



The Congregational Church of Needham

An open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 24, 2017 10:00am**

Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light by Jan Richardson

*Blessed are you in unaccountable faith
who bear the light in stubborn hope
in unbearable times, in love that illumines
who testify every broken thing
to its endurance it finds.
amid the unendurable,
who bear witness
to its persistence
when everything seems
in shadow
and grief.
Blessed are you
in whom
the light lives,
in whom
the brightness blazes—
your heart
a chapel,
an altar where
in the deepest night
can be seen
the fire that
shines forth in you
in unaccountable faith
in stubborn hope
in love that illumines
every broken thing
it finds.*

*Welcome to our worship service.
Please join us for refreshments and time for fellowship immediately following the service.*

PRELUDE

Prelude in C Major
Johann Sebastian Bach

WELCOME SONG (*see insert*)

While We Are Waiting

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Jim and Rev. Heike

CONGREGATIONAL GREETING

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, you have a surprising preference
for people who are small and humble
and who expect everything from you.
You chose Mary, the unassuming young woman from Nazareth,
to become the mother of your Son Jesus.

Through your Holy Spirit
make us aware of the poverty of our hearts,
that we may be open to you and welcome you,
be ready, like Mary, to serve you and your plans,
and expect everything from you.
Come to us and give yourself to us
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN #117** (*Black, New Century*) **Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates**

TIME FOR CHILDREN

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

ADVENT WREATH LITURGY - The Candle of Love

In a world where love is directed to self,
or reserved for those in the 'inner circle,'
or only shared with those who agree with our opinions,
we call upon you, Prince of Peace and Love, to come.

In a world, where true love is fleeting and hard to come by,

We call upon you, God of Love, to come and enter our lives.

On this last Sunday of Advent, we wait for the coming of Your Love into our world.
We wait for the One who showed us what love is and means and looks like.

Come, Messiah, Come and save us.

Lighting the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

**Prayer: Dear God, we pray that our faith may be renewed once again,
and may we relive the wonder of your love not just in our lives
but share your love with the world around us. Amen.**

ANTHEM

“Mary Did you Know?”

Mark Lowry (b. 1958)

Laura Frye, Maggie Furtak, Joseph Rondeau, Crosby Goshgarian Jr.

SELECTION OF READINGS - Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

SERMON

“Mary, Did You Know?”

Rev. Heike Werder

HYMN #123 (*Black, New Century*)

Mary, Woman of the Promise

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

This Little Babe (from Ceremony of Carols)
Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

**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 #120 (*Red, Pilgrim*)
Sing

Hark! The Herald Angels

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World

*Worship Assistants: The Dirks Family
Deacons: Charles Baker, Dibby Moder
Altar Guild: Jean Veigas
Ushers: Craig Morrison, Valerie Kistler, Rob Blauvelt
Flowers: Connie Kaufman
Flower Delivery: Caryl Johnson*

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, Rev Heike at 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

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
781-444-2510, ext. 106

Associate Minister—The Rev. Heike Werder
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Director of Children & Youth Ministries—Madelyn Downer
Youth@needhamucc.org
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Organist/Accompanist—Sangyoung Kim

Housekeeper—Sanira Alchaar

Church Administrator—Danielle Jurdan
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Music Director—Valerie Becker
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Handyman—Bill Donovan

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The Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton, Pastor Emeritus

ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

December 24, 2017

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.

VILLAGE FAIR - THE RESULTS ARE IN! Thank you to everyone who participated in the Village Fair! There are too many of you to thank individually -- from the table leaders, the cooks, the bakers, and the sorters and pricers, to those who donated items and who worked on Fair day, to those who shopped at the fair. Through the efforts of EVERYONE, we raised over \$10,000! A portion of the proceeds will go toward a small beautification project, that being the addition of native plantings around our Great Plain Avenue sign next Spring. The bulk of the proceeds will go toward new windows in the chapel. Thank you!!
Jane Brand, Chair, 2017 Village Fair

The Transition Team would like to thank everyone who attended the report back session on 12/17. Considering that it was short notice, 1 week before Christmas and the start of the Christmas pageant rehearsals, we were astounded and gratified by the strength of the response. If you were unable to make that meeting, and would like an executive summary please email the transition team to have a pdf sent, or pick up a report from the office. If you are comfortable with an email format, we respectfully ask that you use the pdf form to save our earth's resources.

