



FOCUS

January 2017

A NEW YEAR'S BLESSING

from Rev. Heike

Happy New Year to you all! As we begin this new year, may this blessing accompany you:

A Blessing for the New Year

May you grow still enough to hear the small noises earth makes in preparing for the long sleep of winter, so that you yourself may grow calm and grounded deep within.

May you grow still enough to hear the trickling of water seeping into the ground, so that your soul may be softened and healed, guided in its flow.

May you grow still enough to hear the splintering of

starlight in the winter sky and the roar at earth's fiery core.

May you grow still enough to hear the stir of a single snowflake in the air so that your inner silence may turn into hushed expectation.

Peace..... the angel announced. But peace is as much task as gift.

Only if we become calm as earth, fluid as water, and blazing as fire will we be able to rise to the task of peacemaking, and the air will stir with the rush of wings of angels arriving to help us. This is why I wish you that great inner stillness which alone allows us to speak, even today, without irony of "peace on earth" and, without despair, to work for it.

– written by Brother David Steindal-Rast, OSB, on the Process and Faith website.

WHAT GOES ON DURING THE WEEK AT THE CHURCH?

*How do I
find out if
the church is
closed when it
snows?*

ISN'T THERE AN EVENT AT THE CHURCH THIS WEEK?

Follow "Congregational Church of Needham" <https://www.facebook.com/NeedhamUCC/> on Facebook! You'll get all the up-to-the minute news and information from the church including closings due to snow, pictures from meetings and events and notice of upcoming events.

ANNUAL MEETING HEARING SUNDAY, JANUARY 22ND

You are invited to meet with members of the Finance Team, Board and the Ministers in Linden Hall to discuss the Annual Report, ask questions and provide feedback!

ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29TH

Everyone is invited to attend the Annual Meeting. Members of the church will vote on the the church budget and new nominees to serve on the church Committees: the Board, Deacon's, Outreach, Christian Education and Youth.

SUPER BOWL SUBS ARE BACK!



On Sunday, January 22, 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!

Music Ministry News by Valerie Becker, Director of Music

Happy New Year! I hope that you had a relaxing, enjoyable Christmas Season spent with the people whom you love most, and that in one way or another music was a part of your celebration!

As we begin a new year, it is time to say thank you to all of our choirs and our congregational musicians who participated in our 2016 services and the music committee for their hard work throughout the holiday season and this past year. I am forever grateful to everyone and look forward to making more beautiful music with you all in this coming year. To the wonderful music committee, who handles the tasks that need to be handled like a well-oiled machine, my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude.

Our Christmas Concert on December 4th was a joy to plan and perform and we all wish to thank our sponsors for making this concert a reality. Thank you also to the many people behind the scenes who baked, set-up, cleaned-up and made phone calls for this concert. And of course a big HUG goes out to Doris Cook, for organizing such a lovely reception.

On December 24th, our annual Christmas Pageant took place under the direction of Teresa Blume, Heather Salerno and Maddie Downer. What a wonderful way to spend the afternoon of Christmas Eve. The children had lots of energy and their performance put everyone in the holiday spirit.



So now it is time to think about the year ahead. The chancel choir is trying out a new rehearsal model. For the months of January and February rehearsal will be held the first Thursday of each month from 7:30 - 9pm and all Sundays with the exception of January 1, from 8:30 - 9:40am. One of the best ways to be a part of the service is to lift your voice in

song. Please come join us and be part of the Chancel Choir Family. If you would like to join us please let me know.

May we have a snowy, but not too snowy winter season!

FOCUS

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

February issue deadline:
Monday, January 23

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
office2@needhamucc.org

Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton,
Pastor Emeritus



Partner-Family Letters DUE

If you haven't already e-mailed David Johnson your Partner Family letter, please do so ASAP. Time is getting short to get the letters sent out to our volunteer translators in time to send them down with the February delegation. Your partner family eagerly awaits your letter. And getting your letter in now spares everyone the time-consuming reminder phone calls. Thank you! Dave's e-mail: DaveBJohnson@verizon.net.

Informational Session on Guatemala Partnership Opportunities/Needs, Sunday, Feb. 12, 11:30 am

Please join us to learn about opportunities for participating in the work of the partnership. There are lots of ways, large and small, to engage in sustaining this long-running outreach effort that has touched the lives of many of us and our children. So

please come with your questions and interest.

