

*Brookline Community Church
December 18, 2022*



Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Lighting the Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is shaped in a ring. It shows the circle of God's unbroken love. Each week we will invite a "family" to light the candles in the wreath. This week Marjorie and David Drake will light the candles to bring us together in the warm light of God's love.

Lighter 1: The Gospel of Luke tells how Mary meets her cousin Elizabeth:
When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting,
the child leaped in her womb.
And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit
and exclaimed with a loud cry,
"Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb." (*Luke 1:41-42*)

Lighter 2: God speaks in many ways:
through dreams, visions, new ideas,
and the kicking of a child not yet born.
We light our fourth candle,
asking that we may hear God's call
in our body, mind, and spirit.

(Light the last purple candle)

Lighter 1: Living Christ, give us faith to trust you
hope to follow you,
and love to live for you,
and wisdom to know you.

All: We trust you, we love you, we praise you. Amen.

Light the Advent candle four,
Think of joy forever more;
Christ child in a stable born,
Gift of love that Christmas morn.

Refrain:

Candle, candle burning bright,
Shining in the cold winter night;
Candle, candle burning bright,
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

Prayer of Invocation

The First Lesson: Genesis 3:8-15, pp. 2-3

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.'

The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'

***Response: #135 "O Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus"**

The Second Lesson: Genesis 22:15-18, p. 16

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

***Response: #152 “Angels We Have Heard on High”**

The Third Lesson: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7, p. 555

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

***Response: #170 “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”**

Prayers of the People

The response to “Hear us, O God.” is “**Your mercy is great.**”

Let us recite the Lord’s Prayer together:

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

The Fourth Lesson: Isaiah 11:1-9, p. 558

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

***Response: #151 “Go Tell It on the Mountain”**

The Fifth Lesson: Luke 1:26-38, p. 831

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

***Response: #171 “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”**

The Sixth Lesson: Matthew 1:18-23, p. 783

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

***Response: #133 "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"**

Ministry of Sharing

***DOXOLOGY: #809**

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen."

***Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given:**

**O Mighty One,
who scatters the proud and fills the hungry,
by your Holy Spirit let your word leap in us
and bring to our yearning
the joy that comes with new beginnings and renewed lives.
Accept these gifts and our lives
for the furtherance of your Kingdom on this earth.
Amen.**

The Seventh Lesson: Luke 2:8-16, p. 833

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

***Response: #147 "Away in a Manger"**

The Eighth Lesson: Matthew 2:1-11, pp. 783-784

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

***Response: #185 "We Three Kings"**

The Ninth Lesson: John 1:1-14, p. 862

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

***Response: #146 "Joy to the World"**

Collect & Benediction

*** Congregational Response: # 839**

**"God be with you 'til we meet again; by his counsels guide, uphold you,
with his sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again."**

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.



PRAYER LIST (12/18/22)

- Friends & family of Elly Austin, Patty Birner, Jesse Delrossi, Jane Jukes, Edith Corey, Sandy Garvin, Scott Higgins, Ed Krom, Ron Whitebred, Chris Crowder, Morris Nicholson.
- For the friends & families of those who have died alone
- For Luca, Amy's nephew, whose treatments continue
- For those struggling with thoughts of suicide
- For Polly, John Panto's sister, who has moved full time into a memory care facility
- For Mike Esposito, Miracle Mike, Stacey Haight's friend, moving around with a walker, having a surgery to remove some of the hardware installed after his motorcycle accident
- For Carol, Candy's aunt, still working through the medical diagnosis process to figure out what is causing what is clearly not right
- For Luke, Jessica's family friend, who has entered hospice care
- For Jim, Donna's dad, still getting his meds balanced out
- For the friends and family of Matthew, Jessica's childhood friend, who died of a brain tumor, leaving children and parents behind
- For the friends and family of Andrew, Candy's four-year-old cousin, who passed away less than a week after catching the flu
- For the friends and family of Paulette, Rena's daughter-in-law's mother, who passed away from cancer.
- For Mary, Rena's high school friend, who's facing back surgery.
- For those who will be helped by the donations from our recent food drive, that their balancing act of food, gas and housing might become easier
- For the families who are getting help from SHARE to make this Christmas a merrier one, especially the two families we're supporting.
- For Alex, Marjorie's friend, continuing with his chemo towards an 'all clear.'
- For Cassie, Amy's mom, who fell and broke her hip, may she recover soon
- For the people of Ukraine, who fight on, even as the world looks elsewhere
- For the people of Taiwan, searching for peace in the face of hostility
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning¹

