



# FOCUS

January 2017 | Vol. 37 Issue 1

## Sunday Worship In January

Theme:  
**Good & Evil:  
The Seven  
Deadly Sins**

**January 5**  
Team Sermon with  
*Rev. Susan, Rev.  
Elizabeth Carrier-  
Ladd & Rev. Seth  
Carrier-Ladd*

**January 12**  
Pride  
*Rev. Susan*

**January 19**  
Sloth  
*Rev. Heike*

**January 26**  
Wrath  
Breaking the  
Tablets: The  
Pitfalls of Righteous  
Indignation  
*Rev. Susan*

Annual Meeting  
after Worship

## A Message from Rev. Susan Cartmell

This winter our worship theme for January and February is Good and Evil. Our sermons will all be about the topic of the Seven Deadly Sins. Now, most of us Protestants don't talk very much about sin. But the fact that we don't talk about sin does not mean that we don't think about good and evil. We strive to be good. We try to avoid being petty or mean, greedy or self-centered.

Most of the time we really work hard to be wise and kind, and generous. But the plain truth is that part of the human dilemma is that we all wonder;

- Are we hitting the mark?
- Is it enough to try to be good?
- Have we met God's standards?
- Have we met the church's standards?
- Have we met our own standards?

I don't believe that the church should keep telling you that you are a sinner all the time, and you need to shape up. But I also recognize that it is naïve to dismiss sin all together.

Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a provocative book entitled, How Good Do You Have to Be?. Here, he says that the point of faith is to remind us of our mistakes. We need to be reminded. Sometimes we need to be confronted. I don't believe that the church should condemn people for their mistakes. That is between you and God. But by mentioning good and evil, religion helps us to do better.

Most of us remember our mistakes. Many of us have big regrets. Any church worth its salt needs to talk about sin, not to heap on more guilt, but to show everyone that no one is perfect. The Bible tells us everyone falls short. We all fail, and the sooner we accept ourselves, the better. The church helps us to forgive ourselves and try again.

Whenever we have done a sermon series on the Seven Deadly Sins, people have found it fascinating, and I hope it is helpful to your spiritual journey, too.

I promise you that the sermons won't be boring.

Blessings,  
Susan



The Seven Deadly Sins  
by Hieronymus Bosch

**save THE  
DATE!**

## Sunday January 26th

11am - Annual Meeting  
4pm - Winter Concert

## *Moderators Corner by Scott Stewart, Board Moderator*

In our daily lives, so often we think about what we need to do today, or what we need to do tomorrow. Not enough do we stop and think about what we have accomplished. The same holds true for our church lives. The Board has the luxury of reading a monthly ministers' report from each of the three ministers detailing their activities for the previous month. I thought I would share with you some of the information in the recent reports. As the background, keep in mind the Board's Retreat of two years ago when the Board developed a Growth Goal for the church, and challenged the church leaders to help the church grow in Spirit, Community Presence and Membership.

Some of these programs are new over the past two years, some are not. But for the previously existing programs, I think you will see renewed energy, enthusiasm and increased participation.

**Adult Education** – We have a robust program with a schedule of nearly weekly programs, often with guest speakers from outside our church. This fall, attendance has ranged from a low of 8 people to a high of 32. Eighteen or more people is the usual. People are enthusiastic about the education opportunities and stay after service, have lunch together, and grow together in spirit. This year we also added a weekly Bible Study group - one on Thursday and another on Sunday. They have been a wonderful addition to our program.

**Monthly Lunch** – This program is open to all, but attracts a group who are available on a weekday at lunch time. They come together for food, fellowship and spiritual enrichment. The October lunch had 21 gathered, the November lunch 18, and the first December lunch had 15.

**Community Dinner**- Each month our church hosts a community dinner, open to all. People from the church attend, as well as people from Needham and the surrounding area. Our own members prepare and serve the dinner. In November, church families and Baby Basics families came. In total, 45 people attended the November Community Dinner. The December Community Dinner served 8 families, including two new families, for a total of 43 people attending.

