

# First Baptist Church in Needham

## Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Transition Edition 1



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### *One in the Spirit: Prayers through Our Transition*

### **Sunday, July 4, 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> "Hand of God," from *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=55257> [retrieved May 28, 2021]. Original source: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hand\\_gottes.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hand_gottes.jpg).



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## Scripture

### Psalm 48

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God.

Your holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.

Within its citadels God, you have shown yourself a sure defense.

When the kings assembled, they came on together.

As soon as they saw it, they were astounded; they were in panic, they took to flight; trembling took hold of them there, pains as of a woman in labor, as when an east wind shatters the ships of Tarshish.

As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God, which God establishes forever. *Selah*

We ponder your steadfast love, O God, in the midst of your temple.

Your name, O God, like your praise, reaches to the ends of the earth.

Your right hand is filled with victory.

Let Mount Zion be glad, let the towns of Judah rejoice because of your judgments.

Walk about Zion, go all around it, count its towers, consider well its ramparts; go through its citadels, that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and ever. He will be our guide forever.

*The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.*

## Reflection

The Celtic tradition invites us to look with the inner eye. In all people, in all places, in every created thing the light of God is shining. It may lie buried and forgotten under layers of darkness and distortion but it is there waiting to be uncovered.

As George MacLeod says in one of his prayers, "Show to us the glory in the grey". It is a looking for the light of God in the most ordinary, and even dullest, of contexts.... What are the "greynesses" and "hard dull cases" of our lives, whether that be in our environments and communities, or in ourselves and

relationships, deeper than which we may look to recover a sense of the light and beauty of the first day?...In the Celtic tradition redemption is the journey of being reconnected to the light of God within. It is a journey home that takes us through what seems like unknown land.<sup>3</sup>

## **We Hold in Prayer...**

*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 in transition, we offer our hearts and voices in prayer  
where we are, as we are, along this changing path  
entrusting the Spirit's moving among us  
and responding far beyond our individual reach and influence...**

## **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 Pastor Daryn (aka Aunt Daryn!), as she celebrates a new family member. Paxton Woods Bunce, 8lbs 4oz, and 20.5 inches long, was born June 28, to Daryn's sister Lin and Caryanne and joins siblings Loukas Campbell, Maryn Cole, and Rya James...

And with Pastor Daryn and Teddy in anticipation of safe travels to meet Paxton and delight in being with extended family...

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With Clif in gratitude for his nephew, Dean, whose chimney collapsed inside the house into the cellar that no one was harmed in this dangerous situation...

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<sup>3</sup> John Philip Newell, *The Book of Creation: An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999), 9-11.

<sup>4</sup> Photo courtesy of Daryn Stylianopoulos.

With Harry for the congregation's ongoing prayers (originally called the "Worship Resource" and now called "*One in the Spirit*") and the pastoral calls from Pastor Daryn and Pastor Holly.

With Marty in gratitude for Clif's long friendship and all years of help he has provided to the congregation and everyone who needs him...

With Stan that his daughter, Julia was finally able to receive her second vaccination in Canada...

With Peggy in anticipation of safe travels to see family in Colorado...

With Louise that we are all able to be healthy and happy during these long summer days...

In gratitude for the mysteries of God, the hearts of children, and all the saints who have come before us...

*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 in the sharing of the concerns of our hearts as I pray...**

With Harry who has been diagnosed with leukemia and faces numerous doctor appointments, transfusions, and diminished strength and stamina...

With Barbara as she recovers from gallbladder surgery and offers gratitude for the congregation's ongoing prayers...

With Pastor Holly for her childhood friend, Elaine, undergoing a fourth week of chemotherapy and radiation treatments...

With Marilyn who is under hospice care as her health continues to decline, for her comfort and for her daughter Nancy's peace as she cares for her mother in these weeks...

With Cindy, our financial secretary, whose father, Mike, was diagnosed with lung cancer and is recovering from surgery...

