

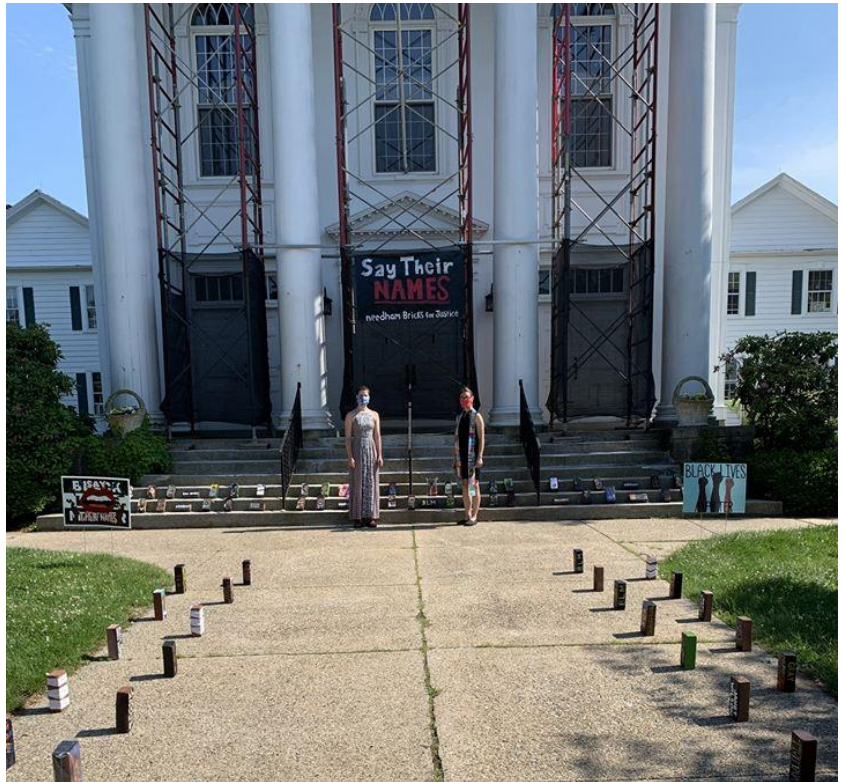
First Baptist Church in Needham

858 Great Plain Avenue, Needham MA
02492 www.fbcneedham.org

Meditations for Sunday, June 28, 2020
*(or whenever you are so led to pause,
reflect, and pray)*

4th Sunday after Pentecost Edition 15

*Photos of the Needham Bricks for Justice
artists installation appear throughout
our worship service this week. See
Announcements for more information.*



Lighting the Candle of Life

You may wish to light a candle or use the candle/fire 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



“If we knew what the next moment held, or the next week, wouldn’t we feel differently about the future? If we knew what would happen tomorrow? But we don’t....The truth is, to a very great extent, we all of us live our lives with our faces pressed up against the unknown and unknowable next moment. True, the sun will (probably) rise tomorrow and many of us rightly take comfort in that certainty. And it’s good that basic things are predictable—that the earth will stay below our feet and the sky above our heads (though in earthquakes that might change). But how little we really know about the future, which I here choose to call the Unknowable Next.”¹

Invitation: *Continue to pose the first question at the beginning of the quote as we continue the story of Abraham, Isaac, and the Lord today.*

¹Gregory Orr, *Poetry as Survival* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 13, 15..

Hymn

God Will Take Care of You

GOD CARES

Nova Scotia native Civilla Durfee Martin (1866-1948) was a music teacher and collaborative hymn lyrics writer with her husband, a Baptist minister and composer, Walter S. Martin. This hymn, first published in 1905, was written during one of several bouts of ill health. Martin's husband did not want to leave her for a preaching engagement. Their 9-year-old son then asked if he did not believe God would watch over Martin while he was away. When her husband returned, Martin had written the text. Her husband immediately set it to music that night, and it was sung by at the Lecestershire, New York, Bible school where they were living a few days later.² This hymn offers continual assurance of God's care regardless of the circumstance or upheavals befall us. Rather than a pie-in-the-sky assertion that denies the complexities of life, this hymn acknowledges the harsh, painful, and devastating experiences in each life and God's persistently moving with each of us through them. Sing or read aloud the words or sing the first and last verses with the Buctot family (and 2-year-old son Danclride) online: <https://youtu.be/MLPp4gXUY3o>.³

Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath his wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.

Refrain:

*God will take care of you,
Through ev'ry day,
O'er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you.*

Through days of toil when heart does fail,
God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

All you may need he will provide,
God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon his breast,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

A Reading from Genesis 22:1-14 (NRSV)

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

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you."

