



UPDATE FROM THE BOARD

Fellow Congregants,
Here is a report on the Board's December activities.

High Rock Church

The Board discussed the opportunity and challenge of sharing space with High Rock Church at length at our first December meeting. As you know, we decided to recommend a trial period, and called a special meeting of the Congregation for a vote on the matter. As you also know, High Rock then withdrew their request to share space, having found space elsewhere in town. The pastor and members of High Rock expressed great appreciation for our willingness to consider sharing space with them. Unfortunately, they were required to make a decision on their other opportunity before we could hold our special meeting.



1180 Great Plain Avenue
Our prospective tenant is

meeting with lawyers to begin the process of preparing an application for a permit to operate an adult day care center at 1180 GPA. The Board has begun the process of reviewing the prospect's suitability. This review will include, among other things, an examination of

the prospect's finances.

Transition/Search Process

The Board has decided NOT to ask the Congregation to vote on a Search Team at the Annual Meeting in January. The Transition Team will be holding its small-group meetings and writing the church profile in January. The Board decided it would be premature to finalize the membership of a search team until after the profile is complete.

The Board anticipates calling a special meeting of the Congregation to approve the Search Team later in the winter.

Bylaws Updates

The Board voted to submit the Bylaws Team's proposed updates to the Congregation for a vote at the Annual Meeting in January. The Board also voted its support of the proposal.

2018 Budget

The Board and Finance Team are working on a 2018 budget to submit to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for its approval.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2018. As usual, a hearing will be held the prior Sunday, January 21.

Yours in Christ,
The Board

ANNUAL MEETING

JAN. 28TH

SAVE THE DATE!

ANNUAL HEARING

JAN. 21ST



Partner-Family Letters DUE January 6th: Tis the Season!

'Tis the season to write to your partner family in Santa María Tzejá, who eagerly awaits your letter! If you haven't already e-mailed your letter to David Johnson, please do so by JANUARY 6TH. Time is getting short to get your letters to our volunteer translators to have them ready to go down with the February delegation. Dave's e-mail: davebjohnson77@gmail.com. (Scholarship donors should likewise send their letters for their students to Dave by January 6th.) Thank you.

February Delegation To Guatemala (February 14-25, 2018)

The church's 61st delegation to Santa María Tzejá is full and features a nice balance of adults and youth, including 4 high school students. Co-leaders Brenda Metzler and Fred Moder will be joined by Jennifer Connors and her daughter Maria Libby; Chloë Misiak; Jerry Durbin; Lucienne Ronco, husband Nick Rhind, and son Anthony; Natalie Hallagan; Lexie Chu; and Scott and Joene Pike. We're looking forward to taking down letters from partner-families and scholarship donors, school and medical supplies, and funds for scholarships, middle school teacher salaries, middle school construction, and village projects. Please plan to join family, friends, and supporters for a brief Delegation Send-Off gathering on Tuesday, February 13th, from 7-8 pm at Dave and Caryl Johnson's, 505 Great Plain Avenue.

Gratitude for Outreach Funding

The village and the Guatemala Ministry Team greatly appreciate the support from the Outreach Committee for the February delegation. The committee has provided funds in the amount of \$5,000 (\$2,000 for high school scholarships; and \$3,000 to fund completion of the new middle school building). Many thanks! Community members are donating all the unskilled labor for the project. See progress from this November photo.



Upcoming Dates/Events:

Tuesday, February 13, 7:00 pm: Delegation Send-Off gathering (at the Johnson's, 505 Great Plain Ave.)

Sunday, March 11, 11:30 am: ReportBack by the February Delegation. Linden Hall. Refreshments.

FOCUS

Contributions are welcome. Please submit materials by e-mail to office@needhamucc.org.

February issue
deadline:

Wed. Jan. 24th

Rev. Jim Mitulski
Interim Senior Minister
revjim@needhamucc.org

Rev. Heike Werder
Associate Minister
revheike@needhamucc.org

Maddie Downer
CE & Youth Director
youth@needhamucc.org

Valerie Becker
Music Director
musicdirector@needhamucc.org

Danielle Jurdan
Administrator
office@needhamucc.org

Cindy Sullivan
Office Assistant &
Bookkeeper
office2@needhamucc.org

Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton
Pastor Emeritus

The Church Board
board@needhamucc.org

Jackie Allen, Moderator
moderator@needhamucc.org

The Deacons
Susan Lively, Chair
emaildeacons@needhamucc.org

To provide feedback about
any aspect of the church,
email
feedback@needhamucc.org

TRANSITION TEAM FOCUS GROUPS

Contact the Transition Team at transitionteam@needhamucc.org to sign up to attend on:
Thursday, January 11 at the Church following Rev. Heike's Soup Lunch, 1pm
Thursday, January 11 at the Conroy's house, 7pm 716 Webster Street, Needham
Wednesday, January 17, Conroy's house, 7pm 716 Webster Street, Needham

FELLOWSHIP & ADULT ED

COMMUNITY DINNERS

6-7pm, Jan. 2, Feb. 6
Linden Hall

Dinners coincide with monthly Baby Basics distribution. Volunteers are welcome to join in our effort to provide a healthy dinner for our guests and members of the church. Volunteers are welcome to help set up, serve, visit and eat with our Baby Basics families, and clean up. Please contact Rev. Heike or Diana Conroy.