With Ernie with hope that he and everyone else who is ill is able to get better...

With Robin as she continues to accompany her friend, Cheryl, in hospice care.

Peggy for a friend's wife, Susan, following her cancer treatment...

With Marty as she continues her recovery and physical therapy at home, and for Chris and Jean in their loving care of her that allows her to be at home...

With Pastor Daryn's sister-in-law, Michelle, who is navigating complexities of travelling to China to be with her father who has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer...

With Liz for her cousin's husband, Dan, as he prepares for surgery on July 8 to aid his breathing after a long and arduous process to get to this point...

With Louise and George for Louise's son, Dave, who is recovering from a recent hospitalization and is recovering at home...

With Elaine and Helen in gratitude that their brother, Bob, is having improved health...

With Pastor Holly for friends Bethaney and Josh as they prepare their family to move from Boston to Dallas, Texas, in July...

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

## Prayers in Our Transitions

**God of Life, in all of life's turns – planned and unexpected – you are there.**

**For the transitions that are hard for me to bear,  
grant me the strength to be vulnerable and seek loving accompaniment.**

**For the changes I anticipate and for which I hope, grant me wisdom.**

**Trusting your Spirit is moving to prepare a place in fellowship and community for  
each beloved member of our First Baptist congregation, I pray...**

With Clif for our Needham community, the congregation's long legacy of presence and service in the community, and the sweetness of memories of coming to FBC Needham as a child...

With Bev and Fayrah for the daily work and pastoral care for the congregation Pastor Daryn and Pastor Holly have dedicated themselves to throughout the discernment process and now the administrative process ...

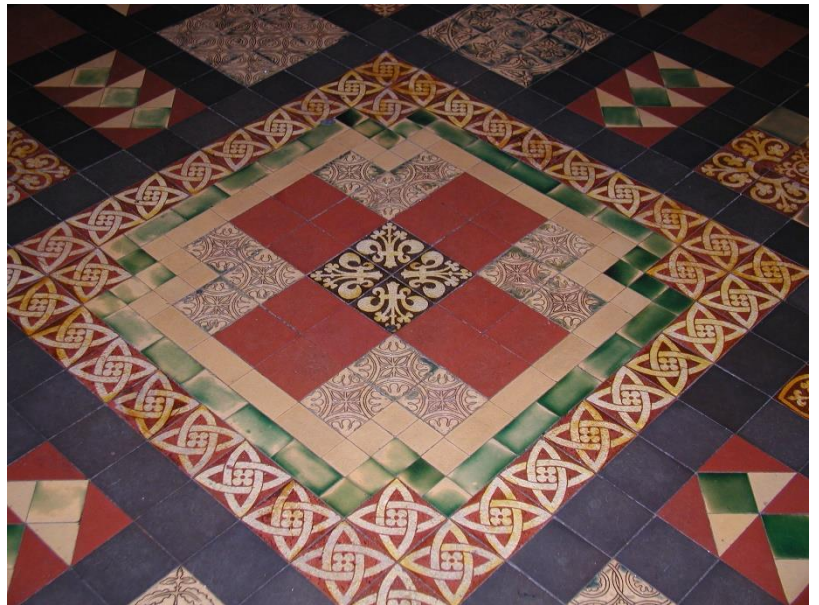
With Fayrah in honoring the difficulty of the hard, good work of moving through congregational transition even when it is emotionally and spiritually complex.

With Pastor Daryn in gratitude for the ways the congregation continually expressed compassion and care with each other as we moved to and through the congregational vote last Sunday...

With Dorothy, Marty, Pastor Daryn, and Pastor Holly for the Administration Ministry as we enter the third session of Year Two with *Creative Callings* in working out the plan for closing.

*Loving God, hear my prayer....*

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<sup>5</sup> Photo: "Cathedral Floor," Dublin, Ireland (2008). ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2021. Use with permission.

