



*Brookline Community Church*

*February 26, 2023*

*Rev. Catherine A. Merrill*

**Prelude:** [\*Psalm 32: Blessed\*](#) by Heather Schopf & Christa Mielke

**Explanation of today's crazy format**

**Call To Worship, Psalm 32, p. 440, Of David. A Maskil.**

Leader: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.

Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit

**All: So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.  
Because your steadfast love is better than life,  
my lips will praise you.**

Leader: While I kept silence, my body wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.  
Selah

**All: Then I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not hide my iniquity;  
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD',  
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.  
Selah**

Leader: Therefore let all who are faithful  
offer prayer to you;  
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters  
shall not reach them.  
You are a hiding-place for me;  
you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.  
Selah

**All: I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.  
Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,  
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,  
else it will not stay near you.**

**Leader:** Many are the torments of the wicked,  
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.

**All: Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.**

**How are we meant to use these 40 days of Lent?**

**Hymn: [Softly and Tenderly by Elisa Bosley](#)**

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling  
Calling for you and for me  
See on the portals He's waiting and watching  
Watching for you and for me

Come home, come home  
You who are weary come home  
Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling  
Calling, "O sinner come home"

O for the wonderful love He has promised  
Promised for you and for me  
Though we have sinned He has mercy and pardon  
Pardon for you and for me

Come home, come home  
You who are weary come home  
Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling  
Calling, "O sinner come home"

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 Concerns:**

**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.**

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

## **Announcements**

**How do we define sin and the role of Adam?**

**Scripture Reading: Romans 5:12-14, p. 798**

Reader One: Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—

sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

**Congregational Reflection on Scripture**

**Scripture Reading: Romans 5:15-19, p. 917**

Team Adam: But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass,

Team Jesus: much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many.

Team Adam: And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation,

Team Jesus: but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification.

Team Adam: If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one,

Team Jesus: much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Team Adam: Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all,

Team Jesus: so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all.

Team Adam: For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,

Team Jesus: so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

### **Reflection on the Scripture:**

#### **Hymn: Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone) by Chris Tomlin**

Amazing grace how sweet the sound	My chains are gone, I've been set free
That saved a wretch like me	My God, my Savior has ransomed me
I once was lost, but now I'm found	And like a flood His mercy reigns
Was blind, but now I see	Unending love
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear	Amazing grace
And grace my fears relieved	My chains are gone, I've been set free
How precious did that grace appear	My God, my Savior has ransomed me
The hour I first believed	And like a flood His mercy reigns
My chains are gone, I've been set free	Unending love
My God, my Savior has ransomed me	Amazing grace
And like a flood His mercy reigns	The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
Unending love	The sun forbear to shine
Amazing grace	But God, who called me here below
The Lord has promised good to me	Will be forever mine, will be forever mine
His word my hope secures	You are forever mine
He will my shield and portion be	
As long as life endures	

### **Why is Paul so hung up on sin when writing to the Romans?**

#### **Scripture Reading: Romans 5:20a, p. 917**

Reader Four: But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied;

### **Congregational 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:**

**We give you thanks and praise, O God,  
for the free and abundant gift of grace  
you have given us in Jesus Christ.  
Let the simple gifts of our lives  
be a sign of our unending gratitude  
for your undying love;  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**Where is the gift for Lent?**

**Scripture Reading: Romans 5:20b-21, p. 917**

Reader Five: but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Reflection on the Scripture:**

**Hymn: [Grace Wins by Matthew West](#)**

**Prayer of Confession as our prayer to go back out into the world**

Leader: Happy are those whose sin is forgiven,  
who no longer suffer in silence,  
but name their sin and seek God's grace.  
Let us confess our sin.

**All: Wild God of the Wilderness,  
you know the ways of good and evil.**

**You know the things that tempt us  
and the things that give us life.**

**You know our nakedness,  
The fruit we eat when no one is watching  
and you know our sin.**

**We confess that we have disobeyed your word,  
denying your providence and care  
and relying on our own cleverness.**

**Have mercy on us, we pray:  
cover us with your grace,  
feed us with the bread of life,  
and re-create us in your image;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.**

Leader: Happy are those whose sin is forgiven!  
Be glad in the Lord and shout for joy:

**All: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God!**

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."

*Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.*

## Notes:

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### Psalm 32

Psalm 32 is divided into three parts, with the middle having the most interest. The psalmist announced the conclusion at the beginning. Namely, for a full life, there is nothing like being forgiven. The psalm does not trouble over the question of a life free of transgression. It assumes transgression. It has observed the killing burden of sin unforgiven, and it knows that forgiveness is the power for new life.

