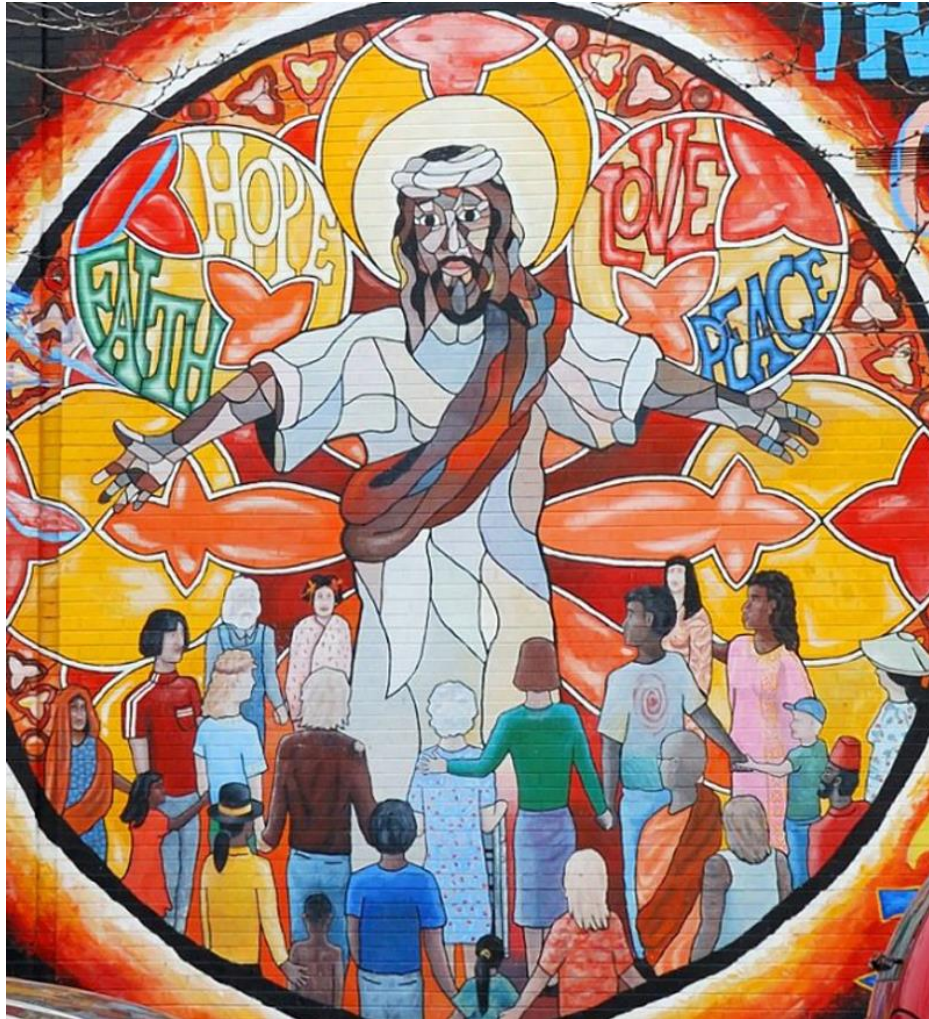


First Baptist Church in Needham

Fifth Sunday of Eastertide

Edition 60



1

Worship and Prayer Resource

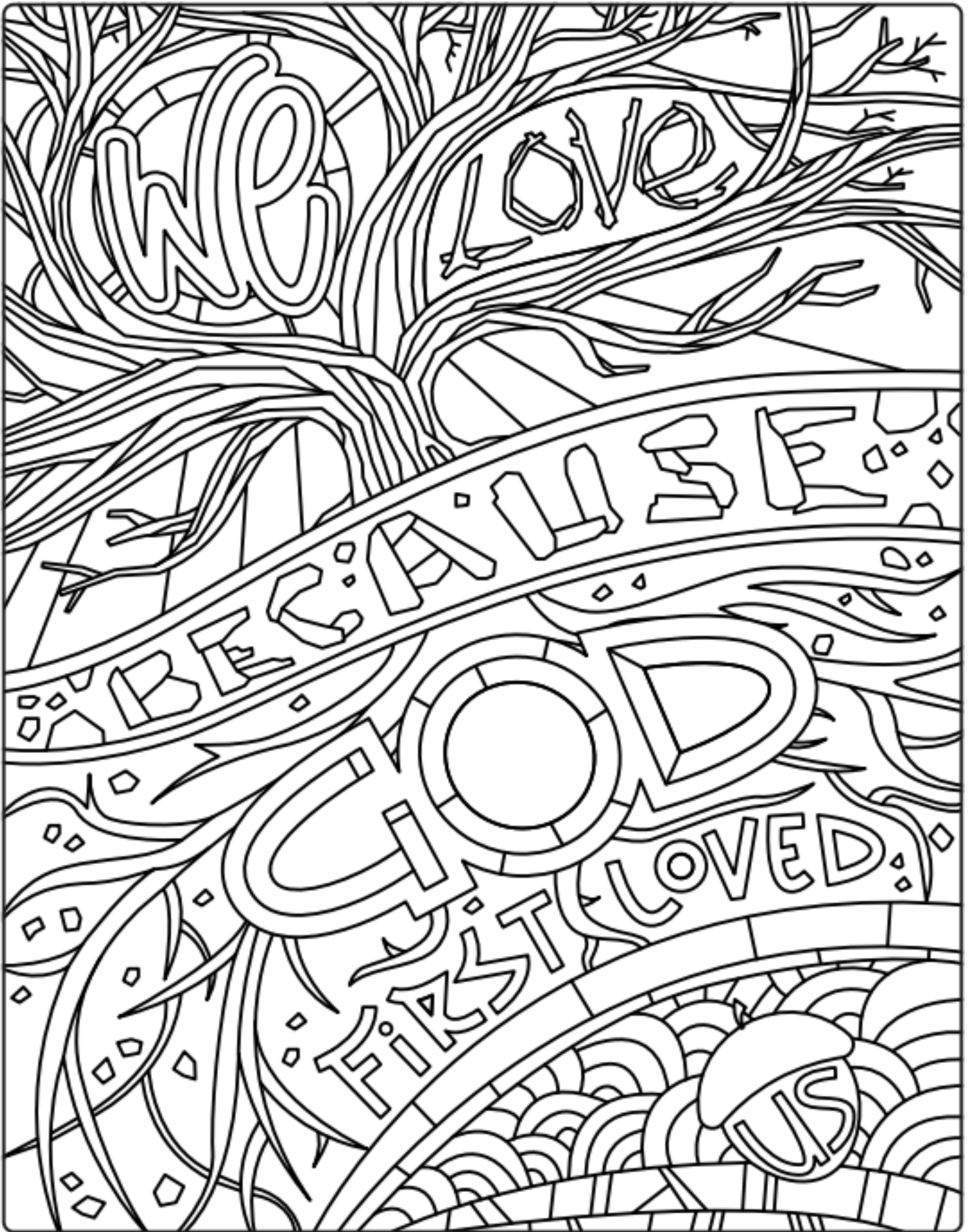
Sunday, May 2, 2021

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

858 Great Plain Avenue · Needham, MA 02492

www.fbcneedham.org

¹Jesus Mural of Faith, Hope, Love, and Peace, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56412> [retrieved March 25, 2021].



Lighting the Candle of Life

You may wish to light a candle or use one of the included images 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

Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?"

He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

The word of the Lord, thanks be to God.

Reflection

“You are ordained by your baptism”²
the theologian said.
Ordained by water, Spirit—
to more than what you’ve been...
Ordained into a life altered –
Word turned into action, theory embodied...
Ordained into service and ministry—
colleagues forever with Candace’s official...
Ordained to be receptive to opportunities—
enabling a supple spirit, innovative responses...
Ordained to emulate Phillip’s initiative—
and then step out of Spirit’s way.³

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH PRAYER BEADS:

