

A glowing orange and yellow handprint is centered on a dark, rainy background. The rain is depicted as numerous small, bright white and orange droplets falling across the scene. The handprint itself is composed of bright, glowing lines, giving it a fiery or ethereal appearance. The overall mood is dramatic and spiritual.

*Brookline  
Community  
Church  
December 3, 2023*

[Photo by Ellie Burgin:](#)

**Prelude: *Mary's Song of Praise* by Seeds Family Worship**

**Call To Worship, The Magnificat, Luke 1:46b-55, pp. 831-832**

- Leader: 'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
**All: for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.**
- Leader: His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
**All: He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.**
- Leader: He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
**All: he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.**
- Leader: He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
**All: according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'**

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

## Lighting the Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is shaped in a ring. It shows the circle of God's unbroken love. Each week we will invite a "family" to light the candles in the wreath. This week the Deacons will light the candles to bring us together in the warm light of God's love.

Lighter 1: The Gospel of Luke speaks about the future:  
"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,  
and on earth, distress among nations.  
People will faint from fear and foreboding." (*Luke 21:25-36*)

Lighter 2: Because our world is full of fear and distress,  
we light our first candle,  
trusting that Christ is alive on earth  
and that the Spirit of Christ lives among us.  
(Light the first purple candle)

Lighter 1: Living Christ, give us faith to trust you.

**All: We trust you, we love you, we praise you. Amen.**

### Hymn: Advent Candle Song – Week 1

Light the Advent candle one  
Now the waiting has begun  
We have started on our way  
Time to think of Christmas day

Candle, candle burning bright  
Shining in the cold winter night  
Candle, candle burning bright  
Fill our hearts with Christmas light

**Children's Message: *Who's on the way to Bethlehem?***

### Hymn: *Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord from Godspell*

Prepare ye the way of the Lord  
Or if we don't feel like jumping around as much

## Hymn: Prepare the Way by Jared Anderson

Prepare the way, make straight the path for Him. Let the King of glory enter in, let the King of glory enter in. Who is this King of Glory?

The Lord strong and mighty. The Lord mighty to save. The earth is full of His glory. Creation calls prepare the way.

His love endureth forever, His power is without an end. His strength is victory's treasure. Let all who call His name prepare the way.

Prepare the way, make straight the path for Him. Let the King of glory enter in, let the King of glory enter in. Who is this King of Glory?

The Lord strong and mighty. The Lord mighty to save. The earth is full of His glory. Creation calls prepare the way.

His love endureth forever His power is without an end. His strength is victory's treasure. Let all who call His name prepare the way.

Let the King of glory enter in. Let the King of glory enter in. Let the King of glory enter in. Let the King of glory enter in. Who is this King of glory?

The Lord strong and mighty. The Lord mighty to save. The earth is full of His glory. Creation calls prepare the way.

His love endureth forever His power is without an end. His strength is victory's treasure. Let all who call His name prepare the way.

## **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: Ready the Way by Bob Hurd**

Ready the way of the Lord, ready the way of the Lord. A voice cries out in the wilderness, ready the way of the Lord.

Let every valley be filled, let every valley be filled. Let every mountain be humbled, let every valley be filled.

Here is your God, coming with your vindication. Look and behold the saving power of God.

Dessert and waste land will bloom, dessert and waste land will bloom. Glory and splendor will fill the land, dessert and waste land will bloom.

Those who are blind will then see, those who are deaf will then hear. Those who are lame will then leap for joy, those who are mute will then sing.

Here is your God, coming with your vindication. Look and behold the saving power of God.

Strengthen the ones who are weak, strengthen the ones who are weak. Say to the frightened: "Have courage." Strengthen the ones who are weak.

Here is your God, coming with your vindication. Look and behold the saving power of God. The saving power of God.

## Sacrament of Communion

### Prayer of Confession

Minister: Old habits and new wrongs wear ruts  
through our lives and relationships.  
But God is able to restore us.  
Like water coursing through a desert,  
the waters of baptism flow through us,  
reminding us that we belong to God  
and are raised to new life.

