

First Baptist Church in Needham

First Sunday after Epiphany

Edition 43



Worship and Prayer Resource

Sunday, January 10, 2021

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

858 Great Plain Avenue

Needham, MA 02492

www.fbcneedham.org

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.

Poem for Reflection “The Work of Christmas”¹ Howard Thurman (1899-1981)

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

Scripture

Genesis 1:1-5

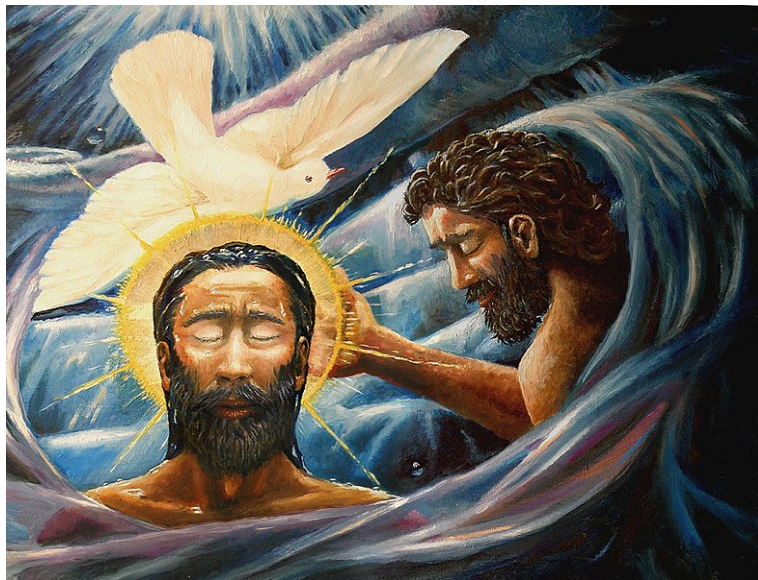
In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

¹ Thurman, Howard. "The Work of Christmas" in *The Mood of Christmas & Other Celebrations* (Richmond, Ind: Friends United Press, 1973), 23.

Scripture (cont'd)

Mark 1:4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."



