



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NEEDHAM

December 7, 2014

Theme: Hope



Our 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.

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.



Sunday, December 7, 2014

10:00am

Children are always welcome in Worship with their parents/guardians. Childcare is available in the crib/toddler room on the lower level for infants and toddlers. Preschoolers go directly to classes downstairs at 10 am. Grades 6-8 are in Stevenson Hall at 10 am. Grades K-5 will start in the Chapel at 10 am, then leave for Communion in the Sanctuary.

PRELUDE

Christmas Night Duet
arr. William Stickles (1882-1971)
Soomi Lee Lowry, piano

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Courtney Brennan

Leader: Let us light the candles of faith.

People: Come, Lord Jesus Come.

Leader: A candle of hope, where despair stands guard.

People: Come, Lord Jesus Come.

Leader: A candle of peace, for tempest-tossed days.

People: Come, Lord Jesus Come.

Leader: A candle of love to inspire our day.

People: Come, Lord Jesus Come.

Leader: A candle of joy to lift our spirits.

People: Come, Lord Jesus Come.

***OPENING HYMN #110(Black Hymnal) Now Bless the God of Israel**

OPENING PRAYER

Call to Prayer

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us pray.

Unison Prayer

**Like a tune in our heads, that won't let up,
Like a long-lost friend who finds us,
Like a healing we cannot explain,
Like the words of a prayer that binds us,
Like hope that won't bow to despair,
Lord Jesus, come again, to remind us
That we are your people.
Help us to prepare for your arrival, as we pray...**

Silent Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Prayer Response

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING

(Led by members of the 2015 Confirmation Class)

Advent Liturgy

Today we light the second candle of our Advent Wreath—the Candle of Peace. We light it knowing full well that peace is elusive, and in some parts of this world, it is almost completely absent. Yet in this season of Advent, we trust that God is never absent from us. God is always preparing something new. Help us to trust that even in war and discord, whether between countries, within families, or within our own hearts, God is present, gently leading us to new possibilities.

Lighting the Candle of Peace

Prayer: Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning, we thank you for the hope and peace you unfailingly offer us. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Mark 1:1-8

p.33

SERMON

“Where Are You God? A Sermon on Tenacious Hope”
Susan Cartmell

HYMN (seated) #110 (Red Hymnal) O Come, O Come Emmanuel

OFFERTORY

Concerns and Celebrations

Voluntary

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

**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

ORDER FOR THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Communion Prayer

Prayer Response

**Holy, holy, holy. My heart, my heart adores you!
My heart knows how to say to you: Holy are you Lord!**

Distribution of the Bread and Cup

Music for the Bread and Cup:

#488 (Red Hymnal) Go Tell it on the Mountain

#547 (Black Hymnal) Amazing Grace

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith. Increase our love for one another. Send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN #102 (Black Hymnal) O How Shall I Receive You**

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Allegro con brio from Sonata No. 3 in C Major, Op. 2
Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827)

A special thanks to Soomi Lee Lowry for sharing her time and talent with us this morning.

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

- Welcome to all who are here for the first time. Please fill out the blue “Welcome” card in the pews to receive weekly emails or newsletters.
- Please turn off your cell phone before attending the service.
- Please ask an usher if you would like a copy of the sermon, or need a hearing device. Copies of the sermons are also available on the sermon link at www.needhamucc.org, our church website.

Worship Leader: Courtney Brennan

Deacons: Joanne Seiden, Tom Mollerus

Communion Servers: Sunu Yeh, Joanne Seiden,

Connie Kaufman, Fred Moder

Ushers: Jim Leighton, Phil Gotwals, Rich Weitzel, Robert Kennedy

Altar Guild: Chris Arren, Denice Koljonen

Flowers: Connie Kaufman

The flowers on the altar are given today to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Binna Mann by her family.

Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is served on the first Sunday of every month in our church. Along with Baptism, it is one of two sacraments in the United Church of Christ.

At Holy Communion we remember that Jesus ate with his disciples on the last night before he died. In that upper room he transformed the Passover meal something new. As he broke the bread that night he reminded them that it was a symbol for his own body which was broken for all of us. As he lifted the cup of wine he told them that it was a symbol of the covenant- which had come from Abraham and Moses - between us and God.

So when we eat the bread and dip it into the cup we remember that God loved us so much that God sent Jesus. Through Christ we came to know God even better. At this table, through faith, we believe Christ joins us and comes to be our host.