LUNCH WITH REV. HEIKE

Noon-1pm, Jan. 11, Feb. 1
Library

Our monthly luncheons will be held on first Thursdays of every month at 12 noon in the Library at 1154 Great Plain Ave. Lunch date might be change due to the unpredictability of our NE winter weather. January's lunch has been moved to January 11, 2018.

February's lunch will be held on February 1, 2018 in the Library, starting at 12 noon.

All are welcome - bring your friends and neighbors!

Weekly Lenten Luncheons start on February 15, and continue through the following dates: February 22, March 1, March 8, March 15, and March 22, 2018.

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Mondays 9-10:30am
Reception Room

This group will meet every Monday morning, except on holiday Mondays or school vacations. Come, if you need an extra hug or prayer said for yourself or a family member.

MEDITATION GROUP

11:30am, Jan. 14, Feb. 11 & 25, 9am Jan. 28th
Chapel

Sue Findlay and Stephanie Oddleifson will lead a group in mindful meditation in the Chapel. We continue meeting on the 2nd and 4th Sundays for an hour of meditation.

"May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be safe, may you be free."

MEDITATION BOOK GROUP

7:30pm, Jan. 11, Feb. 15
Library

Our book discussion group will meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month, 7:30-9:00. This change will allow choir members to participate. We are currently reading **Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn**. We'll be discussing Chapters 6 thru 10. That will bring us to the end of Part I.

TAKE A VIRTUAL PILGRIMAGE WITH US!

11:30am, January 14
Linden Hall

Might you be interested in taking a Virtual Pilgrimage with us and working on your own personal fitness goals? If so read on!



Maddie and Rev. Heike would like to go with you on a Pilgrimage to Spain without ever leaving Needham. We want to travel with you across the ocean and

walk - virtually - the Camino De Santiago, also known as "The Way of St. James." We hope to reach the Catedral De Santiago De Compostela during Holy Week, covering roughly about 3611 miles together.

Attend this Adult Ed offering to find out more or read more about it in this issue of FOCUS on page 6.

January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	1 Church Offices closed	2 6pm - Community Dinner
7 8:30am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship - Epiphany, Communion 11:30am - Transition Team Focus Grp - Chapel Transition Team Focus Grp - Mollerus' House 1pm - Junior High Youth Group	8 9am - Cancer Support Grp 7pm - Finance Team Mtg	9 7pm - Board Mtg
14 8:30am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship 11:30am - Adult Ed - Pilgrimage Walk Info Bible Study Meditation Group	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Church Office Closed	16
21 8:15am - Men's Breakfast 8:30am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship 11:30am - Annual Meeting Hearing 4pm - Jr. High Youth Group 6pm - Sr. High Youth Group	22 9am - Cancer Support Grp	23
28 8:30am - Choir Practice 9am - Meditation Group 10am - Worship 11:00am - Annual Meeting & Luncheon 4pm - Jr. High Youth Group 6pm - Sr. High Youth Group	29 9am - Cancer Support Grp	30
FEB. 4 8:30am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship - Communion 11:30am - Pick up Super Bowl Subs! "Walk in a Relaxed Manner" Book Discussion Bible Study Guatemala Partnership Meeting	FEB. 5 9am - Cancer Support Grp	FEB. 6

2018

	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	3	4 SNOW DAY	5	6
	10	11 Noon - Lunch with Heike 1pm - Transition Focus Group 7:00pm - Transition Focus Group @ Conroy House 7:30pm - Meditation Book Grp	12	13
	17	18 7:00pm - Transition Focus Group @ Conroy's House	19	20
	24	25	26	27
	31	FEB. 1 Noon - Lunch with Heike 7:30pm - Choir Practice	FEB. 2	FEB. 3
	FEB. 7 7pm - Vespers	FEB. 8 Noon - Lunch with Heike 7:30pm - Meditation Book Grp	FEB. 9	FEB. 10

CONFIRMATION EXPERIENCE 2018



Confirmation mentors are the “heart beat” of the experience. Passing on one’s faith is one of the most important gifts we can give to a young person in search of a meaningful faith.

A parents’ meeting is scheduled for Feb. 4, 2018 at 8:30 am in the Library.

A mentor meeting is scheduled for Feb. 11, 2017 at 8:30 am in the Library.

All 9th graders are invited to participate in our 2018 Confirmation Experience. Weekly classes start February 26, 2018 and run through May 14, 2018. Confirmation Sunday is May 20, 2018! If you have a 9th grader who wishes to participate in confirmation class, please contact Rev. Heike ASAP at revheike@needhamucc.org.

If you would like to explore becoming a confirmation mentor, also contact Rev. Heike.

Adult Spiritual Education

Take a Virtual Pilgrimage with us!