We continue the ancient practice of holding a strand of beads to help focus the mind and body during prayer in Eastertide. 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. Pray the 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 wish to make your own prayer beads or use a set significant to you. However you choose to enter into our weekly congregational prayers, know the act of prayer is holy conversation through the Spirit of God as we journey through the light and life of Eastertide. May the prayer beads nurture and support this sacred worship. –*Pastor Holly*

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

² The Reverend Dr. Phillips McCarty. Religious Education Professor, Mississippi College. 1990.

³ “McCarty’s Assertion.” Inspired by Acts 8:26-40. ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

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:

Turn my heart down unfamiliar roads
Rutted, angled, rough with disuse—
So I may find you in the unseen places,
Dappled shade and quiet vistas.

Turn my eyes to clearing vision
Empathetic, bearing witness—
Enabling perspective, cherishing otherness,
So no life can pass unseen, no story unheard.

Turn my hands to daily kindness
Blessing, holding, freeing, loving—
Bestow through me your mercied justice,
That your creation grows restored.

Turn my life, ever-changing
Upheaved, consoled, regret, and joy—
Rooted deep, draw living waters,
Into soul-embodied hope and love.⁴

⁴ "Turn My Heart," Inspired by Acts 8:26-40. ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

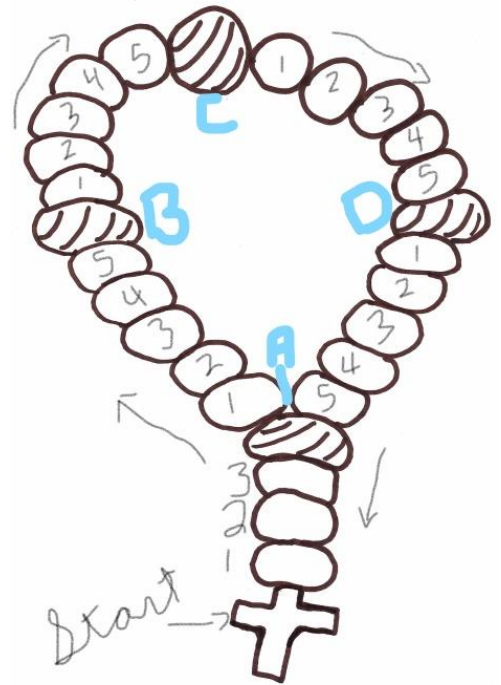
We Hold in Prayer...

