



Brookline Community Church
Worshiping Apart
Reverend Catherine Merrill, Minister
June 14, 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.

Prelude: [Chain Breaker](#) by Zach Williams

[No lyrics, just let it help you get settled for worship]

Centering Ourselves for Worship:

[Join Candy Tiner, today's lay leader, [in our centering prayer](#).]

O God of the Harvest
The little ones,
the ones less than five years old,
are watching
the human space launch
bright eyes and holding their breath.
For them, it is an ultimate adventure.
Wow! and called Dragon, too.
For us, it symbolizes an escape
from all the mess
that we have made on earth.
We would not take away
today's light from their eyes,

but our eyes shine with tears
because of racism in our country,
illness killing so many,
devastation
of this environment.

Let us watch how they do it,
returning booster rockets
to be used again and again and again.

We will need that.

Let us launch something
into this space
like change, like hope —

Because children are watching. Amen¹

Hymn: *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* by Nathan and Christy Nockels

[[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.](#)]

O God of the Harvest
From you alone, Lord Jesus Christ, comes the authority
to heal the sick, cast out demons,
welcome the outcast, and even raise the dead.

Therefore we are bold to seek your power
and ready to claim your grace.
Heal the sick. . . . [*silence*]

Touch with compassion all those who suffer;
speak the word that will make them whole.
Cast out demons. . . . [*silence*]

Banish the powers that oppress your people;
bring peace to troubled hearts and minds.
Welcome the outcast. . . . [*silence*]

Open the arms of your church to all;
gather the lost and bring them home.

¹ Today's centering and closing prayers were inspired in large part by Maren Tirabassi, "SpaceX," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted May 31, 2020, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2020/05/31/spacex/> (accessed June 8, 2020).

Raise the dead. . . . [*silence*]

Stand with us in our joys:

Vigil on Breonna Taylor's birthday for Black Lives Matter in Brookline NH;

Peaceful protest in Nashua to support justice;

Peaceful protest in Milford to support racial justice;

Jocelyn's pre-school graduation, where everyone knew Miss Jocelyn;

Donna's safe trip to visit her family and help in figuring out care for her mom;

John mother & step-father celebrating 40 years of marriage;

Elly Austen's birthday party parade when a few weeks ago we were much more worried;

Lift up our joys and refresh us.

Be with us when we are joyful.

Stand with us in our concerns

The medical professionals who are coming down with the disease;

Everyone figuring out how to re-open our economy without driving the need for care back too high;

Andrew, Donna & Peter's friend, continuing to recover from his multiple surgeries;

The seniors getting something like a graduation they were hoping for;

Aiofe, Megan & Jon's dog, going to an eye specialist;

The Prieto family working through a tough life change;

The folks with weary souls right now;

The people finding their understanding of history shifting underneath them.

Ease our burdens and refresh us.

Be with us when we are concerned.

As you broke free from the grave,
destroy the power of death forever.

Nothing is impossible for you, Christ Jesus.

Let these signs of your coming realm
be manifest in our world today;
for you are our Lord and Savior. Amen.

[The Lord's Prayer]

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.]

Hymn: *I Love to Tell the Story* by Alan Jackson

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

I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above
Of Jesus and his glory
Of Jesus and his love
I love to tell the story
Because I know 'tis true
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do

I love to tell the story
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it like the rest
And when in scenes of glory
I sing the new, new song
'Twill be the old, old story
That I have loved so long

I love to tell the story
'Twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love

I love to tell the story
'Twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and his love

Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:35-10:22

[[Matthew 9:35-10:22 read for you](#)]

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.” Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that town.