February Delegation To Guatemala (Feb. 15-26)

As we enter the 30th year of our church's partnership with Santa María Tzejá, we are delighted to be joined on this delegation by the partnership's founders, Clark and Kay Taylor! Our full delegation will be rounded out by co-leaders Brenda Metzler and Fred Moder, Joan Evans, Jerry Durbin, Theresa Garrett, Angela Kyn, Lauren Valle, Scott and Joene Pike, and two travelers from Texas and Colorado. We're looking forward to taking down letters from partner-families and scholarship donors, school and medical supplies, scholarship and middle school funding, and project funds for the village. Please plan to join family, friends, and supporters for a brief Delegation Send-Off gathering on Tues., Feb. 14th, from 7-8 pm at Dave and Caryl Johnson's, 505 Great Plain Avenue.

YOUTH NEWS

Jan. 2017

@ the Congregational Church of Needham

Maddie Downer, CE & Youth Director

Special Events & Fundraisers

SUPER BOWL SUBS

Skit planning: Sunday January 15, 4:30-5p (BEFORE Junior High YG - for SR and JR high)

Sub skit and sales begin: Sunday, January 22

Sub assembly and sales: Sunday, February 5

SR High Snow Day

Sat, Feb 11 - 9:00 A - 3:00 P

Find more information and the registration form here (Print out and bring or mail to church): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B15gs53vCVFXEwXSXR-OjlskGWYVxGhdIeFK_GcPTZ4/edit

JR HIGH WINTER RETREAT

Fri, Mar 3 - Sun, Mar 5
Providence, RI

We'll be exploring faith and community building - one of our activities will be seeing the musical Little Women! Reserve your space by January 22 - find more information and registration form here (print out and bring or mail to church): docs.google.com/document/d/1gsg0mOTs96zbiWe47YcbHsU6pntXXYQaH508NNWNLGs

Youth Ministries

Date	Jr High	Sr High
Thurs. Jan. 5	No Junior High Programming	6:00-8:00pm Holy Homework in Youth Group room Dinner is served! Bring your homework or participate in learning a new spiritual practice. This month: vision boards/collages to inspire you in the new year.
Sun. Jan. 15	5-6:30pm Junior High Youth Group Snacks, activities, games, discussion, fun!	No Senior High Programming
Thurs. Jan. 19	No Junior High Programming	6:00-8:00pm Holy Homework in Youth Group room Dinner will be served.
Sun. Jan. 22	5-6:30pm Junior High Youth Group Snacks, activities, games, discussion, fun!	No Senior High Programming
Sat. Jan. 28	Laser Tag at Laser Quest with Allin UCC and Grace Community Church youth groups Time TBA (will be afternoon/evening) Please RSVP to Maddie by January 22 if you are planning to come!	

JANUARY 2017						
Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
1 Worship & Communion	2	3 Prayer Shawl Knitters Community Dinner	4	5 Lunch with Rev. Heike	6	7
8 Worship Adult Ed - Rev. Dr. Cody Sanders	9 Cancer Support Group	10	11	12	13	14
15 Mens Breakfast Worship March Retreat Planning	16 Church offices Closed	17	18	19	20	21
22 Worship Annual Meeting Hearing	23 Cancer Support Group	24	25	26	27	28
29 Worship Annual Meeting & Annual Meeting Luncheon	30	31				

COMMUNITY DINNERS

6-7pm, Jan. 3 & Feb. 7

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.

THURSDAY LUNCH WITH REV. HEIKE

Noon-1pm, Jan. 5 & Feb. 2

1180 Great Plain Ave.

Food builds community. We all have to eat, but we don't have to eat alone. Everyone is cordially invited to have a simple lunch on the first Thursday of every month. Soups are vegetarian based (most of them) but always lactose and nut free. Everyone is welcome!

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

9:00am, Mondays - Jan. 9, 23, 30

1154 Great Plain Ave.

Our Cancer Support 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.

"BE THE CHURCH" AT THE BOSTON WOMEN'S MARCH FOR AMERICA

Saturday, January 21

The UCC in New England is invited to "Be the Church" and join forces at the Boston Women's March for America.

Rev. Heike has registered herself and our church to participate in hopes those who cannot go to Washington, DC for the Women's march, consider attending the March in Boston.

This March, while led by women, is open to everyone! Our Associate Conference Minister Rev. Wendy Vander Hart is the point person for the UCC contingent at the Boston March in partnership with Rev. Dr. Nancy Taylor of Old South Church and Rev. June Cooper and Rev. Ruth Edens at City Mission.