Song of Response

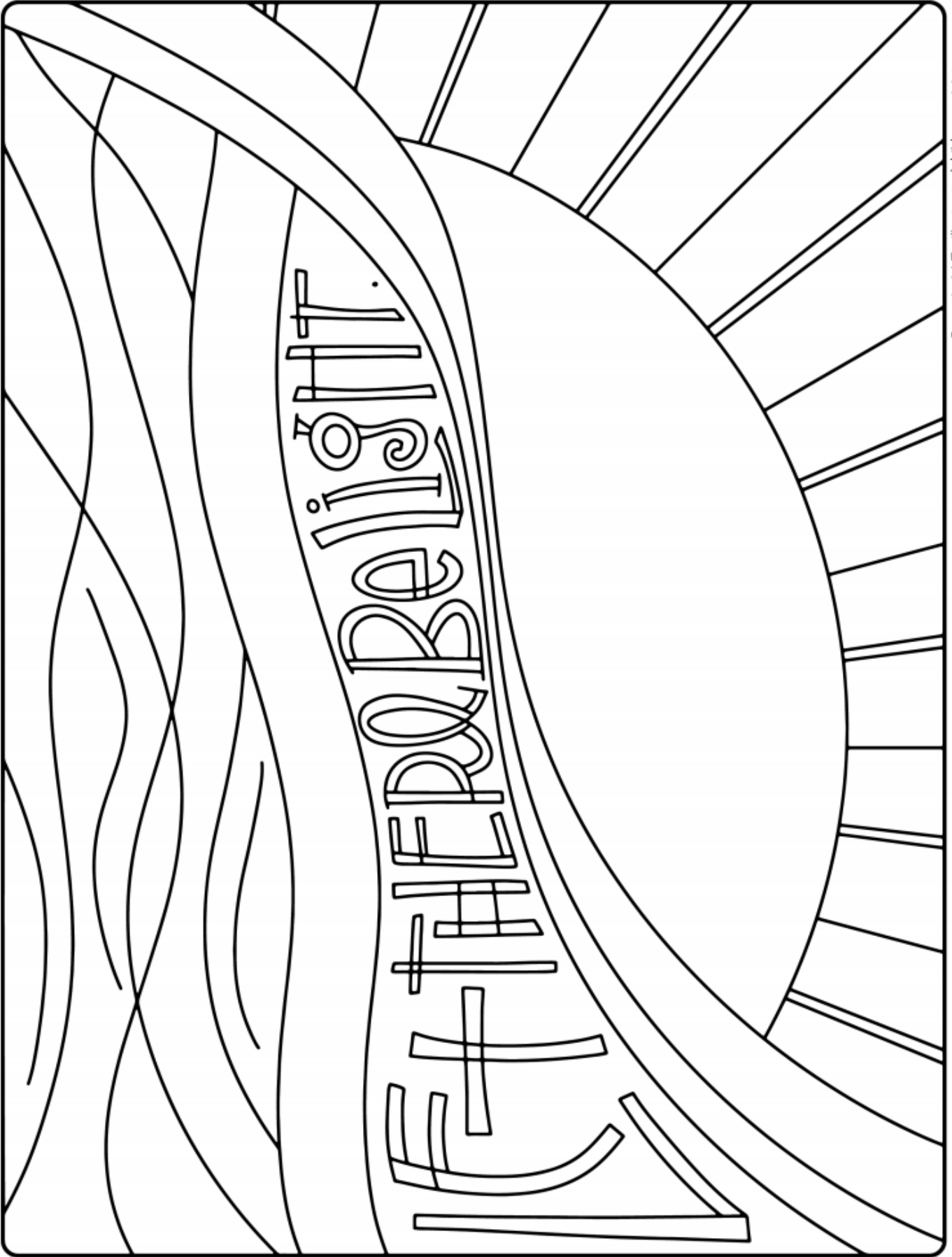
The Work of Christmas

arr. Dan Forrest

Based on the poem by Howard Thurman

Sing, read aloud, or listen to, "The Work of Christmas", as sung by Clark Atlanta University's Philharmonic Society,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zc2eVhq2vJY&t=140s>.



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

“...prayer and meditation can be thought of as the creation of a mental space in which the energies of dreaming and the concerns of waking life are invited to meet each other and to have a mutual, open-ended conversation.”²

*Enter into prayer trusting that God who
walks beside you in your waking*

also accompanies you through your dreaming - keeping vigil, ever present.

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...

² Kelly Bulkeley, *Transforming Dreams: Learning Spiritual Lessons from the Dreams You Never Forget* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000).

We celebrate this community that shares the love of Christ across barriers of technology, distance, time --- God, yours has always been a love that transcends --- **for that love we are truly thankful**, and we **celebrate our church community for exhibiting that so well** each and every day ... *praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

We continue to remember **all those in assisted living facilities**. We pray for the folks at **Wingate, for Barbara and Bruce and their families. Keep them safe and grant your peace and vigilant care** to all in that facility and others throughout our community. We hold **Gloria and Jim Beal, and Marilyn Blake in our prayers** who are also in assisted living. We pray **that folks continue to take precautions to keep residents and workers safe ... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

As a community we remember **those in assisted living who are lonely and isolated**, and having a **difficult time finding peace** in their circumstances. Help them to know **it is okay to feel discouraged and frustrated**. Remind them that **you are a safe place to bring all of who we are; your love is big enough to hold us, however we find ourselves**. Most importantly, **we pray that your presence be made known to them in a way that offers some reassurance of your love and abiding and steadfast, faithful presence**. For **Marilyn Blake, Meg Shannon, Gaby Young**, and others especially in need of this prayer ... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

God, we remember **Marilyn** especially in this time, who continues to **struggle with health setbacks** and has **difficulty communicating** by phone. She is **lonely and frustrated with her health and the isolation required** during this pandemic. Pastor Daryn was able to remind her this week that **we send our love and prayers her way**, and we pray that she is able to know that daily. Tune her heart to the truth that **she is held in the hearts of our church community**, and in the **security of your everlasting love**. **May our collective prayers be a blessing and offer comfort to Marilyn in this time ... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

