



Brookline Community Church

April 2, 2023

Rev. Catherine A. Merrill, Minister

Prelude

The Joyful Welcome

Call To Worship, Matthew 21:1-11

Leader: When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.' This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

**All: 'Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'**

Leader: The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

**All: 'Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!'**

Leader: When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' The crowds were saying,

All: 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

***HYMN #203 "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"**

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.

The Time of Fellowship

Overview of Holy Week

Announcements

Reception of New Members

Invitation

Affirmation of Faith

Pastor: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God. Do you believe in God?

People: I believe in God.

Pastor: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

People: I believe in Jesus Christ.

Pastor: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

People: I believe in the Holy Spirit.

Question about Participation

Pastor: Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world?

Candidates: I promise, with the help of God.

Welcome & Reception

Pastor: Let us, the members of the Brookline Community Church express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

People: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

Prayer for the Keeping of the Covenant

Presentation of Gifts

In the tradition of the early church, new members were received on Easter. They were given gifts to help them flourish in their new lives in Christ. We would like to continue that ancient tradition.

Sacrament of Communion

After presenting new members with gifts, the early church would then celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Table. Then, as now, it reminded everyone assembled that they were one family, with one aim of remembering and serving God.

Prayer of Confession:

All: **We believe in God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. But we can act against those beliefs at time, even as we are surrounded by members of the household of God.**

Pastor: We can act against our beliefs and we can repent of those actions.

All: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

***HYMN: #689 “The Church’s One Foundation”**

Passing of the Peace (from front to back)

Today would be the perfect day to use that most ancient of Christian welcomes “*Peace be with you*” to which one responds, “*and also with you.*”

Rev. Cath will start it from the front of the church and then invite you to stand in your pews and rotate to share the peace of Christ without shaking hands.

Let us pray 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.

Moment for Mission by Karl Crossman from Wycliffe Bible Translators



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:

God of all good gifts,
we thank you for showing us how to care for each other.
May these gifts lead to great feasting
for those who have no banquets set before them.
May these gifts build shelters and places of prayer
for those who are homeless.
May these gifts proclaim your desire
that all your creation live in peace.
Give us grateful hearts, O God,
in the name of the one who came to draw all people to himself,
Jesus Christ, our Savior.

The Beginning of the Journey to the Cross

Matthew 27:11-14, p. 810

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You say so.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?' But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Reflection:

***HYMN: #213 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", vv. 1-2**

Matthew 27:15-26, p. 810

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?' For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.' Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Reflection

Prayer of Pilate: A confession (unison)

Holy God, forgive us the auto-Pilate in our lives – our complicity in the violences of the world, hand-washing at the sorrows of our friends, stifling of our truest questions, and the ease with which we are willing to go along with so much, as long as we are not inconvenienced or involved. Amen.

Matthew 27:27-37, p. 810

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'

Prayer of Simon of Cyrene: (unison) For the hope of the world

God, there are famous cross-carriers pulled out of the crowd – Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Anne Frank, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mother Teresa – for them we give thanks. There are cross-carriers written on no history page whose children we know, whose elderly parents we've met -- and for them we give thanks. Move us to the curb of the Via Dolorosa for our times so we can bear the timber's weight, carry for Christ his caring for the world. Amen.

Matthew 27:38-44, pp. 810-811

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

Prayer of the Bandits: Personal intercessions

Pastor: O Gentle Savior, not because our sufferings and pains are worthy to be named with yours, but because you understand absolutely all the loss and pain and loneliness and desolation of human life and place yourself beside it, we bring you our prayers – for friend and family, neighbor and church member. For those who are ill this day we pray your blessing ...

All: (softly name names, feeling free to let the names overlap one another)

Pastor: For those who suffer emotionally, in relationships, employment, lack of employment, immigration concerns, we pray your blessing ...

All: (softly name names)

Pastor: For those who feel forsaken, we pray your blessing ...

All: (softly name names)

Pastor: For those who are dying, we pray your blessing...

All: (softly name names)

Pastor: For ourselves, we pray your blessing and praise you for your unconditional love. Amen.

