



FOCUS

February 2014 | Vol. 37 Issue 2

Sunday Worship In February

Theme:

Good & Evil: The Seven Deadly Sins

February 2

Envy

Rev. Heike

February 9

Rev. Susan

February 16

Greed

Rev. Heike

February 23

Gluttony

Rev. Heike

A Message from Rev. Susan Cartmell

As I sit here thoughts of the Winter Concert dance in my head. Melodies and memories blend together. But the tune of the evening hymn has been playing a melody in my mind, which is comforting and inspiring. Bobby chose one of the most beautiful evening hymns for the concert. It is one we rarely sing because so many of our services take place in the morning. The words are -

The day thou gavest Lord has ended.
The darkness falls at thy behest.
To thee our morning hymns ascended.
Thy praise shall sanctify our rest.

That is a pretty standard sentiment for an evening hymn. But then the hymn takes a different turn in the second verse.

We thank thee that thy church unsleeping
While earth rolls onward into light,
Through all the world her watch is keeping
And rests not now by day or night.
As o'er each continent and island
The dawn leads on another day,
The voice of prayer is never silent,
Nor dies the strain of praise away.



The first time I sang this hymn was when Doris Cook and I attended the funeral of Peter Gomes in Memorial Chapel in Harvard yard. It seemed such a fitting choice for Peter, a man who had given his life to the church. Even though his "day" was over, the church he loved would be on-going through many days ahead.

On Sunday this Evening hymn took on a special meaning for me because earlier on Sunday at the Annual Meeting our church took another in a series of big steps. We accepted the plan of the design team to renovate the church in a capital campaign renovation which will start in June 2014 and continue through the summer of 2015. The Annual Meeting was longer than usual, because this is a big step. Former Moderators, Scott Stewart and Keith McClelland, along with the Design Team, explained the four years of study, and the architect talked about all the work he has done.

Over the last four years of preparing for this construction project many of you recognize this project as the way to address long-standing problems in the building, and to leave a lasting legacy. I think this project reminds us that it is a blessing to take part in a project which is larger than all of us, but which encompasses our hopes for the church's future, that it will live on after all of us.



We remember with gratitude the faith of generations who left this church better than they found it, and we realize that this is our opportunity to finally integrate all the parts of this church in a plan that will make the church a place which will beckon people for generations to come.

Susan

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

As I write this, I still have the melodies of Vivaldi's Gloria running through my head. Yesterday afternoon's concert was such a delight. Our Chancel Choir worked for months to perfect this rare little gem. After the concert it was evident that all the hard work was worth it. My sincere thanks to the choir for their dedication and perseverance. Our soloists showed us their talent with beautiful arias interspersed throughout the work. A very special thanks to our sponsors, without whom this concert would not have been possible. Please let me mention all the workers behind the scenes that made the concert run so smoothly- our music team for moving chairs, pews, music stands, and making sure our choir was taken care of during the concert intermission. Please let me express gratitude to all our dedicated workers in the kitchen who made the reception such a lovely affair. I am so glad for the time of fellowship afterward: many visitors were made to feel very welcome in our church. Thank you to our ministers and staff, who work so well together. It really is a pleasure to be part of this amazing team. I look forward to seeing you all again on Saturday, May 3rd at 7:00 pm for the performance of Gabriel Fauré's Requiem. We will welcome the Canton Choral Society along with our Chancel Choir and their musical director, Anne Tripp- Miller. It will be a real treat to have these two wonderful choruses performing together.

On a younger note, get ready for some great music from our youth choirs. They too have been busy working on new music as an offering to enhance our worship. Under the direction of Valerie J. Becker, our youth choirs are flourishing. Along with fun and friendship, the children are learning to read music, as well as learning music theory and solid vocal technique. If your child is not participating in one of the youth choirs, please consider offering this gift to your youngster. It is a special gift that your children will benefit from their whole lives long. Please check out the new Youth Music bulletin board outside the choir room as you bring your child to rehearsal!

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.

March issue deadline:
Thursday, February 20th.

