



FOCUS

June 2016 | Vol. 39 Issue 6

A Message from Rev. Heike Werder

Once again, a busy program year is coming to an end. The weeks of June celebrate, for the most part, all kinds of good endings. The public school calendar finishes up June 17, music and dance lessons culminate in recitals, sports teams gather for banquets after a successful season. School bags are exchanged for travel bags for sleep away camp, and high school seniors are starting on their shopping lists for college or looking forward to gap year activities. I am sure that parents are glad to stop being the family's Uber driver and are happy not having to ask "Have you done your homework yet?" for a while. Many of us are ready



to switch gears to start vacations or spend precious summer weeks at cabins all over New England. Others might stay home but already have day trips or their summer reading list all planned out. Whatever you get to do over the summer, enjoy it!

Your church continues to serve you over the summer months. Sunday worship will be held in the chapel beginning July 3rd. While I am on vacation in July, Sandra Summers (M.Div.) and Maddie Downer (M.Div.) will share leading us in worship. Valerie Becker will be our summer musician, and our worship service itself changes just a little bit to use creatively the smaller space. Maddie will also cover pastoral care needs during the weeks of July.

It has also been a kind of tradition to pick a summer sermon theme. After some discussion, we have decided to become biblical story tellers for the months of July and August. We will be using the book by Rabbi Marc Gellman called "**Does God Have a Big Toe? Stories about Stories in the Bible**". Gellman places these stories in the tradition of the midrashim - stories, allegories, and fables whose purpose is to interpret and illuminate the fixed narrative of Holy Scripture. These stories can be told much more freely or shaped by contemporary conditions, and thereby renewing the old stories and teasing out their meaning in a fresh, and often funny way.

Just to give you a little sample, this is how one of the stories starts out: *"In the beginning, as God engages in the business of creating the world, the angels hector the Deity with questions: 'Is the world finished now?' God answers 'NOPE!' like some brusque grandparent wanting to work in peace. Then God makes a man and a woman and says to them, 'I am tired now. . . . If you keep trying to finish the world, I will be your partner.'"*

And "then the angels asked God, 'Is the world finished yet?' and God answered, 'I don't know. Go ask my partners.'"

If you are in town, join us for worship as we share stories about the stories from Holy Scripture, and if you are away, keep us in your prayer as we will keep you in ours.

Blessings,
Heike

Preaching Schedule

June 5 - Youth Sunday
 June 12 - Worship with Communion; Rev. Werder preaching
 June 19 - Worship; Rev. Werder preaching
 June 26 - Hymn Sing; Madelyn Downer leading the service
 July 3 - Worship with Communion in Chapel; Sandra Summer preaching
 July 10 - Worship; Sandra Summer preaching
 July 17 - Worship; Chapel; Madelyn Downer preaching
 July 24 - Worship; Chapel; Madelyn Downer preaching

July 31 - Worship; Chapel; Madelyn Downer preaching
 Aug 7 - Worship with Communion; Chapel; Rev. Mitulski and Rev. Werder
 Aug 14 - Worship; Chapel; Rev. Mitulski and Rev. Werder
 Aug 21 - Worship; Chapel; Rev. Mitulski and Rev. Werder
 Aug 28 - Worship and Blessing of the Backpacks; Chapel; Rev. Mitulski and Rev. Werder
 Sept 4 - Worship; Rev. Mitulski and Rev. Werder
 Sept 11 - **Worship with Communion and Welcome Back Sunday; Rev. Mitulski and Rev. Werder**

Music Ministry News by Valerie Becker, Director of Music



Summertime is fast approaching and with that come thoughts of fun in the ocean, cookouts and lazier days. For me, this down time is actually quite productive as I have the opportunity to plan

for the year ahead and also reflect back on what has transpired during the "unofficial year," September to June. This year there were many beautiful musical moments. Each and every week the Chancel Choir, along with our section leaders brought their best to Sunday morning worship. The Youth Choirs were always enthusiastic and willing to work and they loved singing during the service. Solos from members of the congregation and of course the Friendly Chimers rounded out our program! Just think about how much you actually heard and experienced! I am blessed to be able to work with

so many wonderful people and look forward to next season. Our Holiday Concert will include Benjamin Britten's "Ceremony of Carols and much more!"

