

# First Baptist Church in Needham

## Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Edition 46



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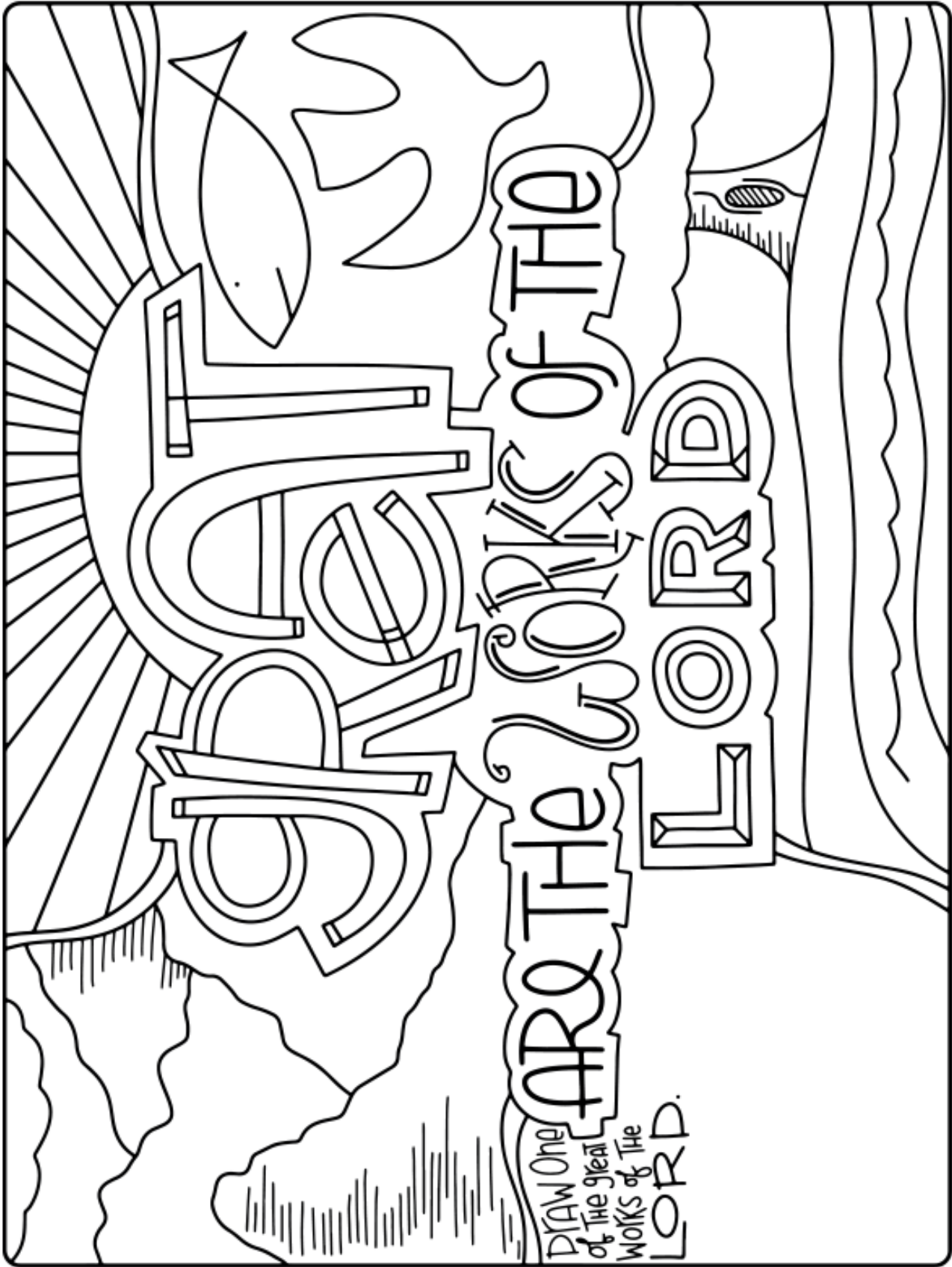
**Worship and Prayer Resource**  
**Sunday, January 31, 2021**  
*(for whenever you are so led to pause, reflect, and pray)*

858 Great Plain Avenue · Needham, MA 02492

[www.fbcneedham.org](http://www.fbcneedham.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Photo: "Hummus and Veggies – 2017", ©Holly Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.



## 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.**

## Scripture

### Psalm 111

Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. Full of honor and majesty are your work, and your righteousness endures forever.