Please don't hesitate to contact the Transition Team for any questions or concerns at transitionteam@needhamucc.org

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.

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 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.

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.

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 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. 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.

12/17/2017 Collections* = \$7,256

12/17/2017 Worship Attendance = 151 people

November Electronic Pledge Amount: \$12,085.21

Please contact the church office 781-444-2510 or 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.

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| 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> |
| Sunday January 31st | 8:30 am 10:00 am | Chancel Choir Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</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> |
| Monday January 8th | 9:00 am 7:00 pm | Cancer Support Group, <i>Reception Room</i> Finance Team Meeting, <i>Conference Room</i> |
| Tuesday January 9th | 7:00 pm | Board Meeting, <i>Library</i> |
| Thursday January 11th | 7:30 pm | Meditation Book Club, <i>Library</i> |
| Sunday January 14th | 8:30 am 10:00 am 11:30 am | Chancel Choir Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Worship, <i>Sanctuary</i> Meditation w/ Sue Findlay, <i>Reception Room</i> Junior High Youth Group |

The Christmas Flowers on the Altar are given by...

The Koljonen Family
In Loving Memory of Juha Koljonen

The Cottons
In Loving Memory of Bill & Edna Doughman, Joseph & Billy Cotton

The Cullen Family
In Memory of Loved Ones

Nancy & Peter Stam
In Loving Memory of Rudolf & Alma Stam, Dorothy & Edwin Campbell

Blair & Debbie Wentworth
In Loving Memory of Our Loved Ones

Fabienne & Carl Madsen
In Loving Memory of Jean-Pierre Anselme

Ken, Gretchen, Olivia & Mia Allen
In Loving Memory of Alan Stuart Lanka

The Leader/Hoffmeister Families
In Loving Memory of Ralph Leader and Beatrice Hopkins

Donald & Karin MacPhee
In Memory of Loved Ones

MaryLou Edman Hughes
In Loving Memory of Joseph "Bill" Hughes and Richard M. Edman

Janet Floyd Rubenstein
In Loving Memory of John & Virginia Floyd



The Christmas Flowers on the Altar are given by...

Zack Biller

In Loving Memory of Grandma Linda, Great Nana and Great Gram

Jackie Allen

In Loving Memory of Sue Baer

Carol & Paul Brown

In Loving Memory of Janice Walsh

Jean Andrews

In Loving Memory of Robert Andrews

K.M. & Deborah Abraham

Jane Clayton-Matthews

In Loving Memory of Shirley Clayton

Maggie & John Fieldsteel

In Loving Memory of Mildred & Lester McIntosh and Joyce & Bob Fieldsteel

John, Vance, Will, Megan & Dana Fernandez

In Loving Memory of Happy Fernandez

Doris Cook

In Loving Memory of Emily & George Drescher

Roger and Jean Huff

In Loving Memory of Marge and Andy Kokko

The Barth Family

In Loving Memory of Margaret & Bruce Riefe

The Brennan Family

In Loving Memory of Oma Tinken and John Brennan



92 While We Are Waiting, Come

1 While we are wait - ing, come;
 2 With power and glo - ry, come;
 3 Come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come;

while we are wait - ing, come.
 with power and glo - ry, come.
 come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come.

Je - sus, our Lord, Em - man - u - el,

while we are wait - ing, come.

This simple and meditative Advent hymn is so uncomplicated in both text and tune that it can be learned quickly and sung without reference to a book, which might make it effective as a prayer response. It would also lend itself to improvised stanzas on appropriate occasions.