

First Baptist Church in Needham

858 Great Plain Avenue, Needham MA 02492

www.fbcneedham.org

Meditations for Sunday, June 14, 2020
(or whenever you are so led to pause, reflect, and pray)

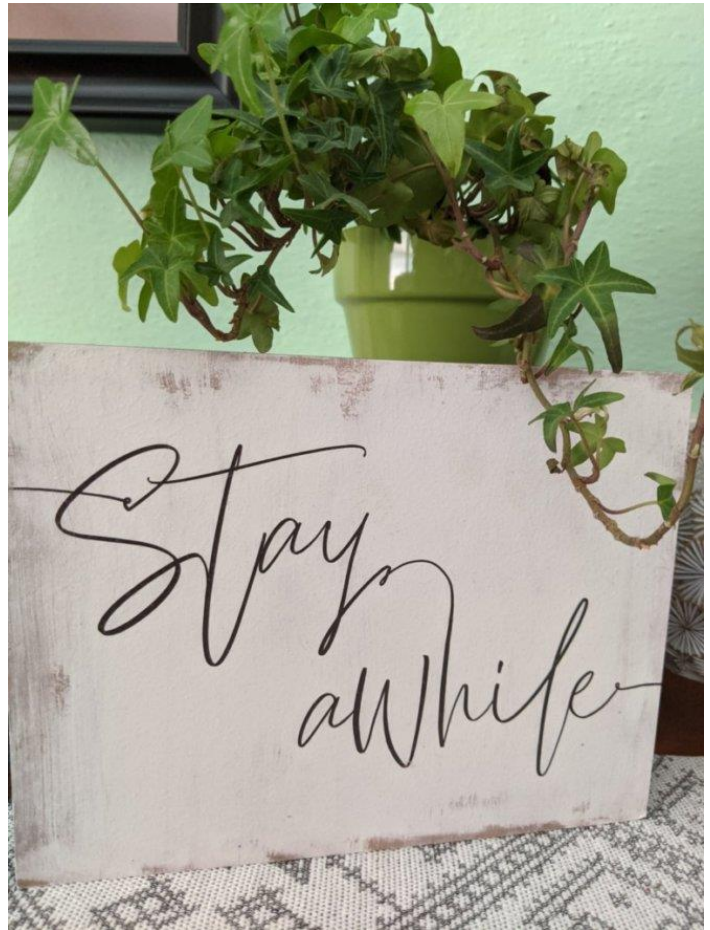
2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Edition 13

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 the transitions in between and beyond.



Preparing to Enter Worship

“But I want to tell you this evening that it is not enough for us to talk about love, love is one of the pivotal points of the Christian faith. There is another side called justice. And justice really is love in calculation. Justice is love correcting that which revolts against love.”

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.¹

*Free me to accept your love, Holy One,
That I may embody your justice.
Free me to accept your justice, Holy One,
That I may embody your love.*

¹ Excerpt from an extemporaneous sermon delivered at Holt Street Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama, on December 5, 1955. Jonathan Chism (editor), *30-Day Journey with Martin Luther King, Jr.*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2019), 12.

Hymn 480

Open My Eyes, That I May See

OPEN MY EYES

Clara H. Fisk Scott (1841-1897) was a native of Illinois, she attended C.M. Cady's first Music Institute in Chicago, in 1856 and began teaching music at the Ladies' Seminary in Lyons, Iowa in 1859. Her Royal Anthem Book, published in 1882, was the first choir anthem book published by a woman. Although many of her hymns were well received in the U.S. and abroad at the time, this hymn has remained best known and loved. Written two years before Scott's death due to a buggy accident with a runaway horse, "Open My Eyes" depicts the gradual receptivity and awareness to Truth that reflects our own present moment as a culture and people. First, Truth may be glimpsed. Gradually, Truth may then be heard in the voices around us, if we but listen. Then, truth is shared openly and without boundary: the Truth of God's Love for all God's children.²

Too often, we grow content with remaining chained to falsehoods of inequity, injustice, and disharmony. "Open My Eye" dares us to come before our Creator and risk being freed from communal and personal injustices to live "illumined". Dare we truly, sincerely, give voice to this seemingly simple, yet profoundly transformative prayer? How may this prayer-song be my prayer today? To what Truth within God's Love may I request my eyes, ears, and heart be opened today? Sing or read aloud the text, or sing along with the Fountainview Academy choir from British Columbia, Canada online: <https://youtu.be/9XSN7aVTAFU>³.

Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.

*Silently now, I wait for thee,
ready my God, thy will to see;
open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!*

Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wave notes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.

*Silently now, I wait for thee,
ready my God, thy will to see;
open my ears, illumine me,
Spirit divine!*

Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart, and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.

*Silently now, I wait for thee,
ready my God, thy will to see;
open my heart, illumine me,
Spirit divine!*

A Reading from Genesis 18:1-15, 21:7 (NRSV)

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

The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on--since you have come to your servant."

So they said, "Do as you have said."

² <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-open-my-eyes-that-i-may-see>

³ Videod on Moonstone Beach, California (2013). Fountainview is a Seventh-Day Adventist boarding school.

And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

And he said, "There, in the tent."

Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?"

The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son."

But Sarah denied, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid.

He said, "Oh yes, you did laugh." The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." And she said, "Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

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

Hymn 461

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

TRENTHAM

This prayerful hymn is our initial Pentecost response to reading aloud and hearing the word of God in worship. In the time of COVID19 and in light of the cries of George Floyd and African-Americans over the centuries of, "I can't breathe!" we hold to the Truth of the Spirit's Breath imbued in each person as a child of promise and of God. With voices around the globe, we claim the Spirit's embodied breath as that which sustains and enables us to hear the sacred Word and live into it until all souls are returned to health, safe, respected, and drawn into community. Sing or read it aloud as your prayerful response to the above text, or allow the quartet of voices from St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Houston, TX, wash over you online at

https://youtu.be/3qV_IHByYBk.⁴

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love the way you
love,
and do what you would do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with yours,
to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life
for all eternity.

