



FOCUS

January 2015 | Vol. 38 Issue 1

Worship In January

Theme:
Justice

**Communion
Sunday
January 4**

Barbara Livingston

**Wednesday
January 7**
CONNECT
Communion

**Sunday
January 11**
Rev. Susan

**Wednesday
January 14**
CONNECT

**Sunday
January 18**
*Annual Meeting
Hearing
Rev. Heike*

**Wednesday
January 21**
CONNECT

**Sunday
January 25**
*Annual Meeting
Rev. Susan*

**Wednesday
January 28**
CONNECT

A Message from Rev. Dr. Susan Cartmell

CONVERSATIONS ON JUSTICE

Our Theme for January is Justice

During this month we will try to address issues of justice in our country today. The issue of racism is one that I promised we would look at more carefully during January.

The news of the police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri revealed a big divide between the way that white Americans and black Americans see themselves in an interaction with the police. African Americans can imagine themselves or an unarmed loved one being fired on by police officers. What the national conversation is revealing about race in our country is that for black Americans there is a lot of fear that police will abuse their power. There is concern in the black community that the abuse of this power is not random but a pattern of behavior.



The Washington Post carried one of the most powerful confessions from a man named Jonathan Capehart. He recalled how his mother used to tell him “ not to run in public, lest I arouse undue suspicion. How I should most definitely not run with anything in my hands, lest anyone think I stole something. The lesson included not ever talking back to the police, lest you give them reason to take you to jail – or worse. And I was taught to never, ever leave home without identification.”

One poll found that 45% of African Americans believe they have been discriminated against by the police because of their race, compared to only 7% of whites. In fact there is evidence that blacks are more likely to be arrested for drug use than are whites engaged in the same activity.

During January we will look at these issues and try to offer forums for more conversations about how we can see different views and hear from various members of the community. I hope you will be part of this conversation.

{Many facts and ideas came from an article in Christian Century, “Don’t Shoot” by John Buchanan, December 24, 2014 p. 7}

**save
THE DATE!**

**Sunday, January 25th
11am - Annual Meeting**

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



My dad was an avid bowler, and quite good. Ever since I can remember he would set out like clockwork every Thursday night to bowl with his league. It was often he bowled 300, a perfect score. He had been awarded over 80 trophies for a perfect score over the many years he spent on the lanes. Friday night was mom's bingo night at the church. Also like clockwork, she would clear the dinner dishes, get her bingo bag and off she went, very rarely missing one week. Tuesday night was my night out: choir rehearsal at church. Week after week, in freezing cold temperatures, we would rehearse until the music was ready for the Sunday service. To prepare for the holidays, it was nothing to spend over three hours in the cold choir loft learning our parts, laughing and having fun the whole time. Why do some of

us get caught up in a routine and become so predictable? Have you ever noticed that the people in our chancel and youth choirs are pretty much the same, year after year? I don't think it is because we get comfortable doing the same thing over and over. Why would anyone in their right mind want to freeze in a choir loft for hours each week, or sit in a crowded and loud bingo hall, or throw a ball down an alley to knock over pins? For no money yet! I think the answer is simple: it is because we do what we love to do. My father loved to bowl. My mother loved to play bingo. I loved singing choir. I bet if you asked any of our chancel or youth choir members why they do it, most would answer because they love it. I am sure we all have a million different things we could be doing on Thursday night or after church on Sunday. But are they things we love to do? I'm not so sure. Maybe you, the reader of this article, might love singing in choir. Did you ever think about it? Would you ever give it a try? Maybe your New Year resolution might be to give choir a try. What have you got to lose? You might just love it! Happy New Year!

Thank You!

