



*Brookline Community Church*  
*February 18, 2024*  
*Rev. Catherine A. Merrill*

[Photo by William Hoffman:](#)

**Prelude: Psalm 25 by Poor Bishop Hooper**

**Welcome and Right Hand of Fellowship**

Extend a greeting to those nearby

**Call To Worship, Psalm 25:1-10, pp. 435-436**

Of David.

Leader: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.  
O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.

**All: Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.**

Leader: Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
teach me your paths.

**All: Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.**

Leader: Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.

**All: Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!**

Leader: Good and upright is the LORD;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way.

**All: All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.**

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

**Children's Message: *What happens in the wilderness?***

**Hymn: *This is the Day that the Lord Has Made***

This is the day, this is the day  
That the Lord has made, that the Lord has made  
I will rejoice, I will rejoice  
And be glad in it, and be glad in it  
This is the day that the Lord has made  
I will rejoice and be glad in it  
This is the day, this is the day  
That the Lord has made (repeat)

**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: *In the Wilderness* by Michael Card

In the wilderness  
In the wilderness  
He calls His sons and daughters  
To the wilderness

But He gives grace sufficient  
To survive any test  
And that's the painful purpose  
Of the wilderness

In the wilderness we wander  
In the wilderness we weep  
In the wasteland of our wanting  
Where the darkness seems so deep

We search for the beginning  
For an exodus to hold  
We find that those who follow Him  
Must often walk alone

In the wilderness  
In the wilderness  
He calls His sons and daughters  
To the wilderness

But He gives grace sufficient  
To survive any test  
And that's the painful purpose  
Of the wilderness

In the wilderness we're wondering  
For a way to understand  
In the wilderness there's not a way  
For the ways become a man

And the man's become the exodus  
The way to holy ground  
Wandering in the wilderness  
Is the best way to be found

In the wilderness  
In the wilderness  
He calls His sons and daughters  
In the wilderness

But He gives grace sufficient  
To survive any test  
And that's the painful purpose  
Of the wilderness

Groaning and growing  
Amidst the desert days  
The windy winter wilderness  
Can blow the self away

In the wilderness  
In the wilderness  
He calls His sons and daughters  
To the wilderness

But He gives grace sufficient  
To survive any test  
And that's the painful purpose  
Of the wilderness

And that's the painful promise  
Of the wilderness

## **Prayer of Confession**

Minister: God remains faithful to the covenant of steadfast love,  
even when we are unfaithful.  
Without fear, then,  
we confess our sins.

**All: God of mercy,  
we begin this Lenten season in confession.**

**We do not live according to your ways,  
but according to our own.**

**We condone violence,  
participate in systems of injustice,  
and use power to our own advantage  
at the expense of others.**

**Forgive us, we pray,  
when we are tempted to follow paths  
other than those you set before us.**

**Teach us your commandments;  
help us to turn from evil in its many guises,  
and turn us toward your kingdom drawing near.**

**In covenantal love, remember us, we pray,  
and be for us, once more and always,  
an ark of safety and new life.**

**In Christ's name we pray.**

Minister: As Noah and his family were brought safely  
through the flood onto dry ground,  
so in baptismal waters  
we are brought from death into new life in Christ.  
Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God,  
forgives us and reconciles us and all things  
in heaven and on earth.

Thanks be to God for this good news!