Please also remember that all of the choirs would love to have more members. If you can share just a little time, you will experience the reward of singing with a group of wonderful people.

Chancel Choir rehearsals

Thurs. evenings from 7:30 - 9:00pm

Sunday morning - rehearsal & service at 10am.

Youth Choir rehearsals

Joyful Noise and Hallelujah Choirs

Sundays from 11:30 - 12:00

Have a wonderful, restful summer.

Valerie



26th Annual Guatemala Yard Sale



Results

Wonderful weather and an excellent turnout of shoppers made the annual Guatemala yard

sale a great success in every way. In addition to celebrating a near-record \$5,450 in funds raised for education in Santa Maria Tzeja, we also celebrate the reuse of so many donated items, along with the fun and satisfaction experienced by so many folks in the Needham community. Our corps of 40 volunteers ranged in age from grade-schoolers to 80-year-olds! Thanks to Nora Slosser for once again running a lemonade stand that raised \$60 for our partnership, and thanks to all who participated in any way.

Partner Family Letters Due June 1st!

If you haven't already submitted your Partner-Family or Scholarship Donor letters, please do so as soon as possible to Dave Johnson: davejohnson77@gmail.com. Our volunteer translators are awaiting your letters so they can

'work their magic' in time for the August delegation to hand carry your letters down. Thank you.

Send-Off for August Delegation (Aug. 2nd, 7-8 pm, 505 Great Plain Ave.)

Please mark the above date on your calendars and plan to join family and friends in sending off the following August delegation travelers to Guatemala: Co-Leaders Caryl Johnson and Alan Clayton-Matthews; David Johnson; Scott Lively; Elizabeth Lively; Rosie Evans; Jessica Clayton-Matthews; Chris Pooley; Kaela Curtis; and Sierra Curtis Little-Gill. Travel dates are August 3-14, 2016.

Seeking Travelers for February 2017 Delegation

Recruitment has begun for the February 2017 delegation to Guatemala! Travel dates are February 15-26, 2017. We hope to have a healthy mix of adults and high school youth to represent the church. Since airline tickets must be purchased in late September, please contact delegation leader Brenda Metzler as soon as possible with your interest or questions: (781) 449-5696 or bmetzler7@verizon.net.

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:
Tuesday, August 23

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

Maddie Downer
CE & Youth Director
youth@needhamucc.org

Valerie Becker
Music Director
musicdirector@needhamucc.org

Danielle Jurdan
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Cindy Sullivan
Office Assistant
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Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton,
Pastor Emeritus

AN UPDATE FROM YOUR DEACONS

May was another busy, and fun, month for your Deacons. One of the most satisfying responsibilities that we have is to host the brunch on Confirmation Sunday for the new Confirmands and their families. As Deacons our role in the church is to support the spiritual health of the congregation and serve members and ministers in a support role. Every year we get to combine these responsibilities by serving the next generation as they affirm and grow in their faith. As always this was a day to nourish the soul as well as the stomach!

May was also a month where we finished the task of transcribing the Start-Stop-Continue suggestions from the evening of Fellowship and Feedback. As mentioned in last month's focus, there were a lot of comments received; well over 300 hand-written post-its in all. After completing the transcription and organizing the suggestions into categories, there were some themes that stood out.

In some ways the feedback showed very good alignment of desired action and our leadership focus for 2016 as many of the START suggestions are either already being implemented or are in progress. These include the following:

- Conducting an audit of the church's finances, which is being undertaken by the Board this year.
- Performing a review of church bylaws, which is another initiative that has been initiated by the Board.
- Putting in place a formal process for pastoral and staff objective setting and performance evaluation. A Deacon team was assembled earlier this year to design and implement a process with the goal of implementation by the end of the year.

Among the items listed most frequently in the CONTINUE category were to continue many aspects of our excellent music programs as well as other aspects of the worship service and youth programs.

In addition to the items mentioned above, there were many other suggestions that will not only be discussed over the coming months but also will provide a good source of baseline information for Reverend Jim Mitulski upon his arrival later in the summer.

So what is next? Continued dissemination of the suggestions to the pertinent teams and committees for discussion. And also making the entire list available to all members. This will be accomplished in a couple of ways. A categorized listing including every suggestion received will be posted on the Deacon's board in the month of June. And any member interested in an electronic version of the list can request one from the general feedback email at feedback@needhamucc.org.

