

Renew and Re-Connect at Church this Spring Bible Sunday, Youth Musical, Youth Sunday, Confirmation, More!

Spring is a busy time — be sure to include worship in your schedule to help you spiritually recharge for the week ahead.



Sun, May 6: Guest Preacher Rev. Dr. Peter Miano, Executive Director of the Society for Biblical Studies will be talking about the Biblical travels of Paul and what he has seen in 30 years of taking members of many churches on trips to the Middle East. Dr. Miano will also lead a discussion after worship at 11:30am in the library, “The Word of God and the World of the Bible: Cultural Backgrounds of the Bible.” The sermon theme for May is “Family Values.” See Rev. Susan’s column on the next page for more details. This is a Chapel Sunday for children in grades K-6.

Sun, May 13: Bible Sunday. During worship kindergarteners and 4th graders receive new Bibles. Rev. Susan will talk about the story of Noah and what it tells us about God, and how God learned to be the parent of all creation. The sermon is entitled, “Mistakes Were Made.”

Sun, May 20: Youth Musical Sunday. During worship, Rev. Susan will preach about Mary and Martha. Sermon title: “How Can We See Our Gifts?” All are welcome to join the Hallelujah and Joyful Noise choirs for their annual musical taking place after worship in Fellowship Hall (see information below).

Sun, May 27: Rev. Jamie will preach for this Memorial Day weekend service. Her sermon is based on a conference she recently attended where Marcus Borg spoke about family values.



Sun, June 3: Youth Sunday! The Senior High Youth Group leads worship for this annual service that celebrates the youth of our church through song and worship. All children in grades K-6 invited to attend. Childcare is available.

Sun, June 10: Confirmation Sunday during worship. June Program for grades K-6. Kids will enjoy two Sundays, on June 10 and June 17, of fun outdoor games and making Olympic-themed art projects in preparation for this summer’s Vacation Bible School program in August (see page 3 for VBS details).

The Congregational Church of Needham’s Youth Choirs Present

L i f e of **t h e**
P a r t y

The Story of Martha and Mary

Save the Date for the Youth Choirs Yearly Musical
Sunday, May 20, 11:30am, Fellowship Hall

A Message from Senior Minister

Rev. Susan Cartmell

All of us want the best for our families. Those of us who are parents strive to be conscientious mothers and fathers. Many of us come to the church and stay because the church is a community of people who talk about and reinforce good values. Here we look to the Bible to see how to become the best people we can be.

This month during worship, we are going to look to the Bible to seek wisdom for our families. This month's sermon theme is, "What Does the Bible Say About Family Values?" "Family Values" is a term which has been hijacked by some of our more conservative Christian friends. Just because they talk about family values in somewhat narrow ways, though, doesn't mean we can't

re-claim the best values of the Bible for our modern families today.

The Bible families were very different from ours. Families living 3,000 years ago had slaves and concubines. King Solomon had 1,000 wives, but no one remembers these historical trends when

This month's sermon theme is, "What Does the Bible Say About Family Values?"



they cite the Bible as a source for family values. In our study of family values in the Bible we will be looking at:

- The importance of FORGIVENESS.
- The way Jesus saw everyone as God's gift no matter their class, race or gender.
- The way our families can promote justice.

I know this may not be the "Family Values" you were expecting, but I believe these family values are more prevalent in the Bible, and more consistent with the messages we

find there. I hope to see you in worship this May. It should be a fun sermon series.

Susan

Family Support Group Sun, May 20, 2:30pm

If you are dealing with a family concern about a child or a family member with a medical problem. If someone in the family is dealing with depression. If you are looking for a circle where you can trust that what you say is confidential...you may find hope here.

Rev. Susan is starting this Family Support Group to offer families a place to share the things that are hard to share in most circles. This is an organizational meeting. For questions, contact revsusan@needhamucc.org

FOCUS

Focus is published once a month. Contributions from all members and friends of the Church are warmly invited. Please submit materials by e-mail to office@needhamucc.org.

Deadline for June issue: Sun, May 20

Rev. Susan Cartmell, Sr. Minister
revsusan@needhamucc.org

Rev. Heike Werder, Assoc. Minister
revheike@needhamucc.org

Rev. Jamie Green, Youth Minister
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Christine Edmonds, Administrator
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office2@needhamucc.org

Doris D. Cook, Volunteer Office Asst.

Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton,
Pastor Emeritus

NEW To Our Church? Join a Spiritual Discussion Series using NOOMA Videos Starts Sun, May 6, 5-7pm

New families in the church are invited to join Rev. Susan for a dynamic new discussion series based on author Rob Bell's NOOMA videos, a series of spiritual short films featuring real-life situations that are designed to spark meaningful discussion after viewing.

