

First Baptist Church in Needham

www.fbcneedham.org

Meditations for Sunday, May 10, 2020
(or whenever you are so led to pause,
reflect, and pray)

Fifth Sunday of Eastertide

Edition 8

*Christ is risen—risen, indeed!
Alleluia!*

Lighting the Candle of Life

*You may wish to light a candle or use the candle photo
as a focus.*

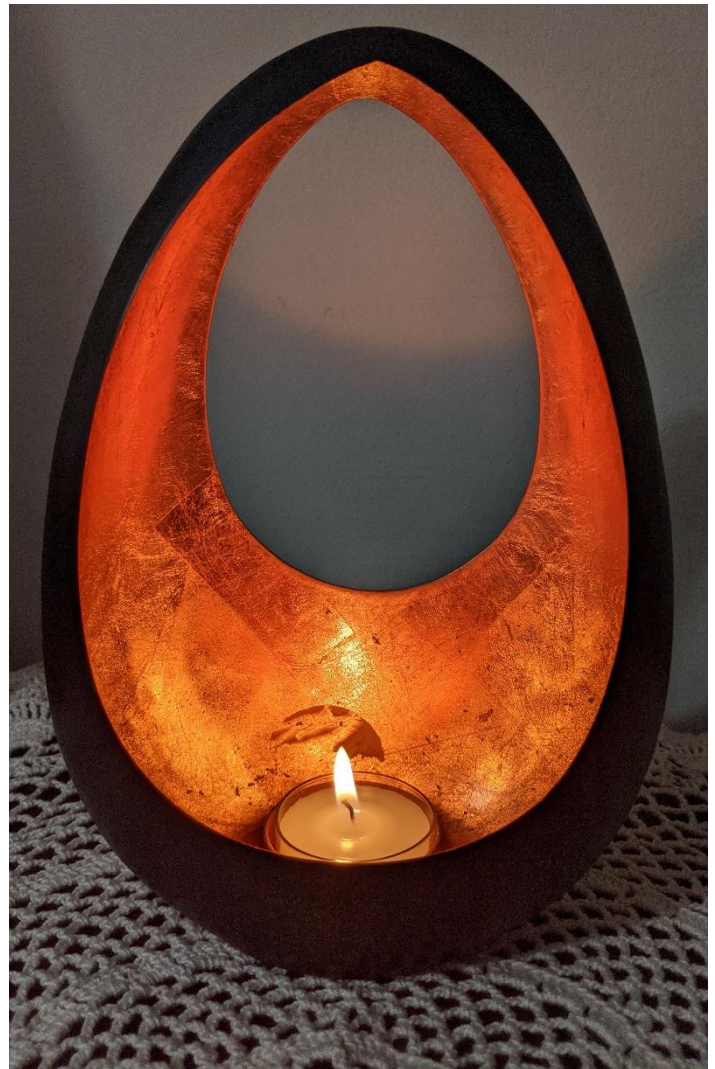
ALL: We light the Candle of Life — a candle
that represents community, spirit, and the
fullness of all of life — birth and death and all
of the transitions in between and beyond.

God, My Rock and Refuge...

*This week, the lectionary turns us to Psalm 31, a psalm
many folk in our congregation have mentioned offers
particular comfort during this time of living within the
COVID19 pandemic. Today, we join Christians around
the world who hold this psalm's words in prayer and
worship wherever they are, however they are.*

The second verse of the following hymn
traditionally starts, "Here I raise mine Ebenezer,
hither by thy help I've come." The Ebenezer stone,
a "Stone of Help" was a large boulder stood on
end as a signal, or standing stone to God.

- *For what do I need to raise a "Stone of Help" to
God today?*



Hymn 68

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

NETTLETON

The English dissenting Baptist, Rev. Robert Robinson (1735-1790), wrote this beloved hymn. It reminds us of the ancient practice of raising stones to mark our trust in God's providence and care to see us safely home. Sing or speak these words, or listen to the Oakwood University Aeolians 70th Reunion Choir, in Huntsville, Alabama, sing online here: https://youtu.be/1VdyIB1_g_s¹.

Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it
mount of God's redeeming love.

Here I raise *to thee an altar*;²
hither by thy help I've come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
bought me with his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.