## 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 Nancy and Pastor Holly for the individuals, families, and friends impacted by the high-rise collapse in Surfside, Florida, especially Nancy's good friend, Larry, who winters there and knows many colleagues and friends are currently missing...

For the people of Afghanistan as U.S. troops pull out and the country works to find its equilibrium in the face of civil unrest...

For the people across the country experiencing severe heat and drought, especially the Pacific Northwest...

For people around the globe who cannot live free, who live in actual enslavement, who know the oppression and fear of totalitarian governance, and who must flee for their lives from their homelands to see protection and asylum from strangers...

*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.





# 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  
churchoffice@fbcneedham.org  
781-400-5867

June 29, 2021

Beloved Community,

For nearly three years, our congregation has been moving through a process of intentional and faithful discernment toward the will of God for our congregation and its resources - Creative Callings at FBC Needham. With deep intention and care we moved through this process of Creative Callings, incorporating prayer, deep listening and careful speech, conversations with ministry and community partners, and attunement to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our midst. This communal, Spirit-led and Christ-centered process enabled us to hold difficult conversations and questions related to our own sustainability and capacity, alongside hope-filled possibilities about how our resources might best serve the needs of our neighbors for this time in the life of our church. The question of how we are best able to live out our Christian witness was at the center of our discernment. Ultimately, the majority of participants in the Creative Callings process felt that God was calling this church community to close and redistribute its resources to the needs of the community and our world.

### *The vote ...*

On Sunday, June 27, 2021, our congregation gathered for worship to honor the conclusions of the Creative Callings process and to seek the will of the congregation. A business meeting was conducted in accordance with our bylaws and with a quorum present at which a majority voted in favor (10-1) of a motion that the Administration Ministry be entrusted to develop a closing plan for First Baptist Church in Needham.

### *Holding the pain alongside our hope ...*

We honor the deep faithfulness and legacy of First Baptist Church - throughout its 165 years of existence and over the course of these more recent months. We also acknowledge the painful and emotional journey this has been at times, and recognize that some aspects of the process yet to come may hold moments of deep sadness and loss for our community as well. And yet, we also hold onto hope - hope for future

possibilities, hope in a creative God who assures us of the life-giving promise of a new thing (Isaiah 43:19). And we continue to trust - we trust in our Gospel through Jesus Christ that assures new life beyond endings. Death does not have the last word when Christ is a part of the story, and Christ is - and has always been - a part of our story, First Baptist Church in Needham. The love of Jesus and care for our neighbors is central to our legacy, and it is our great hope that through our ending, something of our legacy will be reborn - yielding a life-giving, healing, and Christ-like witness for our community and our world.

*As we move forward ...*

As our Administration Ministry discerns how best to proceed toward the will of the congregation, we will do our very best to remain transparent and to keep you informed of significant developments over the course of this process. Your pastors will be with you through the next phase of this journey, accompanying each member of our community in their discernment to find a new spiritual home for their journeys of faith when requested. We will no longer gather regularly for worship on Sunday mornings so that you are able to explore new opportunities and communities for worship and spiritual enrichment. And, if you so desire it, we will come with you to the services and connect you with resources for pastoral care in your new church home. On Sunday evening, September 12, we plan to gather for a service of communion and prayer, subsequently gathering on the first Sunday evening of each month going forward, in order to pray for and connect with one another as we move through this time of transition. Our Calls of Caring and Worship Resources will continue.