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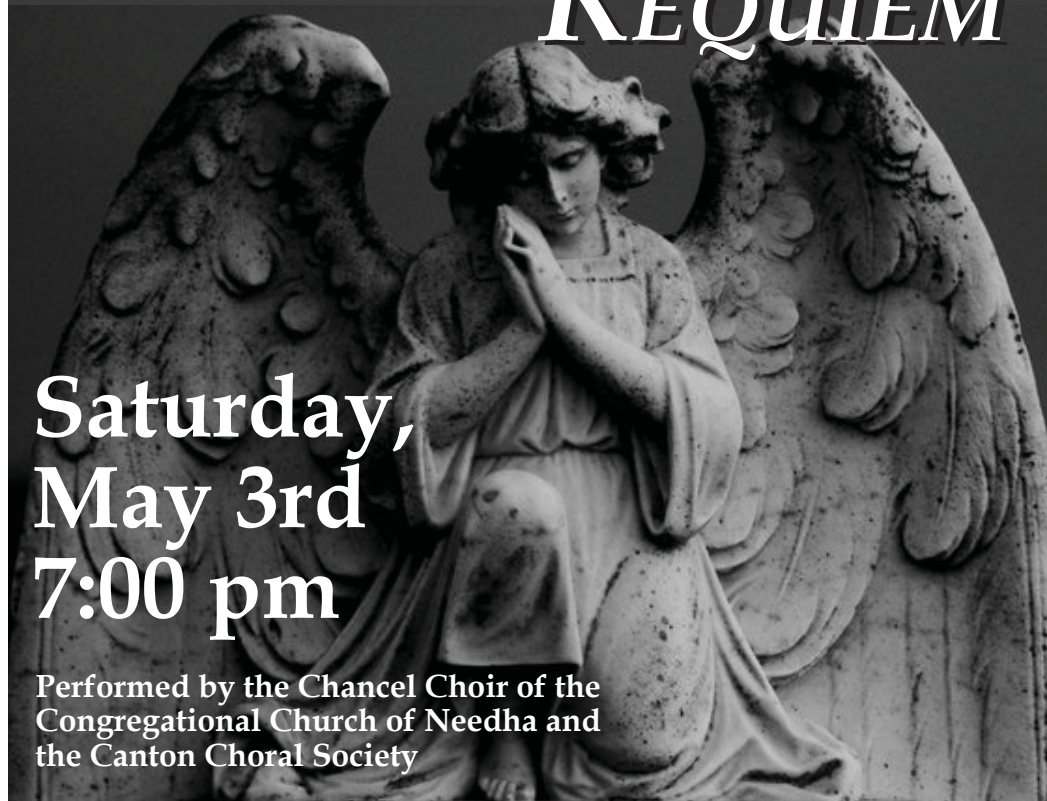
Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton,
Pastor Emeritus

GABRIEL FAURÉ'S

REQUIEM

**Saturday,
May 3rd
7:00 pm**

Performed by the Chancel Choir of the
Congregational Church of Needha and
the Canton Choral Society



Germany Anyone? by Rev. Heike Werder, Associate Minister

As we are preaching our way through the Seven Deadly Sins, I can't help but think of Martin Luther, German priest and theology professor who initiated the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. Luther said some outrageous things in his day we might still shake our heads over today. Here is an example: in a letter to his friend Philip Melanchthon, on August 1, 1521, Martin Luther wrote, "Be a sinner and sin boldly..." The short phrase, "Sin Boldly," is one of the more widely known sayings Luther ever uttered.

Strangely enough, there is a website (www.cafepress.com) that in part features products based on Luther's saying. One of these items is a License to Sin Boldly. It reads, "The bearer of this card is given a license to SIN BOLDLY. Rights and privileges include, but are not limited to: playing cards, dancing, and drinking beer."

Of course, as with so many misquoted ideas, Luther's intent is not conveyed at all in the quote. The full quote from Luther to Melanchthon reads: "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly... Pray boldly - for you too are a mighty sinner." The idea was that God's grace is so powerful, it finally defeats sin altogether. We do not become paralyzed by the fact that we are still vulnerable to sin, but instead rejoice in God's power to overcome sin.