***HYMN: #213 “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”, verse 3**

Matthew 27:45-50, p. 811

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

Reflection

***HYMN: #213 “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”, verse 4**

Matthew 27:51-54, p. 811

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

Prayer of the Women: (unison) An expression of thanksgiving

Christ Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, we thank you that you let us stay to the end, experiencing the reality of your death and the mystery of your hope. We thank you that you let us stay to the end of the lives of people who are near to us with your courage and peace. We thank you that, though we are each somewhere on our own journey to death, there is not an inch we need to walk alone. Hear us as we whisper with the weeping women, “We will return at dawn on the first day of the week.” 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.



PRAYER LIST (4/2/23)

- Friends & family of Jesse Delrossi, Jane Jukes, Edith Corey, Sandy Garvin, Scott Higgins, Ed Krom, Ron Whitebred, Chris Crowder, Morris Nicholson, Eddy Razzaboni, Flora Kenyon, Polly Foley.
- 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 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 all those struggling to start a family
- 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

Palm Sunday Household Prayer: Morning¹

I rise, O God, awakened by your Word, to live another day. Lead me in your path. Show me the steps to take toward greater faith. Hold me in your care as I move through this Holy Week where the shadows deepen even in the daylight. Hosanna! Save me now, dear God! Amen.

Palm Sunday Household Prayer: Evening

I come to the darkness of night, O God, tired and ready for a sweet respite in your care. Keep me safe from all harm, and bring me to the morning light with renewed strength. In Jesus' holy name, I pray. Amen.

Maundy Thursday Household Prayer: Morning

O Lord, as I live for you this day, keep me faithful. Let my living and my dying be precious in your sight, so that I may live for you forever; I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Maundy Thursday Household Prayer: Evening

O Lord, as I rest in you this night, keep me faithful. Let my dying and my living be precious in your sight so that I may rest in you forever; I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Good Friday Household Prayer: Morning

God, on this most challenging day, be with me. Open my eyes to see moments of pain and suffering around me into which I may carry your loving presence. Amen.

Good Friday Household Prayer: Evening

Holy One, into your hands I commit this day that I have lived. Salvage what needs saving in me. Strengthen what is good in me. And in all things bind me closer to you through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

As this week unfolds, spend some time each day pondering the mind of Christ. What is the shape of his compassion? Describe the image of such great love. Finally, what does it feel like, physically, to be so utterly cared for?

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.

	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs. Expenses +/-
February	\$11,682	\$17,386	(\$5,704)

There are several ways to send your offering.

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

2. Scan the QR code

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



In" then

Brookline,

Coffee Hour on Easter morning

We're looking for some help to set up and clean up. And any treats that you'd bring and share.

Lenten Discernment Sessions, March 19 & April 2

Join Rev. Cath after coffee hour in walking through a structured, 90 minute discernment process to see where the Holy Spirit is leading you. You'll develop a practical, hands-on plan for improving your skills at seeking God's direction in your life. You'll also leave with a tool kit for working through the challenges of subtle nudges or deep silences from God. There will be some hands on exercises to do between sessions.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, Remember Jesus' Last Supper

We remember Jesus' Last Supper and the blessing he promised to his disciples. This year we are hosting the 7:00pm joint service with the Mason Congregational Church. At 6:00pm, we'll hold a potluck soup and bread supper in the Social Hall. All are welcome to both or either.

Good Friday Vigil, April 7

From 3:00 to 9:00pm, the church is open for quiet reflection on Jesus' death at human hands. Many find this time of deep quiet profoundly renewing.

Easter Sunrise Service, April 9, 6:00am

As the sunrise breaks on Musket Mountain and the Andres Institute, we welcome the light and the promise of Jesus' resurrection.

Easter Sunday Service, April 9, 10:00am

We celebrate the greatest of Good News – Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, indeed!

Christian Education Coming up on May 7, 8:30-9:30am

We'll be continuing our Christian Education program (for both kids and adults) on May 7. Coming up: Jun. 4.

Take Home Meal, April 14, Supporting the Church!

We're supporting the church with April's THM. If you would like to provide something we can sell in addition to the meals, please let Megan (kingmegan7@gmail.com) know.

The Food Pantry is looking for a freezer

If you have a freezer that's looking for a new home, let Amy (arazz3914@gmail.com) know. She can put you in touch with the right people.

Scams abounding after bank collapses

There are people running scams looking to get your banking details claiming to be from the agencies charged with resolving the bank collapses. Like any good scam, they sound credible and don't want to give you a minute to think. What are people like?

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 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.

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