‘See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

But the one who endures to the end will be saved (Matthew 10:22). There’s a lot the disciples have to endure in this reading about Jesus’ disciples being given their first mission. They go out in pairs, it looks like. They go out under-resourced and stay in other people’s houses, eating what they’re given. They’re persecuted by the civil and religious authorities, kicked out of their own families. They’re supposed to represent themselves at their trials. All that so they can *cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons* (Matthew 10:8), a fairly high-risk occupation, then and now. For a group of people who are supposed to be *wise as serpents* (Matthew 10:16), this doesn’t seem like a smart play. I mean if the Brookline Community Church developed a reputation for walking around barefoot, eating and sleeping at other people’s houses, I’m not sure how many folks would rush to Sunday worship. Sign me up, man. And I’m not sure how much advancement you’d see in this world if you decided to take that on as your daily gig.

If you buy my argument that Jesus calls us to live in the real world, why is Jesus asking this of his disciples, then and now? Why is Jesus asking for so much

endurance? Well, in part because the core of the disciples' job is to *proclaim the good news*, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' (Matthew 10:7). Then and now, that is now an easy message to proclaim or to hear. Not with protests against police brutality generating more videos of police brutality. Not with the details of the economic collapse becoming clearer every day. Not with deaths from Covid-19 beginning to rise in places after a slow decline.

But like many things in Jesus' ministry, there's more happening here than we realize initially. We need to see that Jesus picks his disciples, and not because they have some amazing history or some crazy skills, but because they have problematic histories and no skills. One of the disciples is Matthew the tax collector (Matthew 10:3). Tax collectors in those days had contracts where they would provide a set amount of taxes to the Roman imperial treasury. Whatever additional money they could squeeze out of people, they kept. The people who did the actual collection, like Matthew, were usually desperately poor, taking one of the lowest status and most hated jobs, moving the cash up a chain to wealthier and wealthier individuals. And yet, even as a disciple of Jesus, one of the original twelve, Matthew doesn't get to leave his past behind.² He is still Matthew the tax collector, the guy who helped keep the Roman empire in place.

Another of the disciples is Simon the Cananaean, which doesn't mean he's from Canaan. It means he was a Zealot,³ which means he was working to overthrow the Roman Empire's hold on the homeland of Israel. Depending on your perspective, he was a terrorist or a freedom fighter. And he was in violent opposition to Matthew the tax collector.⁴

So Jesus chose you not in spite of your past, but because of it. Whatever you wanted to leave behind in your past is exactly why Jesus chose you to be a disciple. Whatever from your past puts you in opposition with others who are also disciples, that is exactly why Jesus chose you to be a disciple.

Jesus sends you out as a disciple without walking around money, without any resources, not even a change of underwear. The people you bring the proclamation of kingdom to will feed you and give you a place to sleep for the night. You're to travel light, so light in fact, that it seems like a stiff puff of wind will blow you away. But without all the baggage that might make you independent, here's what you can promise. You can promise that being a follower of Jesus will not make you wealthy or powerful or secure.⁵ You can

² Charles Cousar, "Proper 6: Matthew 9:35-10:8 (9-23)" in *Texts for Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV—Year A*, ed. Walter Brueggemann et al. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 370.

³ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 1: 358.

⁴ Barclay, 358.

⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew*, in *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 107.

promise them that they will have nothing at their disposal other than the authority that Jesus will give to them too.⁶ And you can promise them that nothing will hold them back any longer, not even the power of death. Because through you, Jesus is offering them life in the kingdom of God.

Jesus wants to be clear with you, with me, with all of us, that being his disciple, going out into the world to proclaim the kingdom of God is an exercise in rejection. The state will be threatened by people who aren't afraid of its power. The church will be threatened by people who aren't afraid of its condemnation. Your own family will be threatened because you have allegiance to a tribe other than the one you have been born into. Jesus wants you to be clear that if you are rejected, you're probably doing this disciple thing correctly.

And Jesus wants you to endure all that. People you don't agree with. People who are constantly throwing your past in your face and telling you you're unqualified. Jesus wants you to endure not having enough resources to get anything productive done. Jesus wants you to endure rejection on every scale possible, from your nation to your religion to your family. Jesus asks for endurance from you and every other disciple.

