



FOCUS

November 2013 | Vol. 36 Issue 9

Sunday Worship In November

Theme:

Forgiveness

November 3

Coming to Your
Senses: Forgiving
Yourself

Rev. Susan

November 10

Forgive Your Way
to a Healthier You

Rev. Heike

November 17

Forgiveness as the
Third Way

Rev. Susan

November 24

Forgiving God

Rev. Susan

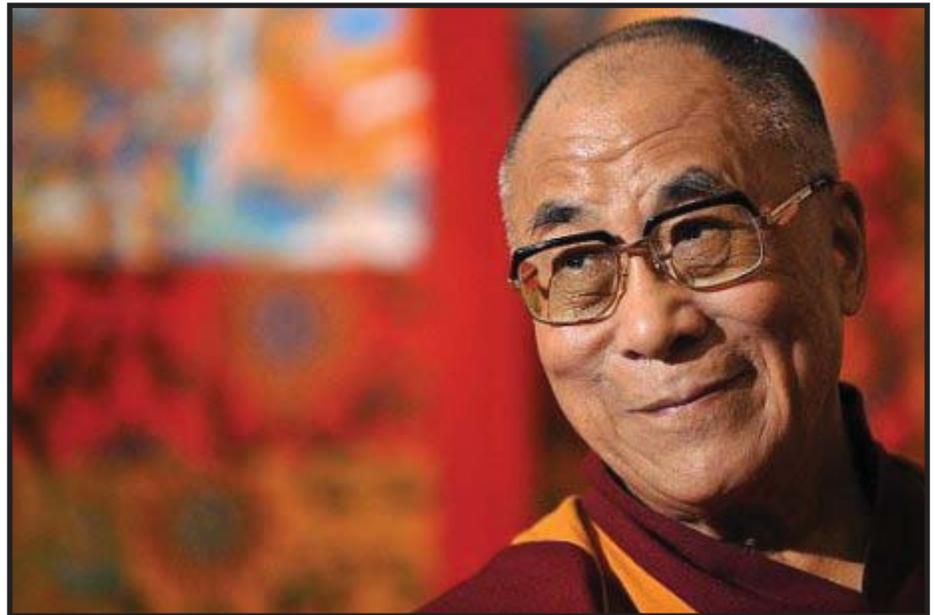
November 24

*Interfaith
Thanksgiving
Worship Service*

A Message from Rev. Susan Cartmell

FORGIVENESS

The Dalai Lama is one of the most charismatic people on this earth. He is one of the very few human beings who can fill Central Park in New York City with his devoted followers, when he comes to town. When people ask what is it about him that attracts so many admirers the answer seems to be that he is a very happy person. He has fun in life. He makes reporters laugh. He is humble and treats everyone with dignity. The Dalai Lama seems to be so in touch with his own humanity that he makes everyone he meets feel good about being human too. He has a way of enjoying his own life so much that whenever he meets someone new he shares that joy, and it is so contagious because of him.



Now it might be easy to imagine that his life has been easy. But the Dalai Lama has been in exile for many, many years. By rights he should be living in Tibet, but the Dalai Lama has been in exile in India since 1959, because the Dalai Lama is recognized in Tibet for his spiritual and his political power. Since 1950 when the People's Republic of China moved into Tibet the Chinese have been suspicious of the Dalai Lama's influence and control in the region. So for most of his life, the Dalai Lama has lived in India and has not been able to live in his homeland or even visit there. He has been exiled from his people and forced to live in limbo, uncertain if he will ever find his way home. The irony is that the man who was chosen to be the incarnation of compassion is viewed as an outlaw and person of suspicion.

The story makes you wonder how he keeps his sense of humor. How does he stay so calm. How does he avoid feeling frustrated? How does he let go of the many insults, restrictions, and affronts to his office and position? The Dalai Lama has learned the art of forgiveness. He is a living example of how, when we learn to forgive, we are the masters of our own destiny.

This month our theme is forgiveness. We will study the story of the Prodigal Son, which is the story that the children will be learning about in Bible Village. We will talk more about examples of other people who had much to forgive, but managed to find great happiness by learning the art of forgiveness.

We hope you will join us for worship.
Susan

On Forgiveness by Rev. Heike Werder, Associate Minister

What sets us (followers of Christ) apart from the rest of the world? I believe it is our charge to forgive. For us Christians to forgive is not an option among many. It is what our faith story demands from us because it is marked forever by the picture of Jesus hanging from the cross, offering as nearly his last words, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). We know that one of his central teachings, found in the Beatitudes, it to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6: 27-28). Every Sunday we pray together, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."



