



Brookline Community Church
Worshiping Apart
Reverend Catherine Merrill, Minister
April 26, 2020

Every part of worship has a video, so we've gathered them together [in a play list](#).
[If you click on "Play All"](#), they'll play from the beginning of the service to the end!
And you can just follow along, never clicking on another link.

Or you can go through clicking on all the individual links – your choice.

Centering Ourselves for Worship:

[Join Howard Clements, today's lay leader, [in today's centering prayer.](#)]

Almighty God,
Jesus, our risen Lord, was made known to the disciples
in the breaking of the bread.
Open the eyes of our hearts
that we may recognize his presence,
and with his disciples cry, "The Lord has risen, indeed!"

Open the eyes of our hearts
That we may recognize his presence
In the one-way lanes of the grocery,
In the weary smiles of those caring for others,
In those running marathons in their home towns,
Just to prove its possible.

Open the eyes of our hearts
That we may recognize his presence
In the unseen hands which bring us our bread,
In the unknown voices who soothe the dying,
In the shoulders rolling back to try one more tough thing,
Coming in a series of tough things.

Open the eyes of our hearts
That we may recognize his presence
Through Christ, who lives and reigns with you
in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Hymn: We Are Marching in the Light of God

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with.]

If you have a favorite hymn you'd like to include in our worship service, just send it along and I'll look for a good place for it.

Lifting Up Our Joys & Concerns:

[Rev. Cath [sharing our Joys & Concerns.](#)]

Almighty God,
we are longing for resurrection,
but are standing in the shadow of the cross.

We remember the pain of your cross,
and of those we have carried and carry now.

We call on you; incline your ear to us and hear our cry:

For a world swept by a pandemic

For those suffering this illness

For those charged with their care

For those who go hungry

For those who are lonely

For those who despair

For all those concerns we want to lift up:

For Joe, John Panto's friend, whose brother tested positive for Covid-19
but has minimal symptoms;

For not getting too impatient with being isolated at home and starting to
take unwise risks;

For the exploding lasagna pan at John Lee's house. Thankfully the
lasagna was salvaged;

For the weariness our souls are feeling as we are pulled without respite
from one challenge to another;

For the grocery workers who keep working, for the hidden folks who
shouldn't be hidden from our view, for those who are experiencing the
stress fractures in their relationships;

For more pliability, more patience, more ability to step back and recognize
where the short tempers in others are coming from;

We call on you; incline your ear to us and hear our cry:
For all the joys we want to lift up:

For the daffodils bursting forth;

For those creating amazing videos to lift our hearts;

For the moments of love and laughter;

For the small joys we would not have even noticed during regular times;

For the food we spice up, and then eat as our mouths are burning;

For building a new TV console with guidance from the internet, to keep the little helpers from unplugging everything;

For potty training, and the long road to an important life skill that entails;

For take-out food when we are tired of our own cooking and the entertainment of eating in our cars and watching the traffic go by;

For BJ's offering senior shopping time, to make it safer and easier to keep supplied;

For the Patriot's Day Holiday, even if it's not being celebrated the same way as in previous years;

For the rainbow over New York City that appeared during the evening cheer for the health care workers;

For the ranch dressing we made from scratch that was soooooooooo good.



For Logan moving back home and being such a wonderful cook (just like her Aunt Cindy taught her to be);

For Elly Austen, Amy's neighbor, who is home from the hospital! Both he & Pam are in quarantine for two weeks, but both are feeling better;

For Maggie, David Drake's mom, who's 93 in a nursing home is recovering from Covid-19. They speak on the phone every day.

For Aunt Rose, Amy's relative, who is still in hospital but slowly recovering; her son Michael is finally feeling better after a couple weeks at home in bed;

For the supply of hand sanitizer that got stowed away over time, so it's there now when someone needs it;

For Raytheon breaking Donna's lab into multiple shifts, so that everyone can work with more room between people;

For the kids who are wrapping up their college studies and getting ready to move on to the next stage in their life;

For pounds of bacon in the freezer, so our future has a smoky, salty savor we can look forward to;

We sing for our savior and for a world that God is calling into being.

We weep for our savior and for a world in peril.

We wonder, like the disciples,
what will become of our dreams for the kin-dom.

Help us, God, to know that you hear us as we live in the tension
between this painful death
this dreadful silence
and the joyful resurrection.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

[\[Let's say the Lord's Prayer together\]](#)

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 (978) 494-6953.]

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:13-35

[\[Luke 24:13-35 read for you\]](#)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection on the Scripture:

[\[The video of the reflection.\]](#)

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" (Luke 24:31-34)

Let's go there. On our daily walk, with the dog, without the dog, with our housemate, by ourselves, whatever. Let's go there. Let's go to "The Lord has risen indeed!" Let's go to that joy. Because it is so real and so important and so meaningful. Let's go to that joy. Because if we are going to walk seven miles out and seven miles back, let's walk to joy. And there are a lot of joys we can walk toward.