The discussions will take place in the library on several Sunday evenings in May and June from 5-7pm. Dinner will be served and childcare will be available.

This Sunday, May 6, the topic will be "Who Was Jesus and What Difference Does His Life Make?" **RSVP requested, but not required. RSVP to office2@needhamucc.org.**

Additional NOOMA discussions will take place on May 20, June 3 and June 17.

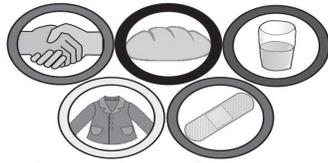
New Ministry Team for Adult Education to start; Interested People sought

Because of the diligent leadership of our deacons, our adult education programs have truly grown over the past few years. And because of its growth the deacons are seeking to form a ministry team for adult education with the ministerial support of Rev. Heike Werder.

They are looking for people who are passionate about education, who love to brainstorm about new programs for our church, contact potential program leaders, and help with some of the organizational tasks that go along with offering adult education program.

If you are interested in joining this exciting new ministry team, please contact Reverend Heike at revheike@needhamucc.org or give her a call.

Great Events Coming Up Soon



VBS OLYMPICS

Join God's Olympic Team to Change the World!

**Summer Vacation Bible School
Registration Now Open
Mon, Aug 27– Fri, Aug 31**

Our spring Vacation Bible School (VBS) was such a success, parents and kids asked for more! Rev. Jamie has put together an exciting new theme for a summer Vacation Bible School from Mon, Aug 27 through Fri, Aug 31, 8:30am-noon, that will be full of active adventure. Registration is now open at www.needhamucc.org/learn/vbs.

This summer's theme is "VBS Olympics: Join God's Olympic Team to Change the World" where kids will create crafts, play exciting games, participate in meaningful community service, and sing upbeat songs.

The program is open to kids, ages 3 years old to sixth grade. The fee is \$15 per day for morning activities from 8:30am-noon. Lunch bunch will be offered from noon-1 for \$5 per day. Additional children in each family will receive a 50% discount. Register by August 1 for a \$10 discount. Scholarships are also available. For more information or to register, visit www.needhamucc.org or call the church office at 781-444-2510. Registration forms can be downloaded at <http://needhamucc.org/learn/vbs>.

FRIENDLY SOCIETY'S STRAWBERRY DESSERT WED, MAY 16, 7:30pm



The Friendly Society will hold its Annual Strawberry Dessert meeting on Wednesday, May 16 at 7:30pm in Linden Hall. All women of the church are invited to join in for this last Friendly meeting for 2011-2012.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

Sun, May 20:
5-6:30pm: 5th grade "Welcome to Junior High Youth Group"
7-8:30pm: 8th grade welcome party to Senior High Youth Group

Sun, June 3: Youth Sunday
 Be inspired by the young energy in our church when the Senior High Youth Group leads worship. Kids in kindergarten and up are invited to attend the service. Childcare is available.

Junior High Youth Group BBQ, 1-3pm
 Senior High Youth Group BBQ, 5-7pm

June 16 & 17: The youth groups will be participating in Needham's Relay for Life event. As part of their participation, the Junior High Youth Group has made **Relay for Life Cancer Awareness Pins** that are now on sale in the church book store (The Good Book, located in the reception room) for a suggested donation of \$2. All proceeds will go to the Youth Group Relay for Life Team "Team UCC: United to Cure Cancer" to benefit the American Cancer Society. Church members are also invited to join us at Relay for Life at DeFazio Field on Sat, June 16th at 5pm for the Opening Ceremony and Cancer Survivor Lap, or at 9pm for the Luminary Ceremony.

Men's Breakfast Sun, May 20, 8:15am

Is Jesus the only way into Heaven?

During Holy Week, Jesus responded to Thomas's query regarding where Jesus was going with, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6).

Are these statements as unambiguous as they sound or was Jesus merely giving "Doubting" Thomas an understandable answer?

Join us as we struggle to understand ourselves. Arrive at 8:15am for fellowship and breakfast or by 9am for the discussion. Contact Dave Rhoads (oldvid@verizon.net) for more information.



Registration at The Center Now Open for 2012-13 School Year

Spaces available for rising sixth and seventh graders

Registration at *The Center*, an after school drop-in program, is now open for sixth and seventh graders for the 2012-2013 school year. The Center will be hosting four open houses for families in the community to tour the space, meet the staff, and learn about the registration process, on Sat, May 19, 9-11am; Wed, June 6, 7-8pm; Tues, June 12, 7-8pm; and Thurs, June 21, 9-11am and 7-8pm. Private tours are also available.