Luther's quote was a result of the joy and spiritual liberation that came to him via the grace of God. Having struggled with a profound sense of sinful unworthiness for years, Luther finally understood that we are saved by grace alone and nothing we can produce on our own.

This insignificant German monk changed the world by his writings, lectures, and sermons. I have been to some of the places he lived, taught, and preached, and was wondering if you might be interested to do the same: taking a trip to Germany next year (June 2015) to travel "In the Footsteps of Martin Luther." You read correctly: taking a trip to Germany with me to see some of these historic places.

This idea has been floating around in my head for a while. Toward the end of the year I will be taking a 3-month Sabbatical, and during this time I could/would do a lot of the planning and research for the trip.

Some potential stops along the way include: the capital of Germany, Berlin to do some sightseeing, travel on to Wittenberg (place of the posting of the 95 Thesis and his hometown for 30 years), Leipzig, Halle, Torgau (all places that Luther has visited, and well, we have to visit JS Bach's church while we are there!), Eisenach (Castle Wartburg - the place where he hid and translated the Bible into everyday German), Eisleben (his birth and death place), Coburg, Augsburg, and Worms, then back to Berlin or we could leave from Frankfurt back to the US. This trip will include an excursion to Heike's hometown Falkensee.

I envision a 10 day trip, and could have a cost estimate by late spring. But before I start anything at all, I would need to know if anyone is interested in going on a trip like this. To make it worth the time and effort, I think that a minimum of 6 people would be needed to go.

So, think about it and let me know. Ask me more questions! Let me know if June is a good time to go. Kids are welcome to go, and so are relatives if you think anyone might be interested. Later in the spring I will make a presentation about the trip after church and, if we are going, we will together study this time in history a little closer.

Most importantly for now: let me know if you are interested! There is a sign-up board by my office, or simply talk to me.



Valentine's Babysitting.

NEED A BABYSITTER FOR A VALENTINE'S DATE?
 YOUTH GROUP FUNDRAISER OFFERS BABYSITTING
 FEBRUARY 8, 4pm-10pm



Dinner and Snacks included!

The Senior High Youth Group 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 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 info visit www.needhamucc.org/babysitting or call the church office at 781-444-2510.

TAKE A PICTURE!

- Every Sunday in February a church photographer
- will meet you in the Sanctuary immediately following
- Worship to take a photo of you and your family for
- the 2014 Directory. If you already have a photo send it to office@needhamucc.org.



REV. SUSAN'S TEMPORARY SCHEDULE CHANGE

Starting in February I will be working on my doctoral dissertation a lot more, in hopes that I can complete it and graduate this semester. With the deacons approval, I will be taking some sabbatical time in February, March and April. This won't be like the last sabbatical when I went to the Holy Land and then to South Africa. This time I just need to work at Andover Newton and make sure I get all the final chapters and footnotes correct.

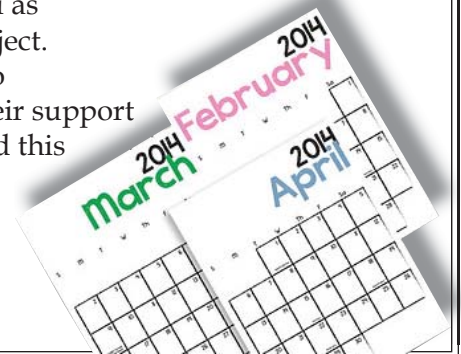
So I will be at the Andover Newton Library or my home office four days a week in February. I plan to preach on Feb. 9, March 9 and April 20. Heike and I will flip our schedules and she will preach three Sundays a month and I will do just one. I will focus on the dissertation for 6 weeks almost exclusively.

Sabbaticals are times to study, and also find refreshment, so I plan to attend a church conference, and a spiritual retreat and to lead a spiritual retreat with Peggy on April 12-13, 2014 on Cape Cod. There will be more information coming soon about that opportunity and directions on how you can register to attend.

Even though I am long overdue to take this sabbatical, I have postponed it for several years due to the plans for the renovation. Now, as we are really getting close to making changes I can see that my role will be diminishing, and experts in construction will play a much larger role. I will be in touch with the Project Manager on a regular basis. As we approach the construction phase, my role here will be receding as the people who actually know about construction play a bigger role and I go back to spiritual leadership.

