



FOCUS

June 2014 | Vol. 37 Issue 6

A Message from Rev. Dr. Susan Cartmell

GREAT BIBLE STORIES

**Sunday
Worship In
June**
Theme:
**Great Stories from
the Bible**

June 1
Youth Sunday

June 8
Pentecost
Noah: Surprising
Modern Man
Rev. Susan

June 15
Joseph: Much
More than a Flashy
Dresser
Rev. Susan

June 22
Jacob: A Bad Boy
Grows Up
Rev. Susan

June 29
Sampson: Fallen
Hero
Rev. Heike

This Summer our worship theme is - Great Stories from the Bible.

I don't know very many people who don't enjoy a good story told well. Stories are so popular that there are popular radio shows devoted to story-telling. It is stories of a town in northern Minnesota that has made Garrison Keiler a household word. When he leans into the microphone to talk about mythical characters from that frozen Lutheran northland we enjoy the human touch that he brings to his story-telling. And it is personal stories that has made *The Moth* a huge hit in urban clubs in New York City.

The ability to stand up and tell a riveting tale has become a valuable currency for many writers today. But story telling is one of the oldest arts of human civilization. Most Bible scholars believe that our Bible is a collection of stories that were originally told around the campfires of Palestine on long evenings. Through this art of storytelling the Israelites remembered their history, the tenets of their faith, and the journey they had taken with God over the centuries. These stories helped them to see the demands of community responsibility, to recognize the way God calls us, and to discover how prayer works. These stories in the Bible are not told about perfect people, but average folks who faced challenges, struggled to be good, and found grace.



This summer we will preach on some of the wonderful stories that are hard to cover in a traditional sermon but lend themselves to a 15 minute telling. The stories of Noah and Joseph, Esther and Ruth, Jacob and Job are hard to read quickly, so we usually preach on one episode or one chapter of a larger epic narrative. But this summer the ministers will do story sermons each Sunday. We may draw lessons from the stories but in most cases these stories will preach themselves. We hope that in summer worship this year you will find the opportunity to sit back and listen to the word of God and drink in the rich details in the Biblical narrative so that these timeless tales find a home in your imagination.

Blessings,
Susan

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



Does the sound of our choirs inspire you? Do you feel that choral music uplifts the soul and enhances the worship experience? If you answered yes, then thank our choir members! Our choir members spent many, many hours of rehearsal time preparing anthems and concert works. They have struggled to learn notes, endured the rants and raves of the choir director, traveled through ice and snow and rain, stayed late hours in the evening and got up early to rehearse on Sunday mornings, and on and on and on. Truly, the church

choir is a gift to the congregation. As we come close to our summer break, stop a choir member and thank them for their hard work, dedication, and love of the church.

During the month of June we look forward to hearing our Joyful Noise, Hallelujah, and Shepherd's Staff choirs sing on Youth Sunday. It is always a treat to hear their lovely voices at any service. We look forward to hearing Bruce Goody on flute, Dave Darmofal on piano, and Eric Slosser on cello during the second and third Sundays of June. We will have a special performance from our Friendly Chime Ringers as well. See you in church!



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.

September issue deadline:
Friday, August 15th.

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Guatemala Yard Sale Success and Appreciation

The 24th annual Guatemala Yard Sale was hugely successful and has now surpassed the \$5,000 mark! Thanks to all you donors, volunteers, and shoppers who made this community event so successful, fun, and environmentally responsible by your recycling and reuse of no-longer-needed items. Special thanks to the 10 or so youth, including confirmands (now members!), who ran the jewelry table, cashiered, helped organize items over the course of the day, and loaded up/drove leftovers to a thrift store at the end of the day. Items still available for purchase: a 7 x 10 ft. oval braided rug (just cleaned), a vintage-1900 bowlback mandolin, and a vintage (1920-30) Mah Jong set of bone and bamboo tiles. Contact Brenda if interested: bmetzler7@verizon.net.

Partner Family Letters Due

July 1st - In order to get your partner-family letters translated for the August delegation to take down, please submit them to David Johnson by Sunday, July

1st (Davebjohnson@verizon.net). Thanks.

Guatemala Delegation Send-off
Tuesday, August 5, 7 pm

Members of the August delegation to Guatemala have been preparing for their trip. Please join us for a send-off gathering for them on Tuesday, August 5th, at 7:00 pm at 372 Warren St., Needham. This will include a chance to hear how the travelers will be spending their time while visiting Santa Maria Tzeja. Light refreshments will be served.

