

First Baptist Church in Needham

858 Great Plain Avenue

Needham, MA 02492

www.fbcneedham.org



Reign of Christ Sunday & Thanksgiving

Edition 36

Worship and Prayer Resource

Sunday, November 22th 2020

(or whenever you are so led to pause, reflect, and pray)

Lighting the Candle of Life

You may wish to light a candle or use the photo above as a focus for this time.

ALL: We light the Candle of Life - a candle that represents community, spirit, and the fullness of all of life - birth and death and all the transitions in between and beyond.

¹ Brooke, Richard Norris, 1847-1920. Pastoral Visit, Virginia, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57807> [retrieved November 18, 2020]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_Pastoral_Visit,_Virgina,_by_Richard_Norris_Brooke,_1881_-_Corcoran_Gallery_of_Art_-_DSC01173.JPG.

Scriptures for this Week

Choose as many of these scriptures to accompany you throughout the week as you would like. You may choose to read one a day or focus on one for the entire week. What stands out as you read them? What word or idea “shimmers” for you? Are there themes or ideas of connection between the scriptures, or that speak to particular circumstances you are experiencing? Where do you find good news in these passages?

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Psalms 100

Ephesians 1:15-23

Matthew 25:31-46

Pastoral Reflection

Reign of Christ Sunday is the “New Year’s Eve” Sunday of the Christian calendar. Since the first Sunday of Advent in 2019, we have journeyed through a most unusual, and certainly unanticipated year. We have known death of beloved family and friends and witnessed the horror of continued needless deaths of persons of color alongside a pandemic death toll that reaches toward a quarter million people just in the United States. We have experienced the upheaval and anxiety of state and local shut-downs. We have curtailed travel and daily errands and remained at home for work and school. We have learned to wear masks as acts of compassion. We have lived through a contentious election cycle. We have struggled with depression, other physical maladies, and loneliness. We have endured.

The texts today turn this Christian New Year’s Eve on its side, however. Rather than entreating us to ignore the systems of injustice in our community and world that led to protests and dissent, they call us to hear the cries of pain, frustration, and anguish that led people to stop suffering in silence and take to the streets – and become part of the healing. While COVID19 necessitates we maintain physical distance and smile behind masks while separated from loved ones, today’s texts remind us that the pandemic does not stop our reaching out to one another, checking in, creatively – even playfully – being thoughtful, and helping each other through this strange pilgrimage as we grieve and hope together. And though the future remains uncertain in its outcome and we will never be who we were before 2020 came our way, what this year and today’s texts offer us is the challenge to emerge from this experience *better* than we were...more thankful...more generous...more welcoming... more merciful...more patient...more kind...more flexible...and more compassionate than we ever thought to be. As we wrestle with how to give thanks to God for a year that has not been easy, we do so at a distance from one another and yet in community. And what this year has to teach us as we continue to move forward together as the hands and feet, heart and mind, eyes and voice of Christ in the world may just transform us yet...and be a blessing far beyond our imagining upon this old world of ours. *May it be so. –Pastor Holly*





You are encouraged to **join First Baptist Newton (10am) or First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain (11am) for Zoom worship throughout the month of November.** Links to these church services will be provided via email and text message. If you would like to receive updates and links, please email pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org. You may also appreciate watching one of our recorded outdoor services or listening to the sermons posted on our website, www.fbcneedham.org (go to Worship From Home).

Song of Response

Give Thanks

words & music by Henry Smith

A Williamsburg, Virginia, native, Henry Smith (1952) wrote "Give Thanks" in 1978 shortly after graduating from college. It is the only one of over 300 compositions he has had published. The song speaks to the condition of his life at the time: unable to find work and diagnosed with a degenerative eye condition that eventually left him blind, Smith's faith and hometown pastor both attuned him to Christ's unfailing presence.² Sing, read aloud, or listen to, "Give Thanks", as sung by Dan Moen at <https://youtu.be/blbslHDgceY>

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he's given
Jesus Christ his Son. *(repeat)*

And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"
let the poor say, "I am rich,"
because of what the Lord has done for us.
(repeat)



² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Give_Thanks_with_a_Grateful_Heart

Prayers of the People

Enter into this time in song. If you don't know the tune, let the words be the doorway to your prayer.

Sung Prayer

Hear My Prayer, O Lord

BENZENHAFER
arr. Holly C. Benzenhafer

Hear my prayer, O Lord. Hear my prayer, O Lord.
I am asking, hear my prayer, O Lord.