As our holiday season comes to a close, there are several members of our congregation that deserve a special word of thanks. A special thank you to Cici Hunt, Teresa Blume, and Kirby Salerno for their beautiful music during the Christmas pageant. Their talents and gifts to our congregation and youth are the best gifts that could possibly be received. Special thanks to our Chancel Choir and Shepherd's Staff Choir for their beautiful choral music during the Christmas Eve service. Their tireless work and dedication is not without appreciation. Special thanks to Dave Darmofal for his ever constant willingness to accompany the choir on piano, to Soomi Lee Lowry for her selfless gifts of piano masterworks, and to Denice Koljonen for sharing her remarkable talents on the organ. All these very talented members give of their time without pay or fanfare. They are all a most precious gift to our congregation!

A very special thanks to Emily Verschoor-Kirss for her talents on the saxophone. Emily is in her senior year at Connecticut College majoring in music and education. She will be pursuing a Master's degree in saxophone in the future. Emily played the preludes for Christmas Eve, and her improvisations on the traditional carols brought them new life. A member of our youth choirs since I can remember, Emily stepped in at the last minute to conduct Shepherd's Staff Choir at the Christmas service. Her musicality and perfect conducting skills made the anthems ring out with new and glorious sound. I like to think it was the musical opportunities in our church that inspired Emily to pursue a professional career in music. How important music is in our lives and in our church! One never knows to what heights it may take us. Thank you Emily, and thank you all! A very happy, healthy, and blessed New Year to everyone.

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.

February issue deadline:
Thursday, January 22.

Rev. Dr. Susan Cartmell
Sr. Minister
revsusan@needhamucc.org

Rev. Heike Werder
Assoc. Minister
revheike@needhamucc.org

Rev. Jamie Klopotoski
Youth Minister
revjamie@needhamucc.org

Danielle Jurdan
Administrator
office@needhamucc.org

Bobby DeRegis
Music Ministries Dir.
drderegis@verizon.net

Cindy Sullivan
Office Assistant
office2@needhamucc.org

Doris D. Cook,
Volunteer Office Asst.

Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton,
Pastor Emeritus

Youth Ministry News with Rev. Jamie Klopotoski, Youth Minister

3rd-5th Grade Youth Group

When: Wednesdays, 6:30pm-7:30pm, starting January 7
Where: Stevenson Hall (downstairs, below fellowship hall)
Who: All 3rd-5th graders in the community
How to Join: Simply show up on Wednesday evening! Contact Rev. Jamie for more info: revjamie@needhamucc.org or 781-444-2510

I'm a 3rd-5th grader, why should I join this group?

To make new friends, have fun, do community service, play games, talk about things that matter to you, learn more about God, Jesus and how you can be a better person, and more!

I'm a parent, why should my child join this group?

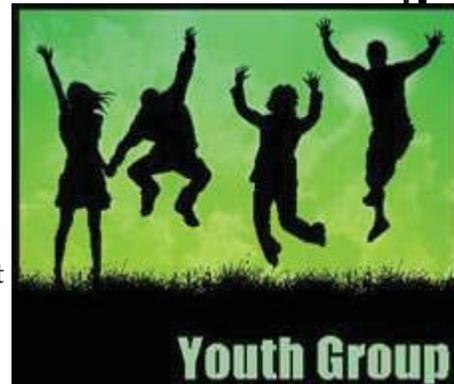
Being part of a youth group can help young people develop important personal and interpersonal skills, and gain self-confidence and self-esteem. Contributing to a group can help them see themselves as being able to really help other people, and have something important to offer. In addition, the community and friendships made in youth group are by-and-large a positive and important experience for youth to combat stress, bullying, depression, and anxiety. This group will give youth a "safe space" that they may not have otherwise--a place where they can express themselves through arts and activities, or just by being able to talk openly with peers and caring adults.

3rd-5th Grade Youth Group is part of a new Wednesday CONNECT evening program at the church.