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...



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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.

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:

⁵ "Lenten Prayer Beads". Pen and ink drawing. ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

- Bead 1:** With Peggy in the pleasure of being able to visit a dear friend from Texas in person since they were vaccinated and the hope that each vaccination brings that people will be able to be with loved ones and travel again in greater safety.
- Bead 2:** With Peggy, Anne, and Clif for the pleasure of lovely weather that enables a round of golf and walks down the street enjoying the flowers.
- Bead 3:** With Harry in gratitude for his sister, Bunny's, upcoming move to assisted living closer to family in Sacramento and for the goodness of his own children in caring for him each day.
- Bead 4:** With Ernie for the pleasure of talking with friends on the phone and letting folks know they are asked about and loved.
- Bead 5:** With Anne for the weekly pastoral calls and mailings from the church.
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 Bev, Harry, and Clif in concern for Ernie as he has had a hard few weeks and hopes to return to his cancer treatment next week.
- Bead 2:** With Harry as he undergoes medical tests and is walking more to counteract sitting so much.
- Bead 3:** With Clif as he acknowledges that as his energy continues to subside, he has learned to appreciate the need to rest better than he used to do.
- Bead 4:** With Ernie and Harry for Liz's continued housing concerns that the process enable her to find a suitable home in which to thrive.
- Bead 5:** With Pastor Daryn and Pastor Holly for the congregation's work toward intentional decisions, both for the church and individuals 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 for her grandson, Alex (age 26), in hospital as he endures a barrage of tests to determine what is making him ill, and with Marilyn's daughter, Nancy, as she cares for her mother and her son simultaneously.

Bead 2: With Harry mourning the death of a dear friend, Lillian Lew (age 72) that her family and loved ones be comforted as she is drawn into God's nearer presence.

Bead 3: With Bruce as his bloodwork is continually monitored.

Bead 4: With Dorothy recovering after a bruising fall (nothing broken!) and in gratitude for the loving care of her daughters and family.

Bead 5: With Bev for Marty and her continued recovery at home from a stroke.
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 Bev and Pastor Holly for the dear people of India as they live under the scourge of COVID variants with inadequate medical resources, vaccines, and overwhelmed funeral workers – that we in countries with greater resources respond quickly and with the greatest compassion and necessary care to help alleviate their suffering.

Bead 2: With our Jewish sisters and brothers in our country who are seeing a rise in anti-Semitism, hate speech, online intrusions, and violence as the country

opens up that this ongoing hatred not be allowed to be part of our “return to normal” desires and habits.

Bead 3: With Asian and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) siblings of humanity in our country who also continue to endure bigotry, discrimination, violence, and fatalities at the hands of people who choose not to be good neighbors even when they may claim to be “good Christians.” May we repent of our own actions and inactions that have allowed such treatment to continue and seek tangible ways to invoke systemic justice and healing.

Bead 4: With students and teachers as they move into the last weeks of the school year that their focus remain clear and their well-being and health stay stable.

Bead 5: With Pastor Holly in celebration of colleagues acquiring new jobs, buying first houses, publishing books and presenting papers, preparing to send children to college in the fall, and planning major moves for their families this Easter season – that in the many changes of life, they know Spirit’s guiding presence.

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.

Announcements

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 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.

Praying with Prayer Beads Continues in Eastertide



We extend our Lenten practice of praying with Prayer Beads into the Holy Season of Eastertide. This ancient practice allows us to follow the path of the beads as we hold the prayers of thanksgiving and concern, gratitude and sorrow, compassion, and celebration in community each week. 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. May this practice move us through this season of new life, faithful congregational decisions, and the moving of the Spirit.

6

Creative Callings

Collaboration, Innovation, and Prophetic Witness



Boston University School of Theology
Center for Practical Theology

Creative Callings Stage 3:

COLLECTIVE & INDIVIDUAL VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

Intentional Decisions – Faithfully Stepping Forward

Join Us for Congregational Conversations

Thursday, April 29, 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.

Norfolk County's "Are You Ok?" Program for Seniors & Residents with Disabilities – Provided free of charge to Norfolk County seniors and residents with disabilities, this program provides a daily check-in call 365 days a year monitored by staff from Norfolk County Sheriff's Office and Fallon Ambulance. **For more information or to sign up, call Deputy Sheriff Cheryl Bambery at 866-900-7865.**

National Suicide Prevention Hotline – 800-273-8255 • We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. **For more information, check online at www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org**

Needham Public Health – www.needhamma.gov/85/Public-Health

NPH's **Traveling Meals** program provides two meals/day to qualified Needham residents (both temporary and long-term). NPH also offers **Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention** and the **Gift of Warmth Program** (utility bill relief). For more information on the full list of services, check online or call 978-455-7940.