**Needham Clergy Association** – For those of you who are not aware, Heike has been serving as president of this organization for the past year, actively involved in the greater Needham community.

**The Center** – The Center is an after school program for 6th and 7th graders started 2 years ago. Kids gather in a safe place for games, study and friendship, while their parents are at work. The Center has 51 registrants and operates every weekday. Of the 51 registrants, 47 are not church members. The kids come from all around Needham. Not only is the program providing a service to our local community, it also contributes a significant amount of rental income for our operating budget, and still shows a small profit. Plus, 6 teenagers work at the Center, either in paid after school jobs (rather refreshing – after school jobs), or in volunteer positions fulfilling their Needham High School Community Service requirements, a win for all.

**Church School** – Although our Church School is obviously not a new program, I want to highlight some of our successes. Fall 2013 attendance has averaged 52 kids a week. We now have kids from 20 new families who are attending on a regular basis. The kids and parents from these non-member families are actively engaged in the life of the church. We expect many of these families will join and become church members in the near future. Our robust Church School continues to be a portal of entrance for young families into full church membership.

### 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).

February issue deadline:  
**Thursday, January 23rd.**

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*Continued on page 3*

## *On Good & Evil* by Rev. Heike Werder, Associate Minister

Our sermon theme for the month of January and February is "Good and Evil" as the übertheme, and we are going to look at the issue(s) with the help of the seven deadly sins. So I could not help myself in sharing with you this little history lesson on the connection of bowling and sin:



*In the third and fourth centuries, especially in Germanic areas, it became customary for men to disarm themselves before entering into the sanctuary for worship. The bulk of these weapons were simple wooden clubs--not elegant, but effective as protection against highway bandits and wild animals. Thus, it became common for the back of the church to fill up with a pile of the wooden clubs during services. Gradually, congregants developed a kind of game associated with this practice of leaving these signs of animosity and violence behind them. After services the men would collect all these clubs, pile them together and compete among each other to see who could knock down the most clubs as possible by rolling stones at them. The more clubs knocked over, the more sins the individual was believed to have left behind.*

*Eventually this contest became more intentional and more organized, ultimately developing into nine pins--a bowling game. Knocking down sins turned into a much anticipated pastime on Sunday afternoons. By the time of the Reformation, bowling nine-pins had grown well beyond the church's parking lot to become a hugely popular betting game at taverns and inns. It was Martin Luther's favorite sport, and he is often credited with being the one to standardize the game of bowling with nine pins. Luther loved the symbolism of Christians as holy bowlers, enthusiastically bowling over all the sins that kept them from seeking God's fullness and fulfillment.*

When bowling made its way to the United States, it quickly lost all of its religious pedigree and became an exercise in gambling. Local and state legislatures took exception to this activity and passed all sort of laws outlawing the nine-pin bowling sport. But some bright bowler got the idea of replacing the rectangle of nine-pin bowling with the triangle of ten-pin bowling. Hence our modern bowling was born.

I don't like to talk about sins that much. I know that none of us are perfect, and that we can easily get ourselves into trouble. For me, on a very basic level, sin is anything that keeps us from God and from doing God's will. Sin is missing the mark of who God wants us to be. Some days I feel less a sinner than others. What is most important is the awareness of when we miss the mark. Knowledge will allow us to change direction.

As we start our new sermon series in the new year, take a moment to think about: What holy bowling do you need to do to keep your life grounded? What wrong actions and attitudes need to be removed that are keeping you from going where God is calling you to go?

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*Continued from page 2*

**Youth Groups** - Again, not a new program, but a program with new enthusiasm. Both the Junior High and Senior High groups continue to grow. This fall, the Junior High group has averaged 18 kids a week, the Senior High group 22 kids a week. The kids are excited and keep coming back, week after week.

This list of programs is not meant to be a complete list, but a sampling of our recent successes. The story needs to be told. Just add up the number of people attending these various weekly and monthly activities. We are growing. We are growing in spirit. We are growing in community presence. And while many churches are decreasing in membership, we have been able to maintain and grow ours. In this season of celebration, we have a lot to celebrate. We need to step back once in a while and reflect upon all our successes as a congregation. Thanks to all who work so hard to help fulfill our goals.