**All: Merciful God, you love justice;  
why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing  
and every form of evil?**

**You have given us the gift of your Spirit;  
why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us?  
You have given us the words of the prophets  
and the Word himself;  
why, then, do we despise and ignore  
what we have heard from you?  
You have sent the light into the world;  
why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light?**

**Forgive us. Restore us.  
Till and tend us as your garden  
until righteousness and praise spring up,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.**

Minister: In Jesus Christ, the Lord has done great things for us!  
Even if we have gone out in tears,  
God brings us home shouting for joy.

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

### Invitation to the Table

Minister: God be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them up to God.**

Minister: Let us give thanks to God most high.

**All: It is right to give thanks and praise.**

### Words of Consecration

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

**We give you thanks O God for having renewed and refreshed us with this sacrament of your love and for being present with us through Christ. We ask, O God, that our faith be strengthened and our love for one another be increased that we would be a true witness to your love. We ask it in the name of Christ our Lord. Amen**

### Hymn: *Behold the Lamb* by Keith & Kristyn Getty

Behold the Lamb  
who bears our sins away  
Slain for us and we remember  
the promise made  
that all who come in faith  
find forgiveness at the cross  
So we share in this bread of life  
and we drink of His sacrifice  
as a sign of our bonds of peace  
around the table of the King  
The body of our Saviour Jesus Christ  
Torn for you eat and remember  
the wounds that heal  
the death that brings us life  
paid the price to make us one  
So we share in this bread of life  
and we drink of His sacrifice  
as a sign of our bonds of love  
around the table of the King  
The blood that cleanses  
ev'ry stain of sin

shed for you  
drink and remember  
He drained death's cup  
that all may enter in  
to receive the life of God  
So we share in this bread of life  
and we drink of His sacrifice  
as a sign of our bonds of grace  
around the table of the King  
And so with thankfulness  
and faith we rise  
to respond and to remember  
our call to follow  
in the steps of Christ  
as His body here on earth  
As we share in His suffering  
We proclaim Christ will come again!  
And we'll join in the feast of heaven  
Around the table of the King  
Around the table of the King

**Scripture Reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28, p. 862**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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

**Reflection on the Scripture:**

**[Hymn: Make Straight the Way by Revival Worship](#)**

Make straight the way for the coming Lord,  
Make straight the way for the coming Lord  
Every valley high every mountain low,  
Every valley high every mountain low  
Every crooked road every winding path,  
Every crooked road every winding path  
Make straight the way He will come at last,  
Make straight the way He will come at last

Turn your heart to the King  
Let His grace and mercy sing

In your heart, let His justice flow  
His righteousness endure

Make straight the way for the coming Lord,  
Make straight the way for the coming Lord  
Every valley high every mountain low,  
Every valley high every mountain low  
Every crooked road every winding path,  
Every crooked road every winding path  
Make straight the way He will come at last,  
Make straight the way He will come at last

Turn your heart to the King  
Let His grace and mercy sing  
In your heart, let His justice flow  
His righteousness endure

Turn your heart to the King  
Let His grace and mercy sing  
In your heart, let His justice flow  
His righteousness endure

Forevermore Forevermore  
He is Lord Forevermore  
Forevermore He is Lord  
Forevermore Forevermore  
He is Lord Forevermore  
Forevermore He is Lord

Turn your heart to the King  
Let His grace and mercy sing  
In your heart, let His justice flow  
His righteousness endure

Turn your heart to the King  
Let His grace and mercy sing  
In your heart, let His justice flow  
His righteousness endure

Make straight the way for the coming Lord,  
Make straight the way for the coming Lord  
Every valley high every mountain low,  
Every valley high every mountain low  
Every crooked road every winding path,  
Every crooked road every winding path  
Make straight the way He will come at last,  
Make straight the way He will come at last



## 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:**

Gracious God,  
teach us to give thanks in all circumstances,  
for you are always with us.

Thank you for the privilege  
of sharing what we have with others,  
of giving ourselves away in love,  
and of receiving the gifts that others share with us.

With our whole being,  
spirit and soul and body,  
we rejoice in you.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Announcements

### A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

Leader: The Promised One of God brings good news  
to the oppressed  
and binds up the brokenhearted.