With Harry we remember all those for whom this new year began a bit too quietly; for **those experiencing profound loss, sadness, and loneliness**, God, we pray for their

comfort and your accompaniment with them in this new year ... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

We hold **Liz** in prayer, who recently learned she may be **at risk of losing her housing** and is **facing difficult decisions** in the days ahead. **Give her strength, courage and the reassurance that she is not alone.** Help her to find the **legal resources and social services** she needs to navigate this time with wisdom and care toward the best possible outcome for her, and Rascal and Maxwell ... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

With **Liz**, we continue to pray in celebration of the **belovedness of this FBC community of faithful friends.** We give thanks **for all the ways Liz has felt accompanied, reassured, and buoyed up** in difficult and tumultuous times throughout the years by the love of this church family. We give **thanks for the way community holds and encourages us** when we need it most ... *praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

With Liz, Clif, Pastor Holly, Pastor Daryn, and others of our community, we remember and celebrate the **belovedness of our animal companions and the blessing they offer** when, in a look, they remind us that **there is far more to life than what we currently face, and far more to love than what we may feel in the moment.** For this blessing and the blessing of the love they offer ... *praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

With Bev and Harry we **give thanks** for the beautiful **Christmas ornament with the picture of our historic building!** We also celebrate the **creative artistry of Anna Claire Stylianopoulos** who **designed and superimposed the Christmas lights** on the image of the church building for the card and ornament ... *praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

With Ernie we celebrate **the ongoing joy of the Advent Christmas ornaments** that continue to grace his home. **For the fun of coloring them,** and for the way **they make him feel closer to everyone at the church** ... *praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

With Barbara, we offer **prayers for our world ... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

With Pastor Daryn, we pray for **Spiro**, who **broke his arm/shoulder** skiing over the weekend. We are **grateful he is doing okay otherwise**, aside from the disappointment of not being able to ski out the season. We pray for **swift healing** and **patience** for Spiro, Daryn and their family as they navigate the next few months ... **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

With Bev, we offer gratitude that a recent change in **Trevor's** medication seems to be going smoothly ... **praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...**

With Nancy we remember her **sister in law's mother, Mary Ann**, who is concerned for the possibility of a recurrence of cancer. God, **give her strength** to face whatever challenges tomorrow brings ... **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

We pray for Harry's sister, **Emma (Bunny)**, who is struggling with Alzheimers and hearing loss, while living in Seattle alone - far from family. God, **make your presence known to her**, and **carry Harry's love to her**, along with **the prayers of this congregation**, that she might recognize something of love and hope in this time of isolation ... **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

With Sue Sarafinas, we pray **for our community as we navigate the Creative Callings** process, and **look forward with interest and hope** to the future manifestations of First Baptist Church in Needham's ministry, **while celebrating the good work happening** even now ... **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

With Harry, we give thanks **for the joys of entertainment** - for **basketball and the sports we love to watch**, and that they are able to continue in some form during this time ... **praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...**

With Harry, Jim, and Andrew, we pray **for the state of Georgia** as they enter into another election cycle. Prayers for a **peaceful election process and transition of**

power. We also pray that regardless of the outcome, **your will be done, God, in our communities and in our world** - that our **leadership and administration of this country will have the courage to do what is right for all the citizens of this country,** that they **will help all in need** regardless of race or income, class or creed ... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

With Andrew, we pray **that people can learn to live together despite their different political views ... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

With Bev and Andrew, we pray **for our church folks, for their continued health and healing ... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

Loving God, we hold **Pastor Holly and her family** in our hearts this week as they grieve the **unanticipated loss of a cousin and nephew, David Schubert,** who died December 19th. Holly's mother, Emily, offered this prayer and hope for David, who was born deaf: **"Today, David can hear, sing and speak."** With **Holly, Emily** and their families we remember **David** in our prayers and **ask that your blessings of comfort be with their family - that your peace accompany them - as they mourn this loss and celebrate David's life and memory ... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