It's just that we have to start where we are, on this road to Emmaus. We have to join these two disciples somewhere true and honest. *But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel* (Luke 24:21). Yes, we had hoped. We had hoped that this journey would not have been so challenging. That the virus would be contained. That it would not be so contagious. That it would not be so lethal when caught. Yes, we had hoped.

Think of all the places we say "but we had hoped." We say it as we are gathering the things left in the ICU.¹ We say it as we learn of the second overdose. We say it when someone has wandered off without a coat during a winter storm because they don't remember about coats or about winter anymore.

So much of a life of faith is asserting that *he is risen*, even when it doesn't seem possible that anyone could have risen, because death, after all, is clearly the end. Sometimes we focus so much on *He is Risen* that we don't acknowledge how much faith it takes to say *but we had hoped*.

Now that our grocery stores are segregated again, not by race, but by medical vulnerability. Now that our neighbors are running a marathon not in downtown Boston but through the local roads with only friends to cheer them on from a safe distance. Now that we are actively asking people to die alone, without their family holding their hand. Now that that is our reality, perhaps the part of our faith we need to lean on is not the *He is Risen* part. Perhaps the part we need to lean on is the *but we had hoped* part.

¹ Richard Swanson, "Commentary on the Gospel: Luke 24:13-35" from "Lectionary Commentaries for May 4, 2014: Third Sunday of Easter", Working Preacher, https://www.workingpreacher.org/wp_print_all.aspx?lectionary_calendar_id=473&print_type=comm&is_sp_anish=0 (accessed November 4, 2019).

Because Cleopas and his buddy were walking in faith. They were mulling over what had happened in Jerusalem. They were coming to terms with the reality that this was not what they had signed up for. This was not the world they had been trying to build. They had hoped for something completely different from what they had gotten.

And yet their faith led them to listen to a stranger telling the whole story of Scripture told from Moses on down, from Genesis and through the prophets to the story of the Messiah. They listened to the whole story told again, with new ideas lifted up, with new emphasis, that helped explain how even now, when what they had hoped for had not come to pass, God was with them. Because God was always with them.

Their faith led them to do one of the crazy things that Jesus was always doing. They ate with a stranger. Not because they believed that Jesus was risen. But because they had hoped so much for a different outcome, for something other than the Cross and persecution.

Those disciples on the road to Emmaus had so hoped that something else was going to happen. But if this rotten reality was what they had, then they were going to do what Jesus had taught them. They were going to share what they had. They were going to break a common loaf with each other. They were going to recognize the miracle of the loaves and the fishes by using the language that Jesus had used back then: took, blessed, broke, gave.²

If we want to get to *He is Risen*, sometimes we just have to start with *but we had hoped*. We have to start in the dust of the road, and we have to accept hospitality from a stranger. And then we have to offer hospitality to a stranger. Now maybe right now, we're not going to be sharing an actual pizza with anyone who isn't living under the same roof. But we can share a good laugh when someone makes [a dog video that's pretty funny](#). We can share [a beautiful piece of art](#) that someone made because the human spirit had so hoped for something different. We can cut our political leaders some slack *and* we can hold them accountable at the same time because Jesus did both and did it with love.

Sure, I want to go *He is Risen*. It's just that I need to accept where I'm starting from. And, for today, that is just *but we had hoped*. Because there is faith all along that journey, from beginning to end.

² John Dominic Crossan, *The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer*. (New York: HarperCollins, 2010): 134.

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

[\[Let's pray together.\]](#)

Almighty God

Bountiful are your gifts to us.

In gratitude, we offer our hearts
and the fruit of our labor to your service.

By your grace, accept the fruit of our labor
and the offering of our lives.

Let us be a sacrifice of thanksgiving
in union with our risen Lord,
who lives and reigns with you forever. **Amen.**

Hymn: Go Now in Peace

[Click here](#) for someone to sing with.

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.

Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.

God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

[[Let's pray together](#). Thanks, Howard, for being our Lay Leader this week!]

Almighty God,
Your son met us on the road,
And we did not recognize him.

But we walked with him,
And we ate with him,
And we learned from him.

In this coming week of isolation and distance,
Help us to walk with more people,
Even if we are walking down different roads

Help us to eat with more people
Even if we are eating in our own kitchens

Help us to learn from more people,
Even if everyone seems a little nuts, a little out of touch, these days.

Because Jesus is there in everyone,
Walking, eating, teaching.

Help us to see his face, again and again,
Even in the mirror.

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."](#)

[The Music Ministry crew made this bit of video for us, so we could all sing together, with each other and our former selves!]

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.



PRAYER LIST (4/26/20)

If you know those on this list, call on them & tell them we are praying for them. If you know others who should be added to this list please give their names to the minister or a deacon.

