



*Brookline Community Church*  
*February 25, 2024*  
*Rev. Catherine A. Merrill*

[Photo by null xtract:](#)

**Prelude: Psalm 22 by Francesca LaRosa**

**Welcome and Right Hand of Fellowship**

Extend a greeting to those nearby

**Opening Prayer**

**Scripture Reading: Psalm 22, pp. 434-435, verse 1**

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

**RESPONSE: #820 Threefold Amen (Danish)**

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, verses 1-2**

To the leader: according to The Deer of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;

and by night, but find no rest.

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 3-5**

Yet you are holy,

enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted;

they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried, and were saved;

in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 6-8**

But I am a worm, and not human;  
scorned by others, and despised by the people.  
All who see me mock at me;  
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;  
'Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—  
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!'

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 9-11**

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;  
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.  
On you I was cast from my birth,  
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.  
Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 12-13**

Many bulls encircle me,  
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;  
they open wide their mouths at me,  
like a ravening and roaring lion.

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 14-15**

I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart is like wax;  
it is melted within my breast;  
my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 16-18**

For dogs are all around me;  
a company of evildoers encircles me.  
My hands and feet have shriveled;  
I can count all my bones.  
They stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my clothes among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 19-21a**

But you, O LORD, do not be far away!

O my help, come quickly to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword,

my life from the power of the dog!

Save me from the mouth of the lion!

**Hymn: O Sacred Head Now Wounded by Fernando Ortega**

O sacred head now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down. Now scornfully surrounded, with thorns thine only crown. How pale thou art with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn. How does that visage languish, which once was bright as morn?

What thou, my Lord has suffered, was all for sinners' gain. Mine, mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly pain. Lo, Here I fall my Savior. 'Tis I deserve thy place. Look on me with thy favor, vouchsafe to me thy grace.

What language shall I borrow, to thank thee, dearest friend? For this thy dying sorrow, thy pity without end. Oh, make me thine forever, and should I fainting be? Lord, let me never, never outlive my love for thee.

**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.]

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 19-21a**

But you, O LORD, do not be far away!

O my help, come quickly to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword,

my life from the power of the dog!

Save me from the mouth of the lion!

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 21b-24**

From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.  
I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:  
You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;  
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!  
For he did not despise or abhor  
the affliction of the afflicted;  
he did not hide his face from me,  
but heard when I cried to him.

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 25-26**

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.  
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the LORD.  
May your hearts live for ever!

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 27-28**

All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the LORD;  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before him.  
For dominion belongs to the LORD,  
and he rules over the nations.

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435, Verses 29-31**

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for him.  
Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the LORD,  
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it.

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

## Hymn: *Man of Sorrows* by Reawaken Hymns

Man of sorrows what a name  
for the Son of God, who came  
ruined sinners to reclaim:  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
in my place condemned he stood,  
sealed my pardon with his blood:  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Guilty, helpless lost were we;  
blameless Lamb of God was he,  
sacrificed to set us free:  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

He was lifted up to die;  
“It is finished” was his cry;  
now in heaven exalted high:  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

When he comes, our glorious King,  
all his ransomed home to bring,  
then anew this song we’ll sing:  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

### **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 your saving love,  
poured out for us in Jesus Christ.

Receive these gifts we offer—  
use them to help those who are suffering  
and to show the good news of salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Announcements**

**Psalm 22 pp. 434-435**

## Hymn: Come to Jesus by Chris Rice

Weak and wounded sinner  
Lost and left to die  
Oh, raise your head for Love is passing by  
Come to Jesus  
Come to Jesus  
Come to Jesus and live

Now your burden's lifted  
And carried far away  
And precious blood has washed away the stain  
So, sing to Jesus  
Sing to Jesus  
Sing to Jesus and live

And like a newborn baby  
Don't be afraid to crawl  
And remember when you walk sometimes we fall  
So, fall on Jesus  
Fall on Jesus  
Fall on Jesus and live

Sometimes the way is lonely  
And steep and filled with pain  
So if your sky is dark and pours the rain  
Then cry to Jesus  
Cry to Jesus  
Cry to Jesus and live

Oh and when the love spills over  
And music fills the night  
And when you can't contain your joy inside  
Then dance for Jesus  
Dance for Jesus  
Dance for Jesus and live

With your final heartbeat  
Kiss the world goodbye  
Then go in peace, and laugh on Glory's side  
And fly to Jesus  
Fly to Jesus  
Fly to Jesus and live  
Fly to Jesus  
Fly to Jesus  
Fly to Jesus and live

## Prayer of Confession

Minister: In Christ, we have one  
who knows our every weakness.  
He has been tested as we are,  
yet his faithfulness never failed.

Therefore, we dare to approach the throne of grace,  
trusting God's mercy as we confess our sin.

**All: God of mercy,  
We have turned away from those you love too many times.**

Minister: Christ Jesus was despised and rejected.

**All: We thought nothing of him.**

Minister: He was oppressed and afflicted.

**All: We hid our faces from him.**

Minister: He bore our sickness and sin.