Prayerful Meditation

“Give me the listening ear. I seek this day the ear that will not shrink from the word that corrects and admonishes; the word that holds up before me that causes me to pause and reconsider; the word that challenges me to deeper consecration and higher resolve; the word that lays bare needs that make my own days uneasy, that seizes upon every good decent impulse of my nature, channeling it into paths of healing in the lives of others....

“Give me this day the eye that is willing to see the meaning of the ordinary, the commonplace; the eye that is willing to see my own faults for what they are, the eye that is willing to see the likeable qualities in those I may not like, the mistake in what I thought was correct, the strength in what I had labeled as weakness. Give me the eye that is willing to see that thou hast not left thyself without a witness in every living thing....Give me the listening ear, the eye that is willing to see.”³

*Enter into prayer trusting that God who fashioned you hears and sees
the longings and needs of your heart.*

We Hold in Prayer...

*Many of this week's prayers are requests from members of our congregation in the past week. **If you have general or specific prayer requests to share - joys as well as concerns - please contact Holly or Daryn to pass them along.***

As a community of faith gathered in Spirit when we cannot be in person as we are accustomed, we offer our hearts and voices in prayer where we are, entrusting the Spirit's moving among us and responding far beyond our individual reach and influence...

With Barbara, we pray for organizations, teams, and individuals whose work and service is responding to the devastation of disasters – fire, flood, hurricane, tornado, earthquakes, and the numerous human-create devastations that cause suffering and loss to humanity and the natural world. We especially prayer for her son as he goes and offers his skills and care in these spaces of upheaval and pain. And we pray for the people of Nicaragua as they now try to recover from two major hurricanes in two weeks' time...**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

³ Howard Thurman, “Give Me the Listening Ear,” in *Meditations of the Heart* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1953), 208.

We hold Clif's cousin, Audrey Childs, to your healing care, Holy One, as she recovers at home after breaking her arm in a fall while serving as a poll worker during the election. For ease of pain and a full recovery...***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With Harry, we celebrate the ability to place orders for prescription glasses online in order to reduce contact with people during COVID...***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Louise and Barbara, we offer gratitude for our Pastors Daryn and Holly and the spiritual guidance and presence they offer in the midst of a pandemic and our own congregation's discernment. For their care of our FBC Needham community and for the devoted ministry of clergy of all faiths and traditions who seek to accompany people on this journey of life...***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Louise, we are thankful to simply be alive and able to cherish the goodness of life in the everyday habits of living...***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Pastor Holly, we hold the souls who continue to be diagnosed with COVID19, especially her friend Gray Jackson and his mother, Eda, who are currently at home in Mississippi, and her friend Dale Tadlock's mother, who was placed on a ventilator and airlifted to a hospital in Jackson, Mississippi Tuesday. For these souls and Dale's father who is quarantined at home...***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With Bev and Andrew, we give thanks for the news that there are at least two potential vaccines on the horizon that appears to be effective. We are so thankful for all the folks that contributed their time and talent to its development, and for all those who have been willing to serve as guinea pigs so that we might have a treatment soon. We recognize that nothing is certain and that any vaccine will take time. We pray that we will all have the persistence and will to make good decisions for the sake of all those we love in the meantime ...***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With Ernie, we celebrate the good news that some of his tumors have responded to the new treatment and await the next round of treatment and testing later in December. For the effectiveness of medical care and alternatives available that enhance well-being through the process...***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Bev, we offer prayer for Stephen Jennings, who had a heart attack and has now returned home. For his recovery and the medical team overseeing his care...***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With Barbara, we give thanks for the Worship Resource and the way a few pages of reflections, prayers, pictures, and songs can "bind us together with ties that cannot be broken"...***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

We continue to offer prayers for our congregation as we begin Creative Callings, an intentional process of discernment about the future of First Baptist Church in Needham - as we listen and seek God's will and the movement of the Holy Spirit through shared story and conversation with ministry partners, community partners and one another. We ask for your blessing, Holy One, in this process. Help us to show up and participate fully, to be good and considerate listeners and careful with our words. Help us to work together, and to receive clarity, moving forward into a new iteration of ministry knowing that you have always called us into a newness of life and being. Help us to move into that way of being together without fear or trepidation, unhindered by what we find comfortable or customary, what is expected or assumed. Open our hearts to your wide and generous realm of possibility and give us the wisdom and strength to move forward into our next Creative Calling ... ***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With Louise, Andrew, and Harry, we are grateful for family who check in to say, "I love you;" who help with winterizing homes and chores; and who find creative ways for us to stay in touch...***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