The Center is a safe, fun place for sixth and seventh graders to develop independence, get homework done and have fun with friends. For more information, to register, or to schedule a private tour, contact us by email at info@MyYouthCenter.org, visit www.myyouthcenter.org, or call Center Director Jamie Green at 781.444.2510 ext 198.

Adult Education: New Date Set for Nate Ramsayer's Talk: A Trip to Ephesus Sun, June 17

A new date has been set for Nate Ramsayer's presentation on his recent archaeological trip to ancient Ephesus.

Please join us on Sun, June 17, at 11:30am, to hear in word and picture about Nate's journey. He went there over spring break as part of his Biblical studies. Meet in Linden Hall; lunch will be provided for a nominal fee. No RSVP necessary.

Outreach News.

"Empathy is not simply a matter of trying to imagine what others are going through, but having the will to muster enough courage to do something about it. In a way, empathy is predicated upon hope." — Cornell West Professor of Religious Philosophy and Christian Studies at the Union Theological Seminary in New York

What is OCWM?

Annually, the Outreach Committee's greatest allocation is to Our Church's Wider Mission, or OCWM as it is referred to in UCC publications and communications. Are you interested in learning more about OCWM and how the money we donate to this cause is used? Come to the Outreach Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 23 at 7:30pm to hear Associate Conference Minister Andy Gustafson explain how OCWM provides so much to so many.

Green Task Force Request

The Outreach Committee voted to approve a request from our church's Green Church Task Force for

\$100.00 to support a community recycling project. Here is a brief quote from the request from the Green Church Task Force:

"The Interfaith Recycling Initiative and Michael Bailit of Green Needham Collaborative have gotten permission from the town to do a pilot project. After a year's effort, they secured permission from the DPW and Parks & Rec to place two recycling receptacles in Memorial Park and two receptacles at DeFazio Park for the cost of \$593.80 (includes liner bags and delivery)."

Our church will join Grace Lutheran, First Parish UU, Temple Beth Shalom and Christ Episcopal in contributing to this important community effort.

Outreach Committee 2012: Find Out Who We Are

Please stop by the Outreach bulletin board (near Rev. Heike's office) to see a picture of the committee members and look for us at coffee hour. We want you to know who we are so we can hear about your questions and outreach interests.



GUATEMALA YARD SALE!

Don't miss our huge and treasure-filled annual sale.

WHEN: SATURDAY, MAY 19, 9 am - 2 pm

WHERE: 505 Great Plain Ave. (Dave and Caryl Johnson's house)

ITEMS WANTED: Household goods, children's toys/games/equipment, bicycles, sports equipment, electronics, collectibles, jewelry, books/DVD's, tools, small furniture, lawn furniture, etc. (no clothing, TV's, or computers/monitors).

DROP-OFFS ON SITE: From 5pm on Sunday, May 13 to Noon, on Friday, May 18 (space allowing) at the Johnson's garage (505 Great Plain). If unattended, lift left-side garage door, put items inside.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Call Brenda Metzler (781) 449-5696 or e-mail: bmetzler7@verizon.net.

Guatemala Servathon Appreciation:

Many thanks to all who supported a worker at our annual community-service fundraiser. Three teams of volunteers worked at: the church (spreading mulch and trimming); the Needham Community Farm; and the Needham Community Council.

NEED A GIFT FOR A TEACHER, MOTHER OR FATHER? Consider a gift in his/her honor by making a donation to support education in Santa María Tzej through our church's Guatemala Partnership. In return for your donation, you'll receive a card to give your honoree. Learn more at Coffee Hour on Sundays in May or email sarahlibbey@comcast.net.

Partner-Family Letters brought back by the February delegation are available to be picked up at Coffee Hour on Sunday May 6th.

SAVE THE DATE!

GUATEMALA PARTNERSHIP'S 25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

October 20 - 21, 2012

There will be:

- *Forums for Everyone*
- *A Festive Dinner*
- *A Youth Program*

Welcome New Members

We joyously welcomed four new families into our Church membership in April. Photos and bio's of all four families are posted on the bulletin board at church.

Amanda Bullock and Melissa Van Hamme

Amanda and Melissa are longtime residents of beautiful Jamaica Plain. Melissa is the owner of Reservoir Dogs, a dog walking company serving Jamaica Plain. She also coaches youth basketball at the JP Community Center, and recently started a girls' league.

Amanda served in the Air Force and currently attends UMass Boston, where she studies sociology. She will volunteer this summer at Veteran's Upward Bound, an organization that helps veterans prepare for the rigors of university studies.

Amanda and Melissa are preparing to help chaperone the Sr. High Youth Group mission trip to Vermont in June. Amanda and Melissa will be married in July by Rev. Susan and Rev. Peggy O' Connor so this is an important and exciting time in their lives. Amanda and Melissa are thrilled to be joining this community, and look forward to meeting everyone.