¹In celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the Oakwood University Aeolians, the combined reunion choir of Aeolians from 2004-2006 under the direction of Dr. Lloyd Mallory, and former and current Aeolians under the direction of Dr. Jason Ferdinand, join in their reunion concert finale number, *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* arranged by Mack Wilberg on March 26, 2016, at the Oakwood University Church in Huntsville, AL.

² Or, "my Ebenezer".

A Reading from Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 (NRSV)

Read the text aloud. Pause and notice what image or phrase stands out or “shimmers” as you tell the story.

In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me.

Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily.

Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me,
take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge.

Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

My times are in your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.

ALL: The word of our Lord. Thanks be to God.

Eastertide Alleluia Hymn 736 Celtic Alleluia arr. Fintan O'Carroll & Christopher Walker

This Alleluia response to the scripture reading will follow us through the season of Eastertide. Alleluia means “God be praised!” You may choose to recite it as a prayer of thanksgiving, sing it to your own tune, or sing along with this online version: https://youtu.be/kSS_TanMwWE³.

[Refrain] Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia.

The word of the Lord lasts forever. What is the word that is living?

It is brought to us through God's son, Jesus Christ. [Refrain]



God, My Rock and Refuge...

Dun Carloway Broch is one of over 500 stone fortresses scattered around Scotland and is estimated to have been built about 2300 years ago on the western side of the Outer Hebridian Isle of Lewis. Such fortresses were both storehouses and places of refuge during attacks or siege. High on hills or cliffs, brochs were more easily defensible. This broch was in active use for over 1000 years and then used as a storehouse until the 1500s.

- A fortress was a place to which to flee in extreme crises and protection from dire threats. How do I claim God as my Fortress, my Broch now?
- The broch was also a place of refuge, a storehouse for ample supplies and cisterns of fresh water, and a location that offered long views in all directions. As I shelter-at-home, for what resources and relationships am I thankful? What new perspective is COVID19 offering me of God's provision?

³ Spirit & Song: Disc B © 2013 OCP. All Rights Reserved All Selections BMI Released on: 2013-11-15 Music Publisher: OCP

Hymn 476

I Need Thee Every Hour

NEED

Originally written for a Sunday School hymnbook, this familiar hymn resulted from a collaboration between Annie Sherwood Hawks and Rev. Robert Lowry, a Baptist minister and hymn editor, in 1872. Holding to God as Rock and Refuge, sing or speak it aloud, or sing along with Lindsay Kirkland from Rosman, NC, online at: <https://youtu.be/2dZ6YaFgaa4>⁴.

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord;
no tender voice like thine can peace afford.

[Refrain]

*I need thee, O I need thee; every hour I need thee!
O bless me now, my Savior, I come to thee.*

I need thee every hour, stay thou near by;
temptations lose their power when thou art
nigh. [Refrain]

I need thee every hour, in joy or pain;
come quickly, and abide, or life is vain.
[Refrain]

I need thee every hour; teach me thy will,
and thy rich promises in me fulfill. [Refrain]

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

BENZENHAFFER
arr. Holly C. Benzenhafer

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



Prayerful Meditation

Come to him, a living stone,
though rejected by mortals
yet chosen and precious in
God's sight, and like living
stones, let yourselves be built
into a spiritual house....

--1 Peter 2: 4-5a (NRSV)

⁴ Hymn is on Sounds Like Reign's album, *Her Heart Sings, Volume 2*, and recorded at Pilgrim Road Studio in 2019.
<http://www.SoundsLikeReign.com>

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—joys as well as concerns—to share please contact Holly or Daryn to pass them along.

