

First Baptist Church in Needham

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Edition 53



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Worship and Prayer Resource

Sunday, March 14, 2021

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

858 Great Plain Avenue · Needham, MA 02492

www.fbcneedham.org

We make the Journey of Lent incorporating the rituals of worship – light, prayer, offering, and benediction – with art, reflection, and the ancient practice of praying with prayer beads. May the creative interpretations and theological contemplation shared here join your own daily experiences, encounters of God’s presence, and prayerful compassion as we make this sacred, worshipful journey together. –*Pastor Holly*

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

John 3:14-21

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

The word of the Lord, thanks be to God.

Reflection

Before we were born,
Before we took our first breath,
Before the week started,
Before the year started,
Before we said, "I love you,"
Before we said, "I'm sorry,"
Before we figured out who we really
are,

Before we figured out who we want to
be,
Before it all—
God loved us.
Unconditionally and freely,
Fully and honestly—
God loved us.
Again and again, this is where our story
begins.²



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² Adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

³ Lisle Gwen Garrity. "Light Wave." Acrylic paint with gold leaf on canvas. Inspired by John 3:14-21. | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. Use with permission.

Ephesians 2:1-10

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.



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But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God--not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

The word of the Lord, thanks be to God.

⁴ "Daffodils Emerging," FBC Needham, MA – 2019. ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

Reflection

God of love,
I forget the beginning of the story —
That I was made from love, to be love, to give love.
Instead of rooting my narrative in the goodness refrain of creation,
I skip ahead and find my worth at the fall,
With Cain and Abel, lost in the wilderness.
I forget that first there was you, and you are love.
I forget that out of that love you created all of us.
I forget that from the very first day, you loved first.
I forget, because a love like that doesn't make sense to me.
Forgive my low self-esteem.
Forgive my resistance to love myself.
Forgive my hesitation to trust that even I could be made good.
And forgive my tendency to pass that doubt on — from generation to generation.
Write a new beginning for me that roots my confidence in your unrelenting love.
With hope I pray, again and again.
Amen. ⁵

PRAYING WITH PRAYER BEADS: Starting with Lent, Prayers of the People changes format to connect to the spiritual practice of using prayer beads. This ancient practice of holding a strand of beads to help focus the mind and body during prayer has been a very meaningful form of prayer throughout Christian history. As your fingers move from one bead to the next, you pray, sometimes the same prayer again and again and sometimes a different, personal prayer with each bead.

Moving through Lent, you may wish to pray Prayers of the People (or your own prayers) by following along with the prayer beads printed in the Worship Resource or perhaps color each bead as you pray. You may choose to make your own prayer beads or use a set significant to you. However you choose to enter into our weekly

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⁵ Adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

⁶ "Lenten Prayer Beads" - ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

congregational prayers, know the act of prayer is holy conversation through the Spirit of God as we journey within the purple shades of Lent's path. May the prayer beads nurture and support this sacred worship. –*Pastor Holly*

Instructions are included in purple italics throughout the prayers so you can follow along with the beads.

Prayers of the People

Enter 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

Holding or sitting with the image of your prayer beads, enter a quiet pause with this prayerful meditation:

God of the here and now —
I have heard the words,
“For God so loved the world
That he gave his only son,”
Time and time again.
I have read them on billboards,
Heard them in worship,
And seen them on signs.
And yet I know,

There is a difference between
Hearing those words
In passing
And truly, deeply listening.
I long to listen, God.
I long to hear your truth.
I long to know your love.
Open my heart and mind.
I am listening.⁷

⁷ Adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

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.**

Place your finger on **the cross** and begin the prayer with these words:

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...

Place your finger on the **first three beads** above the cross saying:

