



*Brookline Community Church
May 19, 2024 Rev. Catherine A. Merrill*

[Photo by Gelgas Airlangga:](#)

Prelude: Psalms of David, Psalm 104 by The Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir

Welcome and Right Hand of Fellowship

Extend a greeting to those nearby

Call To Worship, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, pp. 483-484

Leader: O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

**All: Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.
There go the ships,
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.**

Leader: These all look to you
to give them their food in due season;
when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

**All: When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.**

Leader: May the glory of the LORD endure for ever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works—
who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.

**All: I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the LORD.**

Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul.

All: Praise the LORD!

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

Children's Message: *Who's replying to you now?*

[Hymn: My God is So Big by Studio Musicians](#)

My God is so big so strong and so mighty there's nothing my God cannot do.
My God is so big so strong and so mighty there's nothing my God cannot do.
The mountains are His, the valleys are His, the stars are His handiwork, too.
My God is so big so strong and so mighty there's nothing my God cannot do.

Repeat

3rd time use a DEEP voice

4th time WHISPER

5th time use a LOUD voice

A Reading and Prayer for Pentecost; A Riff on Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking from Brookline? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Haitians¹, Mexicans², Ukrainians³, and residents of Taiwan⁴, Israel and Palestine⁵, Southern California and Hawaii⁶, Florida and Georgia, the Carolinas⁷ and the parts of Nebraska belonging to Tornado Alley⁸, and visitors from the Czech Republic⁹, both family and friends, Indians¹⁰ and those from Lewiston, ME¹² —in our own

languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

Unison Prayer:

**"In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.
Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.
And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."**

¹ The church's adopted daughter, Wiznadine, and the political unrest in Haiti

² The church's adopted son, Quebin, lives in Mexico

³ The ongoing conflict in Ukraine

⁴ Taiwan suffered an earthquake and has been caught in military threats between China and the West

⁵ The conflict between Israel and Palestine escalated on October 7, 2023

⁶ Southern California was hit with severe flooding

⁷ Hawaii suffered from wildfires and typhoons

⁸ Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas were battered by Hurricane Idalia

⁹ Kym Warner's family made it through one band of tornados.

¹⁰ Franta came to visit Brookline from the Czech Republic and the Avramovs travelled safely back & forth

¹¹ Sanjay's family travelled safely back & forth to India

¹² In October, 2023, 18 people were killed in a mass shooting in Lewiston, ME.

Hymn: Psalm 104 by Poor Bishop Hooper

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 or call/text (857) 259-7269.]

Hymn: Send Us Your Spirit by Dan Schutte

Send us your spirit, O Lord
Evening enfolds us and holds us too near
Wake the morning light
Make our living bright
Shine on our darkness O Lord

Hold us with mercy O Lord
Sorrow has spoken, has broken our hearts
Clothe us in your care
Be the life we bear
Feed us and fill us O Lord

Teach us your wisdom O Lord
Shadows have clouded, have crowded our sight
Give us hearts that see
Set our loving free
Hear us and help us O Lord

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:22-27, p. 919

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

RESPONSE: #820 Threefold Amen (Danish)

Reflection on the Scripture:

Hymn: Romans 8 by ReGen Harmony

Jesus hold us, we belong to you. We've gone our own way; with pain we confess the emptiness of Your absence. Spirit, free us. Do what the law could never do; renew our hearts and minds; lead us to life and the peace that comes from Your presence.

Have you heard? God has made a way; He has cheated death. May ev'ry sinner say: Have you heard? He has come for us, ev'ry curse reversed, a new world bursting forth.

Life nor death nor angels, demons, nothing can come in between us. What's behind nor what's to come can separate us from His love.

You withhold nothing from me. Your open hand is always toward me. You defend and go before me; let none accuse whom God has chosen.

We are now, we are one with God. We are now, we are one with God.

We are now. We are one with God. We are now. We are one with God.

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:**

**The Holy Spirit was sent to increase our compassion
and to make us glad to spread good news by caring for those in need.
The gifts we bring today acknowledge our debt to God
and our intent to relieve others of their burdens.**

**Loving God,
Bless what we offer and bless those who will be shown
deeds of power through them;
in Jesus' name. Amen.**

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 104:24-34, 35b)

Leader: Loving God, you were the one who created this world, not me, even if I want it to run differently a lot of the time.

