

First Baptist Church in Needham  
*One in the Spirit: Transition Prayer Resource*

April/Easter 2023

Save the dates!  
A weekend of celebration

Saturday, May 06, 2023  
A Service of Transition:  
Honoring Ministry, Calling & New Beginnings  
3pm  
at First Baptist Church in Needham  
858 Great Plain Avenue  
Needham, MA 02492

Sunday, May 07, 2023  
Together in Ministry:  
Worship and The Walk for Hunger  
11am  
at First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain  
633 Centre Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

\*\*\* A reception in the vestry will follow the service on May 6<sup>th</sup> \*\*\*  
Please **RSVP** to [churchoffice@fbcneedham.org](mailto:churchoffice@fbcneedham.org)

Transition Edition 21  
*(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)

# A Letter from the Pastor

April 2023

## Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Happy Easter!

As we prepare to embark on a new adventure of ministry through our merger with First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain, we are reminded to carry the hope of Jesus's life, ministry, death, and resurrection in our hearts.

Jesus's mission statement as he began his radical ministry of inclusive love – as he launched into creating the world he believed to be possible – was a reading from the prophet Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” And on the first evening of that first Easter week, when Jesus appears to his disciples, he breathes that same spirit upon them – the spirit of the Lord is upon *you* – just as the father has sent me, so I send *you*. He encourages them to go forth, to continue to build on the work of the kingdom – to believe in and to live into the world that which is hoped for, but is not yet seen – to nurture into the world of belovedness Jesus believed to be possible, even in the face of crucifixion and heartache.

People of God, we know that sometimes it is hard to believe that things can be better than they are, based upon what we have seen to this point. We have seen the woundedness of our world. We know what we are capable of doing to one another at our worst – the pain we can inflict, the pain we have felt. We have seen signs of crucifixion in our world – wounds, and scars of trauma and pain. We know what it is to feel doubtful, afraid, small and insignificant in the face of all of that. So much feels beyond our control, beyond our power, beyond our ability to affect any kind of substantial or meaningful change.

We find ourselves with Thomas, the doubtful, as we meet Christ in this season of Eastertide, as we recall to mind and heart once more the strength and encouragement, of his witness, his life, of his presence. We see the woundedness of our Lord - and yet we celebrate the risen Christ, our friend, our teacher, our guide, who shows us what it is to believe beyond the brokenness, beyond the woundedness and malfunctioning systems of our world and hardwired ways of our own hearts.

We celebrate the resurrection. And we also know that resurrection is not the end of Christ's story. It is just another beginning — it is the beginning of our own stories of belief. The Spirit of the Lord is now upon *us* ... and *we* have been sent forth, we have been anointed to bring good news to the poor. He has sent *us* to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. We are an integral part of Christ's resurrection story. The resurrection of Christ is not only about a body raised from the dead, it is about possibility raised from the dead and brought to life through the spirit at work in us. It is about the resurrection of the Gospel - the good news of God's love as it continues to be realized in and through us.

Jesus says, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any they are retained.” The world will be what we make it, people of God. Whatever we do in this world is what the world will become. If we want the world to be good, we have to live layers of goodness into the world. If we want more love and justice in the world, we have to weave more love and justice, more compassion and forgiveness into our everyday encounters, and following Thomas, and the many generations of saints who have come between us and before us, along with the resurrected Christ, we must believe these things to be possible even if we have not yet seen them.

Christ's message all along to the disciples and to us is that the death-dealing forces of the world do not get the last word. Jesus believed in the possibility of something greater, something even more beautiful and powerful that could win out, even if he couldn't see it – even if he never got to see it to fruition. The possibility of it was enough to keep him choosing for love, choosing for life-giving goodness, believing toward the possibility that all might have abundant life.

Jesus returns to us again and again, with reminders of reassurance and peace in the midst of struggle. In the face of woundedness, brokenness and pain, Jesus returns to remind us that we are meant for better, and that better is possible if only we believe it, if only we live it, if only we share it.

May this promise and theme of resurrection continue to live and find life in us, in our lives and ministries as we go forth!

In the hope of the resurrected Christ,  
Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos, Pastor

## + We Hold in Prayer +

### My 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...**

In celebration of all those in our circles with April birthdays, including Katie Johnson and Adia Oumarou; we are grateful for your life and witness in this world! ...