My last sabbatical was so enriching. I enjoyed the chance to share so much of it with all of you. I look forward to that again this time. This academic journey has been a shared process, and I look forward to sharing even more of it with you as I complete this project. I remain grateful to the Deacons for their support as we have planned this out together.

Susan



Youth Ministry News with Rev. Jamie Klopotoski, Youth Minister



In Bible Village during the month January, we have been learning about the story of Jesus Healing the Paralytic (also known as “Four Friends” and “Through the Roof”). In the story, four

men carry their friend up to the roof of Jesus’ house, tear open a hole in the roof and lower their friend through it in order to see Jesus to be healed. What is remarkable is that when Jesus approached him to heal him, Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” And THEN the man could walk again! The Bible Village kids and I have been discussing the different ways this could be possible. It could simply be a magical miracle. Or it could be that the man was so paralyzed with sorrow or guilt from the sins he has committed that he could no longer walk, or that his brain was incapable of sending the correct signals to his legs to walk, or he had just given up on life and no longer had the will to walk. But Jesus tells the man that his sins are forgiven! The power of forgiveness is miraculous and healing. Forgiving yourself is a huge piece of that. I can imagine the man being plagued by all the wrongs he had done in his life- maybe some serious sins! I can imagine the man staying up awake at night tormented with regret and guilt. I can imagine the man thinking he was no longer worthy enough to be alive. But I can also imagine the immense relief and joy that the man must have felt after Jesus removed the weight of these sins from him. We all make mistakes, we all make wrong choices, we all are tempted by the seven deadly sins. But what’s even worse is letting those sins dictate the rest of our lives and our entire futures. The good news is that we are forgiven! We can be resurrected, we can be born again, we can be renewed, we can start over, we can live! Your sins have been forgiven! Get up and live!



- 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.



- Bible Village Unit 3: Jesus Heals a Paralytic
- Goals:
- Locate the story of Jesus healing the paralytic in the Bible.
- 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

From the Deacons

The Board of Deacons would like to thank graduating members Rich Weitzel, Diana Conroy, Frank Arren, Cici Hunt, Tim Barber and Lorri Lofvers for their outstanding service to our group and the Congregation. Rich Weitzel served as our Chair during 2013, and we will miss his tremendous leadership, steady hand at the tiller and calming influence. We would also like to welcome the incoming Deacon class including Sally Fitzgerald, Frank Luppino, Lee McNally, Stephanie Oddleifson, Joanne Seiden and Sunu Yeh. We look forward to a rewarding year in 2014.

The incoming Deacons will be installed formally during the Feb. 2 Sunday Service. They will join the continuing Deacons; Mary Lou Hughes, Connie Kaufman, Robert Kennedy, Fabienne Madsen, Fred Moder, Tom Mollerus, Craig Morrison, Carol Oberle and Peter Atallah.

The Board of deacons is composed of 15 members on rotating 3-year terms. Our mission is to assist the ministers in attending to the spiritual needs of the Congregation. If you have any questions about Deacons, or if you are interested in joining in the future, please ask any of us. You will find Deacons stationed at the parking lot door and at the entrance to the Sanctuary every Sunday before service.

save THE DATE!

Climate Change Cafe

Sponsored by the EMT

Sunday March 30th

Featuring a speaker who will give a talk about native plants and invasive species



Guatemala Delegation Send-Off: Tuesday, February 11th, 7:00 pm (at Dave and Caryl Johnson's - 505 Great Plain Ave.) Please join us for a brief gathering to 'spirit' our church delegation off to Guatemala with your support and good wishes. Travelers are: Brenda Metzler and Carol Miller, co-leaders; Jessa and Hailey Huff; Jerry Durbin; Susan McNeice; and Scott Pike; with interpreters Ali Durbin and Randall Shea. The delegation will be bringing medical and school supplies donated by children in the Vacation Bible School program, some Harry Potter books in Spanish, toothbrushes donated by a local dentist, and of course all your partner-family letters! Before heading to Santa María Tzejá, the delegation will visit in Guatemala City with students and young professionals from our village. They will also visit an organization called 'Safe Passage' that runs programs for people living in extreme poverty, eking out a living from the 'dump'.

