



# The Congregational Church of Needham

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

December 18, 2016  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**Christmas Sunday**

**A Penitent Considers Another Coming of Mary**

By Gwendolyn Brooks  
*For Reverend Theodore Richardson*

If Mary came would Mary  
Forgive, as Mothers may,  
And sad and second Saviour  
Furnish us today?

She would not shake her head and leave  
This military air,  
But ratify a modern hay,  
And put her Baby there.

Mary would not punish men—  
If Mary came again.

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

**PRELUDE**

Prelude and Minuet 1 and 2 from Cello Suite No. 1 BWV 1007  
*JS Bach*  
*Emily A. Verschoor-Kirss - saxophone*

**MUSIC FOR GATHERING**

O Come all Ye Faithful (Adestes Fideles)  
*trad. arr. Lloyd Larson*  
*Friendly Chimers - Crosby Goshgarian Jr., Conductor*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. Jim and Rev. Heike

**CONGREGATIONAL GREETING**

**INVOCATION**

adapted from the Book of Common Prayer

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation,  
that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a  
mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

**INTRODUCTION OF FAMILY**

The Oberle Family  
Carol, Mark, Devon, Kira, Elena

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

One: Love. Everything begins with Love.

**Many: From the beginning of creation to the end of time,  
God's love colors everything.**

Two: Open your hearts to love and you will recognize hope shining  
in the most ancient of promises.

(The Candle of Hope is lit.)

One: Love. Everything continues with Love.

**Many: From strangers across oceans to neighbors next door,  
God's love dwells in everything.**

Two: Live love as a way of being and you will see peace shining  
in each and every face that images: beloved.

(The Candle of Peace is lit.)

One: Love. Everything ends with Love.

**Many: From the most challenging struggle to the most wondrous delight,  
God's love flows through everything.**

Two: Give love with open hands and you will find joy shining  
in the surprises that undo us and transform us.

(The Candle of Joy is lit)

One: Love. Everything leans toward Love.

**Many: From the greatest ruler to the tiniest baby,  
God's love changes everything.**

One: Prepare the way for love and you will find love shining  
in each and every breath that whispers: Emmanuel.

(The Candle of Love is lit, and the congregation sings:)

**Shine a candle in the darkness, breathe new love into our lives.**

**Wind your blessed peace around us till the day when Christ arrives.**

**Shine a candle in the darkness.**

**Wind your blessed peace around us.**

**Shine a candle in the darkness, breathe new love into our lives.**

**Wind your blessed peace around us till the day when Christ arrives.**

**CHILDREN'S TIME**

**Go Tell It on the Mountain, Over the hills and everywhere,  
Go Tell it on the Mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

**ANTHEM**

Veni, Veni Emmanuel Plainsong, Hymn  
*setting adaptation by Thomas Helmore 1854*  
*Accompanied by Joanne Seiden*

## SELECTION OF READINGS

Isaiah 40

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from God's hand  
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:  
'In the wilderness prepare the way of God,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.  
Then the glory of God shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of God has spoken.'

A voice says, 'Cry out!'  
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'

All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.  
The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of God blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.  
The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
'Here is your God!'  
See, God comes with might,  
and rules with a mighty arm;  
God's reward is with God,  
and his recompense before him.  
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
She will gather the lambs in her arms,  
and carry them in her bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by God through the prophet: ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’ which means, ‘God is with us.’

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

**HYMN #128 (Red, Pilgrim Hymnal )**

**In the Bleak Midwinter**

**SERMON**

“Every Family Has Its Ups and Downs”

Quote: Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine from *The Lion in Winter* (1968)

Jim Mitulski

JUSTICE AND HUMAN NEED

## 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.

## Call to Prayer

### COMMUNITY PRAYERS

*Prayers for the people of Aleppo*

*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

See Amid the Winter's Snow  
*John Goss, arr. Dan Forrest*

#### *\*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 #125 (Black, New Century Hymnal)**

**Angels We Have Heard on High**

**BENEDICTION**

Rev. Jim and Rev. Heike

**POSTLUDE**

O Praise the Lord  
*W. Croft*

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

Thank you to Emily Verschoor-Kirss and Joanne Seiden for sharing their gift of music today.