Might you be interested in taking a Virtual Pilgrimage with us and working on your own personal fitness goals? If so read on!

Maddie and Rev. Heike would like to go with you on a Pilgrimage to Spain without ever leaving Needham. We want to travel with you across the ocean and walk – virtually – the Camino De Santiago, also known as “The Way of St. James.” We hope to reach the Cathedral De Santiago De Compostela during Holy Week, covering roughly about 3611 miles together.

Along the way we will send you things to do, read, and contemplate on your pilgrimage. (Mine will be done mostly on the treadmill.)

How is this going to work?

1. If you are interested, come and attend an Adult Education event on Feb. 14, 2018 at 11:30 am after church. The topic will be “What is a Pilgrimage?”
2. If you want to do it, sign up!
3. Keep track of your weekly activities via your fitness tracker! (If you like, I am happy to befriend all Fitbit owners and keep track of all our miles that way.)
4. Log in (share) your weekly steps/miles which we will transfer to our route map at church.
5. Receive, read, and contemplate our weekly spiritual messages as you walk/exercise!
6. Arrive March 30, 2018 at the Cathedral.



We hope that this might be a more centered way to go through the season of Epiphany and Lent and get your exercise at the same time.

Join us, if you are interested, on January 14, 2018 after church for a presentation. Also, feel free to call Rev. Heike for more information.

A Family Recipe

Introducing a new Congregational Church of Needham Cookbook!

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” *Romans 12:4-5*

In explaining the church to our littles, I love to help them understand our congregation as a church “family” – a group of people united in love by Christ Jesus. Families are different for every person. Those we call family may be those we are bound to by blood or we may have done the work of finding people to name our families. A fair share probably know a mixture of these, and maybe other elements, as their nearest and dearest. Our church family is called together in Christ and bound by love. Each congregation is different and has unique passions or work that they are called to, just like each family is different.



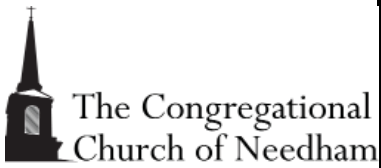
In my family, gathering around a table is one of our supreme rituals – we come together for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, birthdays, and other, more solemn moments with a table at the center. One of the richest experiences with my home congregation was in the wake of my maternal grandmother’s passing, when God’s love was embodied by church members who showed up daily with casseroles. Perhaps some of you have had a similar experience of God’s love embodied in people and poured out in the food we share.

The relationships we nurture around the dinner table are not unlike those we nourish when we are called together around Christ’s table. And, in addition to the ritual of the Communion table, our congregation has made space for food-focused rituals of our own. We gather for chili cook-offs, pie-athalons, and many other breakfasts, brunches, lunches, and dinners. And if you volunteer to chaperone youth group, you’ll soon learn that one of the core components of our fellowship is eating together – whether that’s a taco dinner or fun snacks like Peeps Sushi – or baking bread together. It seems sometimes that food, family, and faith go hand in hand.

With all of this in mind, one of the projects of our youth ministries this year will be compiling a Congregational Church of Needham Cookbook. We are asking our church family to contribute their favorite recipes – any kind! Entrees, sides, salads, desserts, gluten free, nut free, Christmas cookies, slow-cooker, pressure-cooker... you name it, we want it!

In addition to the recipes that the congregation submits, our children and youth will write prayers to use at the dinner table and we will compile it all into a lovely cookbook. The cookbooks will then be sold as a Youth Ministries fundraiser closer to Easter (just in time for Mother’s & Father’s Day if you have a parent who loves to cook). If you have a favorite memory that you would like to share telling folks what your recipe means for you, we invite you to submit that as well.

We will be collecting recipes through the fall and into the winter. Please send your recipe contributions to: youth@needhamucc.org or by mail to:
Congregational Church of Needham, Attn.: Cookbook, 1154 Great Plain Ave., Needham, MA 02492.



1154 Great Plain Avenue
1180 Great Plain Avenue
Needham, MA 02492-2202

T: 781-444-2510
office@needhamucc.org

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needhamucc.org

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Congregational Church
of Needham UCC

Men's Fellowship Breakfast, Sunday, January 21st

On Sunday, 1/21, the Men's Fellowship Breakfast will welcome all church men to breakfast.

The Men's Breakfast brings men of all ages and persuasions together in the Library on the 3rd Sunday of the month before worship in honest and lively discussion touching our faith and our lives in today's complex world. We welcome men of all ages and accommodate those with scheduling challenges. Arrive at 8:15 AM for fellowship and breakfast or by 9:00 AM for the discussion.

Contact: John Baldwin (jsbaldwin@comcast.net) or Rob Dunlavey (rob@robd.com) for more information.

SUPER BOWL SUBS ARE BACK!



On Sunday, January 21st, students in our youth ministries will begin taking orders for the annual sub sale! Watch for the order forms and make sure you get one of our delicious subs!

address

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF
NEEDHAM
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1154 Great Plain Avenue
Needham, Massachusetts 02492-2202

stamp