



Brookline Community Church
January 8, 2023
Feast of the Epiphany

Prelude:

Call To Worship, Psalm 72:1-7. 10-14, p. 464

Of Solomon.

Leader: Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.

**All: May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.**

Leader: May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.

**All: In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.**

Leader: May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles
render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba
bring gifts.

**All: May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.**

Leader: For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.

**All: He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.
From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.**

RESPONSE: [#820 Threefold Amen \(Danish\)](#)

Children's Message: Following the Star

Hymn: #185 *We Three Kings of Orient Are*

A Prayer of Joys and Concerns:

[For next week, please feel free to send me your joys & concerns and I'll include them in our prayers: minister@bccnh.org or call/text (857) 259-7269.]

Hymn: #399 *O God, Who Gives to Humankind*

If you have a favorite hymn you'd like to include in our worship service, just send it along and I'll look for a good place for it.

Invitation to Communion¹

Leader: Come to your new journey to be sustained
by the food and drink of this holy table.

All: **We come following the stars of guidance.**

Leader: Come in spite of all the detours of your life.

All: **We know God shows us every year, every day
an oasis of safety and rest
when we are escaping
from dangers all around us,
and the ‘home by another way’
which may be a new staying place
or a new adventure.**

Leader: Come for there is always a table waiting.

All: **We come to share what strengthens us
and receive the gifts of others.**

Words of Remembering

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: **God, as you serve us in sacrament, shine before us a star, and
teach us to be cooks and servers for the hungry in the world,
those who are escaping some tyranny, those who just need a
gift, we go forth to share your kindness, your wisdom, your
open heart and resting place ... and we pray with the words
you gave your band of travelers ...**

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.**

¹ Today’s Communion Liturgy was inspired by Maren Tirabassi’s “Celebration of Holy Communion – January 2023,” Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted December 20, 2022, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2022/12/20/celebration-of-holy-communion-january-2023/> (accessed January 5, 2023).

Hymn: #157 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Scripture Reading: Matthew 2:1-12, 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

[RESPONSE: #820 Threefold Amen \(Danish\)](#)

Reflection on the Scripture:

Hymn: #161 Once in Royal David's City

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:**

**As the magi entered the house, they knelt in joy
and paid homage to Jesus.**

**Opening their treasure chests,
they gave gifts to him.**

**So we come into God's house today,
offering from our own treasure chests
gifts to Christ,
the light of the world.**

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 72)

Leader: Loving God you call us to leave our homes and lead the world, just as Jesus did, seeking justice for the poor and the voiceless. You urge us to travel to find his people. And you urge us to speak truth to those in positions of political power who do not care for those Jesus loved.

All: Prosperity comes when we care for everyone, when we make sure that no one is left behind. Jesus saw no separation between church and state, between the political and the religious, because it was just life. A life God offered everyone, that we all might find light in the darkness together.

Leader: A strong leader refreshes the community like water that feeds the growth of the earth. A strong leader creates things that endure, not just for a season, but for a long time.

All: May we recognize the kind of leadership that endures, that creates the environment for right relationships and abounding peace, that everyone can build on for generations.

Leader: May great leadership bring out the best of all of our gifts, that together we might offer something royal and religious and sacred.

All: May all those in power pay homage to God's call for justice and protection of the weakest among us.

Leader: God works through us to deliver those who are calling out for help, those who have no one to speak for them, to speak to them, to remember their needs as well as our own.

All: God works through us to save the lives of the weak and the needy, the lives of those who suffer from oppression and violence. Let us remember how precious they are to God and therefore to us.

Leader: Amen and

All: Amen.

[CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: # 839 "God Be With You Till We Meet Again; by his counsels guide, uphold you, with his sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again."](#)

Postlude:

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Notes:

Psalm 72

One of the Royal Psalms, Psalm 72 argues that the king has a responsibility to support and sustain the life of the poor and the marginal when they have no resources by which to sustain themselves. The psalm envisions a quite assertive, initiative-taking royal government on behalf of the poor and the needy.