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey you are welcome at this table. We offer children instruction in the sacrament of Holy Communion in the second grade. We leave it to families to decide if their children will take the communion, but everyone is welcome at any age. If your child will not be taking communion but would like a short blessing, please tell one of the ministers.

When you come forward the minister will give you the bread and say - "The Bread of Heaven for you". Many people respond saying, "Amen" or "Thanks be to God". Dip the bread into the cup of grape juice. As you do, the Deacon will say, "The cup of salvation for you." Again you may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God." You are encouraged to eat the bread soaked in the juice right away, and then return to your seat down the side aisle.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Healing Service

Tuesday
December 16
7:00p.m.



Not everyone is looking forward to a very merry Christmas. Some people have a diagnosis, a longstanding illness, a family problem, a professional setback. Rev. Susan will speak. There will be simple hymns and candle lighting.

*The Congregational Church of Needham
1154 Great Plain Avenue
Needham, Massachusetts 02492
Telephone 781-444-2510; Fax 781-444-3580
E-mail: office@needhamucc.org
www.needhamucc.org*

The Rev. Dr. Susan Cartmell, Senior Minister
The Rev. Heike Werder, Associate Minister
The Rev. Jamie Klopotoski, Youth Minister

Bobby DeRegis, Director of Music Ministries
Valerie Becker, Director of Youth Music
The Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton, Pastor Emeritus

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY: Lessons and Carols— Sunday, December 7th

The Christmas Concert will be held on Sunday, December 7, at 4:00 p.m. to be followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall. If you would like to contribute food or help with the reception, please call Doris Cook at (781) 444-5591. If you would like to be a reader for this please speak to Rev. Susan.

Friendly Society Christmas Luncheon: Wednesday, December 17, 11:30 am.

Join Friendly Society members and any church women in a special time of sharing—a delicious, free luncheon and show and tell (optional) of favorite Christmas decorations that you can bring. All you need to do is let Patty Stewart know by December 10 that you're coming so she will know how much food to prepare. Questions can be Patty Stewart at pattys-place@hotmail.com or 339-222-2784.

Faith Circle Book Club: The Faith Circle Book Club meets **Thursdays at 10:30 am in the Reception Room.** The book club will run through the end of December and focus on books that explore spirituality. We are reading **Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth** by Reza Aslan from October thru December. Contact Christine Weitzel (cweitzel@verizon.net) or Reverend Susan Cartmell (revsusan@needhamucc.org) to join the group or for more information about the group.

Seeds of Freedom: Liberating Education in Guatemala: Book presentation and signing by Clark Taylor, author ***Sunday, December 14, 11:30 a.m. in the Chapel.*** The session will be about a book that is a case study of the exciting educational program in our partner village, Santa María Tzejá in Guatemala. The event will feature a PowerPoint of photos that will interest both experienced travelers as well as those who have never been to the village. Come and learn about key ways in which this church has made a powerful impact on the community and young people within it. Signed copies will be available for purchase at the end of the session. All are welcome. Light refreshments will be served.

Christmas Pageant: Preparations for our Christmas Pageant, are now underway. Rev. Jamie will again be directing this year's pageant which features more than 100 costumed performers! Be sure to sign-up for a part in the pageant by December 7th. Casting sheets are available at www.needhamucc.org/pageant and on the Christmas Bulletin Board in the office hallway. We have lots of space for participants of all ages, from kids to adults. Participants **MUST** be available for at least one rehearsal (Dec 14 and/or Dec 21) AND for dress rehearsal and performance on Dec. 24.

Sunday, December 7th: Casting Sheets Due

Sunday, December 14th , 11:30am-2pm: Rehearsal (lunch included)

Sunday, December 21st, 11:30am-2pm: Rehearsal (lunch included)

Wednesday, December 24th, 2pm-4pm: Dress rehearsal
(snacks included)

Wednesday, December 24th, 4pm-5pm: Performance

Christmas Caroling: Sun, Dec 21, 4-6pm: For all ages! (Kids can come even if not accompanied by an adult because we will have plenty of adult chaperones!) Meet at church at 4pm to carol at nursing homes and a Needham neighborhood. You can also ask for our map ahead of time and meet us anywhere along our route! **New this year:** At 6pm, we'll meet back at the church for a pizza dinner, Christmas cookies and hot cocoa!