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

**Hymn: Revive Us Again by Lifeway Worship**

We praise thee O God  
For the Son of Thy love  
For Jesus who died  
And is now gone above

Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Hallelujah amen  
Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Revive us again

We praise Thee O God  
For Thy Spirit of light  
Who has shown us our savior  
And scattered our night

Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Hallelujah amen  
Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Revive us again

All glory and praise  
To the Lamb that was slain  
Who has borne all our sins  
And has cleansed every stain

Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Hallelujah amen  
Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Revive us again

Revive us again  
Fill each heart with Thy love  
May each soul be rekindled  
With fire from above

Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Hallelujah amen  
Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Revive us again

Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Hallelujah amen  
Hallelujah Thine the glory  
Revive us again

### **Scripture Reading: Mark 1:9-15, p. 812**

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

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

**Reflection on the Scripture:**

**[Hymn: Take me to the Water by David M. Cherwien](#)**

### **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:**

**Because we believe that in Jesus Christ,  
God's time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God  
has come near,  
we respond in tangible ways.**

**By doing acts of justice and compassion  
and by sharing our resources,  
we bear witness to the good news of the gospel.  
The offering is given in gratitude to God.**

**Announcements**

## **A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 50)**

Leader: I have enemies and I have shame. But I am more than that. See me with your tender mercy, don't let me die on the side of the road.

**All: It's the ones who are truly treacherous who should feel shame. I believe in the LORD, so I can offer compassion to everyone, even enemies.**

Leader: Let me keep learning how to offer compassion, how to accept compassion, how to help others when they are leading the charge.

**All: I am so willing to learn, so willing to know your salvation. I am even willing to wait, if that's what it takes.**

Leader: Your mercy is with me always, as it has always been, always ready to let me start over, to begin again.

**All: I've made some mistakes, some real doozies. Remember me on my best days, not on my worst. And help the world see that I am more than my worst days.**

Leader: You are used to helping sinners find the right path. So teach me the way to go, so I can find your way in this world, not mine.

**All: Your steadfast love will keep me going, the compassion you surround me with, the faithfulness you promised me will help me to keep walking, even when the world is making it so, so hard.**

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: River of Life by Mac Powell](#)

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



## Notes:

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### Psalm 25

A psalm of petition, seeking God's intervention, Psalm 25 is an acrostic, with each verse beginning with the next letter of the alphabet. The acrostic gives it a rather diffuse and disconnected quality. The psalm has five themes:

1. The speaker relies completely and confidently on God's capacity and willingness to rescue them. The term "wait" (vv. 3, 5, 21) bespeaks eager longing and powerful expectation. The psalmist fully anticipates that God answers prayer and is capable of wondrous rescue.
2. The grounds for hope is God's steadfast love. The term steadfast love (*hesed*) occurs three times (vv. 6, 7, 10); in verse 6, the term is coupled with "mercy," and in verse 10 it is paired with "faithfulness." The three terms together – mercy, steadfast love, faithfulness – gave Israel a basis for well-being, even in a world of threat.
3. The speaker attests that he is a covenant-keeper who is fully devoted to God and to God's commands. Thus God's goodness is toward covenant-keepers.
4. The psalmist not only attests to faith but acknowledges failed faith and seeks pardon and forgiveness. A declaration of integrity and a confession of sin constitute no debilitating contradiction in the life of faith.
5. Thus the themes of fidelity and failure are juxtaposed; together they indicate the thick and complex relationship that believers have with God.

On the one hand, faith consists in a full acknowledgement of human need, hope, and dependence. On the other hand, it affirms the full, unqualified mercy of God toward the faithful. This mismatch between human ambiguity and divine singularity is the hallmark of biblical faith. The God addressed here is fully adequate for the entire spectrum of faithful life in the world.





## PRAYER LIST (2/18/24)

- Friends & family of Polly Foley, Ken Perrin, Alice Krom, Dave Flannery.
- For Dave Joki, member of the Brookline Fire Department, 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 Kevin, Kevin's dad, who's facing some medical issues
- For a friend, figuring out a way to pay her rent
- For a family in transition
- For Terry, Kym's friend, recovering from a double lung transplant as well as post-surgical complications
- For Ken, Ann's dad, facing complicated diagnosis and treatment
- For John, recovering from foot surgery
- For Susan, John Nicholson's mom, home after a stay in the hospital, but heading back there for more procedures.
- For the friends and family of Jon Kibby, Russel's high school classmate
- For the friends and family of Bobby, Jill's uncle, may they know the love that surrounds them
- For Natalie, Marjorie's sister-in-law, recovering from her third heart attack.
- For Alison, Susan's friend, whose breast cancer has returned at Stage 4.
- For Kim, Amy's friend, recovering from a liver transplant
- For the friends and family of Marc Searles, a long time member of this church
- For Warren, George Razzaboni's brother, entering chemo
- For Alex, Marjorie's friend, starting a new round of chemo
- For Jack in Alaska, whose leg was amputated this week
- For Rachel, Sanjay's mom, back from India, but under the weather.
- 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>**