The notion of justice and righteousness has to do with economic maintenance and with the maintenance of an independent judiciary that would not be merely an exploitative tool of the powerful. Thus, the verbs in verse 4, “defend, deliver, crush,” surely concern a viable court system in which the marginal can expect reliable redress from the rapaciousness of an acquisitive society.

The juxtaposition of verses 1-4 and 12-14 concerning care for the vulnerable by the regime and verses 5-7, 8-11, and 15-17 envisioning extravagant well-being for the regime form the contrast that makes the point of the psalm: care for the poor that becomes the basis for economic prosperity in the realm. The unstated but surely implied negative counterpoint is the recognition that neglect of the poor through economic indifference will inevitably lead to military failure and economic collapse.

But what human king or political leader has ever lived up to such expectations? Psalm 72 reminds us that while we cannot perfectly reflect the community creating justice that characterizes God’s purpose, we should also reject a self-indulgent refusal to attempt to bend public power toward genuine communal well-being.

Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms, in New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 311-316.



PRAYER LIST (1/8/23)

- Friends & family of 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 entered comfort care
- For Mike Esposito, Miracle Mike, Stacey Haight's friend.
- 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, who continues to balance his medical needs
- For those who are balancing food, gas and housing in tough times
- For Alex, Marjorie's friend, continuing to work towards an "all clear" from his cancer.
- For David, recovering from hip replacement surgery.
- For Rick, Nancy's cousin, diagnosed with Stage 4 kidney cancer
- For the friends and family of Beth, John Nicholson's high school friend, who passed away from brain cancer, that they may know the love that surrounds them, especially Carl and their children
- For Joanna, Kerri Haight's colleague, who delivered early on Christmas morning after her pregnancy went off track
- For John Panto, whose extended family is facing challenges at the moment
- For Cassie, Amy's mom, who fell and broke her hip, may she recover soon
- 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 Mary, Rena's high school friend, who's facing back surgery.
- 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: Morning²

God of this new morning, you have awakened me to the brightness of your dawn. I begin this day in gratitude, recalling your mercies through the night, anticipating glimpses of your glory in the hours ahead. Make my face shine today with the joy of your grace, so that another is helped to see your presence and find hope. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

God of love, as the sun has set and night has come, I will not be afraid of the darkness, for you are with me. Your glory never recedes, but is always expanding, bringing more and more people into the sphere of your love. Thank you for such boundless grace as has been given in Jesus Christ. Make me a prism for the light of Christ, reflecting his grace to others all my days. In his name I pray. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Can you think of a dark time in your own life or a dark time in the history of the world when God's glory shone? When the light of Christ's presence became evident? When was that time? What happened? Who was a bearer of light in that darkness? Is there presently someone you know or some situation weighed down in darkness or despair? How can you be a light-bearer for that person, that circumstance?

Daily Awareness Reflection³

At the end of the day, I've been asking myself the following questions. I jot down the answers and ask them again the next evening. I've found it helps me to remain centered as well as increasing my awareness of God in my life. It takes about 10 minutes.

1. Slow down. Stop. Prepare yourself to pray by becoming aware of the love with which God looks on you ...
2. Note the gifts God has given you today. Give thanks to God for them ...
3. Ask God that this be a time of special grace and revelation ...
4. With God, review the day. Look at the stirrings of your heart, your thoughts, and your choices as the day progressed. Which have been of God? Which have not? What does God want to say to you about both? ...
5. Ask for forgiveness for failures/omissions, for healing from their effects ...
6. Look forward to the following day, and plan concretely with God how to live it according to God's desire for your life ...

² 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.

³ Elizabeth Liebert, *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), 31.

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 +/-
December	\$92,307	\$90,959	\$1,348

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.

Take Home Meals on Sale!

The Take Home Meals are on sale to help make space in the church's freezer, which means more yumminess in your freezer. Meals are limited, so take advantage of the sale before everything's all gone!

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.

Take Home Meal on January 20th: Shepherd's Pie

It's going to be delicious (it always is!), so don't miss out!

Christian Education Coming up on February 5, 8:30-9:30am

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

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