You have gained renown by your wonderful deeds; you, LORD, are gracious and merciful. You provide food for those who revere you; you are ever mindful of your covenant. You have shown your people the power of your works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of your hands are faithful and just; all your precepts are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

The LORD sent redemption to your people; you have commanded your covenant forever. Holy and awesome is your name.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. Your praise endures forever.

### 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by God. Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one." Indeed, even though there may be so-

called gods in heaven or on earth--as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. "Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

## 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

"Respect for those who suffer imposes a silence. Pastoral theologian Sharon Thornton writes that the place of silence at the feet of those who are grieving and aggrieved, when...grounded in an open heart, is best described as a sacramental-like act of beholding. Beholding is the beginning space of relation...by which ordinary time is transposed to a sacred moment."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>William Blaine-Wallace, *When Tears Sing: The Art of Lament in Christian Community* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2020), 103..



*Entering into our communal Prayers of the People, you are invited to hold a silence with each request—a silence of deep respect and sacred beholding of the gratuities that reflect the Psalmist's words, of the care and empathy for others found reflected in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, and for the prayers of your own heart shared here in community and those known only to you and God. May you behold*

## **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 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...

As we continue to navigate each of our lives with COVID19, we hold this week to God's watchcare **Spiro Stylianopoulos** who tested positive for the virus and is quarantining at home along with **Pastor Daryn, Fayrah, Anna, and Teddy**. We pray for Spiro's quick alleviation of symptoms and return to full health. We hold **Daryn** to Spirit's healing as she is experiencing symptoms and pray that she will test negative—realizing that for once, learning she may have the flu will be the preferable outcome. We also pray that Fayrah, Anna, and Teddy will continue to test negative and be spared ...*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

We celebrate with **Clif** his continued recovery at home and his returning ability to walk and use his hands with better dexterity. For the wonder of medical science, research, and treatments that allow chronic conditions to be manageable. So too, we celebrate with **Anthony his mother's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday** and the realization that had COVID not prevented them from going to the Philippines to be with her, they would have been too far away from necessary medical attention when Clif needed it during the last two weeks. For blessings in disguise... *Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

As **Harry and his sons** commemorate the first year of mourning his beloved, **Jean's** death, we ask your deep peace may rest upon their hearts as her memory lives on within them. With Andrew, we also give thanks for the life and ministry of **Shari Kamp**, a long-time employee at Murrow Indian Children's Home who died of COVID. As Shari enters your nearer presence, we honor her life through the lives she touched. We hand our collective grief and unutterable loss to God's consolation... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

We hold **Liz** to Spirit's safekeeping as she navigates decisions about her home and future housing. We ask for safe travel for her family as to come together to help her navigate the discerning work of her next step. May your tender mercy rest upon Liz's heart and mind in this trying, stressful, and uncertain time. May Maxwell and Rascal be a comfort and joy each day. And assure her of your presence closer than the next breath and of the loving community who walk with her each step of the way ... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

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For Anthony's receiving his second COVID vaccine and his continued work on the COVID ward we offer our grateful prayer. For Anthony and all persons engaged in healthcare at every level... *Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

With Harry, we continue to hold **Ernie and Clif** to God's healing and pray for their ongoing treatments and restoration. With Clif and Anthony, we lift **Pastor Daryn** and **Pastor Holly** to sacred care as they enact the ongoing work, ministry, and discernment of the congregation's daily life... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

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<sup>4</sup> Photo: "Westminster Abbey Statue – London, 2013" ©Holly Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

With John, Ernie, and Harry, we celebrate the thorough joy of being able to see dear family, even when distanced. We cherish each communication – each text, call, online meeting, socially distanced walk, etc. – as we endeavor to keep each other safe and well. For their abiding and loving presence in all its forms ...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Clif, we hold persons learning to live with new limitations and loved ones who care alongside them. We especially hold Clif's brother-in-law, **Charlie**, and sister, **Janet** as Charlie learns to navigate with a walker. We also acknowledge the lessons of valuing boredom both COVID and physical limitations require of us as we age. For the hard edges of these new ways of being... *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

We are grateful for the ten souls who were able to meet for our online Zoom **Annual Congregational Meeting** on January 24. We celebrate **Mark and Peggy Hellberg** joining us as co-moderators and are grateful for their presence among and with us. We give thanks for the diligent, flexible, and responsive work of the congregation, ministers, and staff in 2020, a most unusual year, and for the dedicated focus and care with which we enter our 2021 year as First Baptist Church in Needham... *Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