**All: We are witnesses to the light of Christ!**

Leader: The Promised One of God proclaims liberty  
to captives and release to prisoners.

**All: We are witnesses to the light of Christ!**

Leader: The Promised One of God comforts all who mourn  
and gives a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

**All: Rejoicing always, praying without ceasing,  
holding fast to what is good,  
we are witnesses to the light of Christ!**

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: *The Coming of the Lord* by Pepper Choplin

Lift up your heads, O gates, and make the highway straight. Prepare to celebrate the coming of the Lord. Your waiting soon will end, God's glory will descend. Rise up and welcome in the coming of the Lord, the coming of the Lord! Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord! Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord! The ancient words foretell: God with us, He will dwell, Christ our Emmanuel, and all will see the glory of the Lord!

Lift up your heads, O gates, and make the highway straight. Prepare to celebrate the coming of the Lord. Your waiting soon will end, God's glory will descend. Rise up and welcome in the coming of the Lord, the coming of the Lord! Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord! Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord! The ancient words foretell: God with us, He will dwell, Christ our Emmanuel, and all will see the glory of the Lord!

O come, O come, prepare the way! O come, prepare the way! Prepare the way, O come, prepare the way, way of the Lord! And then the deaf will hear, the blind will see Him clear, the mute will find their voice, the lame will leap for joy, prepare the way of the coming of the Lord! Prepare the way of the Lord! Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, our God will come to us. Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord!

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



## PRAYER LIST (12/3/23)

- Friends & family of Morris Nicholson, Eddy Razzaboni, Flora Kenyon, Polly Foley, Ken Perrin.
- For Dave Joki and Dave Flannery, both members of the Brookline Fire Department, both fighting cancer
- For Paul, John's friend, who's in a tough fight with cancer.
- For Kim, Donna's relative, whose liver transplant had a setback
- For Brandon, Jill & Kevin's friend, on the heart transplant list.
- For Mark, John Nicholson's brother, who's facing medical complications
- For Kevin, Kevin's dad, who's facing some medical issues
- For Tim, Megan's friend, recovering from medical setbacks
- For the friends and family of Leo, Amy's son George's best friend, who passed away after a tough recovery from an accident
- For a friend, figuring out a way to pay her rent
- For a family in transition
- For Dave Hoffman, recovering heart surgery
- For Deb, Marjorie's relative, entering hospice care, may they ease her passing
- For Olivia, a twelve-year-old friend of Jessica, having meniscus surgery
- For Zane, Jessica's friend, who's continuing to recover from his accident
- For John Lee's newly discovered step-mother, who's been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, may her treatments bring her relief
- For grandparents who are trying to put their families' lives back together, when their children can no longer take care of their grandchildren
- For Tina, Barbara's friend, facing more chemotherapy after cancer surgery
- For George, Sanjay's dad, having to have neck surgery after Thanksgiving
- For Warren, George Razzaboni's relative, diagnosed with lung cancer
- For Wznadine, leaving the Compassion International program
- For Sierra, Candy's daughter, still processing the upset from seeing a fatal car accident right outside her house
- For the people of Israel and Palestine, may they find a way forward
- 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>**

Light of the world, you greet me this morning with new possibilities. Shine brightly, I pray, until I see into the dark places of this world, and into the dark places of my own life. I want to follow you in paths of justice, speak up with you for liberty, and bend with you toward the brokenhearted, even the broken places within myself. I trade in my faint spirit for your mantle of praise—and with my whole being I will rejoice in you. Amen.

## **Household Prayer: Evening**

Restore me, O God, from the rush of the day. Let me dream this night of all the great things you have done. As the darkness comes and these little lights in my house glow, I give thanks for the greater Light no darkness can overcome. To anyone who mourns or sits in prison or fears danger this night, bring the peace that only you can give. You are faithful, and I know you will do this. In Christ. Amen.

## **Questions for Reflection**

John 1:6–8, 19–28 reminds us that we are not the light, but with John we are called to testify as witnesses to the light, who is Jesus Christ. The verb “to bear witness” occurs thirty-three times in the Fourth Gospel! How can you bear witness, in this season of lights, to the true Light who has come into the world?