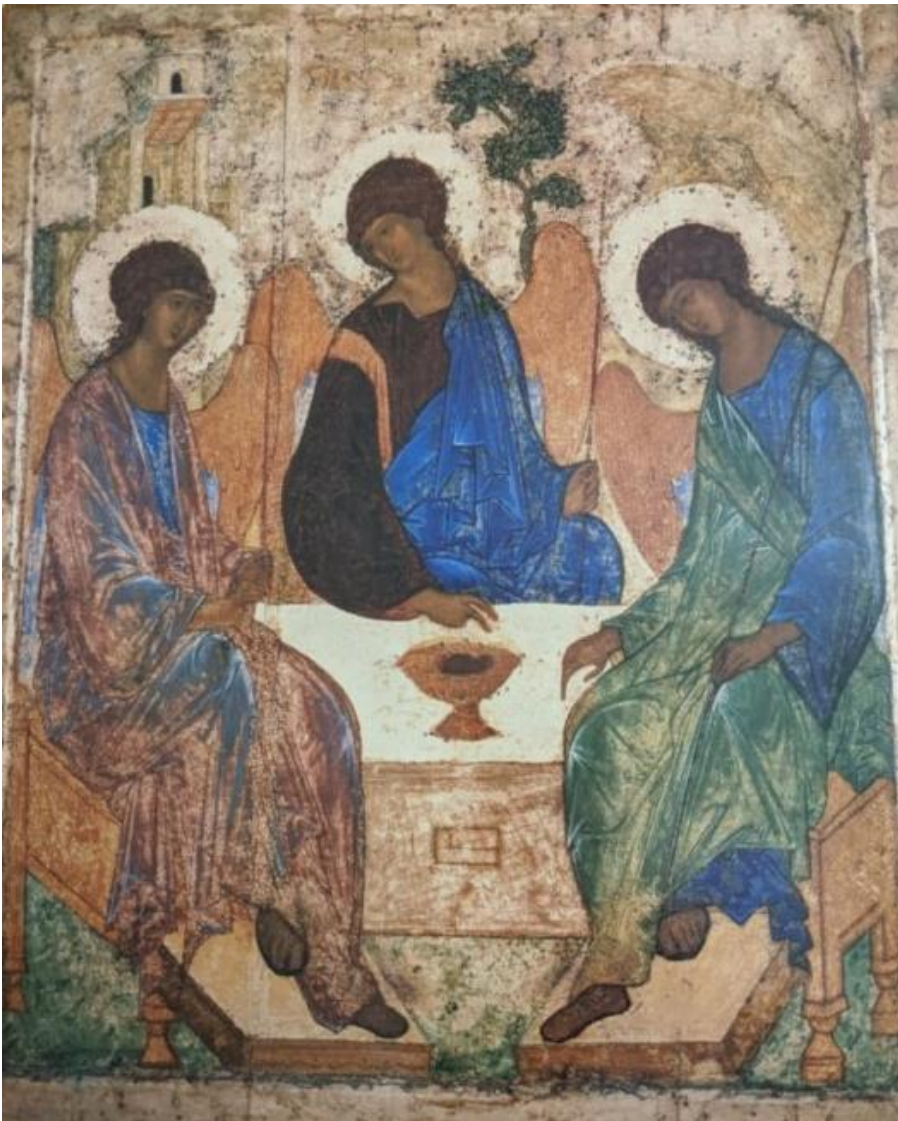
⁴ <https://www.smumc.org/>

Welcoming the Unexpected ...

The Lord appears to Abraham as *Dei*, a Divine plurality – three individuals—unexpected and sudden. This depiction of God in multiplicity is historically celebrated in the ancient Russian icon of the Holy Trinity shown here presumably enjoying Abraham and Sarah’s hospitality. It is significant to consider these references to God revealing the Divine Self in multiple and simultaneous ways as we continue to grapple with the importance of being *Imago Dei*—in the image of, or reflections of—God during COVID19 and the global rising of humanity calling for a full reckoning of how persons of color, and particularly Black Lives, are valued, treated, and marginalized.

God as *Dei* points to inherent diversity living within community. *Dei* values not hierarchy but a collaboration. As such, God as *Dei* reminds us that as *Images of Dei*, we are formed to cherish the beautiful and bountiful diversity of human community. We are called to collaborate and cooperate for the blessing and benefit of the least, the vulnerable, the harmed, the isolated, and the despised souls who are no more and no less *Images of Dei* than each one of us. We are called to recreate the receptive communion and community of our *Dei* in our own lives and the life of the world.

- *Who is a person or group of people I have great difficulty seeing as an “Image of Dei”? How may I form a prayer for them—or for my response to them—and offer it this week?*



- *When I watch the news or hear of what is happening in the world around me, with whom do I identify? With whose actions or words do I not agree or reject? How may I place myself in this second group’s shoes and try to see the situation through their eyes, their perspective? If I cannot agree with them, how may I hold them prayerfully with compassion and an open, listening heart?*

- *How has my awareness of systemic injustices grown or changed since COVID19 shelter-at-home began? In this short time, how have my eyes, ears, and heart been opened to the pain others live with every day? How may I educate myself about their lives and experience this week? How am I willing to learn from people different from me whose experience of my community is not like mine?*

New Zealand hymn lyricist, Shirley Erena Murray (1931-2020) was raised Methodist and became Presbyterian in her marriage to Rev. John Stewart Murray. She taught languages, worked with Amnesty International, and served 8 years with New Zealand's Labor Party Research Unit. These experiences informed her hymns which draw upon human rights, women's concerns, care of the earth, justice, unity, and peace.⁵

As we reflect intentionally on the condition of our hearts and the hurting within our communities and our world, dare to turn to the quiet center of your being and invite the Holy One, Dei, to attune you to both any places of fear or frustration within your heart and mind and to the fears and frustrations of the beloved souls around you and who are unknown to you. Then, allow the Spirit to open you to deep and tender compassion for each one...including yourself...as we live toward a transformed and transforming world. Read these words or sing them aloud to the same tune for "Come All Christians, Be Committed." Alternatively, sing to piano accompaniment by Mary Ruth Munson online at: <https://youtu.be/xc-xpUOaqUw>.⁶

Come and find the quiet center
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, touches base,

making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!

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.

⁵ https://hymnary.org/person/Murray_SE

⁶ Munson is a piano teacher and Music Coordinator at her ELCA church in a small town in the U.S.
<https://www.youtube.com/user/MaryRuth72/featured>

Prayerful Meditation

Hold this reflection of Rev. Dr. Manuel's experience and insight during a 7-day silent retreat meditation.

"I recognized in that moment that old wounds had kept me from fully engaging with folks my entire life. I could be polite or kind to others, but I was unwilling and afraid to experience the wounded tenderness that would have eventually opened into a complete and liberated tenderness. I was unwilling to allow others completely into my heart....