Happy New Year,  
Scott A. Stewart, Moderator

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



During January and February, the lesson taught during Bible Village is "Jesus Heals the Paralytic."

### Goals:

- Locate the story of Jesus healing the paralytic in the Bible. (Mark 2:1-12)
- Locate Capernaum on a map
- Be able to picture the house in the story (ancient middle east architecture)
- Be able to tell the story in their own words
- Describe what it means to be paralyzed
- Identify how God helps and cares for our needs (where in our lives do we need healing and what might that healing look like)
- Articulate ways that God might use you to meet another's need

**Main Idea:** The four friends who carried the paralytic to Jesus had strong faith and hope, worked hard, and persevered to heal their friend (both spiritually and physically). Our faith in God can bring about healing and help others. We show our faith in God by helping and praying for others. Jesus cares about everyone's needs, and so should we, and we should do what we can to bring healing to others.

### Workshops:

**Story:** Students will read Finding Nemo and compare all the friends who helped Nemo with the friends who helped the paralytic man.

**Science:** Students will practice movements of walking and learn how their body and brain is connected, to experience that walking is a gift.

**Cooking:** Students will make a Four Friends Pizza, made from 4 ingredients to remind students of the 4 friends who helped.

**Games:** Students will play fun games like a helping relay race and balloon toss to remember different parts of the bible story.

**Theater:** Students will learn about miming and mime the story of the Healing of the Paralytic.

**Art:** Students will create paintings based on Jackson Pollack's incredibly creative and revolutionary techniques. The four friends in our bible story also had to be creative to find a way to bring their friend to Jesus. Jesus works in extraordinary ways, finds creative ways to help, and works outside the box, just like Jackson Pollack.



### Superbowl Subs

During the month of January, the Senior High Youth Group will be taking orders for Superbowl Subs and **NEW this year... Superbowl Chili!**

Subs are \$7 each, Chili is \$5 a bowl. Please email or drop off your order by **Jan 31st**.

Find order forms at [www.needhamucc.org/superbowl](http://www.needhamucc.org/superbowl). Pick up on Sunday, Feb. 4th after worship.

All proceeds go to the Senior High Youth Group Mission Trip, this year to Wisconsin to rebuild houses damaged due to flooding. The youth will make your sub with fresh ingredients on Sunday morning for you to enjoy during the Superbowl Game!

### Valentine's Babysitting.

NEED A BABYSITTER FOR A VALENTINE'S DATE?  
YOUTH GROUP FUNDRAISER OFFERS BABYSITTING

FEBRUARY 8, 4pm-10pm

Dinner and Snacks included  
\$20 for one child, \$10 for additional child



The Senior High Youth Group at The Congregational Church of Needham is hosting a Babysitting Night on Saturday, February 8th (the Saturday before Valentine's Day). Potty-trained children ages 3 and older can be dropped off and picked up any time between 4pm-10pm at the church for just \$20 for the first child and \$10 for additional children. All proceeds will go to the Senior High Summer Mission Trip, this year to Wisconsin to help rebuild houses damaged by flooding. Families must pre-register by February 1st. Dinner, snacks, a movie, and several fun activity stations will be offered. For more information or to register, visit [www.needhamucc.org/babysitting](http://www.needhamucc.org/babysitting) or call the church office at 781-444-2510.

## Easy green New Year's resolutions for the eco-slacker

These resolutions will help you save money, cut your carbon footprint and decrease your home's waste.

It's easy to think about all the big changes you're going to make in the New Year as the old year comes to an end – but by the second week of January, most of us are already finding reasons to skip the gym or break the spending freeze. That's why we've come up with these green New Year's resolutions so easy you'll have no excuse not to keep them – and as they help you save money, cut your carbon footprint, decrease your home's waste stream, and improve the quality of the Earth, you'll be glad you did.



**1. Never buy bottled water again** - Trade your bottled water for an at-home filtering pitcher and you can help make a dent in the 1.5 million barrels of oil used to make plastic water bottles each year.