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

With Barbara, Pastor Daryn, and Pastor Holly we hold persons living with non-COVID19 illness and injury requiring hospitalization or treatment. We speak name of Daryn's Aunt **Lana Bunce** hospitalized in cardiac ICU after suffering a major heart attack on May 3rd and hold her to God's healing presence. We hold to Spirit's compassionate safe-keeping Holly's Aunt **Deb Benzenhafer**, in Wartburg, TN, who is diagnosed with aggressive stomach cancer and began chemotherapy this week while awaiting a determination from her medical team as to how to move forward with treatment. We also hold Holly's cousin, **Diana Freels Nease** and her family in Franklin, OH, to God's tender care as she was moved to hospice after many years living with cancer. In the midst of suffering and unknowing, life changes and beloved presence, we gather these souls before you and now speak the names of persons likewise confronting serious medical conditions ...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Liz, Barbara, Marilyn, and Pastor Holly, we hold persons living with COVID19 diagnoses, awaiting test results, and hospitalized, especially Liz's **Aunt Virginia**, who tested positive, the residents at **Wingate** who were tested this week after a resident texted positive; Marilyn's folks at **Rivercourt**; Holly's colleague, **Johnny Gall** currently positive and quarantined at home; and Carole Sullivan's brother who has underlying complications. For their recovery, return to the fullness of life...and for souls with COVID19 whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*



With Clif, Anthony, Nancy, John, Louise, and Ernie, we celebrate the beauty and gradual warmth of spring: sitting outside and going for walks, enjoying chipmunks, gardening, mini-golfing, and yard work. With Liz, we offer gratitude for animal companions who grant us perspective on what really matters, especially **Rascal** and **Maxwell**. With renewed eyes to see the deep interweaving of our lives with all nature and well-being...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Pastor Holly, we continue to hold people performing essential work to God's safe-

keeping: truckers and mail delivery, grocery and pharmacy workers, cleaning services, garbage collectors, gas station workers, and security guards such as **Calvin James Munerlyn**, of Flint, MI, who died from gunshot wounding for ensuring people wore masks before entering the store he protected. We hold hospital, hospice, rehab, first responder, counseling, and social work staffs who faithfully continue to work each day to provide healing aid to others at their own personal risk, including **Ben Buckley**, a pathology assistant in Jackson, MS; **Dr. John Merriman**, a medical researcher and nurse in New York City...and for souls engaged in this work whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Anthony, Marty, and Pastor Daryn, we give thanks for persons who are moving toward all forms of recovery and restoration of physical and mental health, especially Daryn's cousin **Audrey** who had knee surgery and has progressed through physical therapy successfully, and Anthony's mother in the Philippines who remains stable, and Marty's niece **Linda** who is on her third round of chemotherapy...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Anne & Sherry, Marty, Barbara, and Marilyn, we continue to hold persons in assisted living communities, especially Wingate and Rivercourt, and souls living at home alone. We especially remember **Bruce Wile** at Wingate; and Barbara's friend and fellow Wingate resident, **Barbara Sabbag**, who is experiencing mental decline exacerbated by isolation. Recognizing the strain of social distancing, the potential for loneliness, boredom, isolation, and disconnection; the frustration, lack of energy, and difficulty to remain positive, we hold them...and souls we hold dear whose names we speak aloud to God's gracious peace...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Clif and Anthony, we give thanks for new protective equipment for **Anthony** and for the ongoing efforts to supply adequate volume of PPEs, medical devices, and necessary materials to front-line medical providers, essential workers, transportation workers, manufacturers, and individual volunteers...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Jim and Pastor Holly, we hold graduating students who are foregoing a season of communal celebrations and ceremonial transition for their years of hard work and determined achievement. Entrusting that the absence of traditional milestone events may be met with loving and creative new forms of honoring their transitions to next phases of life, we celebrate them and offer our thanks for their lives and blessings of presence among us, especially **Erin Buckley, Cait Duncan, Lynn Cooper, and Katherine House**. For who they have become and the goodness they are bringing into the world...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Anne, we hold the millions of people now furloughed or fully unemployed and souls living with uncertainty of employment in the near future, especially **Sherry Wile**...and with souls facing such complex losses and instability whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Marty and Pastor Holly, we offer prayers for souls in military service, especially Marty's grandson Adam serving in the Army at Fort Hood and Holly's friend Brigadier General, Clint Walker, Commander of the Mississippi National Guard....and for souls in service we know personally whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Marilyn, Nancy, and Ernie, we offer gratitude for the guidance and comfort of scripture and devotional materials that enable us to center and hold Christ's teachings and the moving of the Holy Spirit within our lives, especially 2 Peter, *Guideposts*, and our weekly Worship Resource...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Louise, John, Stan, Andrew, Marty, Anne, and Barbara, we give thanks for family, friends, and neighbors who bring groceries, check in, find ways to visit and check-in, and celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in creative ways...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Anne and Stan, we hold pastors and their families and all members of clergy, chaplaincy, and faith community leadership who work to hold sacred space and offer presence to others while also being impacted by the societal shifts due to COVID19. We honor the weight of decisions and preparations they are making daily to provide ministerial service, pastoral care, and continued worship in makeshift, less-than-ideal settings. We pray for clergy officiating funerals and weddings through online means, praying over phones with patients whose hands they cannot hold, and managing the multitude of details of daily congregational life that have not let up and are often now more complicated...and for souls in ministry whose names we speak aloud... *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Marty, we hold our elected local, county, state, and national leaders in prayer for wisdom, compassionate discernment, humane vision, and intentional care in the decisions they are faced with each day during COVID19...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Andrew, John, and Stan, we anticipate new life in all its forms, especially with Andrew as he awaits the immanent birth of **Wren's** daughter. So too, we anticipate and hold in Holy Light John's two daughters-in-law (due in July and September) and Stan's daughter (due in August)...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Jim, Andrew, Clif, Anthony, and Marty we hold Clif's nephew **David** and his family as they mourn the death of his father-in-law, **Richard Rogan**, in Norwood, MA, from COVID19. We hold Andrew's daughter, Wren, in deep condolence in the death of her Aunt **Carolee Zumwalt Light** on April 30. We also lift up the family, friends, and AA members who grieve the death of **Clayton Hewitt** and the many souls in assisted living facilities who have died from COVID19 and its complications. We continue to hold Jim's mother **Adele** as she grieves her husband's death three weeks ago within the social isolation of this season. For the lives lost to COVID19 and its impactful trauma, all persons who have entered God's nearer presence since last we entered prayer together, souls who grieve this day... and for souls whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