Forgiveness is part of our religious DNA, and yet we know how hard it is to forgive when we have been wronged. Sometimes we can't even forgive ourselves. We are, after all, human.

So what can the practice of forgiveness do for us? Frederick Buechner wrote: "When somebody you've wronged forgives you, you are spared the dull and self-diminishing throb of a guilty conscience. When you forgive somebody who has wronged you, you are spared the dismal corrosion of bitterness and wounded pride. For both parties, forgiveness means the freedom again to be at peace inside their own skins and to be glad in each other's presence." (taken from Listening to your Life, p. 305)

Forgiveness is more than a generous act. Forgiveness is about freedom, and peace, and liberation. It actually is good for you.

SAY CHEESE!

Send a great photo of you and your family for the new Church Directory to the church office at 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.

'Shakespeare' Fundraiser is a Hit!

The Guatemala Partnership fall fundraiser "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" was a great success in every way! Between the two evenings, a diverse audience of 250 people attended the memorable performances and silent auction.



Thanks to all who gave so generously of their efforts in putting on the fundraiser -- especially to our

enormously talented Josh Scharback and his actor friends Steve Kidd and Paul Coffey!, to the generous donors who made the Silent Auction such a success, to the bakers of all those delectable Intermission goodies, and to all who attended and shared the laughter and camaraderie in support of our partnership with Santa María Tzejá.

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.

December issue deadline: **Wednesday, November 21.**

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Moderators Corner by Scott Stewart, Board Moderator

We are in the midst of our fall Stewardship Campaign. Please join me and the members of the Board in making your 2014 pledge before November 10th. Forms can be downloaded or filled out online at <http://needhamucc.org/stewardship-pledge-form>.

The Board and the Design Team have been working on the plans for the Capital Campaign renovations. The Capital Campaign has successfully raised \$2.2 Million to date and continues to raise more money. The Finance Team has looked at our borrowing capacity and has made a recommendation to the Board for financing the proposed project. In consideration of the feedback from members of the congregation and the Capital Campaign Committee, the Board has asked the Design Team to work with the architect to finalize a \$2.75 Million plan which will address handicap accessibility, energy efficiency, safety, deferred maintenance and flexibility of space. Members of the Design Team include Keith McClelland (chair), Kirby Salerno, Ann Hayek, Judi Stewart and Mark Oberle. We are working with the goal to begin construction by the summer of 2014. If you have not yet seen the most recent design, feel free to stop by the easels in the Narthex on Sundays where it is displayed or visit the draft plans on the web site at <http://needhamucc.org/connect/building-our-future>.



This summer, the Board approved the sale of the former parsonage. Approximately 70% of the proceeds were added to the endowment to be used to offset the loss in rental income from the former parsonage. The remainder of the proceeds will be used towards the Capital Campaign renovations. The Board agreed to sell the parsonage after assessing the cost of maintaining the parsonage, the rental income received and the current real estate market. Most churches are moving away from owning parsonages as more and more ministers wish to own their own homes.

As we are now into November, the Nominating Team is meeting to develop a slate of committee nominees for 2014. The Nominating Team membership includes two Board members, and one member from each of the four standing committees; Deacons, Outreach, Christian Education, and the Youth Board. For our 2014 slate, the church committees need nominees for four Board positions, five Deacons, four Outreach members, three Christian Education members, and two Youth Board members. Anyone interested in serving on a committee should contact Martha Lamb, Nominating Team chair, for consideration.

Stewardship Campaign 2014

SURPRISING GIFTS

One of the definitions of Stewardship is *"the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving."* Your stewardship pledge provides the sunshine and water for the caring mission of our congregation and plants the seeds that support the exploration our faith and extend our caring reach to our church family, local neighborhood and greater worldwide community.

We would like to Thank you if you have sent your stewardship pledge in for the 2014 year. If you have not yet sent in your pledge, please send it as soon as possible. Forms are available at the church or online at

<http://needhamucc.org/stewardship-pledge-form/>



NOMINATIONS

If you are interested in serving on the church Board or one of its standing committees (Deacons, Outreach, Christian Education and Youth), please let us know! The ad hoc nominations committee is working on putting together a slate of nominees for January's annual meeting. If you would like to serve, we would like to hear from you! Please get in touch with either Martha Lamb (Martha_lamb@aol.com) or Jane Brand (ajbrand@comcast.net), and let us know in what capacity you would like to serve!