And always remember that email address is the one to use if you would like to provide feedback to the church but are not sure where to send it. We will make sure it gets to the right place.

As this is the last FOCUS before the summer, the entire Deacons team would like to wish all members a very relaxing, enjoyable and spiritually enriching summer.

Blessings,
The Deacons Communication Team

YOU ARE INVITED!

Invitation from the Board

Please join Board members and our Treasurer, Jen Connors at 11:30 on Sunday, June 26 for a forum on the Capital Campaign, the future use of 1180 Great Plain Avenue and plans for capital improvements at 1154 Great Plain Avenue. (Spoiler alert: These are all related!)

We plan to review where we are, how we got here, and options for the future- short and long term. We are interested in hearing from you as we move forward together.

I hope you can join us.
Jackie Allen, Moderator

PASTORAL CARE the LAST WEEK OF JUNE

For Pastoral Emergencies from June 26 to June 30, 2016, please call:

Rev. Judy Swahnberg,
Wellesley Hills
Congregational Church,
UCC
judy@hillschurch.org
Church office: 781-235-4424

Cell: 617-816-6605
or

Rev. Elizabeth Garrigan-Byerly
Wellesley Village Church
Urgent Pastoral Care
Cell: 781-591-7451

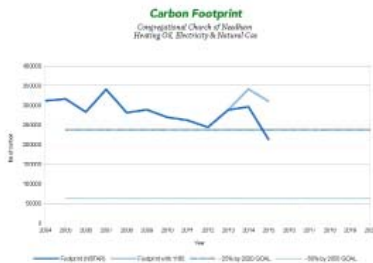
**save
THE DATE!**

Saturday, Sept. 17th 11:30am - Pie-A-Thalon

The first annual Pie bake-off competition and a Meet and Greet for our new Senior Interim Minister Jim Mitulski!

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

CARBON OFFSETS: AN EARTH STEWARDSHIP GESTURE



If you are like most people in Massachusetts, you have made efficiency improvements to and practice conservation measures in your home, from installing

LED bulbs to choosing high efficiency heating and appliances to running only what you really need to eating sustainable food. You have also done the same with transportation, perhaps choosing to take the train or your bike more often, and replacing your old car with an energy-efficient one.

At the same time, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been working hard behind the scenes on more efficient energy supply and distribution, through incentives on renewables and setting legally imperative goals. Collectively, this has led to a 15% reduction in carbon footprint, a measure of greenhouse gas pollution, from 1990 to 2012.

But there is still a way to go to reach the Global Warming Solutions Act's goal of an 80% decrease by 2050 or even a 25% decrease by 2020 (vs 1990).

It's no surprise that most residents are far from being "zero net energy": producing in renewables as much as we use. There will always be some air travel to see family who live far away, some residual car use, while super-insulation retrofitting of houses is only now being piloted by a few brave pioneers.

You are nonetheless faithful to caring for God's creation and are concerned about how your energy usage impacts our friends in Guatemala and other

vulnerable populations around the globe. What can you do today in this conundrum?

Carbon offsets are an answer to that question! They are a way to compensate for your carbon footprint.

Typically they function through reforesting key areas in order to absorb and sequester excess carbon dioxide gas from the atmosphere. It's a way to take responsibility for your part of the pollution. In effect, you pay a nonprofit to plant trees. One of the most well-known companies is Carbon Fund (carbonfund.org). For a typical household, the annual cost runs about \$200-1000. You have the choice, bills and plane ticket receipts in hand, to calculate your footprint, or to simply purchase an offset based on the US averages for your household's size.

Another option is to donate a similar amount to Mass Energy Consumers Alliance (massenergy.org). Closer to home, this nonprofit's goal is to increase the renewable energy portfolio in Massachusetts, driving down renewables costs at the same time and, of course, our state's collective carbon footprint.

We can apply the same thinking about our church's building energy usage. While we have been taking steps since 2009 to reduce our carbon footprint (see chart for goals and status) we still have much work to do to achieve zero net energy, and it will take time to get there as well. For 2015's carbon footprint of 309,593 lbs (1154 and 1180 combined), the cost of carbon offsetting with Carbon Fund would be \$1552. This caring act of earth stewardship would add about 4% to our energy cost each year.