*Some notes on today's liturgy:* *This is the bridge Sunday between the Advent and Christmas season, and we are observing the end of one, and also a foretaste of the next. Because so many travel and can't be with us for Christmas, we are a little flexible and blend the two on this day, with sincere apologies to the purists among us. The poem on the cover by Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000) is offered for meditation; Brooks was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1950, the first African American woman to receive this distinction. The candle lighting litany is from UCC.org. We use hymns today from both of our hymnals and a contemporary hymn from the Iona community in Scotland. This week we will receive a Staff Appreciation offering in order to provide a gift for the church employees; please use the enclosed offering envelope or contact the church office if you wish to make an electronic gift this week.*

*Worship Assistant: Mi Herzog Deacons: Rick Devereux, Dibby Moder  
Altar Guild: Diana Conroy Ushers: Mike Normile, Janet Jankowiak, Bob Everts, Jim Conroy  
Flowers: Connie Kaufman Flower Delivery: Martha Lamb*

- 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= 133 People \*12/4/2016 Collection = \$4,845

Please contact the church office 781-444-2510  
or [office@needhamucc.org](mailto:office@needhamucc.org) to find out how you can give electronically.

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

### Holiday Services

\* **December 24th**

At 4pm, please join us for a Worship service featuring our annual family Christmas Pageant.

At 9pm, we will gather for our Candlelight Service featuring traditional carols and anthems of the season.

\* **December 25th and January 1st, Worship services will be held at 10am.**

\* **The offices will be closed Monday, December 26th through Tuesday, January 2nd.**

### 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  
[RevJim@needhamucc.org](mailto:RevJim@needhamucc.org)  
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Associate Minister  
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Director of Children & Youth Ministries  
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Sangyoung Kim

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Handyman  
Bill Donovan

Housekeeper  
Sanira Alchaar

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **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](mailto:davebjohnson77@gmail.com). Thank you.

### **February Diversity Book Group with First Baptist Church and First Unitarian Universalists: February 28 at First Baptist Church**

**MARCH: Book 1** - a graphic novel by Congressman John Lewis (suggested by John Kirk.) **MARCH Book 3** 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](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.

## Youth News

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

**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](mailto: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 18—JANUARY 15

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 <b>Christmas Eve</b>	4:00 pm 9:00 pm	Christmas Pageant, <i>Sanctuary</i> Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, <i>Sanctuary</i>
Sunday, December 25th <b>Christmas Day</b>	10:00am	Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i>
Sunday, January 1st	10:00am	Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i>
Monday, January 2nd <b>New Year's Day</b>		Office Closed
Tuesday, January 3rd	6:00pm 7:00pm	Community Dinner, <i>Linden Hall</i> Board Meeting, <i>1180 GPA</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 <b>Epiphany Service</b>	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>
Monday, January 9th	9:00 am	Cancer Support Group, <i>1154 Reception</i>
Tuesday, January 10th	7:00 pm	Board Meeting, <i>1180 GPA</i>
Wednesday, January 11th	7:00 pm	Deacons Meeting, <i>1180 GPA</i>
Thursday, January 12th	7:00 pm 7:30 pm	CE Meeting, <i>1180 GPA</i> Choir Practice, <i>Linden AB</i>
Sunday, January 15th <b>Martin Luther King Day Service</b>	8:15 am 10:00am	Men's Breakfast, <i>Library</i> Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i>

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

## The Christmas Flowers on the Altar are

Given in memory of my parents - Pauline (Polly) and Richard Winslow  
*Anne and Bryan Carlson*

Given in memory of Loved Ones  
*Karin & Donald MacPhee*

Given in memory of the Edman, Roadman and Hughes families  
*MaryLou & Bill Hughes*

Given in memory of Ray B. Greene, Jr. and Jean Stewart  
*Judith, Scott & Ramsay Stewart*

Given in loving memory of Ralph Leader and Beatrice Hopkins  
*The Leader/Hoffmeister Families*

Given in memory of our loved ones.  
*Laura and Alex Cullen*

Given in memory of Richard Unsworth

Given in Honor of Doris Cook  
*The Brand Family*

Given in memory of Alma and Robert Treen  
*The Brand Family*

Given in memory of our Loved Ones  
*The Turner Family*

Given in memory of our Loved Ones  
*Blair and Debbie Wentworth*

Given in memory of John Brennan and Oma Tienken  
*The Brennan Family*

Given in memory of the Johnson family and the Goetsch family  
*Caryl Johnson*

Given in memory of Timothy B. Sullivan and Gertrude Thornton  
*The Andre Family*

Given in memory of Caroline & Jack Prizer and Barbara & Rick Devereux  
*Dana and Rick Devereux*