God of ancient covenants, your steadfast love and faithfulness are still new every morning. I thank you that I can begin this day in the confidence of your abiding love and unending mercy. Help me to treat others – family, friends, coworkers, classmates, and even strangers – with love and mercy in our encounters today. When I disappoint or am discordant, help me to show love to others. Open my eyes to the places, people, and circumstances in which your kingdom has come near. I pray in the name of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my Savior. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

God of peace, as the day draws to a close and the evening draws in around me, I think of the creatures of the earth that also seek rest in the hours of the night. You love them even as you love me, and your covenant faithfulness covers all of us. So, with the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the tiny ones who burrow in the ground, I offer you all thanks and praise:

for your unending goodness;  
for the beauty of our home, the earth;  
for your gift of life instead of a deserved destruction.

As your colorful bow now rests in the clouds, so may we color the earth with the ways of peace until all creation rests with you in completeness. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

The phrase “kingdom of God” occurs fourteen times in the Gospel of Mark. Though Jesus is described at the Gospel's opening as being “from Nazareth of Galilee” (Mark 1:9), at Jesus' baptism it becomes clear whence he comes and to whom he belongs. Jesus is God's beloved Son, and his baptism signals the only realm to which he owes allegiance. His baptism, then, not only is a religious act, but also is a political and economic one. In what ways does your baptism into Christ make claims on your political, social, and economic practices as well as your religious practices?

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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.

## **Announcements**

### **Prepared to Serve: 2/24 All Day in Pembroke**

This annual event, proudly organized by the New Hampshire Conference UCC, is dedicated to equipping our congregations with invaluable tools and resources to empower your local faith communities. [Click here](#) for more info.

### **Would You Like Offering Envelopes for Your Weekly Offering?**

Just let Bill Dunbar ([financechair@bccnh.org](mailto:financechair@bccnh.org)) know, and he'll set you up!

### **Book Group Choosing a Book: Feb 18 during coffee hour**

If anyone is interested in choosing a book to read together during Lent, please see Sanjay ([sgcherian@gmail.com](mailto:sgcherian@gmail.com)) during coffee hour.

### **Faith Formation: Deepen Your Connection with God: Mar. 3, 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: 3/3, 4/14 (moving from 4/7 because I usually take the Sunday after Easter off), 5/5, 6/2

### **Brookline Town Meeting, Voting Mar. 12, Business Meeting Mar. 13 & 14**

All day voting for town and school elected positions, zoning and other matters will be done on Tuesday, March 12th from 7am-7:30pm at Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (24 Townsend Hill Road).

The evening business portion of the annual town meeting will be held at 7pm on Wednesday, March 13th and Thursday, March 14th; also held at Captain Samuel Douglass Academy. Snow date is Friday, March 15th.

[Click here](#) for more info.

### **Senior Luncheon, Mar. 16 Corned Beef & Cabbage**

It wouldn't be St. Patrick's Day without a Senior Luncheon! See Amy ([arazz3914@gmail.com](mailto:arazz3914@gmail.com)) if you have questions or can help out.

### **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.

Unfortunately, mean people make it difficult for all of us.

## **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<br>Income | Actual<br>Expenses | Income vs.<br>Expenses +/- |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| January | \$5,054          | \$10,461           | (\$5,406)                  |

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.