So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you."

² <http://womenofchristianity.com/hymn-writers/civilla-d-martin-1866-1948/>

³ 2010 performance

Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!"

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."

So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

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/>

Through a Son's Eyes ...

As we have moved through this family saga over the last few weeks, we have witnessed the complexities and injustices woven throughout the ancient Canaanite cultures that exhibit in the personal experiences of the people within Abraham's family. Today's passage is written so that the initial focus is on Abraham and his responses to the Lord's testing him with horrific directions that contradicted *Dei's* earlier promises regarding Isaac. After watching Abraham banish the slave Hagar and their son, Ishmael, to an almost certain death so that Isaac's position as inheritor could be secured last week, we find the troubled patriarch now preparing to murder his favored son as a living sacrifice.

This ancient story serves as an early prohibition to child sacrifice for the ancient Hebrew people and a call to be willing to give up even that which is loved most in obedience to God (while overlooking the troubling depiction of God as a psychopathic deity that creates harm and pain just to see what faithful humans will do.) However, it also raises serious questions for 21st century people today as we face the hard and painful realities of having lived within cultural systems of racism, dehumanization, and out-right murder of fellow human beings throughout our lives. So today, we consider the story through Isaac's eyes...



- *Isaac trusted his father enough to climb up the mountain to make the sacrifice. However, being seized and bound by Abraham certainly altered that initial trust, if it did not break it fully. When have I trusted another fully and had that trust breached? How do I trust in light of that experience?*
- *False interpretations of the Bible and Christians "speaking for God" have been used to directly dehumanize, segregate, disadvantage, and harm people of color, women, the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrants, the poor, and persons of other faiths and traditions, to name a few, over the centuries. It would have been reasonable for Isaac to leave the mountain and reject his father's religious practices after this episode, but he didn't. Likewise, just within our own lifetime, the things said, done, **and not done** by Christian churches and "good Christian folk" that have instigated, continued, or ignored the ongoing harm done to souls both within our congregations and beyond who belong to one or more of these targeted groups might leave us wondering today why any of them would continue to be Christian, themselves, or trust Christians to care about their welfare now.*

- *If I am part of one or more of these groups, how do I reconcile any harm I have experienced by religious interpretations or religious folk with my own practice and faith? What does it mean for me to be Christian and a member of the Body of Christ?*
- *As I consider the groups noted to which I do not belong, what is a first step I may make this week toward acknowledging and being part of the healing community the Body of Christ calls me to be with them?*

Hymn

Create in Me a Clean Heart

words & music arr. by Terry Talbot

Drawing upon Psalm 51:10-12, this rendition of the text calls on each of us to daily renew our commitment to be open to God's cleansing presence. Renewed and renewing, we may move into each moment dying to our sins, faults, and shameful pasts as we live to bless our neighbors, colleagues, friends, family, and stranger, alike, and be blessed by their presence in our lives. Read these words as a prayer of confession and assurance or sing along with the men of Acapella online at: <https://youtu.be/noUeQQ64Q1I> ."⁵

Create in me a clean heart, O God.
 Let me be like you in all my ways.
 Give me your strength, teach me your song.
 Shelter me in the shadow of your wings,
 for we are your righteousness.
 If we die to ourselves and live through your death,
 we shall be born again to be blessed in your love!



⁵ Acapella is an all-male contemporary Christian group founded by Keith Lancaster in 1982 that only sings without instruments. This song is from 2017. To learn more about them see <https://acappella.org/artists/acappella/> .

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

“To live well, I must believe the truth that others tell,
especially when they have been forced into the habit of being habitually unbelieved.”
--Pàdraig Ó Tuama⁶

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...

We continue to bear witness to the lives disrupted and threatened by the spread of COVID19 in our country. We hold in prayer the nearly 2.5 million reported bodies living with or who have survived the coronavirus and for the countless persons who are have COVID19 but remain undiagnosed. We pray for continued vigilance in basic safety precautions as acts of compassion for others as well as self-care. As summer moves forward and people grow increasingly restless, remind us, Holy One, to heed your command to care first for the most vulnerable in our actions and decisions—even to our own discomfort or inconvenience. For the 9.5 million souls around the globe infected with this virus ...and for those souls we now name...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Stan, Barbara, and Marty, we offer prayer for the almost 500,000 souls around the globe who have died of COVID19. We especially pray for the **residents of Wingate** who died and their family and friends who grieve their absence. We also hold Marty's dear friend, **Hope Anderson**, to your eternal light and ask your Spirit's consolation upon her family and friends in their grief. So too, we hold with Stan the family of **Christine**, who died after a number of troubled years that they find comfort that she is now at peace. For these dear ones 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....*

⁶ Pàdraig Ó Tuama, *In the Shelter: Finding a Home in the World* (London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 2015), 146.