Youth Ministry News with Rev. Jamie Klopotoski, Youth Minister

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

For the months of November and December, Bible Village will be focusing on the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This parable fits perfectly with November's theme of Forgiveness. In the story, we learn that even though the Prodigal Son's father should have been upset with his son for squandering his part of the inheritance, the father surprisingly welcomed the son home with a lavish party. The father forgave his son and still loved him even though the son had made a huge mistake. From this story, we learn that God loves us even when we mess up big time.

During the next 2 months, kids in grades K-6 will learn the bible story in the chapel and then experience the story in 6 different workshops. Below is more information about what they'll be learning.

BIBLE VILLAGE LEARNING GOALS:

- Locate the story of The Prodigal Son in the Bible.
- Learn that Jesus taught by sharing parables and a parable is a story that teaches a lesson.
- Define Prodigal-reckless, wasteful, lost.
- Be able to tell the story in their own words.
- Discover that God's forgiveness is always available for one who asks for forgiveness, and that God loves us even when we mess up.
- Consider how this story applies to their lives and articulate ways in which they can be loving and forgiving at home, school, and in the world.



Main Idea: Jesus taught lessons in parables. In this parable, Jesus compares the relationship between God and humanity to the relationship between a son who made a mistake and a forgiving father. Since God is loving and forgiving, we should be loving and forgiving too!

Bible Story: Luke 15: 1-2, 11-32

Memory Verse: "Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

Workshop Lessons and Connections to the Story:

In **Art**, we will make "Mistake Erasers" to show how God's love for us and God's forgiveness can erase all the wrongs in our lives.

In **Story**, we will read "The Runaway Bunny" and compare it to the Parable. The bunny plays an imaginary game of hide-and-seek and his lovingly steadfast mother finds him every time, just like the Prodigal Son's father loved him and celebrating the fact that his son was once lost but was now found.

In **Cooking**, we will make "Prodigal Parable Party Parfaits." The

chopped up strawberries and pound cake represent the property that was divided up and a portion given to the son. The whipped

topping represents how the son whipped up a storm of wild living. The pudding represents the pigpen the son ended up in. The completed parfait represents the party the father had for his son. Also, it represents our faith journeys- sometimes smooth (pudding), tough (cake), sweet (berries).



In **Theater**, we will create and use "Prodigal Props" to retell the parable.

In **Games**, we will play "Traveling Trivia", "PigPen", and "ABC Taking a Trip" to review the bible story. Also, the Prodigal traveled on a trip away from his family and ended up living with pigs!

In **Science**, we will perform "Surprise Experiments", mixing together baking soda and vinegar, oil and water, and mentos and coke. The surprise results of each experiment represent the surprise of the father celebrating his son's return.

LOOKING FOR TEACHERS!

Do you enjoy art, games, science, cooking, storytelling or theater? The Sunday School program needs more teachers for our Bible Village Workshops. It's fun, easy and rewarding! Rev. Jamie teaches the bible story in chapel, then workshop teachers lead fun activities that connect with the bible

Continued page 5

Touching Someone With Flowers

The Christmas season is just around the corner, and the FLOWER TEAM has already made its plans. Its 12 members, coming in during quiet times, transform the church inside and out, to delight and inspire adults and children alike as we celebrate this holy season. We are busy before Easter as well. The FLOWER TEAM is also responsible for coordinating donations of altar flower arrangements for every month of the year. This is an especially important responsibility since the arrangements represent special times of remembrance and celebration of our church family. After each service, the arrangement flowers are divided into mini-arrangements for the donor and for delivery to those whose spirit we want to lift up.



If you are interested in providing an altar arrangement, please call the church office or fill out the form online at <http://needhamucc.org/altar-flower-donation-form>.

Youth Ministry News Continued with Rev. Jamie Klopotoski, Youth Minister

story. Teach the same workshop for 3 weeks to 3 different ages groups so the teaching gets easier and easier! Any adult is welcome to be a teacher!

We have the following open spots. Please contact Rev. Jamie to sign up!