6:00-6:30pm: Free dinner is available for ALL ages

6:30-7:30pm: Adult ed. (discussions, bible study, meditation) for older youth & adults; Youth Group for 3rd-5th Grade; Childcare for 2nd Grade and under)

7:30-8:00pm: Experiential worship service for ALL ages



Super Bowl Subs

During the month of January, the Senior High Youth Group will be taking orders for Super Bowl Subs & Chili! All proceeds go to the Senior High Youth Group Summer Mission Trip. The youth will make your sub with fresh ingredients on Super Bowl Sunday for you to enjoy during the Super Bowl Game!

Subs are \$8 each, Chili is \$8 for large, \$4 for small.

Order ONLINE at: www.needhamucc.org/superbowl

Or you can email or drop off your order form by Jan 31st to Rev. Jamie (revjamie@needhamucc.org).

Pick up on Sunday, Feb. 1st after worship.



Valentine's Babysitting

NEED A BABYSITTER FOR A VALENTINE'S DATE?

YOUTH GROUP FUNDRAISER OFFERS BABYSITTING

FEBRUARY 14th, 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 14th. 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. **Families must pre-register by February 13th.** Dinner, snacks, a movie, and several fun activity stations will be offered. For more information or to register, visit www.needhamucc.org/babysitting or contact [Rev. Jamie](mailto:revjamie@needhamucc.org).

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP STARTING JAN. 7TH

What is it? Supper, Programs for the Family, Worship

When? Every Wednesday evening from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Who is this for, really?

You - if you travel weekends, if you ski on Sundays, or if you sleep late.

You - if you are not a morning person, if you like experiential worship, if you want to try something new.

You - if you seek more inspiration, or need some fun mid-week.



What is the Schedule?

6:00 - Supper

6:30 - Junior Youth Group (grades 3-5)

led by Rev. Jamie

Adult Class- Questions of Faith

led by Rev. Susan

Meditation Group led by Sue Findlay

7:30

Worship for the Family

Communion - 1st Wednesdays

Walk the Labyrinth - 2nd Wed.

Stories to Inspire - 3rd Wed.

Healing Service - 4th Wed.

Hymn sing - 5th Wed.

Can we come for part of it? Sure, no problem.

Will there be child care? Sure, no worries.

Update From Church and Personnel Review Team

Since we shared the results of the church survey at a meeting in June, and heard additional helpful suggestions then, the following steps have been taken to respond to the Survey and suggestions;

- A Pastoral Relations Committee has been established by the Deacons to serve as an advisory and support group for the ministers. It will also serve as a place for constructive, healthy and confidential conflict resolution as needed. The members of the initial committee are Sunu Yeh, Diana Conroy and Fred Moder. Martha Lamb will be assisting with establishing the committee and its processes.
- Specific suggestions from the survey have been shared with the appropriate Committees and individuals, including Deacons, Board, Ministers, Music, and Membership.
- With respect to the suggestions to bring back nametags, the Deacons have

begun to discuss the logistics of doing so and plan to continue the conversation at their January retreat.

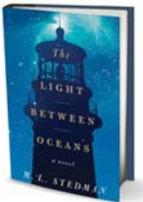
- Susan has worked with the Survey Team to establish personal goals; Heike will do so after her sabbatical is concluded.
- The Board and Ministers are drafting job descriptions for the ministerial staff.
- The Deacons have been reaching out to members who have not been attending worship or participating actively this fall
- The Board has been communicating regularly with the Congregation through meetings, Leadership Night and Focus articles

After the 2015 annual meeting, Fabienne Madsen, Jackie Allen and Mike Yeh will have completed their terms and will be replaced with current members of the Board and the Deacons.

Thank you for your continued support of our efforts,

Jackie Allen, Mike Yeh, Fabienne Madsen, Carol Oberle and Frank Lupino

Join Friendly in January!



The Friendly Society invites all church women to its **January 8th, 1:15 pm**, Linden Hall meeting to discuss *The Light Between Oceans: A Novel* by M.L. Stedman. Our leader is Gail Browne, an avid reader and longtime participant of Needham Public Library book discussions.