As with any matter that concerns the life and well being of this community of faith, you are welcome to bring any question, prayer, joy or concern to Pastor Daryn, [pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org](mailto:pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org), or Pastor Holly, [pastorholly@fbcneedham.org](mailto:pastorholly@fbcneedham.org). Our prayers are certainly with you already, and we are holding this beloved community of Christ in our hearts as we move forward with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In Christ,



Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos, Pastor



Rev. Dr. Holly Benzenhafer, Pastor



Clifton Holbrook, Chair of the Administration Ministry

## 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.**

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### *One in the Spirit: Prayers through Our Transition*

As we move through our congregation's transitions to new communities of faith and pastoral care, we honor the ties that "bind our hearts in Christian love." These spiritual ties connect us to one another as we celebrate, offer gratitude, and bear the burdens of each soul together. Pastor Daryn and Pastor Holly will continue Calls of Caring and these *One in the Spirit: Prayers Through Our Transition* (formerly "Worship Resource") mailings in this interim time.

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## 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.

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# Amended Motion Approved

On Sunday, June 27, 2021, with a quorum present and called into special business meeting, the congregation passed the following motion with over two-thirds vote:

That First Baptist Church in Needham (hereinafter the “Church”) develop a plan for closing, and that the Administration Ministry of the Church shall be authorized to take such steps and actions as are appropriate and/or necessary to develop the closing plan, which would include, 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. The plan would be developed in accordance with such laws and regulations as may govern or be applicable to such closing plan. The closing plan and the recommendations developed by the Administration Ministry will be presented to the Church for approval.

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The logo for Creative Callings is a red rectangle with the text "Creative Callings" in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller white font, is the tagline "Collaboration, Innovation, and Prophetic Witness".

Collaboration, Innovation, and Prophetic Witness



**Boston University** School of Theology  
Center for Practical Theology

## *Creative Callings* Year 2, Session 3

### **ADMINISTRATION STEWARDSHIP & PASTORAL ACCOMPANIMENT *through* TRANSITION**

With the congregational vote on Sunday, June 27, 2021, the Administration Ministry is tasked with developing a plan for closing the church. We now shift to the third session of Year Two with *Creative Callings*. As the Administration Ministry continues to meet to develop a plan to bring before the congregation, each member of the congregation is also encouraged to do your own good work of prayerfully discerning what community of faith you may wish to visit or consider joining. Pastor Daryn and Pastor Holly are available to offer spiritual and pastoral accompaniment and reflection upon request.

# *2021 Ambach Scholarship Award Recipient*



**William Ambach** is a graduate of Shrewsbury High School continuing on to Lineman Institute of New England.

## **– Thank You –**

Dear Scholarship Committee, Rev. Stylianopoulos, Rev. Benzenhafer, & Dr. Penn,

I am sincerely honored to have been selected as the recipient of the 2021 Ambach Scholarship.

Thank you for your generosity, which has allowed me to further my education by attending the Northeast Lineman Institute and Quinsigamond College next year. Your generosity is very much appreciated. It is unfortunate that I am unable to attend a service to read my essay.

Kind Regards,

Will Ambach

## **Essay by Will Ambach for the Ambach Scholarship at FBC, Needham**

Dear Scholarship Selection Committee,

The Ambach Scholarship would help me greatly as I work toward my future educational goals and career choice. I applied for this scholarship, because this scholarship is in my great grandmother's name, Elenore Ambach. Elenore was a member of the First Baptist Church for

many years. I want to share my college essay as I believe this shows my faith, my work ethic and how I like to help others...

When I was little, I could not wait to be able to use the ride on lawn mower that my father and brother Cole used to mow the lawn. It was not so much about mowing the lawn it was about driving the lawn mower. Finally, the day arrived, and I got to drive the lawn mower by myself and now that job became mine! At the time, I did not realize what the next few years had in store for me...

My freshman year of high school, I decided that I want to start making some money, however I was only fourteen and it was hard to get a job at this young age. It was at this time I thought, *why don't I start a little lawn mowing business in my neighborhood*. There were several neighbors with little kids and busy schedules, as well as a few elderly people. I asked a few of my neighbors if they wanted their lawn done, one said yes, and the other said no. After a few weeks, the neighbor that originally said no, saw how I was good at mowing, he finally came back and hired me. That summer I had three clients and when winter came, I asked if they wanted me to snow blow their driveways. Now I was earning money in the summer and winter and I could make my own schedule to fit in my schoolwork and sports.