With Marty, Ernie, Bev, Liz, and Stan we hold persons living with non-COVID19 illnesses, infirmity, and treatments. We give thanks for Marty's niece, **Linda's** remission after chemotherapy and pray for her continued recovery. We ask your watchcare of **Ernie** as he endures radiation and chemotherapy and their many side-effects. Nurture his good spirits and faith even in this season of pain. We hold to your solace **Helen** as she lives with a diagnosis of lung cancer in both lungs and prepares for chemotherapy and radiation. Ease the pain and discomfort of treatments and grant them spans of restorative rest. 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....*

With Harry, Louise, John, Barbara, and Pastor Holly, we give thanks for the constant presence and loving care of family and friends who come by, check on us, run errands, and simply make life better with their love. We also give thanks for the ways in which we are able to be present in return to loved ones and friends...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With John, we celebrate awaiting new life, especially his grandchild due in July and twin grandchildren in September. For their mothers' Eliza and Elizabeth's continued good health, fortitude, courage in this chaotic time, and safekeeping...and for expectant parents we now name ...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Marty, we are grateful for our homes and the ability to be able to shelter in safety and comfort during this time of societal pandemic and transformation...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Stan, we hold the members of Needham Presbyterian Church as they live through their first weeks since the church disbanded. In their discernment of the Spirit's moving in their individual life stories, may they know the comfort of your sacred presence each day and find communities of faith into which they may each take root and flourish...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*



With Andrew, we pray for Pastor Daryn and for her continued good health amidst her service and work...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Ann, we give thanks for **Bruce's** continued recovery from COVID19 and the ability for family to visit with him through a window. For his wellbeing and good spirits and that of residents within assisted living, rehabilitation, treatment, and retirement communities who continue to endure necessary restrictions and precautions for their own health and safety but at its own great price of community, stability, and isolation...and for souls we now name...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Louise and Ernie, we offer thanks or the beauty of shared song over the phone...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Ernie and Pastor Holly, we are grateful for being held in prayer by our FBC Needham congregation and for the sustaining presence of the Spirit each prayer offers...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*



With Katie, Ernie, and Pastor Holly, we celebrate the ability of technology to enable ongoing education, work, and worship...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

As we continue to bear witness to the calls for systemic and personal transformative change in the face of racism and targeting of people of color, we also decry the shooting death of **Rayshard Brooks** in Atlanta. As your Spirit consoles his family and loved ones, we speak his name and call for a cessation of heedless and ongoing death. For his death, the calls for intentional community and law enforcement reform, and the souls directly impacted whose names we now speak...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

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.

Here I Am...

How often have you heard someone calling for you and you responded, "Here I am!"? You locate yourself in proximity to them, identifying where you are and that you are in the same moment. Hearing our name elicits this relational and spatial connection. Sometimes prayer is likened to our calling on God to locate the divine Self and connect to us, but this is a misnomer. With God's continual presence pervasive in our lives, the reverse is much more likely—God calls us by name, and we attune to God's voice, turning and either responding, "Here I am!" or pretending we do not hear. The still, small voice of God comes to us not only in transformative, blinding light or burning bush encounters but also in the ignored voices of persons valued as "the least of these."

- *What resources may I draw upon this week – books, radio, television, internet, friends, or others – to help me become more responsive to God's calling me through the lives of people unfamiliar or unlike me?*
- *What am I willing to risk learning – or unlearning – in order to attune my heart and mind more deeply to God's guiding presence in the lives of people I do not know? How may I be open to change?*



Hymn 559

Here I Am, Lord

words & music arr. by Daniel L. Schutte

Wisconsin native, Daniel Schutte (b. 1947) is a prolific contemporary Christian songwriter and composer. A former Jesuit priest, he has contributed extensively to contemporary Catholic liturgical worship with songs rooted in biblical and religious texts. Schutte is currently Composer in Residence at the University of San Francisco.⁷ This hymn draws upon Isaiah 6:8 and calls us to a life of commitment to responding daily to be benefit and blessing in all our relationships and circles of influence each day—to hold all of God’s people in our hearts. Read aloud or sing the text or sing along with the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Chancel Choir, in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, online at: <https://youtu.be/cFpKgtJ4wcc>.⁸

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Refrain

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard your calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.