Come take part in a thoughtful conversation about the consequences of the choices one young couple makes and how those initial choices impact other lives in unexpected ways. Copies can be purchased at the NE Mobile Book Fair.

Don't forget to put the **Feb. 5th meeting (1:15 pm)** on your calendar, too. Joanne Seiden will talk about the tours she does at the MFA and give us a taste of one as well.

**OPEN AND AFFIRMING
COALITION**
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



February is Open and Affirming 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. ONA Sunday will be observed on February 8, 2015.

Celebrate ONA with the Voices Rising Chorus - February 7th

We welcome Voices Rising back to our church on Saturday, February 7, 2014 at 3:30pm. Their concerts are always of superior quality. This year's concert is "Seasons of Life," a musical tribute to some of the lesser celebrated passages along with the monumental events in life. The songs cover a breadth of styles, with folk tunes and show tunes, Hawaiian chant and a cappella jazz. With music from Joni Mitchell, Pat Humphries and Ysaye Barnwell and words from Khalil Gibran and Ecclesiastes, the chorus will sing about the many phases of our time here on earth and the transition to the other side.



Voices Rising are always a hit for the Needham community and surrounding areas. Save the date and tell your friends! Tickets are available online at www.voicesrising.org - Priority Seating \$30; General Admission \$25 (door), \$20 (advance); Students/Seniors \$10; Children 5 and under \$5.

CHURCH RENOVATION NEWS

from Keith McClelland

Our church's renovations are continuing this winter.



- Construction on the front one-third of 1180 Great Plain Avenue is almost complete and the offices will be moving over there this month.
- The church is working on finalizing tenant needs for the rear two-thirds of 1180 Great Plain Avenue. The required work must be scheduled in time for occupancy by the end of the summer.

- At the same time, the scope and budget of work on 1154 Great Plain Avenue is coming into focus. We are committed to meeting our goals of accessibility, energy efficiency, and reducing deferred maintenance. Work might start in the spring, but the most disruptive work will occur over the summer: readying the building for next year's busy fall.

- The Chapel Transformation project is also moving along. The initial carpentry is complete and plans for flooring, lighting, and painting are being finalized. Check back at the Chapel doors to information about the progress in the coming month.



Calling All Performers!
Sing, Play, Dance into Spring
Guatemala Fundraiser/Save the Date: Saturday, March 21, 4:00 pm

On Saturday, March 21, from 4:00 - 6:00 pm, the Guatemala Partnership will host a church and community-wide talent show and silent auction to benefit education in Santa María Tzejá. Talent abounds in our church, so we look forward to the participation of all you 'young' and younger folks. Cici Hunt has agreed to line up the performers; she can be reached at (781) 540-9113 or cicihunt@gmail.com. For general questions on the event, contact

Brenda Metzler: bmetzler7@verizon.net. For now just hold the date, and STAY TUNED!

Field Trip to Mayan Exhibit at Museum of Science - Sunday, February 8

Please join us for a 'field trip' to the Museum of Science on February 8th following church to see "Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed", the largest exhibit of its kind in the United States. Learn about the rise and eventual decline of the civilization that is the heritage of our friends in Santa Maria Tzeja -- through never-before-seen artifacts, hands-on activities, multimedia components and recreated environments. Cost: Members (\$5); non-members (\$29/\$25 children). For more information contact Brenda Metzler: bmetzler7@verizon.net.



1154 Great Plain Avenue
Needham, MA 02492-2202

T: 781-444-2510
F: 781-444-3580
office@needhamucc.org



Men's Breakfast, Sunday January 18th "Justice"

On Sunday, 1/18, the Men's Breakfast Fellowship will welcome all church men to breakfast. At this month's meeting we will consider **Diversity** as Charlie Baker (senior) helps us discuss how our church and Needham could be more inclusive.

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.

Contact: John Baldwin (jsbaldwin@comcast.net) or Rob Dunlavey (rob@robd.com) for more information.

address

stamp

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