- Rev. Tom Atherton, failing from Parkinson's
- Friends & family of Nell Smallwood, Beatrice Maude Charewicz, Win Hall, Bruce Garvin, Louise Price, Eddy Whitcomb, Shirley Jeffreys, Hazel Corey, Jerry King, Tre Rouse, Tasha Feller, Pat Tiner and Terry House.
- For those who are struggling with depression, addiction, mental health issues, and in their marriages
- Luca, Amy's nephew, as his new treatment appears to be having effect
- God's grace and healing for us all
- Those affected by the corona virus around the world and those working to limit its impact
- Those suffering from domestic violence, who are caught at home with their abusers at a time of rising stress, and therefore rising abuse, that they might find safe havens.
- All those who are dealing with health problems at the moment, all those whose surgeries have been postponed, all those who need medical attention and worry they are taking attention away from the pandemic response.
- For Peter Fleming, one of Lisa's friends from the Milford Special Needs group that meets monthly, who is in the hospital with a brain tumor.
- For the virus staying out of Ledgewood, where Carol works, and all the other assisted living facilities.
- For all those who have lost their jobs and are facing economic insecurity at a time when there is no useful way to look for work;
- For Maggie, David Drake's mom, who's 93 in a nursing home and has just been diagnosed with Covid-19. She has a fever and is in isolation, but is feeling better;
- For Nicu and the rest of the first medical reserve to be called up who are currently serving in New York City. May they be able to effectively do what they have trained for and return home safely.
- For Baby Jack and his parents Amy-Lee and Ryan Schanck, Susan & Russell's daughter's friends, Jack went into the hospital with a bad cold and once through that, he had successful heart surgery
- For students whose terms are coming to an end and who are going to be at loose ends soon, particularly those seniors who are graduating from college;
- For Joe, John Panto's friend, whose brother tested positive for Covid-19 but has minimal symptoms;

- For not getting too impatient with being isolated at home and starting to take unwise risks;
- For the weariness our souls are feeling as we are pulled without respite from one challenge to another;
- For the grocery workers who keep working, for the hidden folks who shouldn't be hidden from our view, for those who are experiencing the stress fractures in their relationships;
- For more pliability, more patience, more ability to step back and recognize where the short tempers in others are coming from;
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning

Lord Jesus, your rising from tomb heralds the dawning of life eternal as the dawning of this day holds the possibilities of life anew. Open my eyes to the signs of your resurrection and confirm in my heart the power of your amazing love, that I may with confidence sing "Alleluia." Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Loving God, you have upheld me with your love even when I have not been aware of your presence. As I rest from my labors let me sleep without fear of darkness or death and rise refreshed to begin a new day in humble service, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

The disciples on the road to Emmaus were with Jesus for hours as he taught them the meaning of the Scriptures. However, they finally recognized him as the risen Lord only in "the breaking of the bread." How does the Lord's Supper enable you to recognize Jesus?

Daily Awareness Reflection

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 the next few minutes 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 God for forgiveness for any failure or omission, and 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 ...

From Elizabeth Liebert's *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), p. 31.

Announcements:

This time of isolation can be very difficult. You may know someone who needs some support beyond what you can provide. We're in this together.

- Suicide prevention: 1-800-273-8255
- Sexual assault: 1-800-656-4673
- Domestic violence: 1-800-799-7233

Melanie, our state senator asked to pass along the following two pieces of information:

- If people want to know the latest status of Covid-19 in NH and the Emergency orders to date, go to <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>
- A great video explaining Covid-19, what and how we fight it and why what we are doing is so important:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgBla7RepXU>

Brookline Food Pantry

Although we cannot be together physically at this time, Outreach is continuing to work with Rebecca Purdin through the Brookline Welfare office & CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) to address any needs in our community.

The Brookline food pantry is now open on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 10-2:00 for drop-offs only. There is a list on the [Brookline Food Pantry's Facebook page](#) that is being updated as items are needed. This week they're looking for:

Tortillas	Napkins
Spam	Decaf Green Tea
Chowder	Saltines
Salsa	Dishwasher Soap
Relish	Laundry Soap

Perishables: (drop off during office hours or call for pick up)

Hot Dogs	American Cheese
Fish Sticks	Cream Cheese
Butter	

If you know of anyone who could use some help from the Food Pantry, please let Rebecca or Amy know. We sense there's more need in the community than is currently picking up food.

Donations can be dropped off downstairs at the Town Hall during regular hours of operation. There are large boxes for donations if there is no one in the Food Pantry. There is also a drop off at the Brookline Post Office.

Thank you for your continued support to our church and our community.

Covid-19 Scams Targeting Seniors

The [NH Attorney General's office put out a press release](#) describing several scams that are targeting seniors. The claims range from needing personal information to get their Social Security payments, to being family members in need of cash to treat Covid-19 symptoms, to offers of fake medical products to prevent Covid-19, to needing personal information to get their stimulus checks, to fake charities. (Honestly, what are people like?!?).

Please pass the word to anyone who might be affected.