

Brookline Community Church
February 12, 2023
Rev. Catherine A.
Merrill



Prelude

Call To Worship, Psalm 119:1-8, p. 493

Leader: Happy are those whose way is blameless,
 who walk in the law of the LORD.

All: **Happy are those who keep his decrees,**
 who seek him with their whole heart,
 who also do no wrong,
 but walk in his ways.

Leader: You have commanded your precepts
 to be kept diligently.

All: **O that my ways may be steadfast**
 in keeping your statutes!

Leader: Then I shall not be put to shame,
 having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

All: **I will praise you with an upright heart,**
 when I learn your righteous ordinances.
 I will observe your statutes;
 do not utterly forsake me.

RESPONSE: #820 Threefold Amen (Danish)

Children's Message: Offering Forgiveness

Hymn: #540 *Take Time to be Holy*

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.

A Prayer of Joys and Concerns¹:

[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: #598 *Peace, Perfect Peace (all six verses)*

Invitation to Communion (Matthew 5:13-20)²

Leader: Come to this table, shaken like salt;
come to this table, tasty like salt –

All: **for you have preserved old stories,
and raised the blood pressures
of those who do injustice.**

Leader: Come to this table, with shining;
but also come with your tired old batteries –

All: **for you have illuminated joys and sorrows,
and you have been snuffed out
and re-lit again and again.**

Leader: Come to this table salty like sweat
from caring for the world,
and crumpled like a bag of fries.

All: **Come to this table, bright as a halogen headlight
and fragile as the candle flame
on a one-year-old's birthday cake.**

Leader: Come to this table because whoever you are
Jesus told parables for you.

¹ Today's Prayer of Joys and Concerns was inspired by Rev. Lourey Savick of the United Parish of Upton Federated, Commonwealth West District who offered the UMC's Daily Prayer on February 9, 2023.

² Today's Communion Liturgy was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Celebration of Holy Communion – February 5, 2023," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted January 24, 2023,

<https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2023/01/24/celebration-of-holy-communion-february-5-2023/>
(accessed February 8, 2023).

Words of Remembering (Isaiah 58:1-12)

Prayer of Consecration

All: Spirit of Christ, shake on our lives
 the seasoning of love
 for Bread is Body
 and the Cup is poured for all.

Shine on these gifts so here and so now.
Shine on our lives today
and give us enough for
everyone's tomorrows. Amen.

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: God, now that we are fed,
 we recognize how many there are
 who need a lighted lamp
 lifted so high
 it may take several hands to hold it,
 and who always need a taste of tomorrow
 and a sip of courage.
 For this we pray in the words Jesus taught his followers ...

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.

Hymn: #739 Pass It On

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:21-37, p. 786

'You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder"; and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgement." But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, "You fool", you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

'It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce." But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

'Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord." But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No"; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

RESPONSE: #820 Threefold Amen (Danish)

Reflection on the Scripture:

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:**

**Jesus said, If you remember that
a brother or sister has something against you,
first be reconciled to them,
and then come and offer your gift.
In peace, we have brought our offerings to God.**

Announcements

Hymn: “Whosoever” Meaneth Me

**1 I am happy today, and the sun shines bright,
The clouds have been rolled away;
For the Savior said, whosoever will
May come with Him to stay.**

Refrain:

“Whosoever” surely meaneth me,
Surely meaneth me, oh, surely meaneth me;
“Whosoever” surely meaneth me,
“Whosoever” meaneth me.

**2 All my hopes have been raised, oh, His Name be praised,
His glory has filled my soul;
I’ve been lifted up, and from sin set free,
His blood has made me whole. [Refrain]**

**3 Oh, what wonderful love, oh, what grace divine,
That Jesus should die for me;
I was lost in sin, for the world I pined,
But now I am set free. [Refrain]**

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 119:1-8)

- Leader: Accept the freedom to walk in the Way of God, across all your journeys in life.
- All:** **Assemble your intentions and intellect and emotions in order to seek our God's instructions for your life**
- Leader: Advance in God's way, letting God steer you around trouble and failure,
- All:** **Absorb God's instructions on how to live, how to pace yourselves and be diligent**
- Leader: Align me on the straight and narrow, Holy One, keep me walking.
- All:** **Abolishing regrets and shame in my life, God gives me the guidance I need to focus on.**
- Leader: Always studying, learning, focusing on what God is asking me and my community to do,
- All:** **Aided by God's passage unfolding just for me, I'll be guided by God's instruction and God's loving companionship, all the days of my life.**
- 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 119

Psalm 119 is the longest of all the psalms. An acrostic psalm where each letter of the alphabet receives eight entries before the poem moves to the next letter.

First, the psalm wants to instruct the young in the “a-b-c’s” of obedience to God’s instructions or torah. Second, it affirms that torah will cover every facet of human existence from A to Z. Third, the message is that life is reliable and utterly symmetrical when the torah is honored. A torah-ordered life is as safe, predictable, and complete as is the movement of the psalm.

Content-wise, the psalm affirms that the torah is not just a set of rules, but it is a mode of God's life-giving presence. Obedience to the torah is a source of light, life, joy, delight. This psalm instructs people in the need, possibility, and delight of setting strong foundations for identity and vocation. Torah living does not require keeping options open about who we shall be.

Furthermore, torah obedience is a starting point, a launching pad, from which to mount an ongoing conversation with God through daily experience. It is simply a statement of trust and submission to a God who has been found to be good and generous.

On the one hand, the psalm understands that life with God is a two-way street. Torah keepers have a right to expect something from God. Obedience gives entry to seek God's attention in God's gift.