Guatemala Reportback: Sunday, March 9, 11:30 am, Linden Hall. All partner families and others in our church community are invited to attend. For adults or youth thinking about joining one of our

church's delegations to Guatemala, this presentation, through photos and stories, will answer some of your questions. Come find out about what our sister village of Santa Maria Tzeja is like, what this trip means to people who have gone, and what purpose it might hold for you. It's never too early to start planning to join a delegation. Dates for the next delegation: August 6 - 17, 2014.

Would You Like to be a Partner Family?

There are several families in Santa Maria Tzeja who would like to partner with families from our church. This involves writing twice-yearly letters to a family in the village, sharing news about family and community life, children's favorite classes, family interests and struggles, etc. The February and August delegations take the letters to the village, and the SMT family responds with a letter for the delegation to bring back to Needham. The correspondence helps to link our cultures, and illuminates how much we have in common despite the differences in culture, language, economic status, and opportunities. Read more about this at GuatemalaPartners.org. Have questions or think you might want to become a partner family? Just e-mail Val Kistler at valk228@gmail.com or call Val at 781-449-6270.

CHURCH RENOVATION NEWS

Our Capital Campaign pledges are bearing fruit! Here are some recent activities in preparation for an early summer groundbreaking:

- Colin Smith, our architect, has completed the schematic phase. This means that we have the final placement of walls and rooms.
- This plan was approved by the Annual Meeting on January 26.
- Detailed plans are being developed by the architect and his contractors for the site, the structural elements, the wiring, the plumbing, the lighting, the heating and air-conditioning, the windows and doors, and the elements of code compliance.
- The church is hiring an owner's representative, sometimes known as a project manager.
- The discussions, document preparations, meetings, and hearings required to receive full approval from the town and a Building Permit are moving forward.
- The design team is contacting the abutters to share our plans and their concerns.
- The Needham Commission on Disabilities has heard the details of our project. The Massachusetts Office on Disability might need to rule on certain aspects of the plan.



The images that were presented at the Annual Meeting and the script that accompanied the presentation are available on our website at <http://needhamucc.org/connect/building-our-future>.

For direct links:

[Click here for the 1/26/14 Annual Meeting Slide Show](#)

[Click here for the script that accompanies the slides](#)

Environmental Ministry Team

The Environmental Ministry Team's mission is to strive to be stewards of God's creation by informing, transforming and living the "green" way. The group reaches out to the congregation by offering informational opportunities, and promoting ideas that encourage people to live on God's earth in such a way as to promote living in harmony with all creatures.

Climate Change Cafés were offered in March and October:

Everyday Biking - members of church discussed their biking habits and offered maintenance tips for bikes. The EMT offered related biking resources for the participants.

Anne Dorfman, director of the Needham RTS spoke to a large group about how the RTS works, how and what they recycle, how they handle trash, composting, the town's plans for the RTS, etc.

Mission 4/1 Earth, April 1-May 19 - Encouraged congregation to keep track of hours engaged in earth-friendly activities such as planting trees, recycling, planting an organic garden, writing letters, etc. We kept track of our progress by

"leafing" a paper tree. We exceeded our pledge of 530 hours, 70 trees planted and 60 letters written to politicians or environmental groups about environmental issues.

Climate Reality Workshop - co-hosted with Sustainable Wellesley on May 10.

Walk/bike to church month - promoted during the month of May.

Carbon Footprint reduction goals - In June, The EMT sent a letter to the church board asking them to endorse carbon footprint reduction goals: "We are writing to urge the church board to commit to the visionary goals of carbon footprint reduction of 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 (base 2005). Adopting these long term objectives will help guide key church upgrade/design decisions we are currently facing." The Board endorsed our goals and asked for a member of our team to join the Design Team. Anne Hayek volunteered to take on that role.

Information and a chart of our church building's carbon footprint, based on energy consumption, from 2004-2013 and showing our 2020 and 2050 goals, is displayed on our bulletin board.