Giver of light, in the light of your Christ I see myself clearly as your child. I rise in thankfulness for you are present when I sleep and when I am awake. I rise to come to you in the hours of joy and in sorrow. I rise to live this day in your wisdom, without fear, without acrimony, but with charity toward those I meet and toward myself when I find I am wanting. Lead me into your desire for me this day, O Lord. Let me know your love is deep and abiding; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Giver of rest and silence, in you I take refuge when the shadows deepen and the time of sleep has come. I thank you for the ventures of this day, for friends who helped me and for those who sought my help, for the skills you planted in me to hone and use, for the strangers whose lives enlarged mine today and whose insights enrich my life. Keep me safe from harm as I sleep and bring me to a new dawn with strength to work and rejoice; in Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Christmas Eve Household Prayer: Morning

O Lord, I will sing you a new song today; with all the earth I will bless your name. I will smile with the heavens and rejoice with the earth; with the trees of the forest I will sing for joy, for you have come to save us. Amen.

Christmas Eve Household Prayer: Evening

Though I walk in darkness, O Lord, I will not be afraid—for I know that the morning will come, and the great light of your glory will shine all around me; through Jesus, the light of the world. Amen.

Christmas Day Household Prayer: Morning

Gracious and Holy God, I thank you for the darkness and the light, for sleeping and waking, for the privilege of safety and shelter, of warmth and health, and I ask your help for all who do not have these comforts. Guide me on this holy day to pray for your world with a whole heart and to see in myself, and in family, friends, neighbors, and strangers, what you see: each one a beloved child. Give me wisdom this day to rejoice in your gifts, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Christmas Day Household Prayer: Evening

God of Earth and all stars, thank you for this day when you call all people to gather in your loving embrace, by many names and traditions, in lands far and near. Thank you for the rejoicing in my life, and for your promise of steadfast love when my days are hard with sorrows. Surround me now with the love that will not let me go, and give me rest, in Jesus' name. Amen.

¹ The Morning & Evening Prayer and Question for Reflection are reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion*. Copyright 2014.

Announcements

The church's financial obligations continue. If you are able, please mail your offering to: Brookline Community Church, PO Box 507, Brookline, NH 03033.

	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs. Expenses +/-
November	\$82,450	\$83,380	(\$930)

Please shop smile.amazon.com and choose Brookline Community Church as your charity to support the church. Thanks!

There are several ways to send your offering.

1. Text "GIVE" to 603-506-4455 for your first time. Click "Sign In" then "Register for an Account"

2. Scan the QR code



3. Mail to: Brookline Community Church, PO Box 507, Brookline, NH 03033.

Serving the church on one of our committees

We have openings on several church committees. We like to have people rotate on and off our committees so everyone has a chance to serve and to rest. Most are three-year terms, but we can certainly be flexible about how the roles are filled. We are looking for folks for Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Trustees, Finance Committee, Stewardship, Deacons and Pastoral Relations. If you're interested in learning more, please let Ann (moderator@bccnh.org) or Rev. Cath (minister@bccnh.org) know.

Christian Education Coming up on January 1, 8:30-9:30am

We'll be continuing our Christian Education program (for both kids and adults) on January 1 (start the year with Jesus!). Coming up: Feb. 5, Mar. 5, Mar. 26 (Palm Sunday is Apr. 2, so we'll meet a week early), May 7, Jun. 4.

Offering Envelopes

If you would like offering envelopes, talk to Rena or email her at renaduncklee@charter.net.

Brookline Food Pantry

The Brookline food pantry is open on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 10-2:00 for drop-offs [Brookline Food Pantry's Facebook page](#) has updates. And there's now [a long, robust Google doc](#) that shows what they need.

If you know of anyone who could use some help from the Food Pantry, please let Angie or Amy know.

Help Lines

You may know someone who needs some support beyond what you can provide.

- Suicide prevention: 1-800-273-8255 (or 988)
- Sexual assault: 1-800-656-4673
- Domestic violence: 1-800-799-7233