**2. Brew your own Fair Trade coffee** - Carrying your own coffee in an insulated travel mug helps you reduce waste from cardboard cups and carrying sleeves which are thrown away at a staggering rate of 58 billion each year.

**3. Remember your reusable bags** - With more than 1 million plastic bags ending up in the trash every minute, taking reusable bags to the store is one of the easiest and most effective ways to reduce your carbon footprint.

**4. Cut back on paper towels** - Instead, invest in a few cotton cloths and some fabric napkins; then drop them in the wash when you run a load of laundry.

**5. Use a bike for short trips** - Ride your bike for trips shorter than 2 miles and you could cut your carbon footprint significantly, save money on gasoline and car maintenance, and increase your fitness level – all at the same time.

**6. Order from your local CSA** - Have your local CSA program put together a box of their best

produce each week.

**7. Become a weekend vegetarian** - Cutting meat out of your diet just two days a week can decrease your carbon footprint by about 1/3 of a ton.

**8. Eliminate phantom power** - It takes approximately one second to unplug the charger for your cell phone, mp3 player, e-reader, or iPad. You could cut your energy bill by as much as 10 percent annually.

**9. Switch to green power** - One option - call your local energy company and see if they offer renewable options (most do).

**10. Replace your lightbulbs** - Replacing your lightbulbs with compact fluorescent lights and LED's may be the ultimate change for the eco-slacker. You could be cutting your energy use by as much as 80 percent.

**11. Buy local** - support the local economy, save gas and reduce your carbon footprint.

**12. Put up clothes lines in the basement to dry clothes** - they will act as a humidifier as they dry.

**13. Use shades, blinds and drapes to help with heating.** Open them to gain the sun's heat during the day and close them at night to keep heat in. Make it a habit today.

**14. Keep your thermostat at or below 68 degrees.** If you are cold, wear layers under sweaters and sweatshirts. Remember, you are saving up to 5% on your electric bill for every degree of temperature change.

**15. Turn thermostat down to 55 F when using a fireplace.** After the smoldering embers are out, close the flue damper to keep warm air in the house.



**16. Use dimmer switches on indoor lights and timers or motion sensors on outdoor lights.**

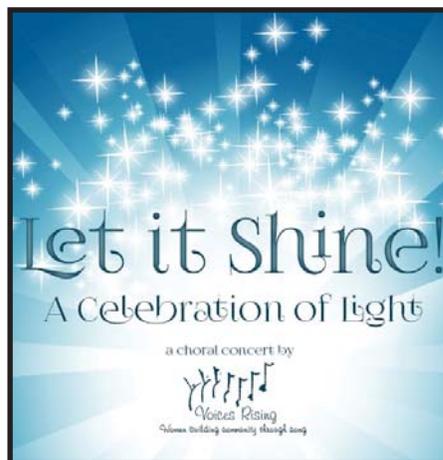
**17. Wear Slippers** - Your whole body will feel warmer if your feet are warm.

## February is ONA Anniversary Month

Each February we mark the anniversary of our congregation's decision to become an Open and Affirming church. Our vote was February 13, 2000. In recognition of our vote and ONA covenant, the ONA banner will be displayed in the sanctuary during February. Let's be proud of our church's openness and ask what else we can do to live out this promise.

### CELEBRATE WITH THE VOICES RISING CHORUS - FEBRUARY 1ST

We welcome back Voices Rising, the wonderful women's chorus, for their eighth appearance at our church on Saturday, February 1, 2014 at 3:30pm. Their concerts are always of superior quality, with both serious and humorous music. This year's concert is "Let it Shine: A Choral Celebration of Light." Selections range from an evocation of sun



dancing on a Romanian mountain peak to a musical setting of Sara Teasdale's words on the far-off hopes and dreams we see in stars. They will help us explore the spark within each of us and the ways in which that spark illumines our

path to a brighter world. It is always a hit for the Needham community and surrounding areas. Come - and tell your friends!

Tickets are available online at [www.voicesrising.org](http://www.voicesrising.org) - Priority Seating \$30; General Admission \$25 (door), \$20 (advance); Students/Seniors \$10; Children 5 and under \$5.



