

First Baptist Church in Needham

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Edition 67

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Worship and Prayer Resource

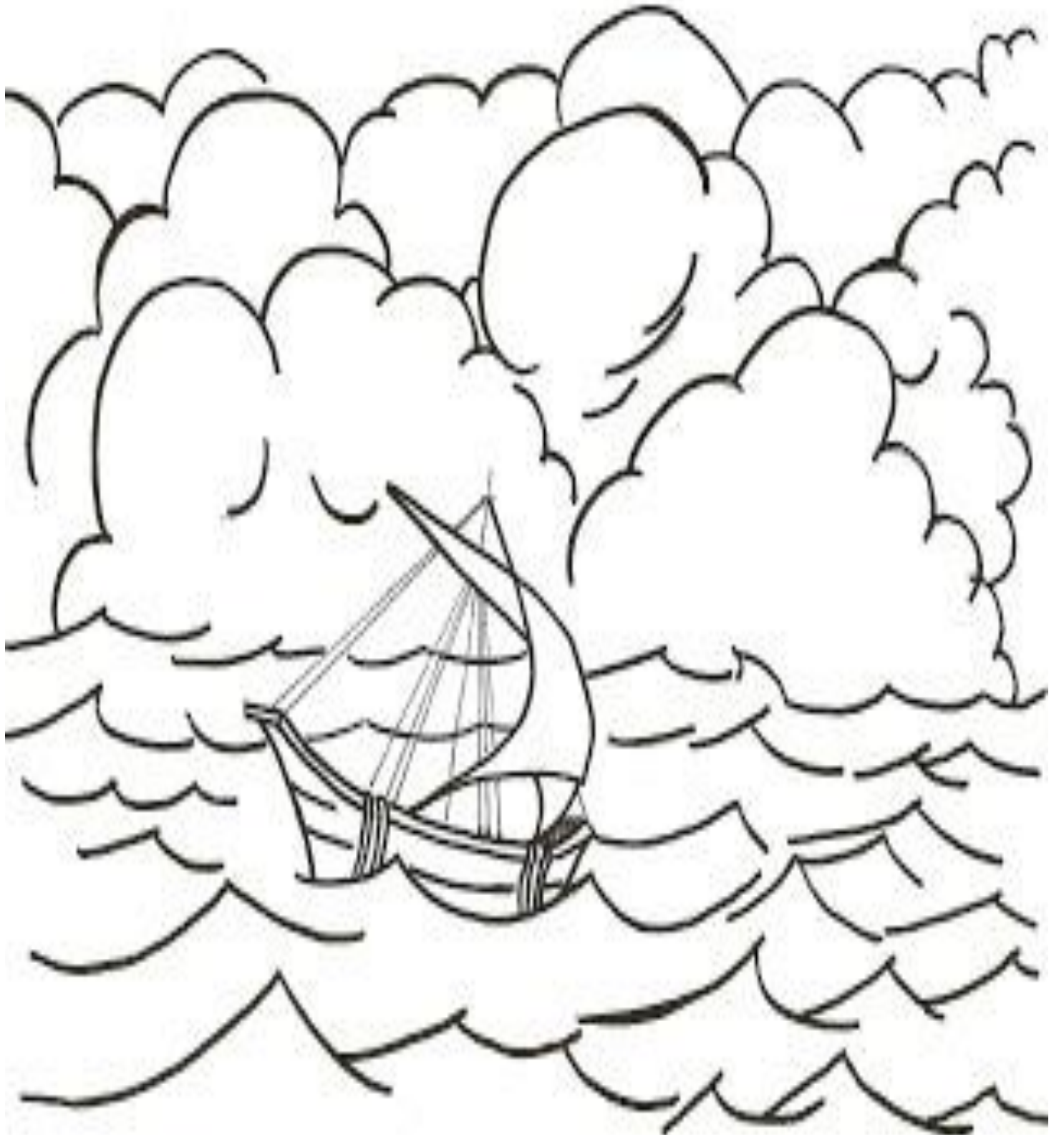
Sunday, June 20, 2021

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

858 Great Plain Avenue · Needham, MA 02492

www.fbcneedham.org

¹ Hildebrandt, Eduard, 1818-1869. Sea Storm, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57951> [retrieved May 28, 2021]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hildebrandt_Sea_storm.jpg.



Scripture

Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."

And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Reflection

The search is always for the Mystery that is deep within creation and yet infinitely other than anything we can know or name. It is a search that takes us into the wild and untamed places within ourselves as well as within nature....The wildness of the mystery of God is uncontainable.²

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, 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...