"In the dark I recognized life without all of the things we impose upon it, and upon each other. As I continued to breathe, I felt a warm breeze near my face....perhaps this is how complete tenderness feels when it arrives, having sloughed off rage. When I turned toward the hurt in the silence, I entered a kind of tenderness that was not sore, not wounded, but rather powerfully present. I sat up straight. The silence had tilled hard ground into soft soil. I sunk deep into the soft ground, where the source of life was revealed—wordless, nameless, without form, completely indescribable. And then—I dare to say it—I was 'completely tender'."

--Rev. Dr. Zenju Earthlyn Manuel⁷



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...

The COVID19 pandemic continues to spread throughout our country and the world as we move between weariness from protective measures and grief for lives impacted and lost to the coronavirus. We especially hold the family of our own dear member for over 60 years, **Margaret Nichols**, who died from COVID19 complications on May 28. Comfort her children, **David, Barbara, and Carol** and their families as four generations grieve her absence while turning to live into her legacy of compassion and service. With Harry, we also honor the memory of **Bill Moy** who also died of COVID19 and hold his family and friends to Spirit's consolation in their mourning. For the 400,000+ lives lost so far to COVID19 and its impactful trauma around the

⁷ Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, *The Way of Tenderness: Awakening Through Race, Sexuality, and Gender*, (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2015), 19-20.

globe, and souls now released from their suffering of this pandemic into your Spirit's living breath who we now name...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Harry, we offer prayer for the family and friends of his American Legion friend, **Semmi Wong**, and offer gratitude for his service to our country with the Flying Tigers. May they live in such a way that honors his life and memory. For these dear souls and 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....*

With Liz, Ernie, Andrew, and Pastor Holly, we hold persons living with non-COVID19 illness and injury requiring hospitalization or treatment. We pray your Encircling Spirit surround and undergird **Ernie** as he has received a cancer diagnosis and has begun radiation and chemotherapy. We pray that Ernie know the deep indwelling of your peace in his heart and mind alongside the sweetness of each new day. In community, we journey with him and keep in embraced in our constant prayer and love.

With Andrew, we hold baby **Carmen** to your tender care as she undergoes test for a possible heart murmur. We pray for her discomfort and her parents worry that they be eased by your loving presence. We give thanks that Holly's Aunt **Deb Benzenhafer** had a successful stomach cancer surgery this week and continue to offer prayer for her extended recovery in hospital in Nashville. In the midst of suffering and unknowing, life changes and beloved presence, we gather these souls before you, Holy Spirit, and now speak the names of persons likewise confronting serious medical conditions...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

In the fullness of life, we also celebrate the joys of birthdays and the turning to a new year of storied living in these unusual times. We celebrate with **Anthony Calilung** whose birthday was on the 13th, and with **Stan Gibson** and **Teddy Stylianopoulos** (now 12!) who share a birthday today—the 14th! For the blessing of each of your lives among us and the turning to a new year of life...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Anthony, we hold medical workers to Christ's watchcare as they continue to provide both the direct care for patients with COVID19 as well as work to provide safe and ongoing services for all other ailments, injuries, and testing. For their stamina, but also their ability to rest and restore; for the weight of what they have experienced on the front lines of the pandemic so far and the uncertain traumas lying in the future; and for members in health care who have been furloughed due to other services being curtailed and live with job insecurity...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Clif, Harry, and Pastor Holly, we hold the millions of souls who have demonstrated around the globe for the full valuing, dignity, and respect of Black Lives and all people of color after the murder of George Floyd within the life-giving breath of the Spirit. We pray for the health of demonstrators and law officers as they seek to break through centuries of systemic, complex racism and injustice in this time of pandemic. We hold to your justice persons solely intent on causing harm and mayhem for their own destructive purposes and to your mercy souls who