We hold Liz's friend Sharefa (called Nina) to your care, Holy One as she moves between work and being the sole care-giver for her mother who is in hospital on an ongoing basis. Recognizing the incredible strain of balancing work and caregiving, we ask your comfort and continued strength move with Nina. Grant her spaces of respite for her body, mind, and spirit. Give her clarity in decisions and support her and all persons who offer loving care alongside work to their loved ones...***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With Pastor Holly, we give thanks that the wrist injuries she suffered over the summer have abated. We receive her gratitude for the continued expressions of care and concern and celebrate her release from pain when performing her work...***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Harry, we celebrate the pleasure of writing cards and letters, sending emails, texting, and calling dear friends and family and hearing back from them, in return. For the sweetness of communicating with those souls we love and care for when we cannot be together..***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Andrew, we pray for persons who daily get up and go to work knowing they are exposed to heightened risk of COVID in doing so. For souls who are called to their work and accept the risk and for souls who are required to work to survive for whom the risk is not an option we pray...***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With John, we give thanks for a good check-up for his twin grandbabies and delight in the ongoing health and vibrance of new life among us...***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Harry, Clif, and Andrew, we are grateful for the Senior Center and their continued care by bringing fresh vegetables and fruit as well as meals to senior adults throughout Needham. We give thanks for the distribution of gift bags Clif will help deliver and for the opportunity to see friends he hasn't seen in a long while. For their paid staff and volunteers and for neighbors and friends who also reach out to help each other... ***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Pastor Daryn, we rejoice with her friend, Sarah MacKinstry Barrington, in the birth of her daughter, Jane Elisabeth on November 12. For this wee new life fresh from God, we are in awe and wonder. We now hold Jane to her Creator's healing as she had to enter NICU a day after her birth with respiratory distress. Comfort her parents and extended family as they await her return to their waiting arms. Guide the medical team in their ministrations. Comfort little Jane in these first days of life... ***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With Harry, we give thanks for the diversion of athletics – our own exercise for good health as well as professional sports. For the pleasure of a good game or workout... ***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Clif, we offer deep gratitude for the people we will not be able to celebrate Thanksgiving with in person and pray that our diligence to lovingly remain at separate tables this year will help to slow the spread of COVID and spare people from sickness and potential death. We are deeply grateful for the homes we do have – those shared with others and those where we are alone – where we will celebrate this holiday. As Clif is thankful to share Thanksgiving with Anthony (and PJ) this year, help us each to see the ones we live with or the home we inhabit alone with a warm and gracious spirit... ***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

God, we ask your mercy upon us when the mistakes and misgivings of our minds, hearts and bodies lead to irrevocable consequences that cause others, and our world, more pain. Have mercy on us when we abuse our power and privilege, when we misjudge, or when our biases and prejudices cloud our vision and corrupt our action. We pray for our divided communities, unite us in your love and mark us with repentance and humility so we can seek the change we need to heal. Again, help *all of us* seek and be ready for the transformation that needs to come for justice and peace to reign in the hearts and systems we create ... ***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

We continue to offer prayers that the stain of racism that exists on the fabric of our nation and the tendencies toward discrimination and dehumanization in our world would be eradicated. Give us the strength to overcome these sins ... ***Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...***

With Liz and Pastor Holly, we offer thanks for our companion animals who provide daily joy, unquenchable love, and great affection. For Rascal and Bandit, Moonshine and Samhain, PJ, and Deacon, and the rest of our FBC Needham menagerie... ***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow...***

With Andrew, we are grateful for the spiritual practices of prayer and worship that afford us ongoing recalibration of our lives toward deeper attunement and accompaniment with God. For those times of centering down, quiet reflection, wonder, and contemplation...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.*

For the prayers of our hearts that you, Holy One, know even when words cannot hold them...*Hear my prayer, O Lord...*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in
heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins as we
forgive
those who sin against us.
And lead us not into
temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory
forever. Amen



Song of Thanksgiving *For the Fruit of All Creation* AR HYD Y NOS

The Reverend Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000) was a British Methodist pastor throughout England. However, it wasn't until his retirement that he became a prolific and very popular hymnist. Writing over 300 hymns, Green was attributed the leader of the hymn writing "explosion" of the 1960s, and more of his hymns appear in North American hymnals today than any other 20th century hymn writer. This harvest hymn set to a Welsh melody intertwines God's care for our physical world and needs with our spiritual nurture and sustenance in verses 1 & 2 while verse 3 reminds us we are the hands and feet of Christ and must embody this care and justice through our actions and words each day.⁴ Sing or read the text or sing along with the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Monroeville, Pennsylvania's choir at <https://youtu.be/AusLKhwtiE4>.

