



# FOCUS

October 2013 | Vol. 36 Issue 8

## Sunday Worship In October

Theme:  
**Faith**

**October 6**  
Finding Courage  
*Rev. Susan*

**October 13**  
Crossing the Red  
Sea: Stepping Out  
in Faith  
*Rev. Heike*

**October 20**  
Faith When You  
Are Caught in the  
Middle  
*Rev. Susan*

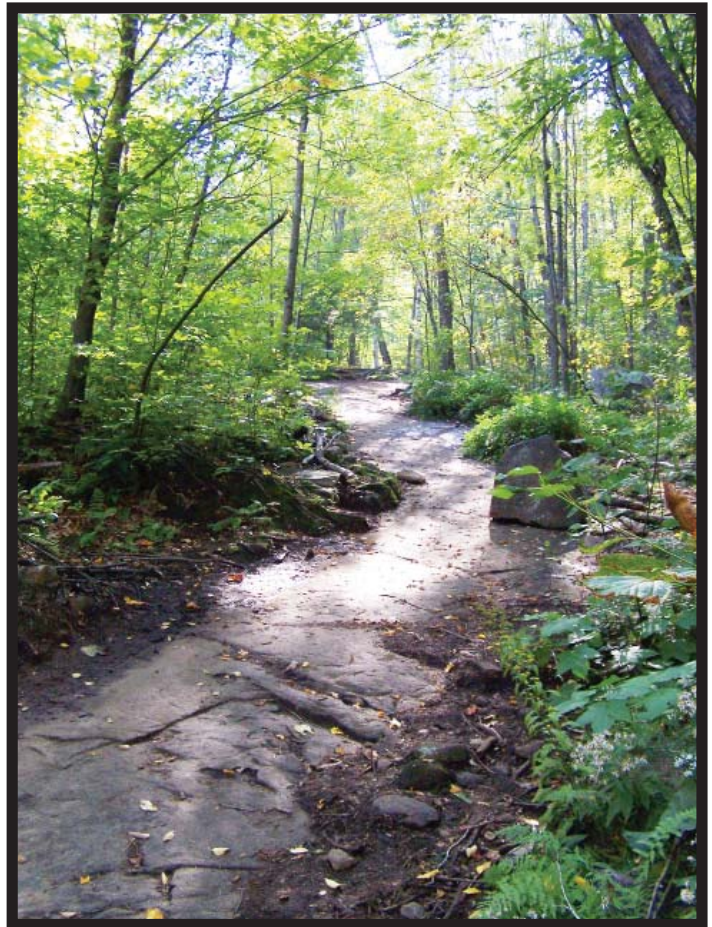
**October 27**  
The Faith to  
Let Go  
*Rev. Susan*

## A Message from Rev. Susan Cartmell

### FAITH AND DOUBT GO HAND IN HAND

When you think of faith, you imagine that it is the ability to believe in things that are not logical. But in the UCC we accept that it is normal to doubt. The path of faith has lots of doubts. There are times when you know your faith is strong, and other times when you don't know what you believe. If you give up on God when it seems that God is not there, then you may miss out on the next great epiphany. The journey of faith is like a trail that spirals around a mountain. As you hike along through life, this mountain has some sections where you walk in the light and some parts where you walk in the shadow, on the darker side of the mountain. If the shadow side seems overwhelming and you give up, you will never come round to the new vista that awaits you in the lighted side of the trail. For when you persevere, even in times of doubts, you arrive at a higher place, that may afford a whole new vista on the trail of life.

Roger Shinn was one of the founders of the UCC. He was born in Germantown, OH and though he started in a tiny rural village, he went on to become a prominent professor at Union Seminary in New York City.



Author of 15 books, his writing raised more questions than it answered. The church he started is unique on the spectrum of churches, because we are not dogmatic or doctrinaire. We don't tell you what to believe, or how to think. We invite you to build a relationship with the Living God. We raise questions and strive to give you enough tinder to light a fire in yourself that will spark a conversation in your soul.