### Guatemala Update for Partner Families and All

The fifty-third delegation to visit our Partner Village of Santa Maria Tzeja, Guatemala, has already formed, and preparations are already underway for the upcoming February trip. Among the travelers is Jessa Huff, Tina Scharback's daughter, who last traveled to SMT in 1990! Imagine the new impressions she will experience, starting with NOT having to hike for 4 hours through miles of dense forest, steep hills and muddy valleys to arrive at the center of the village. She will find homes with electric lights and cell phones, not to mention some TV's. And she'll get to visit a humming Computer Center that is filled with curious youngsters doing research and exploring the outside world.

Progress brings many things, not all of it upbeat. Some of you read in your last partner family letter that the village is experiencing some division on the issue of land availability and ownership. Land is still the backbone of life in the village, and it is finite. Passions run strong on this matter, and there's no right or wrong. What we as a church community, and specifically partner families, can offer is understanding and empathy as we write to our partner families in the village.

The deadline for the receipt of letters that need translation into Spanish is January 10th. Be sure

to check the website [www.guatemalapartners.org](http://www.guatemalapartners.org) to get the latest news from the village and thus be more informed as you write your letter. Email your letter to [davebjohnson@verizon.net](mailto:davebjohnson@verizon.net), or leave it in the Guatemala mail box at church. Pictures are always welcome.

The partnership wishes all partner families and all church families a terrific holiday!

### February Delegation to Guatemala

The February 2014 delegation will be in Guatemala from February 12-23rd. Travelers are co-leaders Brenda Metzler and Carol Miller; Jessa Huff; Hailey Huff; Jerry Durbin; Susan McNeice; and optometrist Scott Pike from Oregon. The group has begun its training/orientation sessions and hopes to make this a very special trip. We are excited to be bringing down a wonderful collection of school supplies donated by children who attended the Vacation Bible School during the summer. Thanks to Rev. Jamie for her leadership on this!

**Notes for your Calendar:** the Delegation Send-Off will be Tuesday night, February 11, at 7:00 pm (place to be announced); and the Reportback by the delegates will be Sunday, March 9, 11:30 am in Linden Hall.

We hope that those of you who missed this trip will start making plans to join the August delegation or the February 2015 one. It's never too early to plan.

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

After the celebrations of Christmas and New Year, we generally head into a time of cold weather, little daylight, and not much going on. It seems the hustle and bustle of December comes to a screeching halt after the first of January. If you can relate to this sentiment, you will be relieved that a special music event will take place in our church on **Sunday, January 26th at 4 pm**. Our Chancel Choir will present a Winter concert, featuring the rarely heard Vivaldi Introduction and Gloria, RV 588, with organ and orchestra. The second half of the concert will be music themed around Winter, with the poetry of the transcendentalist writers set to music, and lovely evening hymns of the church. I hope you will all set this time aside to enjoy, relax, and listen to ethereal music in our lovely sanctuary. The concert will be preceded that morning with worship and our Annual meeting, and followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall.

I would like to commend our new youth music director, Valerie Becker, on a fabulous start with our youth choirs. Numbers are growing, music is flourishing, and faces are smiling. If you have heard Shepherd's Staff Choir singing in Hebrew, Joyful Noise Choir singing in Italian, or Hallelujah Choir singing in parts, you know the wonder that music does in our lives. I again strongly encourage all parents to allow their children to take part in the joy of choral singing. It is a wonderful way for children to experience the thrill of making music, the spirit of working together with others, and the fullness of participating in the ministries of the church.

All my best wishes in this New Year,  
Bobby DeRegis



**Winter Concert**  
Sunday  
January 26  
4pm

Winter Concert featuring  
Antonio Vivaldi's  
Introduction and Gloria  
with soloists, organ, and  
orchestra; anthems to  
celebrate the Winter season.

Congregational Church of Needham

### Schedule Changes Ahead

During the spring months Susan will be finishing her doctoral dissertation at Andover Newton Theological School so that she can graduate in May 2014, with a Doctor of Ministry degree.