With Bev Parsons that she is finally pain free! We offer gratitude that Bev's recent procedure to desensitize the nerve endings in her back eliminated the pain she has endured for so long. Praise God! This is an answer to many prayers. Bev remains grateful that her procedure went smoothly with no side effects, and that Lowell General Hospital and the staff and service there were so very wonderful. May this healing continue to provide relief for Bev, and may she find newfound joy in the possibilities this surgery has created for her ...

With Marty Fassett, who just returned home after a stint of rehabilitation at Briarwood following a hospitalization. We give thanks that she is home once more in the comfort of home. May she know the presence of the Holy with her in all things, and be reminded of the many people who love and care for her, and that she is not alone. We pray for restful nights, better food, and fizzy ginger ale with lots of ice, and that God's provision would supply her every need ...

With Liz, who continues to appreciate the exciting possibilities of her ipad, and has begun taking an ipad class at the senior center. May joy continue to follow her in new adventures ...

For Liz's beautiful cover art for our bulletin on May 6<sup>th</sup>, we give thanks, and her for willingness to share her gifts with the community in such a meaningful way ...

With Clif, for the joy of the Rogerson House gatherings and lunches that have been a source of inspiration, strength, good community, and delicious cookies ...

With Dot Kinne, whose great-grandson will visit soon. For the joy of seeing Bailey and watching him soak up the world ...

With Jim Fuller, as his daughter, Mackenzie graduates from Northeastern University this year. Our prayers of joy go with Mackenzie as she explores the many avenues before her ...

With Anne Wile, for the health and wellbeing of family, and especially her brother on the west coast – for his positive attitude through all things, and continued optimistic outlook in the face of illness ...

In celebration that Katie Johnson is doing well, and got to enjoy lunch with Anna Stylianopoulos recently ...

*††† Offer your own prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving here. †††*

*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...**



For John List, who was recently diagnosed with lung cancer, and for Dianna as she accompanies him through this journey of evaluations, surgery, and recovery. We pray for their continued strength and for inner peace as they navigate this time. May the care providers and surgeons receive the

wisdom and discernment necessary to achieve the best possible outcomes for John ...

For Linda Karpeichik, FBCJP moderator and beloved member, who experienced a recent cardiac event. We pray for the wisdom of physicians and caregivers seeking answers, and for peace for Linda and her family, and for continuing healing and a restful recovery ...

Continued prayers for Jim's sister, Cathy, who is healing from a difficult few years ...

For Mason Fuller, whose upcoming medical tests will determine whether treatment for breast cancer will be necessary. May the love and peace of Christ accompany her and her family as she makes her way through this time of uncertainty ...



Prayers for Bruce Wile, who though he always bears a positive countenance, has recently expressed feelings of frustration at having to stay in one place all the time. We pray for Bruce's peace of mind while affirming the real and legitimate frustrations he feels. We pray that the weather this spring and summer will be conducive to many trips outdoors with family, and for small moments in each day that afford joy enough to carry him through the despair he sometimes feels ...

With Anne, for all those who continue to battle with COVID, and its lingering presence. We pray that they would find the relief and care they need as they endure quarantine, disruption, and symptoms of illness ...

*††† Offer your own prayers of concern, healing, solace, and courage here. †††*

*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, grant me hope and 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...**

Prayers for all the students moving toward the end of the year – give them wisdom to finish strong, and guidance as they plan their summer journeys ...

For the faithful vote of our congregation to merge with First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain toward new possibilities for ministry in our community and in the world, and ...

In gratitude for the upcoming service of celebration on May 6<sup>th</sup>, for all that have been a part of this church's legacy of love and ministry, for all that will continue to nurture it forward in a new and beautiful hope-filled witness ...

In the faithful stewardship of our Administration ministry, Mark Hellberg, Peggy Hellberg, Clifton Holbrook, Nancy Twombly, Elizabeth Mercer, James Fuller, Cindy Sullivan, Robin Bevilacqua, Rev. Dr. Holly Benzenhafer, Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos, and our Vibrant Faith and Creative Callings Coach, Rev. Mark Slaughter, and all those who have thoughtfully, prayerfully, and compassionately brought the church to this moment of Spirit-filled possibility as we live into the new thing God is doing in our midst ...

*††† Offer your own prayers for our transition here. †††*

*Hear my prayer, O Lord...*

### 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...**

For the communities mourning those lost to gun violence, including the lives lost to suicide, and those reeling in the wake of 160 mass shootings of 2023. We lift prayers for those killed in these most recent shootings in ...

Nashville, TN ...  
Evelyn Dieckhaus, Mike Hill, Katherine Koonce, Cynthia Peak, Hallie Scruggs, William Kinney ...