Games (Prodigal Son): 12/8, 12/22
Theater (Prodigal Son): 12/8
Art (Prodigal Son): 12/15, 12/22

Storytelling (Healing of Paralytic): 1/12, 1/26, 2/9
Science (Healing of Paralytic): 1/12, 1/26, 2/9

Theater (Healing of Paralytic): 2/23, 3/9, 3/16
Games (Healing of Paralytic): 2/23, 3/9, 3/16

Science (Loaves and Fishes): 3/23, 3/30, 4/13
Storytelling (Loaves and Fishes): 3/23, 3/30, 4/13
Cooking (Loaves and Fishes): 3/23, 3/30, 4/13

Art (Loaves and Fishes): 4/27, 5/11, 5/18
Theater (Loaves and Fishes): 4/27, 5/11, 5/18
Games (Loaves and Fishes): 4/27, 5/11, 5/18

THANK YOU!

Thanks to everyone who supported the Haunted House- by donating candy or visiting! We raised over **\$2000!** Extra special thanks to the adult chaperones that weekend: Peter Atallah, Fred Moder, Mark Oberle, Debbie Brennan, Jen Connors, Diana Conroy, Jodie Kuhlman, Howie and ME Sesso, Anne Hayek, and Jill Oetheimer.

New Member Sunday! Sunday November 17th

If you are interested in joining the church on this day please contact Rev. Susan or Rev. Heike.

In preparation for Church Membership we ask families to attend one of the Newcomer Breakfasts or meet with one of the ministers. Rev. Susan (revsusan@needhamucc.org) and Rev Heike (revheike@needhamucc.org) are making appointments now for the Nov. 17th joining date.



New Marimba Arrives in Santa María Tzejá



After years of fundraising and planning in both Santa María Tzejá and Needham, a new marimba has arrived in the village. It will allow the middle school to teach marimba classes to the

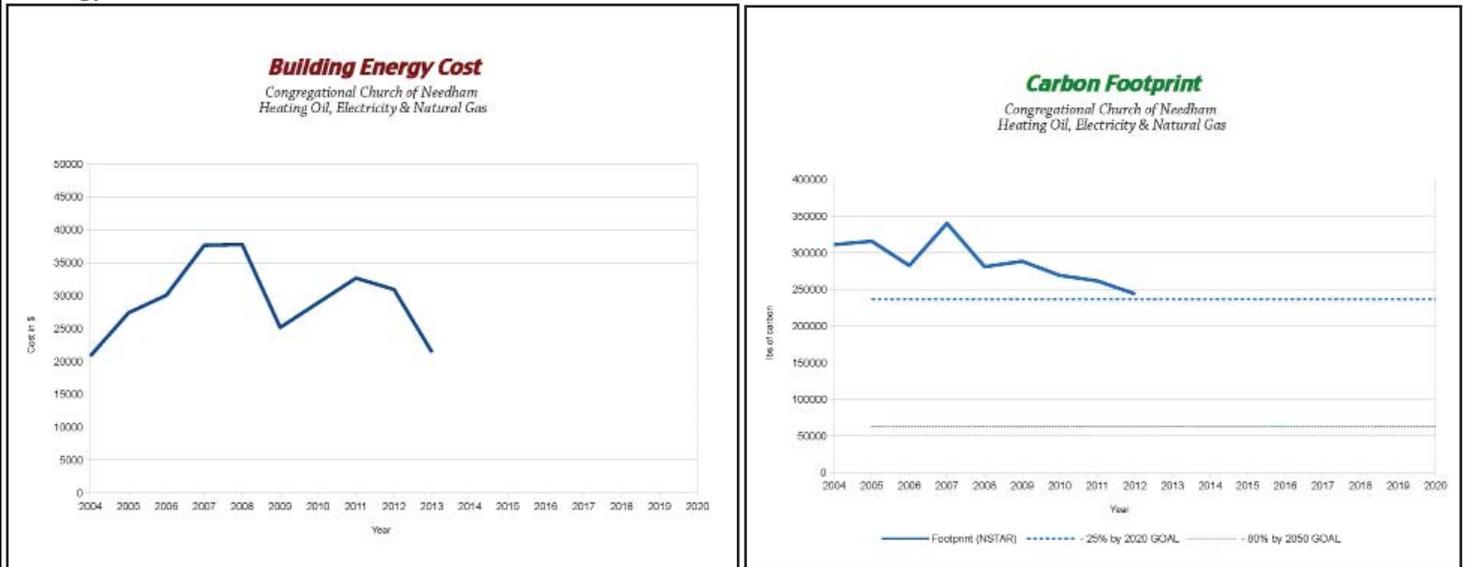
students, in support of their cultural heritage. Students in both SMT and our church held fundraisers over several years to help with the acquisition of this new, high-quality marimba that was built in Guatemala City and transported 12 hours to SMT in late September. The remainder of the funds were provided by funding achieved by the Director of SMT's middle school from an organization that support cultural efforts in rural areas.