While her office hours will change and Heike will be preaching more this spring, Susan will be available on many Sundays to assist in leading worship.

Susan will be using a portion of her sabbatical time for this study leave, but given the importance of this spring in the life of our church as we approach the construction phase of the Capital Campaign, she also plans to be available for important leadership meetings that relate to that project.

In addition to her studies, Susan plans to develop a curriculum for some spiritual retreats and offer the first retreat on Palm Sunday weekend in April. There will be more information about this opportunity for Lenten spiritual enrichment in next month's Focus. If you are interested, please save the date - April 11-13.



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## Men's Breakfast, Sunday January 19 "How do we personally combat evil?"

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 January 19, we will address the January worship theme of "Evil & Good" from the point of view of how to personally combat evil. Come prepared to discuss where we find evil and good in our lives.

Contact Keith McClelland ([kmm1km@rcn.com](mailto:kmm1km@rcn.com)) for more information.

address

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



ADULT PROGRAMMING - January 2014

JANUARY 2014						
Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Cancer Support Group	7 Prayer Shawl Knitters Community Dinner	8	9 Bible Study Lunch with Heike	10	11
12 Bible Study Happiness & Ted	13 Cancer Support Group	14	15	16 Bible Study	17	18
19 Bible Study	20 MLK Day Church Closed	21	22	23 Bible Study	24	25
26 Bible Study Annual Meeting Winter Concert	27 Cancer Support Group	28	29	30 Bible Study	31	

ADULT EDUCATION

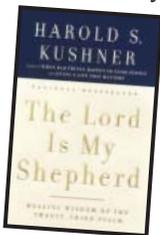
In the new year I want to share with you a number of Ted Talks. One series that has intrigued me: What makes us happy? As we have just started a new year, those resolutions for a better me/us are still hot, and maybe you strive to be happy, or more happy, or happy differently. Come and join me on January 12, 2014 as we explore the theme of happiness together through Ted Talks. If people are interested in the topic, we can continue the discussion on Happiness on Feb. 2 and 9th, 2014.

A few additional dates have been set for the Winter/Spring Adult Education Program at our church. We will welcome **Nate** back on **Sunday, Feb. 23, March 2 and March 9, 2014** who will share with us (some of) the **History of Israel** so we understand in context the stories that we hear many a Sunday. The topic is split into three sections: 1) The primeval history, 2) the monarchy period, and 3) the Second Temple period.



BIBLE STUDY

The new year is a time to consider joining one of our Bible Study Groups.



**Thursday Group - 10:30 - noon.**

Led by Christine Weitzel.

This group begins on Thursday Jan. 9th. They will start a new book, The Lord is My Shepherd. Check out the book - a wonderfully insightful classic by Rabbi Harold Kushner. Find out more from Christine - [crweitzel@verizon.net](mailto:crweitzel@verizon.net).

**Sunday Group - 11:30 - 12:30 after church** - begins again on January 12th. This group will be reading the gospel of Luke one chapter each week to look deeper into the life and teachings of Jesus. For more information, please e-mail Sunu at [dormouse99@gmail.com](mailto:dormouse99@gmail.com).

LUNCH WITH HEIKE MOVED FROM JANUARY 2 TO JANUARY 9, 2014

Please join in having lunch together on January 9th 2014. This is our monthly get together. In February we meet on the 6th, and in March we are starting our weekly Lenten lunches on March 6, 2014.

COMMUNITY DINNER - EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

We gather for our first community dinner of the new year takes place on January 7, 2014. Everybody is welcome to join us for dinner, not just Baby Basics families and volunteers. If you like to help with dinner prep, set up and clean up, please contact Rev. Heike. Otherwise just come! Dinner starts at 6 pm and goes to about 7 pm.