We think it's worth considering - individually and also as a church. What if each household participated with \$10 each to offset our church's building carbon footprint? It seems a small gesture to a worthy cause, and in gratefulness for a warm sanctuary in so many ways.

Anne Hayek and Isabell Wells, co-chairs
EMT@needhamucc.org

End of the Year Sun., June 12 11:30am



Join us for food, fellowship and fun!

Celebrate the start of summer & the end of another wonderful year.

You are welcome to bring Dessert to share!

Lunch and drinks courtesy of the Youth and CE Committees.

ONA NEWS

VOICES RISING June 4

We welcome back Voices Rising for a Pride Month concert at our church on Saturday, June 4, 2016, at 7:30pm. The chorus will present "Be Our Guest - A Smorgasbord of Song." Their website says it's "a choral tribute to food and

performing a concert at the Needham Congregational Church, UCC. Hosting Voices Rising each year is part of our church's celebration of our welcoming ministry.

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

BOSTON PRIDE

Boston Pride is Saturday, June 11. The day starts with the wonderful Pride Morning Worship Service at Old South Church, 645 Boylston Street in Boston at 11am (gathering music at 10:30). Senator Elizabeth Warren and the UCC's own Rev. Judy Hanlon of Hadwen Park Church and the LGBT Asylum Task Force will receive this year's Open Door Award.

The Pride Parade kicks off at 12 noon. The Mass Conference Open and Affirming churches delegation, armed with rhythm instruments and chants, will march in the parade. A festival at City Hall Plaza follows the parade. Please contact Kathie Carpenter (kacarp@comcast.net) if you want to represent Needham UCC with the group.



drink, hunger and thirst. From chili con carne to mashed potatoes, from mangoes to mochas, we'll spill, splatter, guzzle, gobble and munch as we explore our multifaceted relationships to food with musical humor, rebellion and reverence. Snap along to some vocal jazz, kick up your heels in a raucous polka, sway with a familiar folk ballad and sing along to Disney and Broadway classics. Bon appétit!"

Led by artistic director, Leora Zimmer, and accompanist, Soohee Moon, Voices Rising is founded upon feminist principles of community, inclusivity, activism and education. They sing together to give voice to their lives, identities and beliefs, and to celebrate the diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and women's communities in and around Boston. This is the twelfth year of operation of the chorus and its eleventh year



JUNE 2016						
Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2 Thursday Lunch	3	4
5 Youth Sunday Worship Bible Study	6 Cancer Support Group	7 Community Dinner	8	9	10	11
12 Communion Worship All Church BBQ	13 Cancer Support Group	14	15	16	17	18
19 Worship - Father's Day & Blessing of the Youth Mission Trip Bible Study	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Worship - Hymn Sing with Maddie Downer Bible Study	27	28	29	30		

COMMUNITY DINNERS

**6-7pm, June 7 & July 12
Linden Hall**

Every month we prepare and share dinner with the families of Baby Basics. 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 adults alike. Dinners are 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 LUNCH WITH REV. HEIKE

**Noon-1pm, June 2
1180 Great Plain Ave.**

Food builds community. We all have to eat, but we don't have to eat alone. Everyone is cordially invited to have a simple lunch on the first Thursday of every month. Soups are vegetarian based (most of them) but always lactose and nut free. Everyone is welcome!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

SEPTEMBER 11, 2016

WELCOME BACK SUNDAY WITH COMMUNION

**END OF THE YEAR BBQ
Sunday June 12
11:30am-2pm
Food, Fellowship & FUN
Everyone is welcome!**

**A NOTE FROM THE
USHERS**

Would you like to contribute to the life of our church, but are worried that you might not have the time? Consider ushering! Ushers serve one Sunday per month, and need to be in the sanctuary from about 20 minutes before and 20 minutes after service.

Interested?

Please speak with Eric Slosser or email him at eric@slosser.net.