Because if you can endure, when you see the crowds, you will have compassion for them because they are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36). If you can endure, they will cease to be harassed and helpless, wearied and laid prostrate⁷ on the ground. Your endurance will allow them to transform into an abundant harvest (Matthew 9:37). You'll see them as flourishing, as vital, as something that brings life to the community, once you see them as Jesus sees them. And that's what they will become. And that kingdom you are proclaiming comes a little nearer.

So endure for just a little longer. Carry your past a little further down the road. Don't worry about the resources you don't have that would make proclaiming the arrival of the kingdom easier. Endure just a bit more as you proclaim and are rejected by everyone. Because *the one who endures to the end will be saved*. (Matthew 10:22) And in your salvation is the salvation of the world.

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

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

O God of the Harvest,
Jesus said: The harvest is plentiful,
but the laborers are few.
Therefore we ask the Lord to send us out
as laborers for the harvest.

⁶ Hauerwas, 107.

⁷ Barclay, 355-356.

Let us offer the gifts of our lives to the Lord.

Let our whole lives become songs
of gratitude, joy, and praise
so that all the earth may know
that we are your people
and you are our God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn: *Down in My Heart* by the Cedarmont Kids

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

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

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

O God of the Harvest,
The children are watching
What we are doing with this space.

Help us to go back out into the world
And launch hope
And launch change
And launch our faith into our world

So all the world hears and sees
The harvest you are offering.

Help us to be good laborers
In your fields.
The harvest *is* plentiful;
And we're glad to be put to work.
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!]

Postlude: *Smile* by Sidewalk Prophets

[Lyrics that you can sing with or ignore; either way let it help you gear up to return to the world.]

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.



PRAYER LIST (6/14/20)

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, Bruce Garvin, Louise Price, Eddy Whitcomb, Shirley Jeffreys, Hazel Corey, Jerry King, Tre Rouse, Tasha Feller, Pat Tiner and Terry House.
- Luca, Amy's nephew, as his new treatment appears to be having effect
- Those affected by the corona virus 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, that they might find safe havens.
- 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 everyone to stay as healthy as they can in the days to come
- For the friends & families of those who have died alone;
- For our church, that we remain patient with the process of re-opening;
- The medical professionals who are coming down with the disease;
- Everyone figuring out how to re-open our economy without driving the need for care back too high;
- Andrew, Donna & Peter's friend, continuing to recover from his multiple surgeries;
- The seniors getting something like a graduation they were hoping for;
- Aiofe, Megan & Jon's dog, going to an eye specialist;
- The Prieto family working through a tough life change;
- The folks with weary souls right now;
- The people finding their understanding of history shifting underneath them.
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning

God of wisdom, as I go forth this day, show me how to testify to your grace and truth. Give me the chance to speak and the words to say so that I may glorify your name; through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

I give you thanks, Holy God, that you have made me your own, a treasured possession. Hold me close to your heart and bear me up on eagle's wings; in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

How would you respond to the arrival of wandering messengers of good news in your town or on your doorstep (Matt. 9:35–10:23)? Would you welcome them or listen to their words? What does it mean for the kingdom of heaven to “come near” (Matt. 10:7)?

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 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 ...

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

Consider asking God for guidance on deepening our connection as a community when we have to stay apart. How do we change what we are doing now so that it is more satisfying? How do we change what we are doing now to better show our obedience to Jesus' commandment to love? How do we figure out the logistical tasks we need to attempt in person worship? How do we know when the list is good enough? How sustainable does the effort have to be? How do we counter the natural impulse to say, this is too hard to figure out?

Announcements:

Please shop smile.amazon.com and choose Brookline Community Church as your charity to support the church. Thanks!

Help Lines

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

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. In addition to Market Basket gift cards, this week, like last week, they're continuing to look for:

Dry cat food

Cat litter

Chips

Foil and Plastic Wrap

Popcorn

Spaghetti

Baby Formula (dry)

Egg Noodles

Razors

Chili

Soy Milk

Coconut Milk

Tissues

Perishables:

Chicken

Ground Beef/Turkey

Eggs

American and Cheddar Cheese

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.

Covid-19 Information

Melanie, our state senator, asked to pass along the following:

- 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>