We continue to remember **the many lives that have been lost due to COVID-19.** We pause, and remember in this time of prayer that **they were each precious children of God.** We hold **each family, and each individual** grieving the loss of a loved one in our hearts. We pray **that our prayers might bring some comfort and some awareness that they are not alone, that they, and those departed, are remembered and loved ... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

We continue to hold Clif's friends, **Eileen and Tom League,** in our hearts and prayers, who were **recently diagnosed with COVID-19.** Eileen is home, but Tom remains in rehab. **Prayers for his continued recovery ... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...**

We continue to pray for **Eda Jackson** who is in her seventh week in COVID ICU ...
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...

With Ernie, we pray for **all those in prison who are sick with COVID-19, and those in prison who are in need of vaccinations ...** *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

With Marty, we pray for her **great nephew** (Linda's son) who was **diagnosed with COVID-19 ...** *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

With Bev, we continue to recognize that this virus is still affecting so many in our communities, and pray **for their healing and recovery. For all those with so much sickness in their families ...** *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

We continue to remember **Susanne** in her final weeks of pregnancy, and as she recovers from COVID-19. Our prayer remains: **God be with her and grant her and the baby healing and protection, as well as a swift recovery ...** *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

We offer prayers for a classmate of Pastor Holly's, **Chris Harbin**, whose **parents have both been diagnosed with COVID-19 and are in the ER in Hattiesburg, MS.** Chris is a hospital chaplain in Virginia, and his parents are former missionaries to Brazil. We hold this family in our hearts as they struggle to overcome this virus. **We pray for Chris's parents - for their comfort and care - and we hold Chris in our hearts as he navigates the watchcare of others through their illness and loss,** even as it affects him so personally ... *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer ...*

Ernie Steeves **sends his love to everyone** and prays that all are well and paying attention to their COVID needs. With Ernie **we give thanks that the first responders, firefighters and police will begin to receive the COVID-19 vaccine next week ...** *praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

With Andrew, we give thanks for the hard work of our church staff and fellow congregants, and for the gifts they offer our community ... *praise God, from whom all blessings flow ...*

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.*

**TO PICK UP 2021 Offering Envelopes ...*

... contact Robin in the church office to arrange a time for pick up.

If you are unable to pick up yourself, we will try to arrange their delivery in the new year.

