



# FOCUS

October 2015 | Vol. 38 Issue 8

## A Message from Rev. Heike Werder

In the beginning of August I signed up for a class at Andover Newton Theological School. It takes place once a month on a Thursday evening and all day Friday - September through December. I felt that I could manage the time commitment even though the fall, followed by the holiday season at any church is usually very busy. Our church is no exception.

At the beginning of every class module, we are invited to do an interesting exercise: a self-definition exercise. We are to answer a question or make a statement about ourselves like "Write fifty sentences that begin with "I like ...", or "What do you care about most deeply?" or "Name your personal gifts for leadership!" The one self-definition exercise that caught my eye was the following, "Write your visions for your congregation!"

I think this is a great statement to think about as we begin our Stewardship Campaign for the next budget year 2016. Visions are about ideas and hopes and dreams for the future. The hope is that visions turn into mission activities, concrete ways to make our hopes and dreams come true.

So, what is my vision for this church, for this community of faith?

**I envision a church where joy, peace, and love run rampant!**  
**I envision a church where acts of random kindness happen daily!**  
**I envision a church where children find God and love Jesus!**  
**I envision a church where we trust each other with our lives!**  
**I envision a church where all are welcome, everyone is accepted, and all are loved!**  
**I envision a church that intentionally finds the lost, feeds the hungry, cares for the sick, and keeps company with the lonely!**

**But most of all, I envision a community of faith that loves and serves!**



I believe that as a community of faith we take seriously the ways we love and serve. We know that we are not just here for our own faith journey into wholeness, but that we have the responsibility to carry out God's love in service in this world. And we all are called to take on a piece of that responsibility as individuals and as a community.

Each of us is needed to create a vital, open, and welcoming community. That is why we ask that you commit yourself to the service of this church with your resources - your talents, time

and energies, your opinions and your hopes. And yes, we asked for your financial support as well. We want to be good stewards of our religious home so that we can continue to provide a space for spiritual growth and development, for transformation and fulfillment, for healing and wholeness.

May your generosity help our church to love and to serve!

Blessings,  
Heike

## Youth Choir News with Valerie J. Becker, Youth Music Director



Welcome Back Everyone - Whether you love to sing or just love listening to our choirs sing, this fall promises to be a wonderful experience for us all!

We had a fun first Sunday back at rehearsal. Our Youth Choirs are open to everyone and we would love to see more children join us for our rehearsals on Sunday Mornings. At present we have two rehearsals - one directly after church at 11:30 am for children ages 6 - 12. Then our older choir, Shepherd's Staff, rehearses from 12 - 1pm. Please see Valerie if you would like more information or email her at [davalvideo@verizon.net](mailto:davalvideo@verizon.net).

Please encourage your children to sing! Music is good for the mind and for the soul.

It's fun, it's not too scary, and it wouldn't be Halloween in Needham without it! The Haunted House at The Congregational Church of Needham is back on

Saturday, October 24, 5-8pm - sure to please kids and adults of all ages!

Walk through the haunted halls of the church basement decorated by our Youth Groups and run into scary ghosts and creatures! A carnival room with a bouncy house, games, and food will be available for fun without the scares!

A donation of \$5 per person is suggested. Embellished pillowcases will also be on sale to use as candy bags for \$5 each. All proceeds help fund the Senior High Youth Group's summer mission trip.

### 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).

October issue deadline:  
**Thursday Oct. 22, 2015.**

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## Youth Ministry News from Maddie Downer, Director of Children and Youth Ministries

### HAUNTED HOUSE

Please consider donating bags of individually wrapped candy to our Haunted House fundraiser! Please, **NO NUTS & NO PEANUT BUTTER**; i.e. NO Reese's, Butterfingers, Snickers, Baby Ruth, Almond Joy, etc.



### SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH GROUP ONLINE REGISTRATION

ALL FAMILIES with children in Sunday school or Youth Group MUST fill out a form. This form registers your child for Sunday School (crib/toddler through 8th grade) and/or Youth Group (grades 6-12). Register Online at

<http://needhamucc.org/registration>

Each family is asked to sign up to teach 7 times during the year. To sign up, please visit:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/ChildrenYouthSignUp>

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Infants and toddlers:** Childcare is provided for younger children in the nursery starting at 10 AM.

