

*Brookline Community Church*  
*July 30, 2023*  
*Rev. Catherine Merrill, Minister*



Photo by [Amy Pointer](#)

[Prelude: Psalm 128 by Sons of Korah](#)

**Call To Worship, Psalm 128, p. 499:**

A Song of Ascents.

Leader: Happy is everyone who fears the LORD,  
who walks in his ways.

**All: You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;  
you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.**

Leader: Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;  
your children will be like olive shoots  
around your table.

**All: Thus shall the man be blessed  
who fears the LORD.**

Leader: The LORD bless you from Zion.  
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life.

**All: May you see your children's children.  
Peace be upon Israel!**

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

## Children's Message: *Keeping Promises*

Hymn: [Father Abraham by Apple Crisol](#)

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you. So let's just praise the LORD!

Right arm

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you. So let's just praise the LORD!

Right arm left arm

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you. So let's just praise the LORD!

Right arm left arm right foot

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you. So let's just praise the LORD!

Right arm left arm right foot left foot

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you. So let's just praise the LORD!

Right arm left arm right foot left foot chin up

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you. So let's just praise the LORD!

Right arm left arm right foot left foot chin up turn around

Father Abraham had many sons. Many sons had Father Abraham. I am one of them and so are you. So let's just praise the LORD!

Right arm left arm right foot left foot chin up turn around SIT DOWN!

*(or, if we're scant on kids this week, [Hymn: Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah by Fountainview Academy](#))*

Guide me, O thou great Jehovan, pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak, but thou are mighty; hold me with thy powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow; Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through. Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside; death of death and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side. Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to thee; I will ever give to thee. Amen!

*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.]

### **Hymn: Great is Thy Faithfulness by Maranatha! Music**

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father, there is no shadow of turning with thee. Thou changest not thy compassions they fail not, as thou hast been thou forever will be.

Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed thy hands hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth. Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside.

Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness, Lord every morning new mercies I see. All I have needed thy hands hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

### **Scripture Reading: Genesis 29:15-28, pp. 22-23**

Then Laban said to Jacob, 'Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?' Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful. Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, 'I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.' Laban said, 'It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.' So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

Then Jacob said to Laban, ‘Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.’ So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, ‘What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?’ Laban said, ‘This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me for another seven years.’ Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

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

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

#### [Hymn: Promises by the Worship Initiative](#)

God of Abraham, You’re the God of covenant, and of faithful promises. Time and time again, You have proven You’ll do just what You said. Though the storms may come and the winds may blow I’ll remain steadfast, and let my heart learn when You speak a word it will come to pass.

Great is Your faithfulness to me. Great is Your faithfulness to me. From the rising sun, to the setting same, I will praise Your name. Great is your faithfulness to me.

God, from age to age, though the earth may pass away, Your word remains the same. Your history can prove there’s nothing You can’t do, You’re faithful and true. Though the storms may come and the winds may blow I’ll remain steadfast, and let my heart learn when You speak a word it will come to pass.

Great is Your faithfulness to me. Great is Your faithfulness to me. From the rising sun, to the setting same, I will praise Your name. Great is your faithfulness to me.

I put my faith in Jesus, my anchor to the ground. My hope and firm foundation, He’ll never let me down. I put my faith in Jesus, my anchor to the ground. My hope and firm foundation, He’ll never let me down. I put my faith in Jesus, my anchor to the ground. My hope and firm foundation, He’ll never let me down. No, He’ll never let me down.

Great is Your faithfulness to me. Great is Your faithfulness to me. From the rising sun, to the setting same, I will praise Your name. Great is your faithfulness to me.

#### **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:**

Holy One,  
receive these offerings as you receive our lives.  
Gather our false starts and uncertain efforts,  
our generosity and our reluctance.  
Enliven us with your breath and make your purposes known,  
that our lives might show forth your glory. Amen.

**Announcements**

**A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 128)**

Leader: Loving God, I obey what I revere, so I walk in your way, seeking your blessing.