All: **Even in the chaos, you are bringing new things into being. Even the big scary things of nightmare spin around like kids playing on your lawn and obey your rules.**

Leader: You feed all of us, kids, nightmares, lawns; you feed our bodies and souls. You make sure that all of us have what we need, including other people to make life here a little easier.

All: When you turn away, we return to the dust we are. When you send your Spirit to us, we are renewed like the rivers with spring melt water.

Leader: When we look at the volcanos and live through the earthquakes, when we struggle with the hand we've been dealt, may we lift our eyes up and see you shining there. May we rejoice in what your hands have made.

All: I will sing praises to God as long as I'm breathing. I will put my whole self into it, because that's what God gave me, my whole self.

Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul.

All: Praise the LORD!

[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 Hope Has A Name featuring Kristian Stanfill](#)

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Notes:

Psalm 104

Psalm 104 is an extended celebration of the goodness and awesome character of creation. It is a hymn about creation rather than the Creator. It is a poem celebrating the order, symmetry, and majesty of creation.

That grand and almost overwhelming recital ends in verse 23. The end point in the recital is appropriately that people function as workers in God's creation. That is our lot in life. It is not a curse or a special burden.

The remainder of the psalm includes three telling conclusions drawn from reflection on God's ordered world:

- a) God is known to be confident, serene, and at ease. Conventionally the sea is an expression of dread and intense threat. Here the sea is God's plaything; what some think is evil is seen as responsive to God and, in God's way, more tame than we suspected.
- b) In verses 27-30, the whole world is daily dependent on God's sustenance, God's face, God's presence, God's breath. The world is impressive and to be celebrated. But it has no independent existence. On its own, it has no possibility of survival or well-being. That is a daily gift.
- c) That awareness leads the speaker in verses 31-34 to be moved to spontaneous wonder, gratitude, and praise. The psalm translates these very large claims to a personal delight in God's goodness.

Even this psalm cannot resist the conclusion of verse 35. The world is a free gift from God, but with it comes an expectation and a cost. Every generation learns what the first humans in the garden learned (Genesis 2-3). The nourishing Lord has not abdicated sovereignty. In this kingdom of delight, divine will must indeed be honored. This verse suggests the psalm does not express disinterested faith, but guards a faithful social life.

Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 31-33.



PRAYER LIST (5/19/24)

- Friends & family of Ken Perrin, Alice Krom, Dave Flannery, Marc Searles.
- 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 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 Kim, Amy's friend, recovering from a liver transplant
- For Charlotte, Ann's cousin, who had spinal surgery which will take several months of recovery
- For Sue, John Lee's step-mother, facing complications and infections in her cancer treatment
- For John, Carol Cherian's brother, out of the hospital and into rehab closer to home, after a bad car accident
- For the friends and family of Tonya Kelleher Boisvert, graduate of Hollis-Brookline, who died surrounded by family at the age of 46
- For Craig, Candy's dad, heading into a high-risk abdominal surgery
- For Kevin, Kevin's dad, working with doctors to figure out the best way to manage his cardiac issues
- For Warren, Amy's in-law, finishing up chemo and getting additional palliative treatments
- For Kym's friends and family who got through the tornados in Nebraska
- For John Lain, Sue Laub's husband, who's undergoing cancer treatments
- For Ginger, Luke's aunt's dog, who passed away. There is so much love that walks around on four paws.
- 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, recovering from a powerful earthquake
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning¹

God of newness and delight, you greet your world again with light and life. I awaken to your presence behind, before, beneath, above, and within me. I thank you for another day and ask only that you keep me so firmly in your care that I can move gracefully through all I have to do. Guard my family, my friends, and all my brothers and sisters in faith. Let me be a peacemaker today; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Good and Holy One, you have led me through this day of many encounters to the time when I may close my eyes and dream. I thank you for the people you have sent my way today, for the work I have had to do, for the food, shelter, and safety you have given. I pray that people everywhere may have all necessary comfort and nourishment and that I may lie down in peace, resting in the trust that you are watching over all creation. I pray this in the name of the One who made Earth, called the children to come, and blows through our days with wisdom. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

In this coming week consider how many ways and through which persons you are shown a new path for your life. Watch for startling nudges or sudden epiphanies; listen for sighs that signal letting go of something pressing so that you can hear the Spirit's guidance. What have you learned? How can you give thanks?