SAVE THE DATE Reportback for August Delegation to Guatemala, **September 14, 11:30 am** (Linden Hall)

February 2015 Delegation to Guatemala

The February 2015 delegation to Guatemala is beginning to fill, so if you may be interested, contact Brenda Metzler soon. Tickets will be purchased by September or earlier, if the delegation fills up. Travel dates are February 11-22, 2015. Contact delegation leader Brenda Metzler for information for prospective travelers or to sign up: bmetzler7@verizon.net

Moderator's Corner with David Dirks, Moderator, Church Board

This month's Moderator's Corner will be brief. I sent out a letter a couple weeks ago discussing the DayStar purchase, and am hard at work on a Frequently Asked Questions list to be sent out in advance of the June 1 meeting with the congregation, so I won't discuss that topic again here.



I wanted to discuss communication and transparency. Since taking on this role a few months ago, I have heard numerous concerns about whether the board is communicating enough with the congregation. I think this is an important topic, and I believe there are two sides to this question.

First, is the board sharing enough information? This includes what is being discussed at our meetings and what kinds of things we are deciding. We keep notes at meetings, use FOCUS, Constant Contact, and letters. We have been holding congregation meetings regarding the DayStar purchase. However, there is still a need for more sharing of information and as a board we need to tackle how to best achieve that. We are working on a Leader's Night. We had hoped to have one before the summer, but given the urgency of other issues, we will look to have one shortly after the end of the summer. We will look at what else we should be doing.

Second, and maybe more importantly: is the board receiving input and listening to that input? Sometimes a leadership group thinks "Of course we're communicating - we just sent out an email to all our members last week!" But communication needs to go both ways. This is another area we are working on. In addition to meetings, I also think it's important that we be seen as approachable - in person, by email, etc. We do have a board email link now - it is board@needhamucc.org if you want to send an email that will reach the board and the ministers all at once. Thanks to Mike Normile for setting this up.

Also, together with the Deacons, we have just had a comprehensive survey of the congregation. 85 people took the time to respond, and we will be looking carefully at what is being said. I'll preview one comment that won't come as a surprise - several respondents mentioned that communication and transparency needs improvement! More work to be done.

CHURCH RENOVATION NEWS

Summer is always a busy time for church maintenance and renovation. The summer of 2014 will be no exception.

One of the objectives of the Capital Campaign is to improve our face to the community. To this end, we have begun to solicit estimates for the repainting the church's iconic steeple.

After the installation of the beautiful stained glass window in the chapel, we solicited funds for additional renovation of that worship space. When the need for a larger capital campaign

became clear, the Chapel Transformation Fund was carefully preserved. Now the reconvened Chapel Transformation Team is studying how to use those funds as intended to improve the Chapel space.



And some more good news...the **Village Fair** will be held this year as usual! Save the date: **November 15th**. If you are interested in helping out before the Fair or during the Fair, please contact the church office at office@needhamucc.org or 781-444-2510.

save THE
DATE!

THE VILLAGE FAIR!
NOVEMBER 15TH

Youth Ministry News with Rev. Jamie Klopotoski, Youth Minister

Youth Sunday: June 1, 10am

The Senior High Youth Group leads the worship service and graduating seniors give reflections for the sermon. Music by all three children's choirs and the youth worship band. All are welcome!

Youth Group End of Year BBQs: June 1

Junior High 1-3pm, DeMaria Residence (71 Powers St, Needham)

Senior High 5-7pm, Cotton Residence (40 Sunset Rd, Needham)

Youth group members, parents and siblings are welcome at our BBQs. Rain location at the church. Hot dogs, burgers, and veggie burgers will be provided. Please bring a dish to share based on your last name: A-D: Dessert, E-K: appetizer, L-P: salad or side dish, R-Z: Drinks.

End of Year Bible Village

**Celebration: June 8,
11:30am-12:30pm**

ALL Sunday School families are invited to Fellowship Hall after worship for lunch and a celebration of the Sunday School year, including: attendance awards, teacher appreciation, rising up ceremony for Preschoolers entering Bible Village, and musical performance.