need to express generational rage, grief, and horror at unspeakable atrocities unaddressed. We pray for the Spirit's awakening each of us to honest, if painful or uncomfortable, examination of how we have benefitted from a broken, unjust, and often inhumane system and culture. We admit our sense of ineffective helplessness. We ask for the courage to learn, to risk being convicted of the need to change, and the daring to do so day by day. Trusting that as children of God we are intimately connected to all our siblings—a global, country-wide, community, and neighborhood family, we ask for tender eyes, ears, and hearts to see, hear, and know what we could not perceive or denied before this season of transformation...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Harry and Clif, we are grateful for the ongoing work of the Senior Center delivering meals and food throughout Needham, providing online services, and going the extra mile to care for and about their clients. For the Center and the numerous non-profit, community, and social service agencies that continue to provide needed resources and programs despite restrictions, closings, and limited funds ...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Stan, Pastor Holly, Clif, and Harry we offer thanks for the continued health of family and the opportunities to see them in visits, video chats, and across the room...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Harry, we cherish the treasure of letters written by beloved souls over the years that allow us to return to wonderful memories even when they are no longer with us...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Bev, Andrew, and Clif, we are grateful for the measured and careful reopening of more businesses. We pray for continued patience as practices and habits of being in public spaces require discipline and care while we also give thanks for more people having more job security and for persons discerning next life-path directions in this transitional moment...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*



With Stan, Harry, and Clif, we are grateful for the pleasure of being outdoors, for long walks, gardening, and the beauty and delight of flowers, chipmunks, and baby birds...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Liz, Bev, and Trevor, we are thankful for a week well lived...*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.



Laughing in the Face of God...

When the Lord, the *Dei*, told Abraham that Sarah would have a child, hiding behind the door listening, Sarah laughed. Such a pronouncement seemed completely unrealistic. She had lived for decades in a culture that belittled and shamed women who did not bear children. This was personal. As her husband's property as well as his wife, she was considered less than worthy of her position without a child. In essence, without a child, she held no power, no purpose in her culture. She was not inherently worthy for simply being herself. To keep her position, she gave her slave, Hagar, a woman forced to be a surrogate, to produce Abraham's first son, Ishmael. The systemic shaming Sarah lived under was compounded on Hagar as both were only worth the son they could produce.

Dei not only acknowledged her but predicted she would bring forth a new life that would transform her old way of being. And so, Sarah laughed at the *Dei*'s impending birth announcement. Why should she believe anything could change?

- Consider an experience of ongoing ridicule, shaming, or alienation in your life. As you are able, reenter the memory. Notice where you feel it in your body—where do you get tense or feel stress? How does your posture or facial expression change? How did you move through the experience—or have you? What wounds or scars to you bear from others' rejection? How has the experience shaped the way you think of and treat yourself? Others?

- *The year 2020 has broken open many places of inequity, harm, and injustice in our country, community, and individual lives. Our daily narratives of what is “normal,” safe, or expected are challenged by others who are revealing drastically different experiences and life-stories. Perhaps at times our response is like Sarah’s disbelief: how can this be real? How is this version true? And yet, the Dei invites us, compels us, to see, hear, and know in a new way that will birth new life. How may I respond to this moment, this call of Dei on my life this week?*

Hymn 621

For the Healing of the Nations

CWM RHONDDA

Fred Kaan (1929-2009) was born in Haarlem, the Netherlands. He witnessed three of his grandparents die of starvation and his parents’ deep involvement in the resistance movement taking in refugees during Nazi occupation. In his teens, Kaan began attending church and became a pacifist. Kaan was ordained a British Congregational (later the United Reform Church) minister in 1955 and began writing hymns while serving at the Pilgrim Church in Plymouth, UK. Kaan’s hymn theme focus on peace, justice, and unity, as this one aptly does.⁸ Read aloud or sing to the tune for “God of Grace and God of Glory” or sing to the instrumental accompaniment prepared by Rod Smith online at: <https://youtu.be/P0Ia0LEw-1o>.⁹

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love and action
help us rise and pledge our word.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race, or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life’s brief span.

Lead your people into freedom,
from despair your world release;
that redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how, through care and goodness,
fear will die and hope increase.

You, Creator God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind:
That, by our response and service,
earth its destiny may find.

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.

⁸ https://hymnary.org/person/Kaan_Fred

⁹ Made available 2016.

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

(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.