Partner Family Letters Due January 4: As the February 2015 delegation to Guatemala plans for its Feb. 11-22 trip, it is once again time for partner families to write a letter to their family in the village. Please find a little quiet time during the holidays to write your partner-family letter and e-mail it to: DaveBJohnson@verizon.net. Letters are due by Sunday, January 4, to allow translation in time for the delegation's departure. If you want to learn more about becoming a partner family, stop by the Guatemala table during Coffee Hour.

Empty and clean 1 or 2 liter plastic bottles needed! Please drop off in Rev. Jamie's office. These will be used to make lanterns during the Advent Workshop that the kids will use to parade down to the Christmas Tree Lighting in the Town Common.

Alternative Gifts and Calendars to Benefit Guatemala: Make a difference this holiday season by choosing an 'alternative' gift for family, friends, or a teacher. Please stop by the Guatemala table during Coffee Hour to learn about the options. Our partner village of Santa Maria Tzeja continues to educate its youth, with Needham's support for 15 high school scholarships per year, along with support for middle school teachers' salaries. You'll receive a card to announce your gift to the special person you want to honor. Also check out the colorful Guatemalan calendars (\$18) for yourself or as a gift.

Youth Choir: Do you know a child that likes to sing? We would love to have more students join our youth choirs.

FACT: One of the only activities that activates, stimulates, and uses the entire brain is Music.

FACT: Research shows that music is to the brain as physical exercise is to the human body. Music tones the brain for auditory fitness and allows it to decipher between tone and pitch.

Please consider this opportunity for your children!

Rehearsals are on Sundays throughout the year.

Joyful Noise—9:15-9:45 am

Hallelujah Choir—11:30-12:00 pm

Shepherd's Staff—12:00-1:00pm

Each choir will sing for the congregation 4-5 times throughout the year, culminating with Youth Sunday on June 7.

Adult Bible Study: Sunday 11:30 Conference Room: Everyone is welcome to join the Bible Study group that meets after church. This is a great opportunity to discuss your spiritual questions with other people of faith. Last year, we read through Luke and Isaiah by discussing just a few chapters a week. Currently we are reading about the early church in the book of Acts. If you have been wondering what Bible Study is like, check us out! For more information, contact Sunu Yeh at dormouse99@gmail.com

CALENDAR December 7th — December 18th

Sunday, Dec. 7th	10:00am 11:30am 11:45am 2:00 pm 4:00 pm 5:00 pm 7:00 pm	Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i> Bible Study, <i>Conference Room</i> Friendly Chime Ringers Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Joyful Noise and Hallelujah Rehearsal, <i>Ch Rm</i> Shepherd's Staff Rehearsal, <i>Choir Room</i> Chancel Choir Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Lessons and Carols, <i>Sanctuary</i> Junior High Youth Group Movie Night Senior High Youth Group Movie Night
Monday, Dec. 8th	9:00 am 7:00 pm	Cancer Support Group, <i>Reception Room</i> Finance Team Meeting, <i>Conference Room</i>
Wed., Dec. 10th	7:00 pm	Board Meeting, <i>Library</i>
Thursday, Dec. 11th	10:30am 12:00pm 7:30 pm	Faith Circle Book Club, <i>Reception Room</i> Advent Lunch, <i>Library</i> Chancel Choir, <i>Choir Room</i>
Sunday, Dec. 14th	9:00 am 9:15 am 10:00am 10:30am 11:30am 5:00 pm 7:00 pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal, <i>Choir Room</i> Friendly Chime Ringers, Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Joyful Noise, Hallelujah, Shepherd's Staff Combined Rehearsal, <i>Sanctuary</i> Worship Service, <i>Sanctuary</i> Shepherd's Staff Rehearsal, <i>Choir Room</i> Seeds of Freedom Guatemala Program, <i>Chapel</i> Bible Study, <i>Conference Room</i> Pageant Rehearsal Junior High Youth Group Christmas Party Senior High Youth Group Christmas Party
Monday, Dec. 15th	9:00 am	Cancer Support Group, <i>Reception Room</i>
Tuesday, Dec. 16th	7:00 pm	Blue Christmas Service, <i>Sanctuary</i>
Wed. Dec. 17th	11:30am 7:00 pm 7:30 pm	Friendly Society Luncheon Outreach Committee Music Team Meeting, <i>Conference Room</i>
Thursday, Dec. 18th	10:30am 12:00pm 7:30 pm	Faith Circle Book Club, <i>Reception Room</i> Advent Lunch, <i>Library</i> Chancel Choir, <i>Choir Room</i>