June Program Sunday School: June 8, 15, 22 at 10am

We have a VERY exciting plan for June program for grades K-5. The Guatemala Partnership is working with me to design a curriculum to teach kids more

about the partnership our church has with our sister



village, Santa Maria Tzeja in Guatemala.

During Sunday School, the kids will learn a song (in Spanish and English) called Mi cuerpo hace musica/ My Body Makes Music. They will visit a different workshop each week which will teach them about Guatemalan culture, the partnership, and how the partnership is one of our church's responses to the Golden Rule.

- Cooking: Make corn tortillas from scratch (with their hands, just like in Guatemala!).
- Art: Make a traditional Guatemalan weaving with paper or wooden looms.
- Story: Read children's stories from Guatemala and act out a drama of the very first visit our church took to Guatemala.

We hope that you can join us for this fun and informative 3-week program! Learn more about the Guatemala Partnership at <http://www.guatemalapartners.org/>.

Summer Worship Childcare:

From June 29 through August 31, there are no Sunday School classes, but childcare will be available for all kids ages 6 and under downstairs in the Preschool Room. Older children are invited to join their families for worship.

News from the Environmental Ministry Team

Needham Farmers Market is now open! You will find fruits, veggies, baked goods, meats, cheeses and lots more from our local farmers and businesses! It is now located behind the Needham Bank from 12-4 every Sun. through Nov. 23. This farmers market is a place to purchase non-GMO, pesticide-free, sustainably raised produce, meat and dairy. For more information about which foods are low in pesticides or pesticide free, check out the Environmental Working Group's link to the 2014 Dirty Dozen Plus and the Clean Fifteen: <http://www.ewg.org/foodnews>. And EWG's shoppers' guide to avoiding GMO foods and why you should: <http://www.ewg.org/research/shoppers-guide-to-avoiding-ge-food>.

Last month, the EMT shared information about the carbon footprint of lawnmowers. If you should choose to grow grass, consider organic care as part

of your earth stewardship. Organic doesn't have to mean difficult to do nor expensive, but you do have to make peace with a few weeds. The only way to reduce a dependence on chemical fertilizers is to develop a healthy lawn, which is naturally resistant to weeds, insects and diseases, through a healthy soil. Organic matter, such as compost and grass clippings, will benefit any type of soil; it lightens those heavy in clay, and builds humus in sandy soils, helping retain water and nutrients. Most lawn mowers are equipped with mulching attachments which break up the clippings and disperse them as you mow, replacing nitrogen and organic matter.



Healthy soil
Continued on
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VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

AUGUST 25-28



All kids ages 3-11 are invited to August VBS.

The theme is "StudioGo!" where kids will learn real teamwork, participate in real service, and have real fun, while they create crafts, play exciting games, participate in meaningful community service, sing upbeat songs, and enjoy delicious snacks.

The fee is \$25 per day for morning activities from 8:30-noon.

Lunch bunch is offered from noon-1pm for \$5 per day.

Additional children in each family will receive a 50% discount. Scholarships are also available. If you register and PAY before August 1, you can receive \$20 off your family's total cost.

Register at www.needhamucc.org/vbs

Junior High and Senior High Youth group members are needed to be staff! Sign up to help at: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D4FAAAC2BAA8-20142>

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requires many types of organisms, including insects. Applying pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides) kills the beneficial along with the undesirable. Also, if your children play on your lawn, you are exposing them unnecessarily to potentially harmful chemicals. See the American Association of Pediatrics' announcement on pesticide policy here: <http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/AAP-Makes-Recommendations-to-Reduce-Children's-Exposure-to-Pesticides.aspx>

Choose the right grass. Grasses vary in the type of climate they prefer, the amount of water and nutrients required, shade tolerance and the degree

of wear they can withstand. Mow often but not too short : 3-1/2" is ideal. Water deeply but not too often to help roots grow long. Healthy lawns require only 1" of water per week, preferably watered in early morning. There is currently an outdoor water restriction in Needham, which operates under these principles. Call the Needham Water Department or check <http://needhamma.gov/index.aspx?nid=3668> for details about when you can water your lawn. Check http://eartheasy.com/grow_lawn_care.htm for more lawn care tips. Tom at Needham Garden Center is also an excellent resource!

Remember, the other option to lawn care is to plant more native species to feed and harbor birds, butterflies, and pollinators...and less grass!