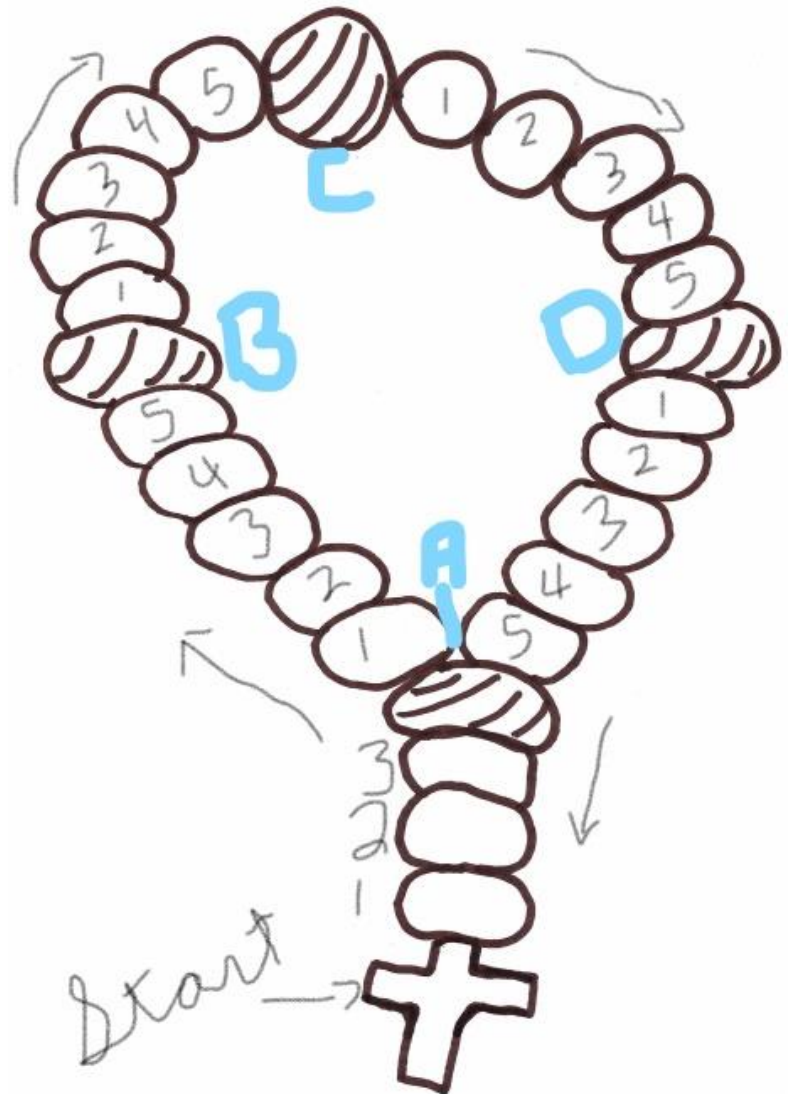
Bead 1: Creator God, hear my prayer.

Bead 2: Loving Christ, hear my prayer.

Bead 3: Abiding Spirit, hear my prayer.

The **4 ridged beads** mark off four themed sections of our Prayers of the People. Each ridged bead is followed by **5 smooth beads** that represent five specific prayers from our FBC Needham community that are related to that theme.

Your finger will move from bead to bead around the loop until you have prayed with each bead and return to the original three beads and cross.



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⁸ "Lenten Prayer Beads". Pen and ink drawing. ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

1st Theme: Gratitude & Thanksgiving

Place your finger on the first ridged bead (A) above the original three smooth beads saying:

O God, thank you for each new day and all that it brings. You promise to provide all that I need, caring not only for me, but for all creation and so I rejoice...

Move to the first set of 5 smooth beads, and offer your prayers of gratitude & thanksgiving along with those of our community of faith:

Bead 1: With Fayrah Stylianopoulos as she celebrates her 17th birthday on March 15 that the next year nurture, challenge, and bless her.

Bead 2: With Clif, Bev, Liz, and Harry in the joy and delight of warmer weather, crocuses blooming, and walks outside.

Bead 3: With Louise, Andrew, and John in obtaining their first COVID vaccines and Harry in receiving his second shot.

Bead 4: With Pastor Daryn that her Grandparents Bunce are doing well and that her Gran Shirley celebrated her 82nd birthday.

Bead 5: With Harry for our Lenten practice of praying with prayer beads.
Praise God, from whom all blessing flow....

2nd Theme: Personal & FBC Needham Concerns

Place your finger on the second ridged bead (B) saying:

Faithful God, you know me inside and out, all my hopes and dreams, fears and failures. Guide and support the FBC Needham community and me as we seek to follow Jesus's teachings and life's ministry while sharing the concerns of our hearts as I pray...

Move to the second set of 5 smooth beads, and offer your prayers of concern along with those shared within our community of faith:

Bead 1: With Clif in hope that families will be able to be together with greater safety as vaccinations continue.

Bead 2: With Bev for her continued back pain that an effective treatment may be found to ease her discomfort its limitations.

Bead 3: With Liz as she cleans out her house and continues to work through the many transitions occurring in her life.

Bead 4: With Louise for Pastor Daryn's and Pastor Holly's health and wellbeing and that of their families and her family as well.

Bead 5: With Pastor Holly for the congregation's continued discernment as we move toward intentional decisions in our next segment with *Creative Callings*.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer....

3rd Theme: Healing, Solace, & Courage

Place your finger on the third ridged bead (C) saying:

God of mercy and peace, your people cry out to you for healing and comfort, courage and strength. Surround your children known and unknown to me with your watch care and abiding presence, as I pray...

Move to the third set of 5 smooth beads, and offer your prayers for Spirit's comfort, healing, and peace saying:

Bead 1: With Marilyn who has ongoing health concerns and is under hospice care.

Bead 2: With John for Spiro's continued healing and wellbeing as his arm continues to heal.



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⁹ "Miss Emily's Shamrocks," Prentiss, MS – 2013. ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

Bead 3: With Clif and Pastor Holly for Ernie's ongoing cancer treatments, tests, and prognosis going forward.

Bead 4: For Liz's friend Liz whose husband died of COVID. May Liz be consoled as her husband enters God's nearer presence and fully healing.

Bead 5: With Ernie that the gradual turning of fewer COVID hospitalizations and deaths will continue until the suffering of this pandemic can be ended and we can return to renewed and restored life.

Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer....