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Margaret was born August 1, 1920, in Malden, Massachusetts, to John Munn Rowell and Edith A. Temple. Her younger sister, Jean Burrage, born two years later, passed away last November, 2019. Margaret attended the University of New Hampshire after graduating from Everett High School where she met her future husband, Paul Raymond Nichols, her freshmen year. After marrying in June 1940, she and Paul moved to Connecticut where he earned his M.A. and then to Dennison University in Ohio where she completed her B.S. while Paul worked as an instructor at the university. After Paul joined the U.S. Army to serve in the Philippines and New Guinea during World War II, Margaret joined her widowed mother in Greeley, Colorado where their first child, David Rowell Nichols, was born in 1944. After being reunited in 1945, Paul, Margaret, and David moved to Cambridge, MA, to pursue further studies. Their second child, Barbara, was born two years later. They eventually moved to Needham, where their third child, Carol, was born.

Paul and Margaret made their home, at 153 Grant Street, in Needham for 56 years. Margaret earned her Master's in Social Work from Boston University, and after brief stints at Carney Hospital in Boston and the VA Hospital in West Roxbury, she continued working as a social worker at the Boston Veteran's Administration. Commuting to Court Street and later to Causeway Street from Needham Junction five days each week, Margaret stayed at the Boston V.A. until her retirement at age 75 having served helping veterans for 50 years! We learned they had to hire two people to "fill her shoes".

Margaret was a member of the First Baptist Church of Needham for 60 years, serving in a variety of roles especially after her retirement. She was also active in Eastern Star and the Needham Council of Aging. She loved playing bridge, caring for others, and keeping active. Most of all, she loved her family. In her 90s she traveled to Illinois, Texas, California, Alaska, Oregon, Tennessee, Illinois, and Maryland to celebrate important family events. Margaret's husband Paul passed away in August, 2010, but she is survived by her three children, David and his wife Carolyn of Charlestown, Rhode Island, Barbara and her husband Victor Pierimarchi of Newton, New Hampshire, and Carol and her husband Paul Friesen of Austin, Texas, along with 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild!

Margaret's passions were caring for others and that included her family, her neighbors, church and community. She was a special lady who was dearly loved by her family and friends and will be greatly missed.

As she wished, Margaret will be buried in Newbury, N.H. Arrangements are being made by the Eaton Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, donations in Margaret's name may be made to the Gary Sinese Foundation, PO Box 368 Woodland Hills, CA 91365.



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.

Missions Giving – Local - FBC Needham is a community that cares authentically about justice, mercy, and actively helping people through mission and worship. In the midst of the coronavirus crisis when the need is greater than ever before, please give freely to our congregational Missions budget by check or online.

And Global – June is **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering month. OGHS is the American Baptist response to worldwide disaster relief and development. It is a channel for national and international aid in times of crisis that allows our offerings to join those of other ABC congregations and extend our ministry and service collectively. Your offering to OGHS and our FBC Needham Missions budget may be received either by check or designated online on our church Paypal link at www.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 NOT accepting drop-off donations at this time due to safety protocols. Financial donations are greatly appreciated and needed.*

MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL of CHURCHES **ONECHURCHFUND**

The Massachusetts Council of Churches and its member congregations and denominations believe in One Church. We believe all parts of the body of Christ are necessary. And, at this terrible moment when so many people are suffering because of the COVID19, some parts of the body of Christ are suffering more than others. As members of the one body of Christ, we cannot say to one another, "I have no need of you."

Through the One Church Fund, the Massachusetts Council of Churches prioritizes the financial, practical, and relational support of immigrant, Black, poor, unhoused, and unaffiliated churches.

Many of these churches' needs are going unmet by federal, state, denominational, and local church resources, even as they have been decimated by the circumstances of the COVID19 pandemic compounded by long legacies of racial and economic disparities and systemic inequities. Churches are essential service providers, especially in immigrant Black, poor, and homeless communities. Immigrant churches and Black churches have long operated with an outsized role in meeting the needs of their communities, by providing education, banking, health care, food, clothing, mental health and spiritual support, often because other institutions failed to provide care.

The need for your support is urgent and growing because many of these vibrant churches operate from plate to plate, with no reserves, no endowment, no savings. These churches are in danger of closing critical ministries because of the economic crisis caused by COVID19. These churches are experiencing increasing need at a time of decreasing local resources. We need your help to unify and sustain these churches in the communities experiencing the most suffering. We can be a balm to one another in the Body of Christ. To learn more, go to <https://www.onechurchfund.org/about/>

Please give generously and ask for what you need to ensure the whole body of Christ endures.

You can also donate through our church's Paypal link at www.fbcneedham.org.

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