JULY 2016

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
					1	2
3 Communion Worship - Chapel - Sandra Summers	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Worship - Chapel - Sandra Summers	11	12 Community Dinner	13	14	15	16
17 Worship - Chapel - Maddie Downer	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Worship - Chapel - Maddie Downer	25	26	27		29	30
31 Worship - Chapel - Maddie Downer						

AUGUST 2016

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
	1	2 Community Dinner	3	4	5	6
7 Communion Worship - Chapel	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Worship - Chapel	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Worship - Chapel	22	23	24	25	26	27
	August Vacation Bible School!! 22nd-26th					
28 Worship - Chapel - Blessing of the Backpacks	29	30	31			

SEPTEMBER 2016

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
				1	2	3
4 Worship Bible Study	5 Labor Day - Church offices closed	6 Community Dinner	7	8 Thursday Lunch	9	10
11 Communion Worship Welcome Back Sunday	12 Cancer Support Group	13	14	15	16	17 Pie-A-Thalon!
18 Worship New Member Orientation Bible Study	19 Cancer Support Group	20	21	22	23	24
25 Worship Bible Study	26 Cancer Support Group	27	28	29	30	



1154 Great Plain Avenue
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T: 781-444-2510
office@needhamucc.org

On the web at
needhamucc.org

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of Needham UCC

Men's Fellowship Breakfast, Sunday June 19th

On Sunday, 6/19, the Men's Fellowship Breakfast 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) 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

Youth News

June 2016

@ the Congregational Church of Needham
Maddie Downer, CE & Youth Director



Chaperones Needed for Youth Mission Trip!

We are in need of three - four chaperones (at least 2 male) for the Youth Mission Trip, Monnay, June 27 - Friday, July 1. We will be visiting New Haven, CT where we will learn about food justice, housing vulnerability, and economic disparity. Our work will serve populations who are affected in these areas as well as the host church.

Contact Maddie with any questions or to volunteer at youth@needhamucc.org!!

Put this on your calendar!

Sunday, June 5 is Youth Sunday

Join our children and youth as they lead us in worship with prayer, song, and reflections from their participation in church life! Worship begins at 10 AM.



Sunday, June 12: ALL Church Picnic

The entire congregation is invited to celebrate the beginning of summer with a cookout, games, and community-building. Families are invited to bring a NUT-FREE dessert to share. Burgers, hot dogs, and veggie burgers will be provided.

If you would like to join members of the CE and Youth committees in grilling during the second half of the service, please send Maddie an email at needhamuccyouth@gmail.com.

Sunday, June 19: Blessing the Mission Trip Participants

Please join us during the service to bless our group of high school students and their chaperones for their upcoming mission trip.



Sunday, August 28: Blessing of the Backpacks

Students of all ages are invited to have their backpacks blessed for the new school year on Sunday, August 28 at the morning worship service.

LABOR DAY WEEKEND RAFTING TRIP



High school students are invited to join Heike and Maddie for a weekend of camping and rafting. We will be traveling to Maine to raft on the Kennebec River.

If you are interested in joining us, please email Maddie at needhamuccyouth@gmail.com.

Youth News

@ the Congregational Church of Needham
Maddie Downer, CE & Youth Director

June 2016

AUGUST VBS

Animal Academy

August 22 - 26
8:30 AM - Noon

Come and learn about the furry, feathery, and creepy-crawly members of God's family! Come sing songs, play games, learn about animals in our science workshops, do arts and craft projects, and participate in animal activities! A traveling petting zoo will come to visit. An animal shelter will show us the ways we can help homeless animals. And we'll have lots of fun learning to love all of Creation the way that God loves us!

Please note, children will be in supervised contact with farm animals and puppies.

\$30 per day per student for first child, \$20 per day for each child after. Due by June 30. Ages 3 - 10. Please note, students must be potty-trained. Sign-ups begin on May 15 - June 30 (or until VBS is full.) at needhamucc.org/VBS

Registration is on a first come, first served basis. Once we reach the max per age group for each day, students will be put on a waiting list.

Lunch Bunch: Noon - 1 PM, \$5 per student. Our snacks and lunches are entirely peanut and tree-nut free. Typical lunches: chicken nuggets, sandwiches, pizza.

Scholarships are available!

Please don't let financial circumstances prevent your family from participating in VBS or Lunch Bunch! We can offer partial or full need-based scholarships so that your children can experience the joy of VBS: Animal Academy. Please reach out to us at youth@needhamucc.org if you are interested in a scholarship application.