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

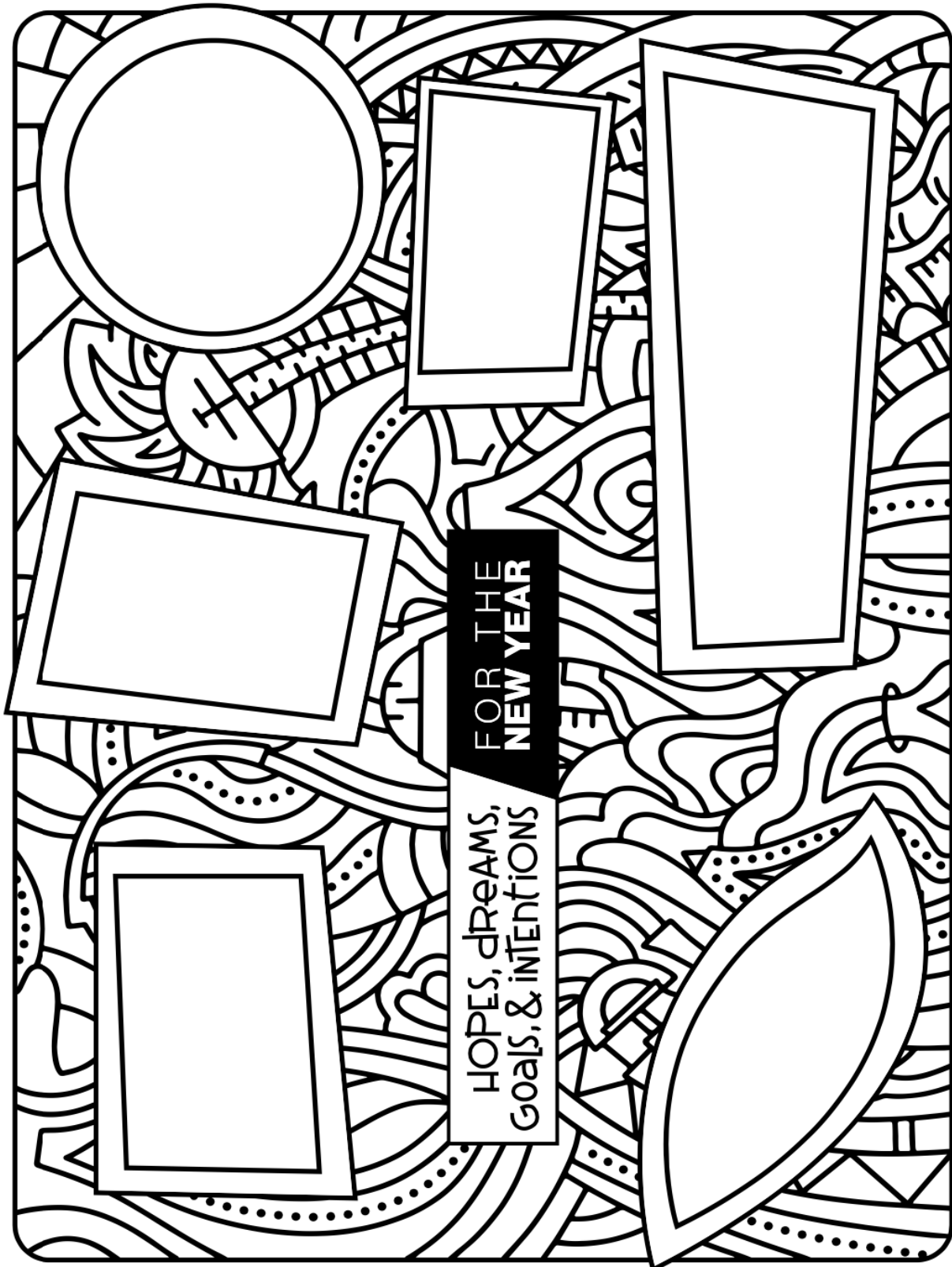
One: The peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

One: Let us greet one another in peace as we prepare for the journey ahead.

Blessings in the new year!
A happy and healthy 2021 to all.

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

Worship - Worship Resource and Calls of Caring will continue!

Worship Resources and Calls of Caring will be provided each week. You are encouraged to make use of the worship resources we provide, 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 if you need links to join these services.

We are aware how much the Worship Resource and Calls of Caring mean to our community, particularly to those of our community members unable to attend services in person or via Zoom. We will continue with the publication of these materials and with our calls each week, and will make an effort not to call during the time of Zoom services on Sunday mornings. Blessings, all!

Annual Meeting - January 24th @ 11:00am via Zoom

Zoom links will be made available via email and text message. Please make every effort to attend.

Join us Sunday, January 10th! 6:30pm



Boston University School of Theology
Center for Practical Theology

WE WILL PICK BACK UP ON ZOOM, JANUARY 10, 2021, at 6:30pm with a congregational retreat to kick off year two of our Creative Callings process. The first community partner video of our 2021 process will be posted on that same day. Our Zoom retreat will be facilitated by our Vibrant Faith Coach, Rev. Mark Slaughter and by Community Consultant, Nathan Smith. We look forward to seeing you!

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 Daryn, pastordaryn@fbcneedham.org.

Offering Envelopes TO PICK UP 2021 Offering Envelopes contact Robin in the church office to arrange a time for pick up. If you are unable to pick up yourself, we will try to arrange their delivery in the new year.

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.

Needham Community Council continues to provide necessary resources and food to individuals in need of their services. If you or someone you know are in need of reaching out to them or if you want to learn how you can best volunteer to help at this time, go to their website at: <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.

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.

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