Living in hope of when we may worship in proximity to one another, we give thanks that our worship, song, and prayer happen *despite* our needing to be physically distanced. In the joyful assurance that each day, each thought, and each breath are both a gift *from* God and our gift *to* God we say with confidence...*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.



God, My Rock and Refuge...

St. Martin's Cross is a high cross—in a way a Christian version of the Ebenezer standing stone—that stands outside the entrance of the Abbey on the Holy Isle of Iona, Scotland. Standing 16 feet tall, it was carved from a single slab of red granite in the 8th century C.E. It is highly ornate on both sides—the side in the photo is covered in spheres and Celtic knotwork, and the reverse has animals and human forms. At one time, Iona, an ancient burial island, had over 300 such high crosses. Three remain standing. However, though the crosses have fallen or been lost to time, the island remains a place of sacred pilgrimage.

Verses 15-16 of Psalm 31 speak to utter trust in God's care and safe-keeping in the face of danger, threat, and dire circumstance. Such trust is also called upon when faced with the ongoing, daily changes we each experience.

- *Am I willing to trust God as my life continues to change—when I don't know and cannot determine what is going to happen, or when I fear what I cherish will be or is being lost to me?*
- *This cross has stood for at least 1200 years bearing witness to Christ's presence. How may I live my life this week as an enduring witness to Christ's abiding presence, peace, and hope?*

Hymn 546

Built on the Rock

KIRKEN DEN ER ET

Written by Danish hymnist Nicolai F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), this hymn tune may not be as familiar to Baptists as it is to Lutheran and Dutch Reform traditions, however, its words speak to the reality that though we call on God as our Rock and Refuge, God indwells in us as the "living stones" of the Church. Read the text aloud, or sing with the acapella version online sung by Elliot Bowman at: <https://youtu.be/7bKYNIKx7V8>⁵. Note the fourth verse online is different from what is printed here (there were nine verses originally).

Built on the Rock, the church shall stand
even when steeples are falling;
Christ builds His church in ev'ry land;
bells still are chiming and calling,
calling the young and old to rest,
calling the souls of those distressed,
longing for life everlasting.

Not in a temple made with hands
God the Almighty is dwelling;
high in the heav'ns His temple stands,
all earthly temples excelling.
Yet He who dwells in heaven above
chooses to live with us in love,
making our body His temple.