NEWS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES TEAM

Did you know that the City of Boston has established the following greenhouse gas emission goals: to reduce them 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050?

Have you ever wondered what the carbon footprint of our church building is? Remember, carbon footprint is defined as the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions expressed in a carbon dioxide equivalent, and caused by an organization, in our case. A good frame of reference is that driving your car 1 mile produces approximately 2/3 of a lb of CO₂.

Recently, the Environmental Ministries Team, motivated by the upcoming renovation project, retrospectively looked at our church's energy consumption of oil, electricity and natural gas based on billing. (Below/To the right) are two charts illustrating the resulting carbon footprint paired with the building energy costs.



The charts demonstrate that energy efficiency measures such as light bulb replacement and insulation taken thus far have given us a good start toward sustainability goals while keeping the utility budget in check. However, that was the easy part. The current renovation project offers the opportunity to ensure we largely surpass this start and position ourselves for the future.

Over the summer the EMT asked the Board to consider adopting the carbon footprint goals shown by the dotted lines on the carbon footprint chart to align with Boston.

Anne Hayek, an EMT member, has joined the renovation design team as we as a church strive to reduce our carbon footprint now and in the future.

For more information on the City of Boston's sustainability goals and plans to achieve them, visit <http://www.cityofboston.gov/climate/bostonsplan/> and <http://greenovateboston.org>

OUTREACH NEWS! Children's Book Drive

The Outreach Committee invites you to donate new or gently used children's books. Donations will be given to the families that attend our monthly community dinner. Please bring all books to the church to Rev. Heike or the church office. Thank you!



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



It is with great pleasure that we welcome our new youth music director Valerie Becker. Valerie is the Artistic Director of the Treble Chorus of New England, and for the past 30 years, music teacher at the Winsor School in Boston. Valerie brings to us a new level



of expertise, energy, and experience. It is my hope that every child in our church will be able to experience the joy of music with Valerie. The choral singing experience brings new confidence, friendships, and higher learning to children. It is also a wonderful way to teach our children about the faith that we share together in this church and in our life journey. Bringing your child to choir may be "yet another thing to do" in this busy world of ours, but rest assured your child will be so much better for it. I hope to see you all in church, and in the new choir rehearsal room in Linden AB!

Please mark your calendars for our annual Christmas Concert. On Sunday, December 8th at 3:00 pm, our Chancel Choir will perform Vivaldi's Introduction and Gloria, RV 588, with soloists and orchestra. RV 588 is not the commonly performed Vivaldi *Gloria*, but a rarely heard gem that is much more musically challenging and interesting. In fact, there is only one professional recording of it available. Come experience the sounds of the season in our beautiful sanctuary surrounded by music. What better way to spend an afternoon!

Men's Breakfast, Sunday November 17th

"Forgiveness in the News of the Day"

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 November 17, we will address the November worship theme of "Forgiveness" from the point of view of the daily news. Come prepared to discuss how the story of the Prodigal Son is honored/ignored by world leaders and neighborhood folks alike.

Contact Keith McClelland (kmmlkm@rcn.com) for more information.

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address

THE VILLAGE FAIR & MARKETPLACE

SATURDAY NOV. 16

9:30AM TO 3:00PM

AT THE



CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF NEEDHAM

1154 GREAT PLAIN AVE.

[HTTP://NEEDHAMUCC.ORG](http://needhamucc.org)





NOVEMBER 2013

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
					1	2
3 Bible Study God in America	4 Cancer Support Group	5 Community Dinner	6	7 Bible Study Lunch with Heike	8	9
10 Bible Study God in America	11 Veteran's Day	12	13	14 Bible Study	15	16 Village Fair
17 Bible Study God in America	18 Cancer Support Group	19	20	21 Bible Study	22	23
24 Bible Study God in America Interfaith Thanksgiving Worship Service	25 Cancer Support Group	26	27	28 Thanksgiving	29	30

BIBLE STUDY

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

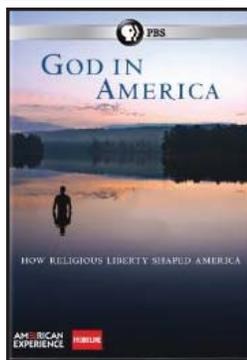
Our Bible Study Group is based on the book "Saving Jesus from the Church" by UCC minister Robin Meyers. Full of common sense yet it casts new meaning on traditional ideas about faith.