**Preschoolers:** A special preschool Sunday School class is offered in the Noah's Ark Preschool Room on the church's lower level for the entire worship hour starting at 10 AM.



**Grades K-5:** On most Sundays, children in grades K-5 join their families in the

worship service at 10 AM for the first 20 minutes and then attend Bible Village, an interactive Sunday School experience with Art, Cooking, Theater, Story, Games, and Science workshops for the rest of the hour. On the first Sunday of the month, kids start in Bible Village for chapel and workshops and then are dismissed for the sanctuary to join their parents at the Communion Table.

**Students in grades 6-8** follow the Bible Village groups from the sanctuary to children's chapel. After chapel, 6-8 students go to Stevenson Hall for class. Fall classes will be taught by Maddie, our CE and Youth director.

### YOUTH GROUPS

Join with other students for fun, food, and fellowship! Games and activities, film devotionals, worship and service opportunities, mission trips and fundraising events. We currently offers the following Sunday

evening opportunities to students in our community:

### **Junior High Youth Group (JH)**

Open to all students in grades 6-8.

Time: Most Sundays, 5:00-6:00 PM

### **Junior & Senior High Dinner**

Open to all students in grades 6-12.

Time: Most Sundays, 6:00-7:00 PM

Jesus set the example for showing us that one of the best ways to be in fellowship with one another is by eating together! Join us between Junior and Senior High meetings for a youth dinner. Some weeks, students or parents will be asked to cook -- on special occasions we will bring in outside food like pizza!

### **Senior High Youth Group (SH)**

Open to all students in grades 9-12.

Time: Most Sundays, 7:00-8:00 PM

Join our Facebook group! Search "Needham Senior High Youth Group"

### **October Youth Ministry Calendar:**

- Sunday, October 4: Normal YG schedule.
- Saturday, October 17, 5pm – Sunday, October 18, 9am: SH Lock-In
- Friday, October 23: JH & SH Haunted House prep & dinner, 5-8p
- Saturday October 24: JH & SH work at Haunted House, 2-9p

*Note: If a date is unlisted, youth group will not meet that evening. Please note time changes for special events.*

### FOR ADULTS

ALL adults are invited to volunteer to teach Bible Village and/or chaperone our young people in Youth Group. You do not need to have children in the programs to volunteer! Volunteers are necessary to continue offering these wonderful faith formation programs.



There are just over 200 spots to fill; if each of our 60+ families committed to 4 spots (i.e. a rotation of 3 weeks of Bible Village and one YG spot), we'd be covered. Including the wider community, we'd fill the whole roster – easy!

To signup, visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/ChildrenYouthSignUp>

Or contact Maddie, ext. 104 or at

[youth@needhamucc.org](mailto:youth@needhamucc.org)





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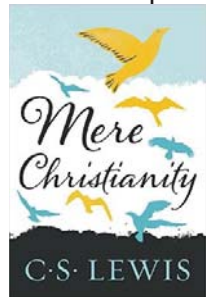
**WE ARE LOOKING FOR COMMITTEES TO TEACH OUR 6-8 CLASS ABOUT THEIR MINISTRIES!**

How does your committee contribute to the life of this church and our surrounding/world community? Come and teach the Junior High students

about their place in the larger workings of the Church – and how they might one day be involved in your committee! Are you on the music committee? One week, play your favorite sacred music – another, teach them Taize! Are you on the environmental committee? Teach our kids why their choices matter and how they can make better ones to care for the Earth. What are you passionate about in the life of this church? Contact Maddie and she will find a place in the calendar and help you with lesson plan basics and ideas!

**Let's Read Together!**

Faith Circles Book Group is starting up on Thursday October 1st! We will be reading a Christian classic, Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis. Our group meets 10:30-12:00 every Thursday (except October 22) until November 19 in the reception room. Please come join us! Any questions, contact Christine Weitzel at [cweitzel@verizon.com](mailto:cweitzel@verizon.com).



**ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES TEAM NEWS**  
 ...EARTH STEWARDSHIP FOR OUR LIVES TODAY...



**Out with the OLD in with the NEW**

Check the EMT web page (<http://needhamucc.org/serve/environmental-ministry-team/>) for more photos and information.