The Environmental Ministries Team includes Isabell Wells, Anne Hayek, Carla Virschoor- Kirss, Carol Brown, Caryl Johnson, and Jenni Haynes



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Men's Breakfast, Sunday February 16
"Anger & Righteousness"

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 February 16, we will address the February worship theme of "Evil & Good" by discussing anger, righteous or otherwise. Come prepared to discuss anger in our lives.

Contact Keith McClelland (kmm1km@rcn.com) for more information.

address

stamp

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



ADULT PROGRAMMING - February & March 2014

FEBRUARY 2014						
Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2 Bible Study Happiness	3 Cancer Support Group	4 Prayer Shawl Knitters Community Dinner	5	6 Bible Study Lunch with Heike	7	8
9 Bible Study Happiness	10 Cancer Support Group	11	12	13 Bible Study	14	15
16 Bible Study	17 President's Day Church Office Closed	18	19	20	21	22
23 Bible Study Bible History 101	24 Cancer Support Group	25	26	27 Bible Study	28	

HAPPINESS

Sunday February 2 & 9, 11:30am

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 Feb 2 & Feb 9 as we explore the theme of happiness together through Ted Talks.



BIBLE HISTORY 101

Sunday February 23, March 2 & March 9, 11:30am

Presented by Nate Ramsayer

What happened between the time Noah's Ark landed and David fought Goliath?

Who came first, the prophet Elijah or Alexander the Great?

We've all heard of Jonah – but other than being swallowed by a whale, what do you know about him?

Many of us learn Bible stories as children, but by now, how many do you actually remember? This class will be a fun, interactive way to reacquaint yourself with that blue book sitting in front of you in the pew (or on your bookshelf at home). Join biblical scholar and archaeologist Nate Ramsayer as he guides church members through the history of ancient Israel, how events and people fall in chronological order, and what material and textual evidence exists for these classic tales! Three Sundays: Feb. 23rd, March 2nd, and March 9th, 11:30–1:00. Lunch will be provided for a minimal fee!

TRANSLATING THE BIBLE

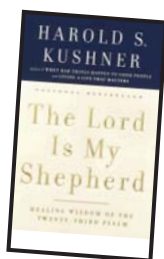
Sunday March 23, 11:30am

Presented by Greg Mobley

Ever wonder why there are so many different translations of the Bible? Greg Mobley, professor at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, is presently working on a Biblical translation for a new commentary, and will give us a close up view of what goes into the decisions a translator makes.

MARCH 2014

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
						1
2 Bible Study Bible History 101	3 Cancer Support Group	4 Prayer Shawl Knitters Community Dinner	5	6 Bible Study Lunch with Heike	7	8
9 Bible Study Bible History 101	10 Cancer Support Group	11	12	13 Bible Study Lunch with Heike	14	15
16 Bible Study	17 Cancer Support Group	18	19	20 Bible Study Lunch with Heike	21	22
23 Bible Study Translating the Bible	24 Cancer Support Group	25	26	27 Bible Study Lunch with Heike	28	29
30 Bible Study Climate Change Cafe	31 Cancer Support Group					



BIBLE STUDY

Consider joining one of our Bible Study Groups!

Thursday Group - 10:30 - noon.

Led by Christine Weitzel.

They are discussing 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 - cweitzel@verizon.net.

Sunday Group - 11:30 - 12:30 after church - 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.

LUNCH WITH HEIKE

February 6, Noon

Let's Eat Together!

Please join us for lunch on February 6th 2014 in the library. This is our monthly get together. In March, we are starting our weekly Lenten Lunches on the 6th. Consecutive lunch dates are: March 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10, 2014.

COMMUNITY DINNER - EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

We gather for our next community dinner on February 4, 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 ends around 7 pm. Help with clean-up is always appreciated!

SAVE THE DATE - WOMEN'S RETREAT MAY 9-10, 2014

It is not too early to clear your calendar for the annual women's retreat! Rev. Heike has made the reservation with Craigville Conference Center in Centerville, MA on Cape Cod. We will be staying in the Manor overseeing the ocean. All women are invited to attend!