Louisville, KY ...  
Joshua Barrick, Deana Eckert, Thomas Elliott, Juliana Farmer, James Tutt ...

Dadeville, AL ...  
Philstavious Dowdell, Shaunkivia Nicole Smith, Marsiah Emmanuel Collins, Corbin Dahmontrey Holston ...

Yarmouth, ME ...  
Robert Eger, Patricia Eger, Cynthia Eaton, David Eaton,



... and for the many others wounded and in recovery from these shootings ...

We continue to pray for the ongoing proliferation of guns in response to insecurity, prejudice, misplaced anger, and anxiety as witnessed in the shootings of Ralph Yarl, Payton Washington, and Kaylin Gillis ...

God, please show us a path away from guns and gun violence ... direct our ways toward responses grounded in the care, grace, and compassion for others, toward policies and priorities that cannot be bought or manipulated. Orient and ground us in recognizing the dignity and belovedness of all your children. Lead us away from death-dealing patterns of living toward life-giving promise.

*††† Offer your own prayers for our community, nation, and world here. †††*

*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...*

*Hear my prayer, O Lord, and hold all the prayers of our community...as I pray the prayer your son taught us saying:*

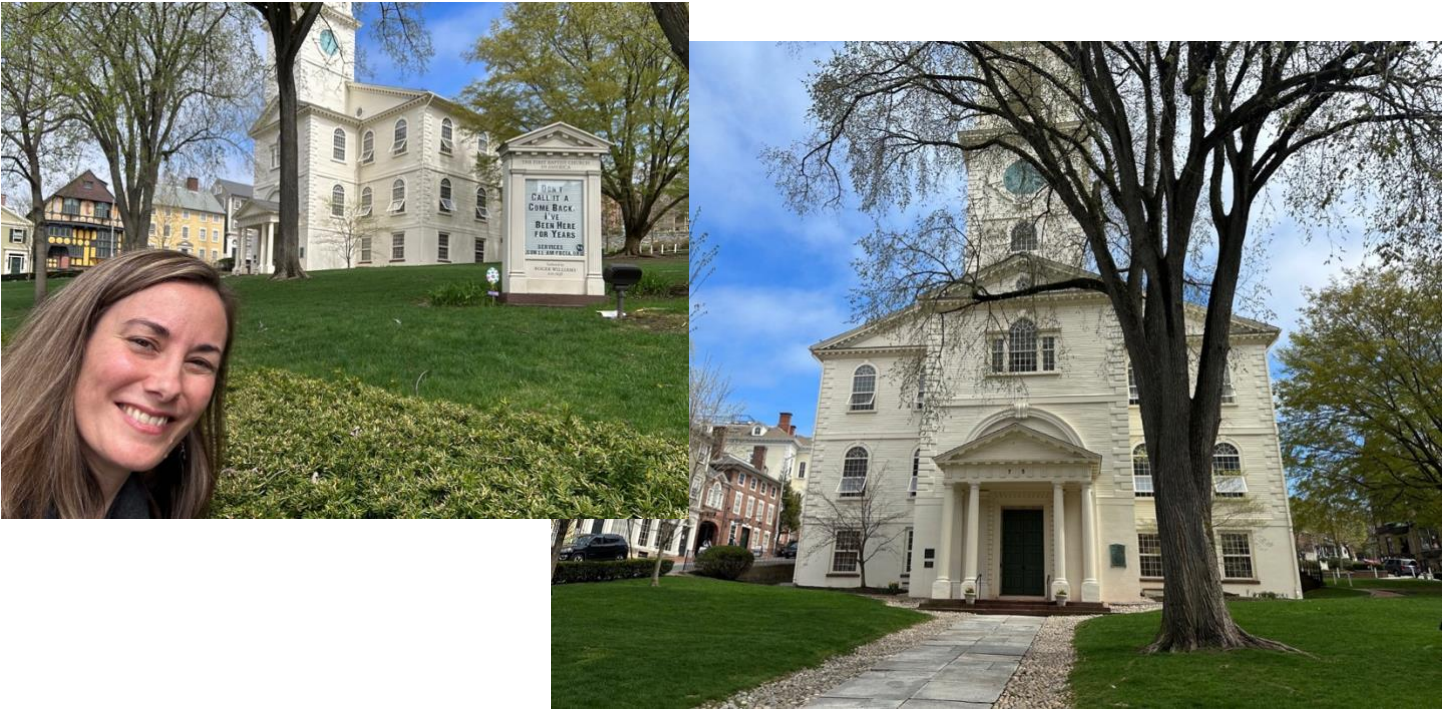
Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our  
daily bread  
And forgive us our sins as we  
forgive  
those who sin against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory  
forever. Amen.