Come Fly With Me To Germany! by Rev. Heike Werder, Assoc. Minister



Are you interested in a trip to Germany to explore the life and ministry of Martin Luther? 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."

Toward the end of 2014 I will be taking a 3-month Sabbatical, and during this time I will 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, but before I start planning, I would need to know if anyone is interested in going on a trip like this. I think that a minimum of 6 people would be needed to go.

To entice you I will highlight one of the stops on our possible travels in Luther's footsteps.

We will be visiting Wittenberg to explore the main attractions.

This sleepy little town in rural eastern Germany doesn't look like the center of a revolution. But the events that played out here in the 16th Century shook the foundations of Christendom.

It was here in Wittenberg, Germany, that Martin Luther lived and preached, and on October 31, 1517, he nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church. The Protestant Reformation had begun.

For such a small town, there is a lot to see:

- The town itself. A charming collection of 16th Century houses and a striking market square.
- The Castle Church. It was on the doors of this impressive church that (allegedly) Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses. Luther's grave is inside.
- The Town Church. Another beautiful Medieval church where Luther preached many sermons.
- Luther's Residence. Martin Luther lived in this converted cloister with his family for many years. Now a museum.
- The Oak Tree planted where Luther burned the Papal Bull.
- Lucas Cranach's Home and art studio. This artist documented much of the Reformation with his portraits and woodcuts.

We might actually stay for a night and two days to explore the town and all it has to offer.

Interested? Email me at revheike@needhamucc.org.



JUNE 2014

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
1 Youth Sunday Church Meeting	2	3 Community Dinner	4	5 Lunch with Heike	6	7
8 Bible Study	9 Cancer Support Group	10	11	12	13	14
15 Bible Study Life and Work of Thomas Berry	16 Cancer Support Group	17	18	19	20	21
22 Bible Study	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 Bible Study	30					

LUNCH WITH HEIKE

Thursday June 5, Noon

Let's Eat Together! Please join us for last lunch of the season on June 5th in the library. Everyone is welcome!

COMMUNITY DINNER – EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

June 3rd, July 1st and August 5th - 6pm

Our next community dinner is June 3rd. Everybody is welcome to join us, not just Baby Basics families and volunteers. If you like to help with 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! Our next Community Dinner will be July 1st.

EXPLORING THE LIFE AND WORK OF THOMAS BERRY

June 15, 2014 at 11:30 in Linden Hall

Join us watching an amazing documentary about the great eco-theologian Thomas Berry. Berry has been a pioneer in the field of spirituality and ecology, and has created a quiet revolution. He is a monk, a cultural historian, and author, a teacher, and a mystic. Lunch will be available for the event.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Are you looking for an outreach/mission project for the whole family? Since the Fall of 2010 our church has supported Family Promise Metrowest. This organization is a cooperative, interfaith partnership providing safe transitional shelter, meals, and case management as they seek permanent housing in the Metrowest area.

How does it work? There are Host Congregations that provide overnight accommodations for homeless families by converting church rooms into

bedrooms, one week at a time, three to four times a year. Each Host Congregation is paired up with one or two Support Congregations who provide additional volunteers, supplies and support during host weeks. Support Congregations help with shopping for supplies and groceries, cooking and sharing evening meals with the families, homework of the kids, playtime, set up and take down of rooms at the Host Congregation, or support the Day Care Center in Natick by doing mailings, office work, or staff the family room.

We are a Support Congregation. 10 to 15 volunteers from our church have supported the Host Congregation with these various tasks during hosting weeks. We are seeking new volunteers who might be interested in joining these efforts. The whole family can join in. That means children are welcome (which is often not the case).

How much of your time will this take? Volunteer times for some of the tasks are very flexible. Pick the time and day you want and can help. Volunteer time averages between two to three hours, depending on the task.

In order to be a volunteer, you will have to attend a training which will last about one hour and a half. The training can be done here at the church on a Sunday once we have a new group of volunteers.

Family Promise Metrowest(www.familypromisewetrowest.org) provides a safe place for homeless families in our area. We would like to continue to support this organization. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Rev. Heike at the church (revheike@needhamucc.org).



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Men's Breakfast, Sunday June 15th
""Extending Fellowship in the Twenty-First Century""

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 June 15, we will address "Extending Fellowship in the Twenty-First Century." How do we extend vital and connected fellowship in a world of "selfies" and "tweets?"

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

address

stamp

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