² John Philip Newell, *The Book of Creation: An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999), 30.

Prayers of Gratitude & Thanksgiving

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...

With Clif in gratitude for the refreshing rain and relief from the heat.

With Andrew in celebration of Wren's baptism in Oklahoma.

With Anna and Fayrah for their safe travels this summer.

With Barbara who will see two of her children over the weekend and for Wingate coming out of a two-week lock-down.

With Andrew for his sister and brother-in-law, Jan and Jess, in celebrating their 50th anniversary.

With Barbara for the beautiful and meaningful Reflections in the Worship Resource each week.

Praise God, from whom all blessing flow....

Prayers of Personal Concern, Healing, Solace, & Courage

Faithful God, you know me inside and out, all my hopes and dreams, fears and failures. You hear your children cry out for healing and consolation, courage and strength. Send your Spirit as we seek to follow Jesus's teachings and life's ministry while sharing the concerns of our hearts as I pray...

With Marty in her continued recovery, and with her son and daughter-in-law, Chris and Jean, in their caregiving.

With Clif for Gordon Swan diagnosed with lymphoma.

With Liz in continued concern for her cousin's wife, Sue, recovering from a heart attack.

With Pastor Holly for her childhood friend, Elaine, who is entering her second week of daily chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

With Bev for Trevor as his health is declining that he be able to be comfortable and that their days together are remain sweet spirited.

With Clif for Ernie who continues to experience painful secondary conditions exacerbated by his treatment that he have relief and his rest be restorative.

With Bev, Barbara, Pastor Daryn, and Pastor Holly for the congregation's intentional decisions with *Creative Callings*.

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

Prayers for the Community, Nation, & World

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...

With Clif as he makes a first sojourn into Boston since COVID and for the countless people finding ways to safely return to travel, routines, work, and gatherings after more than a year of restrictions and sheltering at home.

With Andrew for the dissention over voting in Arizona and for the serious questions of equity of access for voting and voting registration throughout our country.

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

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

+++ Offer your own prayers here. +++

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

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.



³ Photo: "Worship on the Lawn at the Turquoise Table." FBC Needham. ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.



First Baptist Church in Needham

One in the Spirit, One with Our Neighbors

American Baptist Churches USA

858 Great Plain Avenue
Needham, MA 02492

www.fbcneedham.org
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781-400-5867

Sunday, June 6, 2021

Beloved Community,

As your pastors, we intend to convey in this letter the sentiments of the *Creative Callings* Discernment Process participants who, with the approval of the Administration Ministry, present the included motion for your prayerful consideration and vote in a specially called congregational meeting on Sunday, June 27, 2021:

In 2018-2019, the First Baptist Church in Needham congregation conducted a series of preliminary meetings which led to our decision to enter into an intentional vocational discernment process through Boston University School of Theology's grant-funded project, *Creative Callings*, in 2019. After delays and adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we implemented our intentional contemplative discernment process regarding the future of First Baptist Church in Needham with a retreat in October, 2020, followed by regular weekly meetings by Zoom. The congregation was kept abreast of the process with regular mailings, pastoral calls, and ongoing invitations to participate. We first met in November-December, 2020, with Congregational Partners who shared their stories of how their congregations faithfully moved through times of similar transition, creating space for new possibilities and places of community for their members and their properties/resources. In January-February, 2021, we then met with Community Partners in Needham who shared both the needs in our local community and the varied and creative ways in which they are addressing these needs. Since April, 2021, we have met weekly for our current session, "Intentional Decisions: Faithfully Stepping Forward," to consider and discern our congregational wellness and lay leadership capacity, the best use of our physical resources for the Needham community, and future possibilities. This entire intentional and prayerful process culminates in the recommendation now brought to the congregation.

Throughout these months – October, 2020, to the present – the members of the *Creative Callings* Discernment Process have faithfully gathered weekly during each

session in deep discernment of the will of God for this congregation. Six of our congregational lay leaders devoted themselves to the time and concerted effort needed to regularly participate in the *Creative Callings* Discernment Process: Elizabeth Mercer, Nancy Twombly, Andrew Thoresen, Clif Holbrook, and Mark and Peggy Hellberg. We are also grateful for the presence and leadership of Ernie Steeves who participated in the initial phases of discernment through *Creative Callings* with Boston University in 2018-2019. The group drew upon the gifts offered by our *Creative Callings* Coach, Rev. Mark Slaughter, ethnographer Nathan Smith, and our Pastors, Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos and Rev. Dr. Holly Benzenhafer who shepherded the process and held space for the group discernment each week and individually. Rev. Marlene Gil, Associative Executive Minister for Congregational Relations with The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts (TABCOM) also gave of her time to serve as a denominational observer and resource to the Discernment Process. We have prayed, reflected, and listened deeply to our Partners and even more to our congregation's needs, abilities, and realities. We do not come lightly to the motion presented. It has been hard, emotional, and draining work. It is also faithful work that has been attended with great care and prayer each week. It is also not unanimous work. The motion brought by the members of the *Creative Callings* Discernment Process was determined with a vote of 6 in favor and 1 opposed. That said, we are unanimous in our concern for the ongoing care and wellbeing of the congregation's members going forward.

