



*Brookline Community  
Church*

*May 23, 2024*

*Rev. Catherine A.  
Merrill*

[Photo by Dids:](#)

**Prelude**

**Welcome and Right Hand of Fellowship**

Extend a greeting to those nearby

**Call To Worship, Psalm 29, p. 438**

A Psalm of David.

Leader: Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

**All: Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name;  
worship the LORD in holy splendor.**

Leader: The voice of the LORD is over the waters;  
the God of glory thunders,  
the LORD, over mighty waters.

**All: The voice of the LORD is powerful;  
the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**

**The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;  
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.**

Leader: He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,  
and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.  
The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;  
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

**All: The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl,  
and strips the forest bare;  
and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'**

Leader: The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;  
the LORD sits enthroned as king for ever.

**All: May the LORD give strength to his people!  
May the LORD bless his people with peace!**

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

**Children's Message: *How can we shrink the Bible down?***

**Hymn: #522 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**

**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: #623 Sweet Hour of Prayer**

**Scripture Reading: John 3:1-17, pp. 863-864**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.'

Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

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

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

**Hymn: #532 *Be Thou My Vision***

#### **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 God, your love overflows in the gift of your Spirit.  
Bless these gifts that we offer  
that they may spread your blessing  
in a world of hurt and need;  
in Christ's name. Amen.**

#### **Announcements**

##### **A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 29)**

**Leader:** In ancient places, in ancient voices, everyone and everything from way before to here and now, come together to worship God.

**All:** **God is the most powerful force in the cosmos, rolling like thunder over the lands.**

**Leader:** The voice of God can change the face of the planet, can break open the hearts of the powerful, and bring justice and righteousness to places which are bereft of either.

**All:** The voice of God can change reality in a lightning flash. The voice of God can call peace out of war. The voice of God can make the elements of the world, earth, fire, wind and water, dance. The voice of God can make order out of chaos, make right out of wrong.

Leader: The voice of God can strip the leaves from the trees. The voice of God can strip hypocrisy from those who prefer to leave the world more broken than how they found it.

**All:** God sits on God's throne, more powerful than the chaos of natural disaster, more powerful than the chaos of human hearts.

Leader: May God give strength to God's people, that we might stand against the chaos of this world.

**All:** May God bless God's people, that we might unite together in peace.

Leader: Amen and

**All:** Amen.

**Hymn: #447 Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God**

[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."](#)

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

## Notes:

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### Psalm 29

This psalm reflects Canaanite mythology and rhetorical structures. This may therefore be one of the oldest psalms. The summons to worship (vv. 1-2) is addressed to the “sons of God.” The other, older gods are summoned to assign honor, glory, and sovereignty to this God. By an act of worship, they are invited to vote for the true God.

This is a song of new orientation, evident in verses 3-9a, which present the cosmic disorientation in which this God has been at work to conquer. It may be that the narrative characterizes a great rainstorm that sweeps off the Mediterranean Sea (v. 3) through Lebanon (vv. 5-6) and on to the southern desert (vv. 7-8). The general picture may be a reference to the global waters of chaos in Gen. 1:2.

So it is the powerful voice of Israel’s God, named repeatedly, which moves decisively to undo the old order and to tame the forces of chaos. There is nothing here of faithfulness or justice; it is raw untamed power.

This God is now stably and comfortably seated on top of the mighty waters, which are no longer a threat. The real king tames chaos. His throne, established atop the flood, shows that the conquest is real and expresses utter contempt for the defeated waters.

When chaos is overwhelmed and driven from the field, a blessing is appropriately given from the newly established throne by the newly recognized king (v. 11). The action of the psalm is to sing into place the new order that overcomes chaos. It is a psalm that speaks about order in a way that overrules all anxiety about life, and the very act of singing the song itself is a practice of that new order.

The new order requires the honoring of God, but it also requires the capacity and power to reorder life. That is cause for singing, on earth, as in heaven.

Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 142-143.



## PRAYER LIST (5/23/24)

- 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 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's facing months of recovery
- 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 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 John, Carol Cherian's brother, back in Dartmouth Medical Center, after a bad car accident
- For Jimmy, Tony's brother, who's just been diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer, with only a few months expected
- For Jen, Amy's sister-in-law, who's going in for surgery
- For Kim, Donna's niece, who's in for more surgery after issues stemming from her liver transplant
- For the friends and family of Sue, John Lee's step-mother, who passed away from cancer
- 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: Morning<sup>1</sup>**

Life-giving God, awaken me to your threefold presence in the world this day that I may share your love with others as freely as you have done for us in Christ.  
Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

Abba, I give thanks for the immeasurable gifts of this day, above all, for the gift of your love made known in Christ. How grateful I am that by his love I am counted as a precious member of your family. Mere words cannot convey the wonder of this love. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

Jesus invites us to be born from above to receive new and abundant life. Salvation, or abundant life, is understood as a present reality in the Gospel of John. If the gift of God's love made known to us in Christ through the Spirit is stirred up by gratitude, what daily practice could increase your sense of gratitude? How could a simple practice of thanking God at any given moment in the day enliven your experience of salvation?

### **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**

### **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.

### **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](mailto:sdlhaight@gmail.com)) know.

### **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.

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](mailto:minister@bccnh.org)) know.

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

Grove personnel will be at the Grove (town beach) on Sunday, May 19th from 11am-4pm processing placards and memberships. [Click here for more details.](#)

### **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 5<sup>th</sup>. If you can host at least two of the young people, please contact April Springfield at 603 943-9452 or ([aprilCspringfield@gmail.com](mailto:aprilCspringfield@gmail.com))

### **Looking for Help to Spruce up the Church's Exterior**

Brookline is already planning its contribution to the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.hortoncenter.org)

### **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!

### **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 Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs. Expenses +/-
<b>April</b>	\$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.