With the heating season around the corner, your EMT is burning to tell you about our boiler and heating system work over the summer. Devaney Energy of Newton, our vetted supplier-installer, replaced our three cast iron oil-burning boilers with Energy-Star rated Lochinvar gas condensing boilers. We also replaced 6 of 8 water circulating pumps with electricity-efficient variable speed ones. With some new valves which regulate water flow, apparatus to let air escape and water expand, insulation on key pipes in the boiler room and the removal of accumulated dust from the radiation units throughout our 1154 church building, we are expecting an overall much more efficient system to deliver heat where and when needed! How efficient, you ask? With boilers 96% efficient, we expect our overall system efficiency to increase from 60 to 70%.

The impacts are as follows:

- Carbon footprint: reduction of about 110,000 lbs (about a third less) means less pollution!
- Cost: reduction of about \$20-25K (annual budget \$40-45K) means more for programs!
- The Board approved a Capital Campaign expenditure of about \$52K. Earmarked donations allowed our church to spend a total to date about \$65K on equipment.

Thank you to all the dust bunny chasers: Blair W (coach and facilitator), Deb B, Carol B, Debbie W, Diana C, Jennifer C, Jenni H, Paul B, Phil H who joined Anne H and Isabell W, EMT co-chairs

And thank you as well to all those who contributed financially this far!

We are looking for an additional \$6-13K to create a supplementary heating zone in the basement which includes Bible Village classrooms on the south side, to upgrade thermostats to smart models, to insulate pipes generally, and to replace the two remaining pumps with variable speed models as well as various peripheral system items such as valves and vents. We would also like to install a secure “red-line” control system, for a total project budget of about \$80K for this fiscal year, with an additional 15,000 lbs reduction in carbon footprint, and \$3K in cost savings.

If you would like to help us insulate pipes on weekends and school holidays, please contact Anne and Isabell at [EMT@needhamucc.org](mailto:EMT@needhamucc.org) or call 781.449.2052 (Anne).

If you would like to contribute financially to this fast-payback earth stewardship project, please contact Danielle about making an earmarked donation to the Boiler Replacement Project.

## Friendly Society News



Christmas Stockings for City Mission kids! Come to Friendly Society's Workshop meeting to sew and assemble net stockings with small toys.

We'll meet **November 5, 1:30**, 1180 Great Plain Avenue to socialize as we work. The Christmas spirit starts early!

## FAMILY PROMISE METROWEST



Family Promise Metrowest is a community response to family homelessness. Congregations provide food and shelter by opening their doors to these families. Needham

UCC is a support congregation, which means we provide support to other local congregations who house the families. As a Family Promise volunteer you will gather with other members of the congregation to cook, serve and share family supper with the

families. Needham UCC supports these congregations four separate weeks over the year. Our next support week is November 22.

Don't have time to volunteer? In-Kind Donations are also needed.

**Sweet Sounds for Kids on Sunday afternoon, October 25 3:30-5 PM at Energy Fitness in Natick.**

For more information please go to the website: [www.familypromisemetrowest.org](http://www.familypromisemetrowest.org).

If interested in participating, or have questions, please contact Heidi Wiesel at [heidi.wiesel@gmail.com](mailto:heidi.wiesel@gmail.com) or Susan Kirk at [susanckirk@comcast.net](mailto:susanckirk@comcast.net).



### Let Us Bring Guatemala To You!

In August and February each year, we send delegates to Santa María Tzejá on behalf of our congregation. Approximately 200 people, including more than 90 youth from our congregation, have traveled to Guatemala over the 28 years of our partnership. A delegation highlight in Guatemala City is attending a 'coyuntura' to hear first-hand accounts of social, economic, and political events shaping the country and affecting our friends in Santa María Tzejá.