DIVERSITY BOOK GROUP

7pm - February 28th at First Baptist Church

We will be reading **MARCH, Volume 1**, a graphic novel by Congressman John Lewis. You have plenty of time to read it even if you have never read a graphic novel. Be adventurous! Take a risk!

UPDATE FROM THE BOARD

Fellow Congregants,
Here is a summary of the Board's December activities.

Budget

The Finance Team, the Board, and the Treasurer have been working hard on a budget for 2017. We hope to finalize the budget by mid-January. We will present it for discussion at the hearing on January 22, and for a vote at the Annual Meeting on January 29.

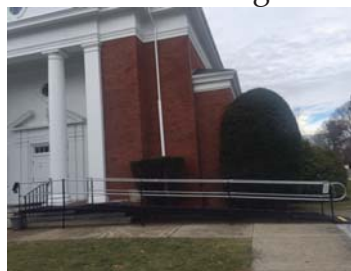
Stewardship

As of December 19, the pledge total reached \$332,409. The Finance Team has determined that in order to fund the requested programs and operations, our church needs \$400,000 in pledges. The Stewardship Team is hopeful that with everyone's help, we can reach that goal and want to remind everyone that every pledge, in any amount, matters.

We ask that everyone reflect prayerfully on what the church means to you and consider increasing your pledge this year if you possibly can.

For those who make electronic payments which continue automatically unless you cancel them,

it is still important that you notify the office of your pledge for 2017 so it can be counted toward our budget.



The Wheelchair Ramp

The town permitting process has taken longer than anticipated. But with any luck, the ramp to the front entrance of the Sanctuary should be

installed and operational by the time you read this.

1180 Great Plain Ave

Our real estate agent is continuing to show the property to prospective tenants. While activity does tend to slow during the Holidays, we expect that it will pick up again early in January. The broker intends to install a sign at the front of the building, which may be there by the time you read this. The broker has also listed the property in the MLS (Multiple Listing Service), and plans a mailing to its client base.

Happy New Year

The Board wishes everyone a holy, healthy, and peace-filled 2017. We look forward to seeing you at the hearing on January 22 and the Annual Meeting on January 29.

To our dear church friends...

We are into a new year, and we have time to reminisce about 2016. In last year's early months, we were thrown into a frightening situation when our 11-year old grandson suffered a critical ski injury. The news went out so quickly that Rev. Heike was on the phone with us when we were still on our immediate drive to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Hospital where Jack had been airlifted. The next day and several Sundays thereafter, you were urged to pray for him.

We begin 2017 wanting to share the outcome of your response. The recovery Jack has made over these months has been deemed a medical miracle. With Len's training, we agree. We see now a well child who is making progress toward being like before. And then we recognize also how much each of you has contributed toward his status with your heartfelt prayers. This is to thank you for caring so deeply. You show again what a blessing this church has been for our family.

With Love,
Adele & Len Chang

CONFIRMATION 9th Graders & Mentors

Confirmation Experience for 9th grader to start February 27, 2017! If you have a 9th grader who wishes to participate in confirmation class, please contact Rev. Heike.

If you would like to explore becoming a confirmation mentor, also contact Rev. Heike. Confirmation mentors are the "heart beat" of the experience. Passing on one's faith is one of the most important gifts we can make to a young person in search of a meaningful faith.

A parents' meeting is scheduled for Feb. 5, 2017 at 8:30 am in the Library. A second date for a parents' meeting is set for Feb. 6, 2017 at 7 pm in the Library as well.

A mentor meeting is scheduled for Feb. 12, 2017 at 8:30 am in the Library.



CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF NEEDHAM

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

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

On the web at
needhamucc.org

On the twitter
[@needhamucc](https://twitter.com/needhamucc)

Like us on
Facebook
Congregational Church
of Needham UCC

Men's Fellowship Breakfast, Sunday, January 15th

On Sunday, 1/15, 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.

Thank you!!

The Community Dinner team thanks everyone for their contributions of re-usable containers. They have been much appreciated by our guests.

Please continue to bring your surplus containers in- they can be left in a bag labelled "Community Dinner Take-Out" or something like that, and left in the kitchen. Please make sure they are SUPER CLEAN (like run through the dishwasher) and intact.

If you have questions about anything to do with the Community Dinners, please don't hesitate to call or email Diana Conroy (781-449-3350) (conroyjd@rcn.com)

address

stamp

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