On the other hand, having earned the right to speak, the speaker nevertheless throws himself on the mercy of God and waits for a move from God – a free, unfettered, uncoerced move from God. A life of full obedience is not a conclusion of faith. It is by mercy and not by obedience that the psalmist lives (v. 77).

Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 39-41.



PRAYER LIST (2/12/23)

- 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 those who are balancing food, gas and housing in tough times
- For Rick, Nancy's cousin, diagnosed with Stage 4 kidney cancer
- For Keith and his family, Donna's colleague, whose daughter lost her battle with brain cancer
- For Jen, the Aitken's friend, diagnosed with cancer
- For Hailey, daughter of the Razzabonis' friends, who has started cancer treatment
- For Jessica's three childhood friends who lost their parents this week, that they may find comfort and for all those who have parented us as we grew
- For Luke's family and friends, Jessica's friends, who passed in hospice care
- For Gerry, Jakub's colleague, entering a second round of chemo
- For Marjorie's friends who have gone through so much loss this week
 - For Ann, who lost her husband of 50 years
 - For Marjorie's ex-mother-in-law, the grandmother to Marjorie's kids
 - For Dave's daughter's mother-in-law
 - For a school friend, who grew in a different direction
- May they all know the love that surrounds them
- 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: Morning³

Holy God, I greet this day with thanks and the determination to choose the good. Help me to walk with you in blessing. Let my “yes” be yes, and my “no” be no, as I share the light of Christ. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Lord Jesus, it is night, and night is for sleeping; yet, my mind is racing fast. I give thanks for the blessings this day, and then I worry—there is so much left undone. But you are with me! You calm my anxiety, fill me with peace, and help me choose the way of rest. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Today’s readings speak of blessings and curses, life and death, good relationships and those that are broken. Moreover, the texts suggest that we have a choice in these matters.

Where do you find life, and where do you not—and what role do your choices play? Where have you experienced broken relationships in your own life or in the church? How do Christ and the reign of heaven enable us to move beyond brokenness and live in mutual support?

Daily Awareness Reflection⁴

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 ...

³ 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.

⁴ Elizabeth Liebert, *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), 31.

Announcements

The church's financial obligations continue.

| | Actual Income | Actual Expenses | Income vs. Expenses +/- |
|---------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| January | \$7,930 | \$8,964 | (\$1,034) |

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.



Feb. 10th: Take Home Meal, Swedish Meatballs with Mashed Potatoes & Gravy

Part of the proceeds of this month's THM goes toward Marguerite's Place in Nashua. Marguerite's Place, Inc. is a nonprofit transitional housing and supportive services program for homeless women in crisis and their children.

Helping the Salvation Army Food Pantry Meet Urgent Needs

The Salvation Army Food Pantry is in desperate need of regular size boxes of cereal and peanut butter & jelly in plastic containers. If you wish to make a donation you can leave the items in the front hall at the church or in the outside bin by the side door. You may also give a monetary donation to a member of the Outreach Board and we will shop for you.

Outreach is starting 2023 collecting much needed items for Marguerite's Place

Marguerite's Place located in Nashua, NH supports homeless women with children in their quest for self-sufficiency by providing transitional housing, childcare, and supportive services to help families thrive. Marguerite's Place consists of 10 apartments in two buildings on Palm St in Nashua along with a licensed child care facility onsite. Let's help these women as they transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency with the help of the many programs at Marguerite's Place. After moving in, residents partner with a case manager who provides these women with individualized support, career/financial coaching, and connection to vital community resources to help them create a plan for their future.

Please help them by purchasing any one of the following items between now & **Sunday, Feb 19th:**

Diapers in sizes 3,4,5 & 6

Paper Towels

Kleenex-Facial Tissue

Unscented Trash bags

Cleaning products

You may place these items anytime in the plastic bin outside the church by the side door, in the front hall inside the church or drop off in person on Friday Feb 10th between 1:00-4:30 PM.

If you would like to make a monetary donation you can mail a check to the Brookline Community Church, PO Box 507, Brookline NH 03033 and note that this is for Marguerite's Place Collection.

You may also give your donation to a member of the Outreach Board.

Contact Amy Razzaboni at 603-801-9210 or arazz3914@gmail.com with any questions concerning this collection or regarding the work we do through our Outreach Board.

His Mansion is Hiring a Director of Operations for their 320 acre campus

The Director of Operations leads a team who runs the day-to-day operations of a 320-acre campus and property. This includes building maintenance, work crews, property care, and farming. Housing and a hybrid compensation package may be available. See Rev. Cath (minister@bccnh.org) for more details.

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

We'll be continuing our Christian Education program (for both kids and adults) on March 5. We'll be taking a kid's eye view at Holy Week. I think the adults might be surprised by what they see. Coming up: Mar. 26 (Palm Sunday is Apr. 2, so we'll meet a week early), May 7, Jun. 4.

Save the Date (possibly): March 11, Food Pantry Fundraiser at the Event Center

The Fire Department is working on seeing if they can pull off an entertaining evening at the Event Center to support the Brookline Food Pantry. Watch this space, but there are rumors of corned beef, cabbage and comedians!

Update to the Senior Citizen Active Walking Program

A nice addition to the Winter Walking Program, offered to Brookline residents age 70+ at The Hampshire Dome in Milford by NH Wellpoint Foundation, is LUNCH!! Beginning February 21st, Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County is proud to sponsor free lunches for participants of the Hampshire Dome Winter Walking Program. Lunch is available on Tuesdays 11:30AM -12:30PM. Please see [the flyer](#) for more details.

Horton Center Schedule for 2023 looks awesome!

Lots of fun theme weeks, from Mysteries on the Mountain to Hogwarts at Horton Center. If you know of anyone who could use some time in a beautiful place, centered on Christian faith, please pass the word. Scholarships are available. www.hortoncenter.org.

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