On October 25th, that experience comes to Needham, and we hope you will join us for this rare opportunity. NISGUA (the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala) sponsors a Fall Tour of the United States, and this year will visit Needham, largely in response to our interest and activism on behalf of people in Guatemala. We will host an event on Sunday, October 25th, from 6:30 - 8:00 pm in Fellowship Hall, where we will learn more about the impacts of mining on natural resources and rural communities in Guatemala. The featured speaker will be Llan Carlos Dávila, a local Mayor and representative of the Diocesan Committee on the Defense of Nature, a church-based organization in Guatemala that supports the rights of local communities in their pursuit of ecological justice. A second public event on this national tour



Llan Carlos Dávila, CODIDENA

will be held at the Northeastern University School of Law on Monday October 26th at 6:00 pm.

If you are interested in our partnership with Santa María Tzejá, social and economic development in developing countries, global sustainability, or environmental justice, this is a must-see event. We hope to see you there.

Check our website at [guatemalapartners.org](http://guatemalapartners.org) or [nisgua.org](http://nisgua.org).

### Third Annual 'Guatemala Social' a Success

This event for partner families and friends of the project, held outdoors at the Johnson's on September 20th, was a fun and festive gathering enjoyed by 40-50 people. Thanks to all who dropped by to share good camaraderie and an array of delicious food and wine. It was an energizing event, as we celebrate the impact of the partnership in both communities and begin another year of outreach and exchange with Santa María Tzejá.

### Two SMT Journalists Reach International Audience

Two journalism graduates from the village, Santiago Botón and Rolanda García, are working as regional correspondents for the Venezuelan news program TeleSur, reaching viewers throughout Latin America. They are TeleSur's first team of indigenous Maya K'iché reporters in Guatemala. Per Rolanda, "we see TeleSur as an alternative international news channel through which we can make visible our struggles and resistance, our ways of life and the organization of our communities, as we look to achieve our inclusion and our autonomy." Our congregation contributes to such successes by providing middle school salary support and high school scholarships.

**save the date!**

**THE VILLAGE FAIR!  
NOV. 14TH**

It is once again time to start thinking about the Village Fair, and Silent Auction. We are accepting donations for the Auction as of now. This can be items of value, donations of services, donations of area restaurant or store Gift Certificates, or a donation of lessons in your area of expertise. (Voice and music lessons, tutoring, and cooked or baked goods on schedule are always popular!)



Please contact Diana Conroy (781-449-3350 or conroyjd@rcn.com) to arrange for your donation.

Our Fair is not only a wonderful event for our community it is a wonderful time for fellowship in our Church. There are many opportunities to be part of the Fair and we would love to have as many people involved as possible! Contact Danielle in the church office (office@needhamucc.org or 781-444-2510) and let her know what your availability would be and if you have a special area you would like to contribute. We have volunteer opportunities available if you can help out for one hour or a few the day of the Fair or in our pre-fair planning!

**CHAPEL CHAIRS,  
CHAIRS, CHAIRS!!**

Now that the chapel renovation is completed, we need to give everyone a lovely place to sit.

Twelve chairs have already been purchased through the generosity of the Chapel Committee and twelve more are on order. Now we need your help to reach the goal of sixty more chairs. You may purchase one for \$175 which can include a plaque denoting a memorial or tribute. This is a fine way to honor a family member, celebrate a birthday, anniversary, or other special occasion. Other monetary donations are welcome and will be applied to additional chairs. Checks and inscriptions can be sent to the church office.

Thank you,  
The Chapel Committee

**ONA NEWS AND  
EVENTS**



**OPEN AND AFFIRMING  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**LGBTQ HISTORY  
MONTH**

October is LGBTQ History Month, during which we will display our ONA banner in the sanctuary. Beginning

October 1, read the stories of famous LGBTQ people at [lgbthistorymonth.com](http://lgbthistorymonth.com). The site includes such notables as sociologist and women's suffrage supporter Jane Addams, basketball player Jason Collins, actors Laverne Cox and Angelina Jolie, poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, Good Morning America anchor Robin Roberts, and singer Dusty Springfield.

**COMING OUT DAY**

October 11 is celebrated as National Coming Out Day, a day of sharing one's truth about their sexual orientation or gender identity. People may

also choose to come out as allies to the LGBTQ community.

**THE ONA COVENANT**

The Open and Affirming Coalition of the UCC reminds churches that the "ONA covenant is the congregation's vow to work for a church and a world where everyone is wanted and valued."