For the fruit of all creation,
thanks be to God.
gifts bestowed on every nation,
thanks be to God.

For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor,
God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbor,
God's will is done.

In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

Offering



*During this time of offering, consider going right now to www.fbcneedham.org (Take Action) to complete your offering or **continue to support the ongoing ministry of the church** by writing your check to the church office and preparing it to mail to: **First Baptist Church in Needham, 858 Great Plain Avenue, Needham MA 02492**. Please indicate it is your offering or pledge on the check.*

Let this act be a spiritual practice woven in within your worship.

Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

⁴ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-for-the-fruit-of-this-creation>

Benediction

Speak these words of benediction knowing that you are part of a loving community of faith. If you lit a candle at the beginning, you may wish to blow it out now.

One: Our blessing to one another is that we are here for one another, that we are with one another, that we celebrate and remember one another along the journey.

ALL: We extinguish the Candle of Life, but the Light continues to shine within us. As we pass the peace we carry the Light of the Candle of Life from this hour into this world and beyond, offering peace, hope and light wherever the journey leads.

Passing of the Peace

Consider going to a window or standing in your door and speaking the blessing, “The peace of Christ be with you.” to the world as the service concludes. Imagine your family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors receiving this blessing. Consider the strangers, delivery and mail people, city workers, homeless persons, and discarded people receiving your blessing. See the gathered creation – all trees, plants, animals bracing for winter, the rocks and water, wind and sky receiving the blessing, as well. And receive this blessing, thankfully, into your own heart for the week ahead.

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

One: Let us greet one another in peace as we prepare for the journey ahead.

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Announcements

Our ministry at FBC Needham continues!

Our church office has re-opened for our Office Manager, Robin Bevilacqua. We are encouraging limited visits to the church building, and all who visit are required to mask, sign-in, and socially distance. If you need to speak with Robin, please call ahead if you can. Pastoral and other church staff are working from home. Office voicemail and email are being checked regularly. If you have a pastoral concern, contact Pastor Daryn or Pastor Holly by email, phone, or text.

Security Adjustments

Changing Member Page Password: email or call Pastor Daryn for the NEW password for our church membership page. Our Creative Callings password is the same as before. The membership directory has been taken down from the website for now. Please let Pastor Daryn know if you need to be in touch with someone in the community pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org.



Take a Selfie for Ingathering Sunday! Throughout the month of November, we will be collecting pictures of our congregation members making their donations and pledges. Take a selfie (a photograph of yourself with your phone - or have someone else take one of you) mailing in your pledge or making an online donation to the church **this week!** We will compile the images into a collage to so we can see each other's dear faces!

~NOVEMBER WORSHIP 22nd~

For November 22nd, we are invited to
Zoom Sunday services with the communities of
First Baptist Church in Newton (10am) &
First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain (11am):

Zoom links for worship can be found on the password protected member page of our website (www.fbcneedham.org). We will also make an effort to email/text the Zoom links prior to the services. Please make sure your email and/or phone information is current with the Church Office if you are interested in receiving these notifications. and/or email you should have received. Please do not share community Zoom links on social media or with others you do not know or trust.

Do not share our password for our church webpage with anyone beyond our church community. Thank you for understanding. Blessings to you all!

As always, if you have questions or concerns about anything, or prayer requests you would like held by our community, contact Pastor Daryn, pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org or Pastor Holly, pastorholly@fbcneedham.org, or our church office: Robin Bevilacqua, churchoffice@fbcneedham.org.

Worship Resource and Calls of Caring will continue!

We are aware how much the **Worship Resource and Calls of Caring** mean to our **community**, particularly to those of our community members unable to attend services in person or via Zoom. We will continue with the publication of these materials and with our calls each week, although we will make an effort not to call during the time of Zoom services on Sunday mornings. Blessings, all!