# WHAT DOES DR. KING'S LEGACY MEAN TO YOU?

Join us for  
Needham's Celebration and Observance of

## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

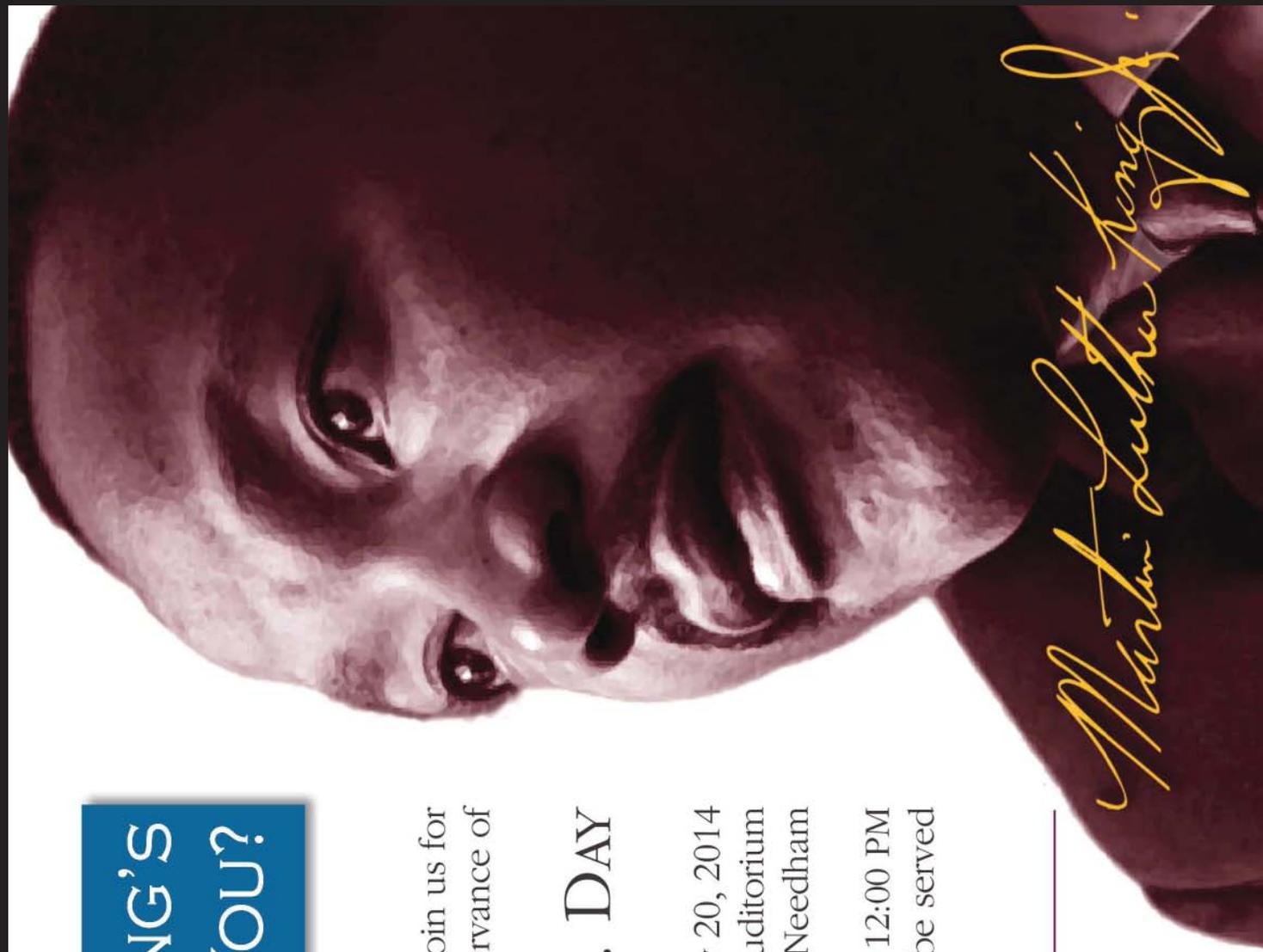
Monday, January 20, 2014  
Needham High School Auditorium  
609 Webster Street, Needham

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Refreshments will be served

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*SPONSORED BY:*

- Needham Clergy Association
- The Town of Needham Human Rights Committee
- The Needham Public Schools  
and its METCO program.



*Martin Luther King Jr.*