The middle part of the psalm states the movement concisely: paralysis (vv. 3-4), acknowledgment (v. 5), rescue and well-being (vv. 6-7). Everything in disorientation, everything for future life, everything in relation to God – everything depends on confessing to God. This psalmist understood the need for spoken release and admission, the liberation that comes with actual articulation to the one who listens and can respond.

There is no doubt here about the reality of God, the reality of accountability, the clarity of expectation, and the need to come to terms with that clear, unavoidable relationship. God is not an elective or a hypothesis, but a definitional and determinate partner who establishes norms and with whom we must deal. Freedom from guilt requires embracing it and having it dealt with by the mercy of God.

In verses 8-11, the one who has found this way to freedom wants to share it. We could be stubborn and miss the whole point. But the “narrow gate” to new life is the way of coming to terms with God, facing God’s holy will and the contrasting failure of our life.

The guilt to be acknowledged concerns our idol-making, which reduce all of life to management and reduces the terror of God’s holiness to a set of religious niceties. For what the psalm finally commends is *yielding*. Against that, our social values are oriented to *unyielding control*.

Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 95-98.



## PRAYER LIST (2/26/23)

- 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 those who are balancing food, gas and housing in tough times
- For Rick, Nancy's cousin, diagnosed with Stage 4 kidney cancer
- For Jen, the Aitken's friend, diagnosed with cancer
- For Hailey, daughter of the Razzabonis' friends, who has started cancer treatment
- For Eddy Razzaboni, George Sr.'s brother, who passed away from Covid
- For the friends and family of Flora Kenyon, Marjorie's mom, who passed away on Friday night
- For Polly, John's sister, as she comes to the end of her life
- For Lori, Barbara's granddaughter, who's helping nurse her grandmother and great aunt through Covid in Florida
- For Jessica's relative, who's been diagnosed with a rare form of lymphoma, may they find the right combination of care quickly
- For Peter, Rev. Cath's cousin, whose pancreatic cancer has shown up in his liver
- For the Avramovs, traveling to Prague later in the week, may it all go smoothly
- For Doris, Marjorie's 98 year-old aunt, who's been diagnosed with Covid
- For all those struggling to start a family
- For Megan and her family, Susan & Russell's daughter's friend, whose father passed away from pulmonary difficulty
- 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: Morning<sup>1</sup>**

Holy God, as this day surrounds me like a garden with a thousand trees, give me enough knowledge to obey your commandments, and to choose the fruit that gives life: the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

Where can I hide from you, O God? You have found me here, stained with the fruit of desire, shivering in the evening breeze. This is all I ask: wrap me in your mercy, and let me rest in your presence; for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

How might you grow in faith and draw near to Jesus through the forty days of Lent? Let Jesus' three responses to the devil be your guide: (1) study Scripture (live by the Word of God; Matt. 4:4); (2) seek reconciliation with God and others (do not put God to the test; Matt. 4:7); and (3) be active and intentional about participating in the worship of your congregation (worship the Lord your God; Matt. 4:10).

### **Daily Awareness Reflection<sup>2</sup>**

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 ...

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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)

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.

### Thanks to everyone who supported Outreach's recent efforts

We're very grateful for everyone who contributed to our recent drive to support Marguerite's Place and the Salvation Army Food Pantry. A small donation can make such a big difference in someone's life.

### 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.

### March 7, Candidates Night, 7:00pm or on Zoom

The Hollis Brookline Rotary Club is hosting a Candidates Night for Town and School Board candidates on the ballot for the March 14th election. [Details](#) on how the session will work and the Zoom link are available now.

### March 11, Senior Luncheon: Corned Beef & Cabbage

Faith and begorrah, it's time to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with the seniors in the community.

### March 11, Food Pantry Fundraiser at the Event Center

The Fire Department is working on an evening fundraiser at the Event Center to support the Brookline Food Pantry. There are rumors of corned beef and cabbage and special entertainment!

### Take Home Meal, March 24, Supporting Habitat for Humanity

We're supporting Habitat for Humanity with March's THM. If you would like to provide an "add on," something we can sell in addition to the meals, please let Megan ([kingmegan7@gmail.com](mailto:kingmegan7@gmail.com)) know.

## **The Church has 12 Covid Test Kits, Take & Replace!**

NH made Covid supplies available to certain non-profits. We took advantage of the program to snag 12 Covid test kits. If they become hard to find again, feel free to grab one (Candy [secretary@bccnh.org](mailto:secretary@bccnh.org) can help) and replace it later.

## **Cookies/Cakes for Coffee Hour**

We like to have treats available during coffee hour, so if you're cooking at home and would make a bit extra for the church, we'd love to freeze them and share the love later.

## **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](mailto:minister@bccnh.org)) for more details.

## **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](http://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