! <i>Office Closed</i>
Tuesday January 2nd	6:00 pm	Community Dinner, <i>Linden Hall</i>
Thursday January 4th	12:00 pm 7:30 pm	Lunch w/ Heike, <i>Linden Hall</i> Choir Practice, <i>Linden AB</i>
Friday January 5th	5:00 pm	Senior High Retreat
Sunday January 7th	8:30 am 10:00 am 4:00 pm 6:30 pm 7:00 pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Worship, <i>Sanctuary</i> Junior High Youth Group Senior High Youth Group Guatemala Meeting, <i>Library</i>

## CHRISTMAS

## 108 Jesus, Jesus, Oh, What a Wonderful Child

The musical score is written in G major and 12/8 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. Chord symbols are placed above the vocal line. The lyrics are: "Je-sus, Je-sus, oh, what a won-der-ful child. Je-sus, Je-sus, so ho-ly, meek, and mild; new life, new hope the child will bring. Lis-ten to the an-gels sing, 'Glo-ry, glo-ry, glo-ry,' let the heav-ens ring!"

System 1: G C G/D G C G/D G C C7 G C G/D D7  
 Je-sus, Je-sus, oh, what a won-der-ful child.

System 2: G C G/D G B7 Em A A7 D7 Am7 G/B D7  
 Je-sus, Je-sus, so ho-ly, meek, and mild;

System 3: G C/G G C/G Gm Am7/G G  
 new life, new hope the child will bring.

System 4: C C7 C#dim7 A C#dim7  
 Lis-ten to the an-gels sing,

System 5: G/D D7 G Am7/G E7/G# Am A7/E D7 G  
 "Glo-ry, glo-ry, glo-ry," let the heav-ens ring!

Text: from Doc Bagby  
 Music: Margaret Allison (b. 1920); harm. Jeffrey Radford (b. 1953)  
 Harm. © 1992, Pilgrim Press

WONDERFUL CHILD

*The Friendly Chimers* We dedicate our music this Sunday to Doris Cook, who does so much to enrich the spirit and life of our church, especially but not limited to the music program. Doris met her late husband Ed while singing in the choir. She is the donor of our chimes in his memory.

*Liturgy Notes* Although not stressed in the Congregational Heritage of the United Church of Christ, the UCC has moved to a more liturgical consciousness since the merger in 1957. The Evangelical and Reformed churches brought into the new UCC denomination observances like the liturgical calendar, the lectionary, vestments and colors that coordinate to it. By contrast, the Puritans of New England actually banned Christmas observances, as this excerpt from a 1659 law from the Massachusetts Bay Colony illustrates:

“For preventing disorders arising in several places within this jurisdiction, by reason of some still observing such festivals as were superstitiously kept in other countries, to the great dishonor of God and offence of others, it is therefore ordered by this Court and the authority thereof, that whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas or the like, either by forbearing of labor, feasting, or any other way, upon such accountants as aforesaid, every person so offending shall pay of every such offence five shillings, as a fine to the county.”

These laws weren't fully relaxed until the 1840's. Our church decor reflects all of these strands. Somewhat restrained, plain glass, communion. Since the 1960's all of the Protestant churches, including the UCC have become more liturgical. And the Catholic church has become more Protestant. The UCC participates in the Consultation on Church Union, now called Churches Uniting in Christ. We observe a common church year, a common lectionary, wear similar vestments, observe communion more frequently, partner on programs, share resources. The end result is unknown, but it has led to change in worship styles. Seminaries have merged. Forty years ago, it would have been less likely that a New England Congregational Church would have an Advent Wreath, call the third Sunday “Gaudete” or “Rejoice” Sunday, taking the best of the liturgical worship and adapting it to our rationalist tradition. In the UCC, we learn from the past and also incorporate the best of what is evolving in the present, and we innovate for the future. That is our distinctive contribution. Today we take a break from the Prophets and allow ourselves to anticipate the Joy of Mary's song until next week when angel swell the song..

Denise Levertov (Oct 24, 1923– Dec 20,1997) distinguished American poet who wrote on religious and political themes. She taught locally at Brandeis, Tufts and MIT. She is of both Jewish and Christian backgrounds.

Our Hanukkah liturgy is from Siddur Congregation Sha'ar Zahev (San Fransico, 2009)

## No Wind at the Window

90



1 No wind at the win-dow, no knock on the door;  
 2 "O Mar - y, O Mar - y, don't hide from my face.  
 3 "This child must be born that the king - dom might come:  
 4 No pay - ment was prom - ised, no prom - is - es made;

no light from the lamp - stand, no foot on the floor;  
 Be glad that you're fa - vored and filled with God's grace.  
 sal - va - tion for man - y, de - struc - tion for some;  
 no wed - ding was dat - ed, no blue - print dis - played.

no dream born of tired - ness, no ghost raised by fear:  
 The time for re - deem - ing, the world has be - gun;  
 both end and be - gin - ning, both mes - sage and sign;  
 Yet Mar - y, con - sent - ing to what none could guess,

just an an - gel and a wom - an and a voice in her ear.  
 and you are re - quest - ed to moth - er God's Son."  
 both vic - tor and vic - tim, both yours and di - vine."  
 re - plied with con - vic - tion, "Tell God I say yes."

John L. Bell is a member of the ecumenical Iona Community which began in 1938 on the site of medieval Iona Abbey, founded by Saint Columba in the sixth century. COLUMCILLE is the Irish rendering of Columba's name.

WORDS: John L. Bell (1949- )

MUSIC: Irish melody; arr. Marty Haugen (1950- )

COLUMCILLE

11.11.11.11.