## **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 Christmas Raffle is Live!**

You can now buy tickets and take a peek at the raffle baskets. Check out [our website](#) and let your friends know!

### **Christmas Faire is more than a gorgeous raffle**

- **Take Home Meal: Chicken Pot Pie!** Let Megan ([kingmegan7@gmail.com](mailto:kingmegan7@gmail.com)) know if you want to order or contribute ingredients!
- **Christmas Cookies: \$7 for 12.** Let Megan ([kingmegan7@gmail.com](mailto:kingmegan7@gmail.com)) know if you want to order or contribute cookies to the church by December 1.
- **Soup & Chilis To Go:** Let Ann ([desrochers.ann@gmail.com](mailto:desrochers.ann@gmail.com)) know if you can donate soup, chili or help with set up or clean up

### **SHARE Wreath Gifts Due by Dec 10:**

The wreath is up, with ornaments identifying the kids and what they're hoping to get. Please have your unwrapped gifts back by Dec. 10. The guidelines for participating are in an envelope next to the wreath.

### **Faith Formation: Deepen Your Connection with God: Dec. 10, 8:30a**

We will be offering faith formation sessions once a month. In addition to the activities designed for the kids, we'll be offering a separate track of reflections on Christian Faith Practices for the adults.

We meet at 8:30am on Sunday mornings: 12/10 (moving from 12/3 because the Christmas Faire is later that day), 1/7, 2/4, 3/3, 4/14 (moving from 4/7 because I usually take the Sunday after Easter off), 5/5, 6/2

### **Gently Used Winter Clothes can find a good next home**

If you have any gently used winter clothes, let Amy ([arazz3914@gmail.com](mailto:arazz3914@gmail.com)) know. She'll find a good home for them.

### **Email Scams may appear to come from the church!**

You may get an email that appears to come from the church or Rev. Cath asking for money or gift cards. We won't ever do that, so you can ignore them. The scammers haven't necessarily infected our computers, and we keep up with our anti-viral software. Unfortunately, mean people make it difficult for all of us.

### **Brookline Senior Citizen Active Walking Program details for 2023-2024**

The Hampshire Dome is open for seniors to walk during the winter. For more details, [click here](#).

### **There's a task list in the Social Hall if you could help with a church project**

Some are bigger than others; some will require supplies that the church will provide. If you have a few hours and would be willing to take on a task, we would appreciate the help!

## 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 there's anyone who could use some help from the Food Pantry, please let 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 +/-
November	\$116,035	\$91,374	\$24,661

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.





## Gifts for *SHARE*



*This Christmas our church will be helping to make the holiday merrier for area families by participating in the SHARE gift-giving project. We have adopted six children in two families this year.*

### Instructions for gift giving:

- Choose a colored tag (or more) from the wreath located in the lower front entryway of the church.
- Purchase the requested gift or an appropriate substitute.
- Provide Gift Receipts if possible
- Do not wrap the gifts for children. You may put the gift in a gift bag. Attach colored tag (from the wreath) to the gift. Attach Christmas gift tag with first name of child and family # on it.
- GIFT WRAP AND GIFT BAGS MAY BE DONATED ALSO.
- If you must substitute a specific gift request, please try to stay with the type of gift requested. Please be sure to return a gift for each ornament taken. If you find that you cannot buy an intended gift, return the ornament as soon as possible.
- Please bring the gift to church on or before Sun., Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>.

**The deadline is Sunday, Dec. 10th**  
**Gift cards to Walmart, Target, Amazon and/or**  
**supermarkets are also appreciated!!**



## Poinsettias

This year, the Deacons will be donating a small number of Christmas flowers to help decorate the sanctuary.

Please fill out the form below and give it to a Deacon (Russell H, Barbara HH, John P, Candy T, Jill A), or email your dedication to Candy at [secretary@bccnh.org](mailto:secretary@bccnh.org). We will include your dedication in the Christmas Eve bulletin, as we have done in past years.

Dedication deadline: Sunday, December 17th.

Placed by: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

and/or In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Merry Christmas!  
Thank you!