An excerpt from the Statement of Faith he wrote includes these words:

You call the worlds into being,  
create persons in your own image,  
and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

Peace,  
Susan

## *On Faith by Rev. Heike Werder, Associate Minister*

For me, faith is about trust – trust in God, trust in other people, trust in myself, but mainly trust in God. In my ministry I have met many people who struggled to have faith, people who desperately wanted to have faith only to realize that they could not hand over things to God. Faith is also about letting go - of control that is, and letting God take over.

I admit that even though I have been working on faith for many years now, sometimes I don't fully trust that God will deliver. I know this because I still worry about all kinds of things: I worry about what will happen if there isn't enough money when I reach the golden years, or I run out of ideas in my ministry, or about all the things that could go wrong in my body or my spouse's, or with the environment, or the world. Don't get me wrong, I do have faith, but sometimes I just don't believe. Being a minister I guess does not immunize me from some of the worries we all carry around.

But I also know that God does not require perfection. God wants us to try our best, but God is not looking for perfection. That is comforting, don't you think? I know this because when I look at the list of people that God chose for God's purposes, the characters and personalities are far from perfect. Yet, God saw something in them that He was planning to use.



I love the parable of the mustard seed. In it Jesus told us: "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20) I think that this parable tells us is that even if our faith is tiny, even if its weak and a little shaky, we should employ it. Even if

it is only the size of a small mustard seed, we should still use it to reach toward God. For faith must be activated - we can't just wait for something to happen; we must employ whatever level of trust we have in God. How do we do this?

Certainly not by trying to make ourselves feel calm about something that troubles us, simply because we think we should present a faithful image to God. Instead we hold out what trust we have toward God, saying: "Well, it isn't much, but it's all I've got: I am trying to count on you." Jesus' mustard seed story tells us that God will honor even this small amount of trust. Our answers to prayers do not come as a result of our perfect confidence but they come when our attempt to trust meets God's goodness. It is the attempt to have faith that matters.

Faith is not something you just get or find or read about it and apply. Faith is the result of learned experience. If we were not fortunate enough to have been given early life experience that caused us to trust the world, it is not too late to create this experience. We create it by risking that it might be true. It is okay doing so bit by bit in small dosages; a little risked, a little bit gained. Soon we will learn through experience, and eventually we will know what faith is and how we can trust the God who loves us.

### FOCUS

Focus is published monthly. Contributions from members and friends of the Church are invited. Please submit materials by e-mail to [office@needhamucc.org](mailto:office@needhamucc.org).

November issue deadline: **Wednesday, November 23.**

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## Youth Ministry News *with Rev. Jamie Green, Youth Minister*

During the month of October, the kids in Bible Village will continue to learn about Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan through different workshops: theater, games, and art. The story of the Good Samaritan is a perfect example of how we are all called to put our faith into action. This is incredibly important, because, as James writes, "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). As we learn about the good deed performed by the Samaritan, kids will be encouraged to do good deeds of their own, so they can put their faith into action. Together, we can change the world, one good deed at a time. Here are some ideas of simple good deeds you can do together as a family.

- Hold the door open for someone
- Help someone with yardwork
- Help someone with household chores
- Let someone go in line in front of you
- Return a shopping cart
- Pick up trash in a park or along a road
- Donate clothing, food, books, toys
- Give out free popsicles to the neighborhood

For more ideas visit [randomactsofkindness.org](http://randomactsofkindness.org)

### SUNDAY SCHOOL INFO

**\*\*Please note: Calendars and registration form are available at [www.needhamucc.org](http://www.needhamucc.org) – ALL kids, new and returning, must have a form filled out. Allergy information is ESPECIALLY important!**

**\*\*Also, each Sunday School family is asked to sign up to teach six(6) times during the whole year. To sign up, visit: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D4FAAAC2BAA8-201320141>**

Here is some basic information about our programming this year!

- Crib/toddler: For infants through 2 years old. Meets at 10am in the nursery.