**All: We believed God was punishing him.**

**Help us to turn back to those you love. To join our hearts with theirs, so the circle of praise and prayer grows every wider.**

**We pray for all who are despised and rejected, suffering and wounded, oppressed and afflicted.**

**We pray for all who feel forsaken, crying out by day and night: Where is my God?**

**We pray for those who are mocked and scorned, the subjects of insult and injury.**

**We pray for all who hunger and thirst, whose mouths are dry, whose bodies waste away.**

**We pray for all who face the end of life, who lie in the dust of death.**

**We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, source of all healing and endless life. Amen.**

Minister: God deems as righteous all who trust that Jesus has been raised from the dead for our salvation.  
Hear the good news:

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

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: Jesus by Chris Tomlin**

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



## Notes:

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### Psalm 22

This psalm is of special interest for Christians because Jesus quotes verse 1 from the cross (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34). A classic example of a psalm of lament, it is readily divided into two parts: the complaint of the speaker in trouble (vv. 1-21a) and praise and thanksgiving after the resolution of the trouble (vv. 21b-31).

Two questions arise from the drama of this psalm. First, is it true that God can be present and then absent? Conventional theology says no. It is clear nonetheless that the Psalter gives an account of lived reality that takes place through give and take in which God is a part of the entire tension of fidelity and infidelity. We are thereby free to attest to our experience of divine abandonment and to take it at face value as a theological truth.

Second, are we free and unrestrained to voice our conviction of divine abandonment? This psalm, among others, makes clear that we may use no-holds-barred rhetoric to share our conviction about God. Orthodoxy places no curbs on us. Such utterances, moreover, not only characterize such a reality of divine absence but do so in an accusatory tone, assuming that we are entitled to richer fidelity from God than we readily experience.

Alongside such questions, two affirmations are central to this faith. First, we trust that serious, engaged petition will indeed mobilize God to action that God would not otherwise undertake. Such prayer is not pretend but is life-or-death engagement with God, who is thereby summoned from infidelity to fidelity, from absence to presence.

Secondly, the God who has been absent, can be again present in decisive, transformative, life-giving ways. Thus, the dramatic movement of the psalm is not only rhetorical but a lived truth concerning the God who comes into circumstances of death and gives new life.

Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms, in New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 111-122.



## PRAYER LIST (2/25/24)

- Friends & family of 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, hopefully headed home soon.
- 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 Kyla, Candy's granddaughter, recovering from a pair of stitches in her head, may she heal up quickly
- 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>**

Lord Jesus, help me walk with you this day. If you lead me where I fear to go, give me courage and keep me true, that I may bear my cross without shame and live in the promise of life eternal. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

Jesus, if I stray, show me my fault, forgive my sin, and set me rightly on your path. Keep me on the way of the cross, and lead me to the eternal joy of Easter. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

Jesus asks his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. How do you practice self-denial for the sake of the gospel? Is every instance of self-denial an act of obedience to Jesus? Can some forms of self-denial foster oppression?

### **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**

### **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 25 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. See below for details.

### **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

## **2024 Book Group**

We're looking to restart the BCC book group for this Spring. Rev. Cath's availability isn't conducive to leading this cycle so Sanjay will coordinate the activity. Rev. Cath plans to participate as a reader and in discussions. We have a set of books to choose from (see the other side).

Since this activity is lay-led, there is no common theme to the books under consideration. They are submissions from some of the congregation to get us started. They are likely to contain adult concepts.

Let's select the book on February 25. Sanjay will figure out how to partition the reading assignments once we've chosen a book. If you plan to attend the meetings but can't be at church on February 25, please email Sanjay your book choice by Saturday, February 24 at [sgcherian@gmail.com](mailto:sgcherian@gmail.com).

We found that having the meetings in people's homes led to a strengthening of our fellowship so we'd like to use that approach again. If you'd be willing to host 10-15 people coming to your home for 1½ - 2 hours on a Sunday afternoon, please let me know.

Let's try and meet on:

- March 17, 4:00-5:30pm
- April 7, 4:00-5:30pm
- April 21, 4:00-5:30pm

***The Stranger in the Lifeboat* by Mitch Albom (288 pages).** This is the story of nine survivors of an explosion on the luxury yacht they were on. then they spot a man floating in the waves. When they have pulled the man aboard the raft, he claims to be the Lord and they're faced with a crisis of belief.

***Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Grams (560 pages).** The story of Elizabeth Zott, a brilliant scientist who has the misfortune of being a woman in 1950s America. After a frustrating failed academic career, Zott finds success in an unlikely place: as the host of a television cooking show.

***Death at Fair Havens* by Maria Mankin, Marin C Tirabassi (298 pages).** Wanda Duff is an unconventional New England clergywoman. When parishioner Niels Pond dies unexpectedly at the Fair Havens assisted living facility, Wanda's duty to minister to his family is beset by her suspicions about the circumstances of his abrupt passing.

***Mercury Pictures Presents* by Anthony Marra (432 pages).** The story of Maria Lagana, who flees Rome with her mother after her father is arrested by the Fascist regime. She rises from the typing pool to associate producer at Mercury Pictures, a B-movie studio with aspirations to play with the big boys at MGM, Warner Brothers, Paramount.

***Babel* by RF Kuang (560 pages).** Babel is set in an alternate-reality 1830s England in which Britain's global economic and colonial supremacy are fueled by the use of magical silver bars. Their power comes from capturing what is "lost in translation" between words in different languages that have similar, but not identical, meanings.

**The church's financial obligations continue.**

	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs. Expenses +/-
<b>January</b>	\$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.