**All: Blessed are those who get to keep what they produce. They are not slaves, producing on another's land. They are not in exile, producing for another nation's benefit. They are not poor, making a living by picking through the leavings of other people.**

Leader: Blessed are those whose spouses are alive. They did not die in childbirth. They are not so malnourished that they could not support a pregnancy.

**All: Blessed are those whose children are healthy. Like olive trees, they show tenacity, thriving on rocky hillsides, enduring the sweltering heat of summer. Against all odds, they gather around the family table.**

Leader: Blessed are those with a roof over their heads. Big or small, with a feast or a snack on the table, it is a blessing that there is a place to gather.

**All: Blessed are those who live in a healthy and flowering political system, where disputes can be resolved, and daily life continues safely and surely.**

Leader: Blessed are they who live to see their children's children. Their grandchildren are not captured by invading empires. Their grandchildren are not sold into debt slavery. Their grandchildren have a home to return to. All of this depends on the health of the nation they belong to.

**All: May we see the prosperity of our nation! Peace be upon our land!**

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: God of Faithfulness by Movement Worship**

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

**Notes:**

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**Psalm 128**

The opening section of the psalm, verses 1-4, is framed by the phrase “those who fear the Lord.” The psalm’s opening word is often rendered as “happy.” The term introduces an observation about living: one who walks or lives in line with God’s purposes finds wholeness. It provides the parallel to the fear of the LORD in verse 1. In this phrase, “fear” is about reverence or awe before God, and the observation that whom one reveres, one obeys. To fear the LORD is to entrust all of life and hope to this one and follow the divine guidance.

Verse 2 illustrates such a full life in terms of everyday work. In the ancient world, labor was about growing food, and the enjoyment of that task was eating the fruits of one’s labors. In verse 3, the grapes and olives were common to the life of ancient Israel and provided for daily life. Verse 4 ties these illustrations of work and family back to God’s blessing. It is God who is present to make possible the vibrancy to grow and live fully.

The psalm concludes in verses 5-6 with a benediction, a blessing from God. God is present to bring about powerful growth and full living. The completion of that blessing is put in terms of *shalom*, or peace, but not just as the absence of conflict. The hope is for the encounter with the reign of God and the consequence of a healthy and full life for individuals and the community. The blessing is thus a gift from God rather than a human success, and is tied to both individuals and the nation; the two are bound together.

The psalm’s conclusion is a benediction. The pilgrims receive a priestly blessing and hope to live out that blessing faithfully, based on the encounter with God in the sanctuary; they hope for a life that fits together in integrity, a life of peace.

Adapted from Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms, in New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 544-547.



## PRAYER LIST (7/30/23)

- Friends & family of Jane Jukes, Edith Corey, Sandy Garvin, Scott Higgins, Ed Krom, Ron Whitebred, Chris Crowder, Morris Nicholson, Eddy Razzaboni, Flora Kenyon, Polly Foley, Ken Perrin.
- For Rick, Nancy's cousin, diagnosed with Stage 4 kidney cancer
- For Jen, the Aitken's friend, diagnosed with cancer
- For Alex, Marjorie's friend, whose diagnosis at the Mayo Clinic means more chemotherapy to hopefully get a better handle on the cancer.
- For Dave Joki and Dave Flannery, both members of the Brookline Fire Department, both fighting cancer
- For Eric, Rena's high school friend's son, who is having serious side effects from his cancer treatment
- For Paul, John's friend, who's in a tough fight with cancer.
- For Renee, Donna's nephew's wife, going through cancer treatment
- For Brandon, Jill & Kevin's friend, on the heart transplant list.
- For Frank, Marjorie's friend, with a spot on his lung which requires a biopsy
- For Okie, Marjorie's friend, whose pain control medications aren't working
- For Jessica & Elianna, recovering together from a pair of broken arms
- For Kim, Donna's relative, who has had complications in her liver transplant and is having to go through more medical procedures
- For Mark, John Nicholson's brother, who's facing medical complications
- For Kevin, Kevin's dad, who's facing some medical issues
- For Leo, Amy's son George's friend, still recovering in the hospital
- For Allison, Megan's friend, who broke her elbow and her pelvis
- For Tim, Megan's friend, who passed out unexpectedly in the shower
- For Karl Crossman, Rena's son-in-law, home after a hospital stay
- For Kaelyn, Jessica's daughter, making a tough journey
- For Nancy, Kym's sister, who's having a second hip replacement surgery on the same hip
- For the friends and family of our former UMC Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar
- 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>**