I picked up a few more over the next couple years and was making good money and helping others. I now had a small lawn care and snow removal business, I never really thought about having a name for my business until I thought about an instance with one of my neighbors when I started mowing their lawn. They were new to the country and were learning the English language. For a very long time they called me Nicholas, I would always tell them that my name was Will but they would still call me Nicholas, and one year they gave me a Christmas card and it was addressed to Nicholas. My family and friends thought it was funny and started calling me and my business Nicholas' Lawn Care. My neighbors will recommend me to others and tell them my name is Nicholas. Now all my clients and neighbors were calling me Nicholas.

My hard work in the neighborhood has really paid off. This summer I was hired to mow a lawn in the next town, which is almost the size of a big field. This has brought my total to six lawns that I take care of, and I expanded my business to trimming trees, mulching, cleaning, and power washing houses.. I have even hired a few of my friends on the big jobs.

My small little business has taught me a lot, it is not just about the money, I think that this experience really helped me become more mature, more hardworking, and more responsible. I have learned many great skills that will be valuable to me though life. I know how to interact with adults, manage my time and money and have great negotiating skills!! When people say they work at Target or somewhere, I think to myself, *That's cool but I built my own business at the age of sixteen*. This makes me proud of myself and makes me feel that I can do anything that the world throws at me. **I have faith in myself!**

## *Ambach Scholarship Award Recipient*



**Andrew Dodoo** is a graduate of Brighton High School and continuing on to Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts.

- **Thank You** -

Hello Pastor Daryn,

I want to say thank you and am grateful for this scholarship award. This will help me a lot for my college education. And also I want to thank First Baptist Church in Needham for awarding me this scholarship and for helping me to be able to accomplish some of the important things I will need in College.

Andrew

## **Essay by Andrew Dodoo for the Ambach Scholarship at FBC, Needham**

In Ghana, West Africa 2016, I was brutally attacked by a tenant who poured acid on me in my father's house. I was severely burned, not knowing if I was going to die or not. I was feeling intense heat and pain, I could see my skin melting. I ran straight to a friend's house and wept for help. I was devastated. I thought this acid burn was going to end my life.

I was hospitalized for seven months in Ghana. I was 16 years old and also on a soccer team. I was not able to continue school or soccer. I was fighting for my life, and it felt like I would never get better. I was vulnerable, incapacitated, and sad. I was dying. I was so scared I thought nothing could be done, but I never lost hope,

As my health was deteriorating my brother made contact with a hospital in the United States so that I could have a more successful treatment. I was brought to Boston, MA to get my medical care from Shriners Hospital for Children. At Shriners I had over 23 surgeries. Amazingly, I was able to go back to school and to play soccer during my treatment. There were times when I could have given up, but I never did. Because to me, giving up is not an option.

I am currently in my final year of high school and eager to continue my journey through college. This acid burn experience has taught me a lot about life. I am a very ambitious person, who has always had hopes and dreams to become a professional soccer player. Honestly, all the struggles that I have been through have made me stronger. This experience has been an opportunity in my life, even though it is not a good thing, still it has made me who I am and has gotten me to where I am today. I have come a long way and I can't just give up no matter how tough things get. Nothing can stop me from achieving my dreams.

I am grateful to God for still being alive. I feel so blessed and happy even though it was a huge setback for me. I was out of school for about two years, nonetheless I knew that it was never too late to pursue my dreams. I still have time to do everything I have always wanted to do. I have learned what real hope is, how to always focus on the positive and see what is possible, recognize the good that comes out of the bad, and that everything happens for a reason. This experience taught me how to overcome any kind of obstacle I might encounter. I am alive and with God's help nothing can stop me. Our greatest glory in life is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. I will always keep my faith high and strong, no matter what happens, I will stay positive.