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

GOD IN AMERICA - HOW RELIGIOUS LIBERTY SHAPED AMERICA

Sunday's November 3-December 8, 11:30am

For 6 weeks, starting Nov. 3, Rev. Heike invites you to undertake an ambitious journey with her into American Church History. The highly acclaimed PBS series God in America explores the tumultuous 400-year history of the intersection of religious and public life in America, from the first European settlements to the 2008 presidential election.



God in America examines how religious dissidents helped shape the American concept of religious liberty and the controversial evolution of that ideal in the nation's courts and political arena; how religious freedom and waves of new immigrants and religious revivals fueled competition in the religious

marketplace; how movements for social reform -- from abolition to civil rights -- galvanized men and women to put their faith into political action; and how religious faith influenced conflicts from the American Revolution to the Cold War.

Here is what you can expect: after lunch, we will watch each episode with discussion to follow. Don't worry if you have to miss a session. You can watch it online to catch up.

November 3: "A New Adam"

Episode 1

The first hour of God in America explores the origins of America's unique religious landscape -- how the New World challenged and changed the faiths the first European settlers brought with them.

November 10: "A New Eden"

Episode 2

Hour two considers the origins of America's experiment in religious liberty, examining how the unlikely alliance between evangelical Baptists and enlightenment figures such as Thomas Jefferson forged a new concept of religious freedom. In the competitive religious marketplace unleashed by this freedom, upstart denominations and a new wave of religious revivals swept thousands of converts into the evangelical fold and inspired a new gospel of social reform.

November 17: "A Nation Reborn"

Episode 3

Hour three explores how religion suffused the Civil War. As slavery split the nation in two, Northern abolitionists and Southern slaveholders turned to the

DECEMBER 2013

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
1 Bible Study God in America	2	3 Community Dinner	4	5 Bible Study Advent Lunch with Heike	6	7 Advent Workshop
8 Bible Study God in America	9 Cancer Support Group	10	11	12 Bible Study Advent Lunch with Heike	13	14
15 Bible Study Spirituality & Healing	16 Cancer Support Group	17	18	19 Bible Study Advent Lunch with Heike	20	21
22 Bible Study	23 Cancer Support Group	24 Christmas Eve Christmas Pageant	25 Christmas	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Years Eve				

Bible to support their cause. In the White House, Abraham Lincoln struggled to make sense of the war's carnage and the death of his young son and embarked on a spiritual journey that transformed his ideas about God and the ultimate meaning of the war.

November 24: "A New Light"

Episode 4

Hour four explores the forces of modernity that challenged traditional faith and drove a wedge between liberal and conservative believers during the 19th century.

December 1: "Soul of a Nation"

Episode 5

Hour Five explores the post-World War II era, when rising evangelist Billy Graham tried to inspire a religious revival that fused faith with patriotism in a Cold War battle with "godless communism," and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as a modern-day prophet, calling upon the nation to honor both biblical teachings and the founders' democratic ideals of equal justice.

December 8: "Of God and Caesar"

Episode 6

The final hour of God in America brings the series into the present day, exploring the religious and political aspirations of conservative evangelicals' moral crusade over divisive social issues like abortion and gay marriage. Across America, the religious marketplace expanded as new waves of immigrants from Asia, the Middle East and Latin America made the United States the most religiously diverse nation on earth. The series closes with reflections on the role of faith in the public life of the country, from the ongoing quest for religious liberty to the enduring idea of America as the "city on a hill" envisioned by the Puritans nearly 400 years ago.

SPIRITUALITY AND HEALING

Sunday December 15, 11:30am

Join us as we welcome Brita Gill-Austern, professor at Andover Newton Theological School for a lecture on the healing power of love peace and faith. She will discuss the mind body connection and it's surprising gifts.

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 November 7, Noon

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 at the church on the first Thursday of every month. Soups are vegetarian based (most of them) but always lactose and nut free.

Advent Lunch with Rev. Heike

December 5, 12 & 19, Noon

Join Rev. Heike for these Advent Lunches with discussions and readings from the Advent Devotional "Behold!". Lunch will be lactose and nut free soups. Everyone is welcome!

Community Dinners

**Tuesday November 5 & December 3
6 to 7 p.m., Linden Hall**

Sponsored by the Outreach Committee.