"The Coalition's focus on building churches and communities where LGBTQ people can live their lives in freedom and equality also means that we need to be one with the struggle for racial justice — these issues are intimately intertwined."

**ENDORSE TRANSGENDER LEGISLATION**

Please take the opportunity to sign as a supporter of the current transgender legislation. It would expand the current Massachusetts law to provide protections and in places of public accommodation, including such places as theaters, restaurants, medical buildings, lodging, transportation, parks.

Go to: [freedommassachusetts.org/faith](http://freedommassachusetts.org/faith)



## OCTOBER 2015

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
				<b>1 Lunch with Heike</b>	2	3
<b>4 Communion Bible Study Labyrinth Church Meeting</b>	<b>5 Cancer Support Group</b>	<b>6 Community Dinner</b>	7	8	9	10
<b>11 Bible Study Stewardship Kick-off!</b>	<b>12 Columbus Day Office Closed</b>	13	14	15	16	17
<b>18 Men's Breakfast Bible Study</b>	<b>19 Cancer Support Group</b>	20	21	22	23	<b>24 Haunted House</b>
<b>25 Worship Bible Study</b>	<b>26 Cancer Support Group</b>	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween

### COMMUNITY DINNERS

**6-7pm, October 6 & November 3 Linden Hall**

Once a month we offer dinner for the families of Baby Basics and the volunteers involved in the program. Everyone is invited to join us for dinner, and/or if you are looking for a volunteer opportunity for your family, this is an opportunity for children and adult alike. Dinners are on the first Tuesday of the month.

Help is needed with shopping for food, meal preparation, eating with our guests, and clean up.

Please contact Rev. Heike or Diana Conroy if you are interested in participating in the service project.

**THURSDAY LUNCHESES WITH REV. HEIKE**  
**Noon-1pm, Nov. 5 and Advent Lunches Dec. 3, 10 & 17 at 1180 Great Plain Ave.**

If you are available for a different kind of lunch break, why not have lunch at the church on the first Thursday of the month and weekly during the season of Advent and Lent?

Rev. Heike will be offering a delicious, nutritious soup, good bread, and dessert. The cost for the lunch remain \$ 3.00 per person, and we have purchased take-out containers for take-away.

Our first Thursday luncheons will take place in our new building at 1180 Great Plain Avenue.

### LABYRINTH

**Sunday, October 4th, Noon**

The dream started a few years ago: Wouldn't it be nice to have our own labyrinth? We were able to borrow a portable one from the Wellesley Village Church for special occasions which caused in us a little "labyrinth envy". But the cost for a new one is prohibitive.

Amazingly, Carol Miller sewed together the canvas, and then figured out how to draw a labyrinth onto it. Volunteers came and painted in the pattern and we now have a finished, beautiful labyrinth!



A labyrinth is an ancient pattern found all over the world and its symbolism points toward all the journeys we make in life. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tool.

We will be laying the Labyrinth out in Fellowship Hall Sunday October 4th after Coffee Hour (around noon). If you are interested, please join us!

**CHURCH MEETING**  
**Sunday, October 4th, 2pm**

On October 4th, at 2 pm we will hold a feedback meeting for Rev. Hayes to share the comments, suggestions, opinions, and questions that were raised on September 26th.



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**Men's Breakfast**  
**Sunday October 18th**

On Sunday, 10/18, the Men's Breakfast Fellowship will welcome all church men to breakfast.

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](mailto:jsbaldwin@comcast.net)) or Rob Dunlavey ([rob@robd.com](mailto:rob@robd.com)) for more information.

**CHURCH RENOVATION NEWS**

**Boiler Replacement Campaign**

Make a tax deductible contribution towards the efforts for energy efficiency in our church at 1154 Great Plain Ave. With the addition of our 3 new boilers, we change our heat efficiency from 60% to 96%. With our other energy saving efforts, we hope to reduce our carbon footprint 25% by 2020! We have

the potential to save \$10,000- \$15,000 each year! Any contributions may be earmarked for the "Boiler Replacement Campaign". If your employer has a matching program, please consider requesting a contribution match from them.

Send your contribution to Danielle in the church office.

address

stamp

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF  
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