Thus, the participants of the *Creative Callings* Discernment Process, with the approval of the Administration Ministry bring this motion trusting that nothing can separate us from the love of God, whose Spirit binds us together. We are and will always be connected in love as part of God's community and the Body of Christ in the world. First Baptist Church in Needham has offered a community of faith and a space in which we have been nurtured and formed in our faith and practice. We hold the journey of First Baptist Church in Needham, our life and service together, in our hearts and in communion with each other wherever our individual paths take us – just as the people who have claimed identity with this congregation have done across the decades of coming and going: some in life-long membership, some for a span of years, and still others for only a season. We have come to a point in our congregation's life and sustainability, however, that requires us to take steps that are faithful, if hard, for a future hope we cannot fully yet see. This recommendation is brought as an act of faith, along with pastoral care, and deep trust that the Spirit is indeed moving within each member of First Baptist Church in Needham preparing us to live fully into the future with hope as we take the next step.

In Christ, your Pastors,



Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos



Rev. Dr. Holly C. Benzenhafer

Previous Notice for a Special Business Meeting

A special business meeting will occur during the worship hour on Sunday, June 27, 2021, for the sole purpose to vote on the motion to dissolve presented below as recommended by the participants of the *Creative Callings* Discernment Process and approved and presented by the Administration Ministry.

MOTION TO DISSOLVE

That First Baptist Church in Needham (hereinafter the “Church”) be dissolved, and that the Administration Ministry of the Church shall be authorized, in its discretion and without a further meeting, vote or action of or by the Church, to take such steps and actions as are appropriate and/or necessary to commence, effectuate and conclude the dissolution of the Church, including, but not limited to the disposition of any and all property of the Church, real or personal, upon such terms and conditions as the Administration Ministry may deem appropriate, all in accordance with such laws and regulations as may govern or be applicable to such dissolution, and the review and approval of any documents in connection with such dissolution and/or to effectuate such dissolution, all such documents and submissions to be in such form and content as the Administration Ministry may, in the exercise of its sound discretion, deem to be in furtherance of such dissolution, and further that Clifton Holbrook as Chairman of the Administration Ministry be authorized to execute any document in connection with such dissolution; all in such form as he shall approve, and his execution thereof shall be sufficient evidence of his approval.

Announcements

Our **church office** is open Tuesdays-Fridays 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. Contact Pastor Daryn or Pastor Holly if you need help finding links to join other online services.

Worship on the Lawn

(weather permitting)

Sundays in June 2021

10:00 a.m.

COVID protocols – masks and physical distancing – remain in place.

As we are moving through *Creative Callings* congregational decision-making and prepare for individual vocational discernment and exploration, join us on the Warren Street side lawn of our building for worship on Sundays. Contact Pastor Daryn with any questions.

Planning to Attend? Pre-register at: www.fbcneedham.org/worship-ministries

Services are also recorded and posted on our website for later viewing at:

www.fbcneedham.org/outdoor-worship

Creative Callings

Collaboration, Innovation, and Prophetic Witness



Boston University School of Theology
Center for Practical Theology

***Creative Callings* Year 2, Session 2:**
COLLECTIVE & INDIVIDUAL VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT
Intentional Decisions – Faithfully Stepping Forward
Continues on Thursdays, at 6:30pm on Zoom!

April – May – *Honing Our Congregational Call/Recognizing New Life*: intentional conversation and reflection as a community

June – July – *One on Ones*: individual vocational discernment conversations

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.

Offering

Your continued financial support of the daily work and ministries of FBC Needham is vital. Offerings can be turned in during Worship on the Lawn, through the church website online, or via mail. May the act of giving be a spiritual practice that accompanies your daily prayer and worship.

Mail Checks to:

First Baptist Church in Needham
858 Great Plain Avenue,
Needham MA 02492

Online:

Go to <https://www.fbcneedham.org>
Click the **Take Action** link & follow the directions.

Make checks payable to: First Baptist Church in Needham.
Please indicate it is your offering or pledge on the check.