# Announcements

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Pastor Daryn preached and facilitated worship at The First Baptist Church in America on April 16<sup>th</sup>, the oldest Baptist congregation in The United States, founded in 1638 in Providence, RI, by Roger Williams.



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## ***Creative Callings Year 4, Merging ADMINISTRATION STEWARDSHIP & PASTORAL ACCOMPANIMENT through TRANSITION***

With a congregational vote on Sunday, June 27, 2021, the Administration Ministry was tasked with developing a plan for closing the church. Our Administration Ministry has been diligently meeting to develop a plan to bring before the congregation.

While our church continued to gather for worship, pray together, and navigate this time of transition, the Administration Ministry has all along been engaged in discernment with community partners and others in ministry around future possibilities for our resources and property. Throughout the discernment, we have been engaged with the hopes that our resources



will continue to meet the needs of our Needham community and will continue to uphold and honor the legacy of First Baptist Church in Needham’s ministry within the community.

Our exploration led to conversations with First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain about the potential for a merger of our assets and ministries. This has been a life-giving possibility to hold. On November 4, 2022, The First Baptist Church of Jamaica Plain voted unanimously at a congregational meeting to engage in further discernment around the possibility of a merger between our congregations. On November 5, 2022, FBC Needham’s Administration Ministry unanimously approved a recommendation “to pursue a mutually agreeable partnership in whatever legal form would be agreeable with FBCJP and enter into discussions and negotiations with them.” On December 12, 2022, the Administration Ministry by unanimous consent, agreed with the Vision Statement proposed by First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain (previously shared, along with the motion to merge, in advance of the 2023 Annual Meeting for the congregation’s consideration). The Administration Ministry voted to recommend a merger with First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain to the congregation in the form of a formal motion at the Annual Business Meeting of First Baptist Church in Needham, held on January 22, 2023.

The Annual Meeting, held entirely on Zoom, was well attended and the motion presented. The motion to merge with First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain carried with overwhelming enthusiasm, with nine active members voting in favor of the motion. Two additional active members who were unable to join the call, connected with Pastor Daryn afterward to express their joy in the church’s decision to merge. We remain excited for the possibilities this merger of resources and mission will allow, and trust that as God has been ever present along this journey of discernment, God will continue to lead us as we move forward into new possibilities for ministry in Needham and beyond.

Some implications of this partnership are that it will allow for our building and property to continue to steward inclusive, creative and meaningful ministry for the arts, social justice mission, and the overall wellness of our Needham community. It will facilitate an ongoing relationship with some of our most valued community partners, and community’s social service providers, and will provide potential worship space for some of our neighboring Baptist and ecumenical colleagues who are in need of space for their ministries and the sharing of the Gospel – the good news of God’s love.

We plan to hold a service celebrating the legacy of FBC Needham and our calling to merge with FBC Jamaica Plain on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 3pm in the sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Needham. The following day, Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, we will join First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain for worship at 11am and share together in the Walk for Hunger, a beautiful way to embark upon mission and ministry together. We hope you are able to join us for the events of this meaningful weekend!



## IMPORTANT DATES to REMEMBER:



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Saturday, May 6 @ 3pm  
A Service of Transition: Honoring Ministry, Calling and New Beginnings  
(at FBC Needham)

Sunday, May 7 @ 11am  
Worship at FBC Jamaica Plain & The Walk for Hunger

\*\*\* A reception in the vestry will follow the service on May 6<sup>th</sup> \*\*\*

**Please RSVP to [churchoffice@fbcneedham.org](mailto:churchoffice@fbcneedham.org)**

### **Upcoming Administration Ministry Meetings:**

Tuesday, April 25 @ 6:30pm

Monday, May 1 @ 6:30pm

Final Meeting TBD @ 6:30pm

**Watch for the next Prayer Resource due mid-May**

## SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Regular Sunday morning worship will continue for our community at  
First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain.

Worship is held on Sunday mornings at 11am. All are welcome!

First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain  
633 Centre Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

## Offering

Your continued financial support of the daily work and ministries of FBC Needham is vital, particularly as we move through this time of transition. We encourage each member of our community to continue in your regular giving toward the support of our continued ministry throughout our time of transition and the future ministries of our FBC Needham/FBCJP collaborative ministry.

*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. - Matthew 6:21*