We are God's house of living stones,
built for His own habitation;
He fills our hearts, His humble thrones,
granting us life and salvation.
Yet to the place, an earthly frame,
we come with thanks to praise His name;
God grants His people true blessing.

Thro' all the passing years, O Lord,
grant that, when church bells are ringing,
many may come to hear God's Word
where He the promise is bringing:
"I know My own, My own know Me,
you, not the world, My face shall see;
My peace I leave with you. Amen."

Offering

For online giving, go to <https://www.fbcneedham.org> or continue to support the ongoing ministry of the church by sending a check to the church office via 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.

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.

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.

⁵ A Capella Hymns (2017).

Passing of the Peace

(Picture in your mind's eye the faces of beloved souls with whom you would share the peace of Christ in person if you could, and offer each one your blessing of peace.)

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.

Hymns under copyright are used by permission under CCLI # 763542.

Announcements

While the Church Office and Building are currently closed, our ministry continues! Pastoral and office 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.

Dear Community, a couple of weeks ago we lovingly reminded you to continue in your financial support of the mission and ministry of First Baptist Church in Needham, and provided details about ways to contribute in this time of social distancing. Church member and Moderator, Andrew Thoresen, has put together a helpful and informative guide to Planned Giving Strategies you may want to consider as you think about ways you can contribute to the sustainability and stewardship of First Baptist's ministry. We have included that resource in this week's mailing. You will also find a PDF of the document on the "Take Action" page of our website (www.fbcneedham.org), along with more information about giving at First Baptist. Know that you and the gifts you offer are blessings to our continued ministry in and with our community and the world.

In Christ, Pastor Daryn

First Baptist Church in Needham has received a loan through the Paycheck Protection Program. We give thanks for this assistance, and pray it will allow us to more thoroughly support and minister to our employees, tenants, and community in this time.



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 NOT accepting drop-off donations at this time due to safety protocols. Financial donations are greatly appreciated and needed.*

Rev. Dr. Maung Maung Htwe Family Fund – Pastor Maung is an American Baptist pastor in Allston serving our sister Baptist church, the Overseas Burmese Christian Fellowship. He and his family have all contracted COVID19, and his 17-year-old daughter died from the virus in April. A fund to aid his family’s COVID19 expenses and the burial expenses for his daughter, Teresa May has been established. **To make a donation to help Pastor Maung’s family**, send a check with a memo notation: Maung Family Fund to [FBC Needham, 858 Great Plain Avenue, Needham MA 02492](#), OR donate through our online portal at www.fbcneedham.org, choose “Other” and designate the gift to Maung Family Fund.

Livestreaming Services: Many congregations are offering their services online both in real time or recorded to watch or listen as you are able. Here are a few you may wish to virtually “visit”:

- **Boston University’s Marsh Chapel** – Available live on Sundays 11:00-noon on WBUR (90.9 FM radio or on online at <https://www.wbur.org/> and then click “Listen Live”). Recorded services are available as a podcast on iTunes or other RSS feeders (search: Marsh Chapel).
- **Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, MS** – Available livestreaming online on Sundays 11:30-12:30 Eastern at <https://www.northminsterbaptist.live> . Prior recorded services are at <https://www.northminsterbaptist.live/on-demand> and then click on “Playlist” to select a date.
- **Harvard Memorial Chapel** – Available live on Sundays 11:00-noon on WHRB (95.3 FM radio or on online at <https://memorialchurch.harvard.edu/sunday-services-0> and then click “Listen Live” on the current Sunday). Recorded services are available on the same link under “Listen to Sunday Sermons” along with daily Morning Prayers under “Listen to Morning Prayers.”
- **First Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.** – Available online on Sundays 11:00-noon at <https://www.firstbaptistdc.org/upcoming-worship> and then follow links to Facebook Live. Prior recorded sermons are at <https://www.firstbaptistdc.org/listen-to-sermons>.

Text and Photo Attributions: “Word Stones;” “Beltane Fire;” “Faery Glen Broch, Isle of Skye;” “Dun Carlway Broch, Isle of Lewis;” “Purple Hyacinth & Stones;” “Double-Pink Azaleas;” “St. Martin’s Cross, Isle of Iona;” and “FBC Needham Steeple” by ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2020. Use with permission.