Newsletter

Check out our most recent issue of our Newsletter, *InSpire*. There you will find important information about worship, Creative Callings, stewardship and financial giving, as well as our upcoming capital campaign and building and organ restoration projects. There is a lot happening at FBC Needham this fall and I encourage you to actively participate in the life-giving ministry and discernment taking place in our community. To receive a copy, email churchoffice@fbcneedham.org.

***“Those Who Dream”* Advent 2020 begins**
Next Sunday, **Nov 29!**

*We will join First Baptist Church in Newton for
Advent Zoom Worship each Sunday at 10am!*

Zoom Advent kits will be delivered this week! Each kit includes: Votive candles, a streamer, illustrated coloring pages & crayons, & a daily Advent devotional booklet.





Looking for Advent: A Photographic Invitation

The four weeks of Advent have traditional themes of **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love**. This year, you are invited to carry each week's theme with you wherever you may be – in your home, going for a walk, driving past holiday lights, or even the pretty wreath on your own front door.

When you see something that represents the week's theme, take a photo of it and send it to Pastor Holly at pastorholly@fbcneedham.org.

We'll use the photos as visual inspirations of the season on our social media sites. Let this be a gentle practice of *Looking for Advent* each day, and see what you discover holds Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love all around you!

Photo Guidelines:

1. Photos **MUST** be taken by you (not taken by someone else or published elsewhere)
2. Focus on decorations, lights, nativities, or nature – we can't post pictures of people without their written permission OR of copyrighted material (ex. a photo of a picture in a book).
3. These are **CANDID** Photos – they don't have to be “professional” but they do need to be clear & identifiable 😊
4. Holly will edit or crop any photos as needed. Don't worry if it's off-center.

What to Send:

1. Your photo
2. 1-2 sentences why it represents the week's theme for you.
3. Location and/or any story behind it the photo

Advent 1 – Hope – Sunday, November 29 – Friday, December 4

Advent 2 – Peace – Sunday, December 6 – Friday, December 11

Advent 3 – Joy – Sunday, December 13 – Friday, December 18

Advent 4 – Love – Sunday, December 20 – Wednesday, December 23

Coming in December!

Physically Distanced Christmas Light Strolling

As the holiday lights and decorations go up around their neighborhood, **Clif and Anthony** will be extending an invitation for folks to join them for their evening strolls with their new pup **PJ** to enjoy each other's company (safely distanced) and the beauty of the season's lights.

Watch for more information coming soon!



Boston University School of Theology
Center for Practical Theology

Creative Callings

Collaboration, Innovation, and Prophetic Witness

**OUR MEETINGS FOR THIS YEAR HAVE ENDED.
WE WILL PICK BACK UP ON ZOOM, JANUARY 10, 2021,
with a congregational retreat to kick off year two of our Creative Callings process. The
first community partner video of our 2021 process will be posted on that same day.
Here's to next year!**

Thank you to all who have shown up curious, engaged the videos and video partners in meaningful dialogue, curated questions, and held possibility for our church in this process of discernment and dreaming. Our partner testimony videos, recorded congregational Zoom conversations and Q&A's with ministry partners will continue to be posted on the Creative Callings page on our website.

If you have questions about Creative Callings, or how you can best support First Baptist in our participation, please contact Pastor Daryn, pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org. **You should have received a packet of information and guidance specific to Creative Callings.** If you did not receive this packet, please contact the church office.

Our next partner video will be posted January 10th! Be on the lookout for more information about Creative Callings 2021.

The Zoom link and password for Creative Callings can be found in the newsletter and Creative Callings packet you should have received. They are also on the member page on our website and our Creative Callings webpage. If you do not have the login information for Zoom and or the password for our Creative Callings page, please contact Pastor Daryn, pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org.

Do You Need Washable Masks? Be Kind Needham Masks for Seniors is a local organization making washable fabric masks available to local senior residents *for free*. Your health and safety in the weeks and months ahead is paramount, and having reusable, washable masks aids sanitation, is environmentally friendly, and is cost-effective. If you or a senior you know need masks, please contact Pastor Daryn or Pastor Holly.

Needham Community Council continues to provide necessary resources and food to individuals in need of their services. If you or someone you know are in need of reaching out to them or if you want to learn how you can best volunteer to help at this time, go to their website at: <http://needhamcommunitycouncil.org>.

Please note: They are accepting donations by appointment only at this time due to safety protocols. Financial donations are greatly appreciated and needed.

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