I have wept for love of them,
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my words to them.
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them,
my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
'Til their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

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.

⁷ <https://www.last.fm/music/Dan+Schutte/+wiki>

⁸ This 2005 choral performance is with musical arrangement by Craig Courtney.

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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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.

Needham Interfaith Clergy Conversations – Our community's ministers continue to offer thoughtful online conversations on different topics. The videos may be found on YouTube, by searching for "Needham Interfaith Clergy Conversations."

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.

Needham Bricks for Justice Artist Installation at FBC Needham

FBC Needham is honored and humbled to host a *NeedhamBricksforJustice* art installation memorializing the 90 black lives lost to police excessive force and violence so far in 2020. Ninety bricks were laid out on our front walk and steps, each bearing the name or picture of an individual lost to the same in our recent past.

When church is at its best, it holds the stories, witness, and testimony of its communities and allows space for those stories to speak, to engage, and transform hearts, attitudes and bodies toward a more loving and healing presence and witness in the world. We hope this installation does just that - that it bears witness to the stories of our communities, that it calls hearts and minds to engage and be transformed toward more loving policy, loving action, and loving encounter in all that we do, and is done in and through us. We are honored to hold space for the witness for justice of these artists, and especially to hold space for the stories of the lives memorialized in and through their art. Thank you, Charlotte Caron, and to your team of artists and all those who contributed to this witness for justice in our community. <https://bricksforjustice.wixsite.com/needham>

From the Artist: A Brief Statement About the Piece:

(Content warning: reference to the deaths and murders of Black people)

Needham Bricks for Justice is a collective installation to commemorate the lives of Black people unjustly killed by police in the United States. Each name, each face represents a victim of these hateful acts of violence. You'll notice we have 90 bricks standing in this installation. 90 is the estimated number of Black people killed by police so far in 2020, and the number is growing by the day. The names and faces represented are only a fraction of the long and continuous cycle of police brutality disproportionately affecting Black men, women, and children in this country. Today, Black people are 3 times more likely to be killed by police than white people. In 2015, the year Alton Sterling, Natasha McKenna, Philandro Castile, Samuel DuBose, and many others were murdered at the hands of police officers, the statistic was 2.5 times more likely. This statistic must change. Young Black children should not have to grow up learning how to prevent themselves from being killed by police officers.

The most important work to developing and forming anti-racist people is the work done at home, within our own communities. Needham Bricks for Justice brings together the work and heart of about 20 local artists and activists. For some, protesting is where they find their voice. For others, starting book clubs and initiating online discussions is that space. For each artist involved in this installation, visual art is a powerful and informative platform to personally engage in anti-racist work. We all hope these bricks can speak to those in our community to stand together in support of Black lives, Black futures, Black children, Black justice.

† † †

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.

Come Worship with Us in God's Green Sanctuary! Beginning Thursday, July 2nd at 6:00pm



Images: Outdoor worship space, Trinity Presbyterian Church (Charlotte, NC. Courtesy of Steve Lindsley);
Drummers together (Humble Drum. Courtesy of River Arts)

We are excited to conduct a trial worship experience outdoors on the lawn of First Baptist Church for the first four Thursday evenings of July at 6:00pm (July 2nd, July 9th, July 16th & July 23rd).* We are delighted to creatively navigate this interesting moment in our lives of faith. Just a word of anticipation, this worship experience will not be traditional! Due to evidence that suggests group singing and collective responses to be unsafe, we will be experimenting with other forms of praise - drumming, streamers, clapping, etc. We trust that our praise, in whatever form it takes, will be glorifying and pleasing to God so long as we are also committed to the forms of praise God most cares about - care and justice for our neighbors (Isaiah 58, Amos 5:21-24). And in keeping with our care for you, we will continue to mail out and post online (www.fbcneedham.org) our At-Home Worship Resources, and will continue to reserve Sunday mornings for our Community Calls of Caring.

We are stressing the health and well-being of everyone, so please understand **social distancing and mask wearing are a requirement for all participants!** Mingling before and after worship is discouraged. If you have been sick or are not feeling well, stay home. If you are in a vulnerable population and have underlying health conditions, or do not feel safe joining, please do not feel pressured to attend; God is with you wherever you are. Please do what feels right and safe for you and for others. If we realize we cannot accomplish this worship experience in a safe manner that upholds the dignity and health of all gathered, we will cancel until another time presents itself. I am holding each and every one of you in prayer. Strength and the peace of Christ be with you all.

Blessings,
Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos

* Worship format/location beyond July 23rd, TBD

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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