With Pastor Holly, we call upon Spirit's healing relief for her son-in-law, Greylyn who has suffered with allergic hives for two months while awaiting an appointment with an allergist. For quick and responsive treatment to alleviate the constant itching and a diagnosis of its cause, and for his continued work to finish his dissertation under most trying and distracting conditions ... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

With Pastor Daryn and Ernie, we give thanks for the lovingkindness and compassion of our FBC Needham community and cherish the prayers and expressions of love and concern that buoy us in our moments and seasons of crisis, illness, and recovery ... *Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

With Clif, we turn our hearts toward the second half of winter and anticipate the growing warmth of the sun in the assurance that spring awaits beneath the quiet earth and in the tighten buds of the trees ...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

We continue to lift Pastor Holly's friend, **Eda Jackson**, to your watchcare as she remains in COVID ICU for more than 70 days. We also hold her children **Gray and Dabs** to your discerning compassion as they navigate difficult decisions going forward. We continue to hold **Clif's friends** from Racine who continue to endure prolonged impacts from COVID and also Ernie's neighbor, **Ann Cosgrove**, who completed treatment for breast cancer and now awaits learning if she is cleared next month ... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

We give thanks that our **second year of Creative Callings** is underway and for our community partners' testimonies and support. For their insights and willingness to accompany us in our discernment... *praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

We continue to hold in prayer Pastor Daryn's grandfather, **Dearl Bunce**, who continues rehabilitation for speech, occupational, and physical therapy after **suffering a brain bleed and lack of consciousness** during a violent home invasion and burglary. We pray for his ongoing recovery and for his wife, **Shirley**, as she recovers from the trauma of the experience... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

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 ...*

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.

## Offering

*During this time of offering, consider going right now to <https://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.

## 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

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.

**While Pastor Daryn and her family are navigating COVID, if you have a pastoral concern, contact Pastor Holly by email, phone, or text.**

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## Worship - Worship Resource and Calls of Caring continue!

**Worship Resources and Calls of Caring are provided each week.** You are encouraged to make use of the Worship Resources and to find other meaningful opportunities for worship and reflection, Zoom services, or other spiritually enriching means of communing with God and community during this time of social distancing. The Zoom links provided for FBC Newton and FBC Jamaica Plain remain the same as before and are posted on our website on our member page. Contact Pastor Holly if you need links to join these services.

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## 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.

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# Creative Callings

Collaboration, Innovation, and Prophetic Witness



Boston University School of Theology  
Center for Practical Theology

We will welcome Sandra Robinson from Needham Community Council and Timothy Muir McDonald from Needham Public Health to OUR SECOND COMMUNITY PARTNERS Q&A on Thursday, February 4th at 6:30pm. Their videos are available on the Creative Callings link on the church website. You should have received a Creative Callings packet for Year 2 - it contains a schedule, bios for our community partners, and more information about the timeline of Year 2.

**Reserve Thursdays at 6:30pm in 2021 for our congregational conversations for discernment via Zoom!**

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. If you have questions about Creative Callings, or how you can best support First Baptist in our participation, please contact Pastor Holly, [pastorholly@fbcneedham.org](mailto:pastorholly@fbcneedham.org).

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## *How Are You? Mental Health Awareness & Care*

The pandemic is exacting a daily price from each of us mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, financially, and through our sense of instability and insecurity. If you are finding life increasingly difficult to navigate, there are numerous resources available to help. At FBC Needham we recognize the necessity of behavioral and mental health support in nurturing wellbeing and safe-keeping of our community. Please utilize these resources as needed, and share them with friends and loved ones who may benefit from them.

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255 ·**

**online:** [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org) ·

**Mental Health America (screening tools):** <https://screening.mhanational.org> ·

**SafeLink – Massachusetts' State-wide Domestic Violence Hotline: 877-785-2020**

**Casa Myrna:** [casamyrna.org](https://casamyrna.org)

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**Needham Community Council** continues to provide necessary resources and food to individuals in need of their services: <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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## 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](mailto:pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org).


*Now Accepting Applications*



**NEED HELP PAYING  
RENT DUE TO COVID-  
RELATED INCOME  
LOSS?**

APPLY FOR COVID-19  
EMERGENCY RENTAL  
ASSISTANCE

**To qualify:**  
Must be a Needham resident  
Have reduced income because of COVID-19  
Have an annual income at or below 80% of Area Median  
Income (\$67,400 for individual; \$96,250 for family of 4)  
CONTACT: [robyn@metrowestcd.org](mailto:robyn@metrowestcd.org)  
or 617-923-3505 x 5



EQUAL HOUSING  
OPPORTUNITY