- Preschool: For all preschoolers. Meets at 10am in Preschool Room on lower level.
- Grades K-6: The first Sunday of the month is Chapel Sunday, meet in Chapel at 10am and then join family for communion in the sanctuary. Other Sundays, start in sanctuary at 10am and then go to Bible Village after the Children's Time. Bible Village starts in the chapel for a song and lesson, and then kids go to a different workshop each week- Art, Cooking, Theater, Story, Games, or Science.
- Grades 7-8: Class at 10am in Stevenson Hall.
- Grades 9-12: Youth Lounge at 10am in the Stevenson Hall Youth Lounge

### YOUTH GROUP INFO

**\*\*Please note: Calendars and registration form are available at [www.needhamucc.org](http://www.needhamucc.org) – ALL youth, new and returning, must have a form filled out. Allergy information is ESPECIALLY important!**

**\*\*Also, each Youth Group family is asked to sign up to chaperone four(4) times during the whole year. To sign up, visit: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D4FAAAC2BAA8-youth1>**

- Junior High (Grades 6-8): Meets 5-6:30pm most Sundays in Stevenson Hall for games, discussions, community service, special events and more!
- Senior High (Grades 9-12): Meets 7-8:30pm most Sundays in Stevenson Hall for games, discussions, community service, special events and more!

### HAUNTED HOUSE

**\*\*Please consider donating bags of individually wrapped candy (NO NUTS) this month\*\* Drop at the church Mon.-Fri. 9am-5pm or on Sunday.**

## The Village Marketplace Fair


**Save the DATE**  
**Saturday, November 16th**  
**9:30am - 3:00pm**

Local artists, hand-crafted items, home-made baked goods, and so much more will be featured at this year's Village Marketplace Fair. Many "good old" favorites will be back such as Timeless Treasures, Vintage Jewels, and an auction. The wonderful Cafe will serve lunch all day. Proceeds will benefit the church.



If you would like to volunteer to lend a hand or know of a craftsperson you would like to see participate, please call 781-444-2510. Many hands are needed!

THE GUATEMALA PARTNERSHIP IS DELIGHTED TO HOST  
TWO PERFORMANCES OF THE HILARIOUSLY ENTERTAINING

The Complete Works of  
  
William Shakespeare

FEATURING OUR OWN JOSH SCHARBACK  
AND TWO PROFESSIONAL ACTORS FRIENDS.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, &  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 21  
7:00-9:00 PM

Whether you love the Shakespeare classics, or absolutely detest them, this show is for you. This show originated from London and the Reduced Shakespeare Company, and if you are skeptical that all 37 plays can be fused into a two-act performance, then "make haste and get thy tickets with no delay!"

Intermission will feature an array of Complimentary Refreshments and a Silent Auction, featuring Guatemalan handicrafts and items including sports tickets, vacation homes, and homemade foods.

These performances are a benefit for the Guatemala Partnership, a project that was launched by our church over 25 years ago.

Tickets/More Info Available at: [www.guatemalapartners.org](http://www.guatemalapartners.org) or on Sundays at Coffee Hour/Fellowship Hall.

## Music Ministry News by Dr. Bobby DeRegis, Director of Music

In October we will learn about bringing our faith to life. For me, faith has always been shown in actions. Here in our church we see faith put to action in many different ways. Our Guatemala Partnership seeks to bring justice and a better life to our far away brothers and sisters in Central America. Our Environmental Ministry Team seeks to care for our mother earth through education and awareness. Through our Capital Campaign we seek to make our buildings more accessible and efficient. There are so many examples of living our faith through action.



You may not have thought so at first, but music is also faith in action. Our choirs are constantly rehearsing so that their music may be presented to you, the faithful, as an inspiration and a gift to God in song. Making music in the church has always been my way of showing faith, more so than prayer. I hope you all will see our music as our faith in action. With this said, I encourage you to think about participating in the act of making music, and letting your faith shine. Whether you sing, play an instrument, or just enjoy singing the hymns at worship, you are bringing your faith to life. As always, I invite you to think about making music with us, and move your faith into action with us. St. Augustine of Hippo stated it best: "He who sings, prays twice."