Daily Awareness Reflection²

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 ...

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.

² Elizabeth Liebert, *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), 31.

Announcements

Senior Luncheon: May 18, Chicken Parm

You don't have to be a senior to attend. If you'd like to help, speak with Amy (arazz3914@gmail.com).

Looking for help cleaning the church starting in June

Marjorie is stepping down after doing a great job of keeping us neat and tidy (and banishing a bazillion lady bugs). We're looking for someone who'd be interested in stepping in to the part-time position. If you're interested, or know anyone who might be, please let Susan Haight (sdlhaight@gmail.com) know.

Drafting the Purpose Statement for the Church

The Vision team will be offering three different opportunities to get your input on the church's new Purpose Statement. It's the foundation of the work that is to come. We will run the same workshop three times to make it as easy as possible for everyone to contribute. We hope to see everyone at one of the following 90-minute workshops:

- Sunday, May 19, 11:30am at the church
- Monday, May 20, 7:00pm at the church
- Tuesday, May 21, 7:00pm on Zoom

Assembling a Prayer Team (in general) and for the Vision process

There have been an increasing number of prayer requests during the week, especially for people asking for prayer support in the face of an emergency. If you would be willing to be on a prayer team email, I'll send out what details I can share and ask you to add them to your prayers. We'll continue to pray for everyone in our weekly worship services as well.

The Vision team is also looking for folks who would be willing to pray for our work as we move through the process with the rest of the church. Later on, we may be doing some prayer walks through our community and we'd appreciate help coordinating those, but that will come later.

If you're willing to be a part of either team (or both!) let Rev. Cath (minister@bccnh.org) know.

Get your 2024 Parking Pass for the Grove! Our first Lake Service is 6/30!

Grove personnel will be in the Town Hall meeting room on **Thursday, May 9th from 5-8 PM** processing placards and memberships. Please bring your placards for processing. If you do not have a placard and wish to purchase one, they are \$3.00 each. Proof of residency is required. [Click here for more details.](#)

Special Memorial Day Weekend Worship on THURSDAY, May 23, 7:00pm:

As we've done in the past few years, we'll have a special Thursday night worship service ahead of the Memorial Day weekend.

Memorial Day Ceremony, Monday, May 27 9:30am at the Town Hall:

Remembering those service members we have lost, the ceremony is led by the Kilduff-Wirtanen American Legion Post #74 with Rev. Cath offering the prayers.

Angel Choir: Save the Date 6/5 & Looking for Hosts:

The Angel Choir, a group of talented young people from the First Presbyterian Church of Granville, OH will be presenting a free concert at the Hollis Congregational Church in the evening of Wednesday, June 5th. If you can host at least two of the young people, please contact April Springfield at 603 943-9452 or (aprilCspringfield@gmail.com)

Looking for Help to Spruce up the Church's Exterior

Brookline is already planning its contribution to the nation's 250th birthday party in 2026. We'd like the church to put its best face forward. We'll be looking to speak with folks who can help us improve the look of the exterior, as well as finding sources of funding to help pay for that. If you're able to help, please speak with Susan Haight (sdlhaight@gmail.com).

BCC Book Group: Looking for suggestions for our next read

We wrapped up our discussion of Anthony Marra's *Mercury Pictures Presents*. We're looking for suggestions for our next read. Let Sanjay (sgcherian@gmail.com) know if you have any ideas!

Faith Formation: Deepen Your Connection with God: June 2, 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.

Horton Center Schedule for 2024 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

Would You Like Offering Envelopes for Your Weekly Offering?

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

Gently Used Spring/Summer Clothes can find a good next home

If you have any gently used clothes, let Amy (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 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 +/-
April	\$22,266	\$34,087	(\$11,821)

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.