4th Theme: Community, Nation, & World

Place your finger on the fourth ridged bead (D) saying:

God of compassion and justice, there is so much in the news that is painful, from natural disasters to governmental actions to hunger, poverty, and violence. And there are so many instances of lovingkindness, beauty, and hope. Move among your creation and your children, as I pray...

Move to the fourth set of 5 smooth beads, and offer your prayers for Spirit's moving:

Bead 1: With Harry for the goodness of meeting with Olin college students to share with them the experience of being a senior adult.

Bead 2: With the people of Myanmar in the political unrest and violence they are living through and our sister Myanmar congregation in Lynn, MA, the Overseas Burmese Christian Fellowship as they and their pastor, Rev. Maung Maung Htwe hold vigil for their families, friends, and country.

Bead 3: For teachers receiving vaccines as they and students navigate returning to school in the next weeks.

Bead 4: With the people of Lebanon as their economy collapsed creating fear, social upheaval, unrest, protests, and national instability.

Bead 5: During this Women's History Month for the women and girls throughout the world who endure misogyny, sexism, unjust wages, and limits to education and employment due to their sex. I pray for their continued resilience, courage, and hope and work toward equity and representation in their communities, homes, and workplaces.

For the moving of your Spirit in hope and healing throughout our world, praise God, from whom all blessings flow ... And for your enduring presence, justice, and mercy in our brokenness, Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer....

Concluding the Prayer

Return to the first ridged bead (A) saying:

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

You may wish to use the original 3 beads to offer your own prayers.

Bead 1:

Bead 2:

Bead 3:

Hear my prayer, O Lord...as I pray the prayer your son taught us saying:

Holding the cross, end with 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.

Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain

As you leave this space,
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm—
Again and again and again,
Until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace. Amen.¹⁰

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¹⁰ Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Announcements

Our ministry at FBC Needham continues!

Our **church office** is open for our Office Manager, Robin Bevilacqua. We are encouraging limited visits to the church building, and all who visit are required to mask, sign-in, and socially distance. **If you need to speak with Robin, please call ahead if you can.** Pastoral and other church staff are working from home. Office voicemail and email are being checked regularly.

If you have a pastoral concern, contact Pastor Daryn or Pastor Holly by email, phone, or text.

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 Daryn or Pastor Holly if you need links to join these services.

Welcome to Lent – Our Theme is *Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain*

Our Lenten Prayers of the People take on a different format as we hold our communities and FBC family in ongoing intentional prayer and compassion with the ancient practice of praying with prayer beads. A drawing of prayer beads will be included each week for you to follow along or color along if you do not have a set of beads. As our hearts and minds make this 40-day journey toward Easter, may we also be open to the Spirit's moving in our congregation's discernment through our devotional resources drawn from A Sanctified Art, LLC, www.sanctifiedart.org; prayer practices; worship; and daily faithful living.



“Again and Again: A Lenten Refrain” – Lenten Zoom Gatherings Fellowship, Study, & Prayer | Thursdays in Lent | 7:00pm-8:00pm on Zoom | Hosted by Peggy & Mark Hellberg

Would you like to get together for a time of fellowship, study, and prayer as we explore our Lenten devotional book, “Again and Again: A Lenten Refrain” during the season of Lent? If so, please join us on Thursday nights from 7 PM to 8PM on Zoom as we walk through Lent one week at a time.

We hope that by sharing this time we will get to know each other better, and we will grow in our understanding of God’s call to each of us. It would be great if you would review the resources before the meeting but that is not a requirement. It would be helpful if you had access to a Bible. Please reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions. We look forward to seeing you (virtually) on Thursday.

Please feel free to invite your friends.

Peggy and Mark

Zoom Link: Mark and Peggy are inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: FBC Needham Lenten Devotional, Study, and Fellowship

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82130750040?pwd=OFMvakoxNDYzVUg0SFdKOVZQWWFHUT09>

Meeting ID: 821 3075 0040

Passcode: 575973

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,82130750040#,,,,*575973# US (Washington DC)

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Dial by your location

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+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 821 3075 0040

Passcode: 575973 Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82130750040?pwd=OFMvakoxNDYzVUg0SFdKOVZQWWFHUT09>

Consider Making a Generous Gift!

Thanks to **America for Christ (AFC) Offering** contributions, **American Baptist Home Mission Societies** (ABHMS) supported communities distressed by the devastation of COVID-19 last year, as the pandemic swept our country and Puerto Rico. ABHMS also helped families who lost homes to floods, wildfires and storms, along with children living on the edge because of poverty, and seminarians preparing to devote their lives to sharing the Good News. These are just a few of the ways we minister to those in need; there are many more.

Please help us continue to bring healing and hope to communities, families, children, and Jesus' disciples in 2021 by supporting this year's America for Christ Offering.



Boston University School of Theology
Center for Practical Theology

Creative Callings Stage 3:

COLLECTIVE & INDIVIDUAL VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

Intentional Decisions – Faithfully Stepping Forward

Starts Thursday, April 22, at 6:30pm on Zoom!

Previous videos are available on the *Creative Callings* link on the church website. If you have questions about *Creative Callings*, or how you can best support First Baptist in our participation, please contact Pastor Daryn, pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org, or Pastor Holly, pastorholly@fbcneedham.org.

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.