## HAUNTED HOUSE AT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NEEDHAM SAT, OCT 26, 5-8PM

It's fun, it's not too scary and it wouldn't be Halloween in Needham without it! The Haunted House at The Congregational Church of Needham is back on Saturday, October 26, 5-8pm, featuring a traditional Halloween theme sure to please kids and adults of all ages.

Walk through the Haunted Cemetery, run into scary ghosts and goblins, and visit Frankenstein's Laboratory. A party room with a bouncy house, carnival games and food will also be available for fun without the scares.

A donation of \$5 per person is suggested. Tie-dyed pillowcases will also be on sale to use as candy bags for \$5 each. All proceeds help fund the Senior High Youth Group's summer mission trip to Wisconsin to rebuild houses in impoverished communities.

### From the Deacons

The Deacons would like to welcome back everyone for the start of the fall season!

On Saturday, October 5th from 9:00a - 1:00p the Stephen Ministry will be holding an Introductory Workshop at the Covenant Congregational Church in North Easton. The cost is \$15 per person, and if you are interested or would like more information please contact Rev. Heike Werder.

## SAY CHEESE!



Send a great photo of you and your family for the new Church Directory to the church office at [office@needhamucc.org](mailto:office@needhamucc.org). The last directory was filled with fun shots of individuals and families at home, during the holidays and on vacation so send them in!

If you don't have one - don't worry! We'll have some picture taking sessions several Sunday's after worship.



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On the web at  
needhamucc.org



Like us on  
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Congregational Church  
of Needham UCC

## Men's Breakfast, Sunday October 20th "Hymns & Faith"

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.

On October 20, we will address the October worship theme of "Faith" from the point of view of the hymns that move us. Come and bring some hymns to consider!

Contact Keith McClelland ([kmmlkm@rcn.com](mailto:kmmlkm@rcn.com)) for more information.

FRIENDLY SOCIETY

# GARY LANDGREN - HONKY TONK PIANO

**October 16th 7:30pm**

All members of the church are invited to see Gary Landgren, "Honky Tonk Piano Man" entertain us with music, including ragtime, swing, and early jazz. There will also be a sing-along to many memorable songs. Join us for an informal and lively presentation, followed by delicious refreshments.

address

stamp

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



**ADULT PROGRAMMING - October 2013**

<b>OCTOBER 2013</b>						
Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
1	2	<b>1 Community Dinner</b>	2	<b>3 Lunch with Heike</b>	4	5
<b>6 Bible Study Christianity in the 21st Century</b>	<b>7 Cancer Support Group</b>	8	9	<b>10 Bible Study</b>	11	12
<b>13 Bible Study FIELD TRIP Dead Sea Scrolls @ MOS</b>	<b>14 Columbus Day</b>	14	16	<b>17 Bible Study</b>	18	19
<b>20 Bible Study Minor Prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures</b>	<b>21 Cancer Support Group</b>	22	23	<b>24 Bible Study</b>	25	26
<b>27 Bible Study Climate Change Cafe</b>	<b>28 Cancer Support Group</b>	29	30	31		

**BIBLE STUDY**

**Sunday's at 11:30am or Thursday's at 10:30am**

Our Bible Study Group is based on the book- "Saving Jesus from the Church" by UCC minister Robin Meyers. Full of common sense yet it casts new meaning on traditional ideas about faith.

Contact the church office - [office@needhamucc.org](mailto:office@needhamucc.org) to join a group or order a book. For information contact Sunu ([dormouse99@gmail.com](mailto:dormouse99@gmail.com)), Christine ([crweitzel@verizon.net](mailto:crweitzel@verizon.net)), Rev. Susan ([revsusan@needhamucc.org](mailto:revsusan@needhamucc.org)).

**CHRISTIANITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY:  
DISCERNING THE FUTURE THROUGH THE PAST**  
**Sunday October 6, 11:30am**

Christopher Evans, professor at BU's School of Theology will lead this informative class. By providing a brief look into important themes in American religious history, the class will look at how recent shifts in American religious behavior might impact Christianity's development in the decades ahead. Chris has also just published a new book Histories of American Christianity: An Introduction. Check it out on Amazon.

**THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS FIELD TRIP**  
**Sunday October 13, Museum of Science**

Trip to the Museum of Science to see the "Dead Sea Scrolls". We have a group reservation for 1:30 p.m. The cost is \$ 29.50 per person. After church we will have lunch and carpool to the Museum.

**MINOR PROPHETS OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday October 20, 11:30am**

Welcome back Professor Greg Mobley of Andover Newton Theological School as he presents another wonderful lecture at our church.

**CLIMATE CHANGE CAFE**  
**Sunday October 27, 11:30am**

Anne Dorfman, the Needham RTS director speaking to us about our transfer station, their recycling efforts and what their future plans are to continue to help make Needham a greener community. SPONSORED by the Environmental Ministry Team.

**HEALING AND FAITH**  
**Sunday, November 3, 11:30am**

Professor Brita Gill-Austern from Andover Newton Theological School will present a lecture on

**FELLOWSHIP AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

**Cancer Support Group**  
Rev. Susan Cartmell leads this weekly support group on Monday morning, from 9 to 10:15 a.m.

**Lunch with Rev. Heike**  
**Thursday October 3 & November 7**

Soups are vegetarian based (most of them) but always lactose and nut free. Everyone is welcome!

**Community Dinners**  
**Tuesday October 1 & November 5**  
**6 to 7 p.m., Linden Hall**

Sponsored by the Outreach Committee.

# SURPRISING GIFTS

It's time for our annual stewardship drive.  
We would like to receive all pledges by October 28th.  
Below are some tips on how to pledge today!

Dear Friends,

This has been a year of surprising gifts. We have found ways to use our old building in new ways –

- Revamped our Choir space and brought the choirs out of the ground floor to the Main floor.
- Re-fashioned our Church School rooms so that they are more centrally located, and have a 'new look.'
- We have installed a new full-time minister in Rev. Jamie.
- We have re-configured the Chapel so it has more flexible seating and a new look.
- We have added a new nursery which is spacious and also flexible space.

We have done all of this while staying within our budget for 2013, and serving more and more families.

This year 16 families joined the church and 37 came as new visitors. We have realized our goal to grow in membership and fellowship.

Your stewardship gifts made this happen. Your continued support will make our church thrive.

Please make your stewardship pledge today, so we can continue to grow in spirit and numbers.



Thank you,  
Rev. Susan Cartmell, Senior Minister

## What does your Pledge Support?

Pledge dollars are THE basis of our budget each year. We have set a goal this year to raise \$425,000 in pledges in order to:

- Sustain & grow our Christian Education and Youth Fellowship programs for children, youth and adult.
- Fund our outreach efforts locally, nationally and globally.
- Provide the dedicated staff and vibrant programs you rely on in ministry and music.
- Maintain and preserve our well-used building.

## Pledge by Oct. 28th!

There are 5 ways to pledge:

1. Drop off or mail the enclosed pledge card to the church.
2. Pledge online at <http://needhamucc.org/stewardship-pledge-form>
3. Email pledge confidentially to [pledge@needhamucc.org](mailto:pledge@needhamucc.org).
4. Online Giving: go to [needhamucc.org](http://needhamucc.org), and click on the "Pledge/Donate" button to sign up using your credit card or checking account.
5. Call your pledge into Danielle Jurdan at 781.444.2510.

## Help us reach our goal 70 families at the \$2,500 or more level

We ask each household to consider pledging \$2,500. Last year, 59 families pledged \$2,500 or more. These 59 pledges accounted for over 50% of our pledge dollars!

This year, we hope to increase our number of families at this giving level to 70 households.



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