The Ward Family

Kevin and Ellie Ward met during their senior year at Connecticut College. Ellie moved to Needham from rural Pennsylvania when she was 8 and lived here until she was 16. During that time she often

attended services at this church with a friend and her mom, although she was never officially a member. Kevin and Ellie have lived in Needham for about four years. They have two kids: Lucy, almost 7, and Owen, who just turned 5.

They chose the church because of its open, welcoming community. Since Kevin was raised in a religious home and Ellie was not, it was somewhat tricky for them to find a church in which both of them felt comfortable in the community and engaged in the sermons. The fact that the kids had so much fun here was icing on the cake for their family!

The George Family

Jake George originally hails from Berkeley, CA and his wife, Jenny, is from the Philadelphia area. They met during their junior year at Brown University and have been New Englanders ever since. They became residents of Needham six years ago following a search for a close-knit community in which to raise their children.

They have three children: Nicholas is 8, Josie is 5 and Isabella is 2. Jake works in marketing for an economic consulting firm in Boston and Jenny is an elementary school social worker who is presently a full-time mom.

The Georges were first introduced to the church by Heather and Kirby Salerno (having sung a cappella with Heather in college). They've been frequent visitors over the past couple of years, coming to appreciate what a warm, welcoming oasis the church provides in both a spiritual and social context.



The Lanka Allen Family

Ken grew up outside of Chicago. He studied engineering at Dartmouth College, where he and Gretchen originally met (on the ski slope!). Gretchen grew up in Lafayette, CA. She studied history at Dartmouth College, then worked at MGH after graduation.

Olivia (6) and Mia (4) both go to the Lexington Montessori School. The school's focus on peace, diversity, and community make it a perfect fit with their church life. Olivia loves reading, gymnastics, music, playing with friends, and going to church. Mia loves dancing, soccer, going to LMS, "reading" books, playing with friends, Sunday School, and laughing!

The Allen Family moved to Needham in November of '08, and are delighted to have found such a welcome and inclusive home in the congregational church. They love the family time and peace they find here, and feel blessed to have found such a comforting and open church community.

Green Church Task Force



Roll and Stroll to Church for the Month of May

For the month of May, we are encouraging you to walk/stroll or bike to church. Did you know that for every mile you do not drive, you offset 1 lb of carbon dioxide?

To help you prepare for your walk or ride to church, be sure to download the Roll and Stroll worksheet which can be found on the church's website at <http://needhamucc.org/connect/small-groups/>

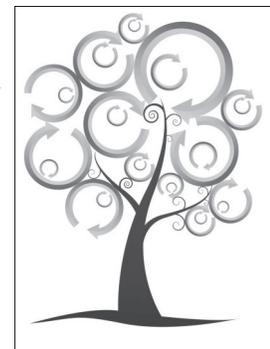
Congregational Church of Needham to be Honored on Green Needham's Tercentennial Plaque



We are pleased to announce that the Green Needham Collaborative (www.greenneedham.org) has recognized our church's efforts to reduce

the building's carbon emissions and promote environmental awareness among the congregation. The Church will be one of 28 community organizations and businesses who have demon-

strated an outstanding commitment to energy reduction that will be honored on Green Needham's Tercentennial plaque. The plaque will be displayed in a Needham town building. We thank everyone who has helped us become a more environmentally aware congregation.





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needhamucc.org**

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**Congregational Church
of Needham UCC**

FOCUS IS NOW ONLINE...
*but you can still receive a
mailed copy*

We have moved to making FOCUS available online to our members, but we know not everyone wants to receive it this way. We are working to create a mailing list of those who want to continue to receive FOCUS in the mail.

If you received this copy of FOCUS via mail and want to continue to receive it this way, do nothing. You will remain on the mail list.

If you would like to be added to the FOCUS mail list, please call Church Administrator Christine Edmonds at 781-444-2510 and leave your name, address and phone number.

***** Copies of the newsletter will always be available at church to be picked up when you are here for worship.**

Please let us know if you have any questions by calling 781-444-2510 or e-mailing office@needhamucc.org.



**Sign up Now To Play
or Sing for the
Congregation this
Summer.**

During the summer months (July 1—Sept. 2), we invite musicians of all types and ages to accompany our worship services. You can sign up for parts of the service or for the entire service. Look for the bulletin board in the main hallway to sign up. Contact the office at 781-444-2510 with any questions.

Youth Sunday is June 3



*Join us for an
inspiring
service led by
the youth of
our church*

◆ Enjoy songs and anthems by the youth choirs.

- ◆ Hear senior reflections by graduating high school seniors.
- ◆ *All are welcome! Children in kindergarten and up are invited to the service. Childcare will be available for infants and toddlers.*

Address Service Requested

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