God of ferment, God of life, as I recall the night's unsettled dreams . . .  
as I foresee the day's demands . . .  
come to me

in the desires of my heart,  
in the anger of the excluded,  
in all I might discount—

until I find you everywhere,  
until your holy love leavens every impulse,  
for I pray in the name of Jesus, whose surprising call continues. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

Joy of my heart, thank you for this day's unexpected turns: for provision when I was stymied and laughter born of grace. As I rest in your mercy open my heart to your unruly love and the neighbors you have put in my path. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

Are there dilemmas or relationships in which you feel separated from the love of God? Can you imagine that God might be at work there, bringing life in unexpected ways? What would change if you were to claim the promise that nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord?

### **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**

### **Help taking the piano in the church's front hall to the Transfer Station**

We're looking for some strong souls and a pick up truck to take the spinet piano in the front hall to the Transfer Station. If you can provide either one, please contact Susan Haight ([sdlhaight@gmail.com](mailto:sdlhaight@gmail.com)).

### **Making Space for Newness in the Church**

Churches have a habit of collecting items that bring joy for a while before converting to clutter. So if you have something that you think might be worth having appraised so it can go brighten someone else's life, please take it to the second floor Youth Room and leave it on the table that used to be in the Deacons' Room. Contact Susan Haight ([sdlhaight@gmail.com](mailto:sdlhaight@gmail.com)) for more info.

### **Quarterly Church Statements via email!**

As we upgrade the church's accounting software, we're experimenting with sending your quarterly statements via email. Let Bill ([financechair@bccnh.org](mailto:financechair@bccnh.org)) know if you need any corrections.

### **Brookline's Food Pantry welcomes garden produce**

If you've got extra produce from your garden, the Food Pantry would welcome it! Click [here for more details](#).

### **2023 Parking Passes are available for the Grove**

You'll need a parking pass to park for our Lake worship services in July & August. For membership details and hours when you can get that taken care of, [see the town website](#). If you aren't a Brookline resident, contact Candy ([secretary@bccnh.org](mailto:secretary@bccnh.org), 603-801-5918) and she'll explain the system.

### **Meals on Wheels Dine Out Club for folks over 60**

The Dine Out Club is a donation-based meal program for people over the age of 60, with a suggested donation of \$4.00 per meal.\* Upon signing up, you will receive a Dine Out Club card which can be used for meals from a specially curated menu at a restaurant partner location. [More details are available here](#).

### **B – S.A.F.E.: Brookline - Special Assistance for Emergencies**

If you have special accommodation needs or require special assistance during a possible or actual emergency within the town, the information would be helpful to local responders. This could include information on complicated medical condition or medical equipment, communication challenges such as hearing loss or inability to speak, etc. [The form](#) is completely voluntary. It should be returned to the Ambulance chief.

## Critical Home Repair Program from Habitat for Humanity

The program provides home repairs to low to moderate income homeowners who are struggling to maintain their homes due to age, disability or family circumstances. The program focuses on health, life and safety code issues. It allows Habitat for Humanity to partner with families to help them reclaim their homes with pride, dignity, and in safety without being disrupted by the uncertainty, trauma and expense of moving. [More information and an application](#) are available on Habitat's website.

## 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.

## 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

## The church's financial obligations continue.

	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs. Expenses +/-
June	\$51,136	\$49,469	\$1,667

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.

