



*Brookline Community Church*  
*Worshiping Apart*  
*Reverend Catherine Merrill, Minister*  
June 28, 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: [Psalm 89: For Ever I Will Sing the Goodness of the Lord](#)**

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

**Centering Ourselves for Worship:**

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

How lovely is your sanctuary,  
our sanctuary, O God.  
My soul longs for the pews  
for the clear windows to the world around  
or glass in sparkling color.

Happy are those who worship in your home,  
and don't want to see the inside of mine.

Happy are those who meet to plan Outreach  
in the social hall of a blessed place,  
easily able to see who wants to talk  
because hearts show in the eyes.

And happy are those who share  
a common kitchen  
of chicken and tortillas  
rather than crafting tenderness  
with crockpots  
while binge-watching television on our own breakfast bars.

And they go from strength to strength  
who drink coffee and eat cake  
at coffee hour,  
or just drink lots and lots and lots of coffee  
at AA meetings.

God, hear my whining prayer;  
give ear, O God of the wilderness  
who at least gave a design  
for a beautiful traveling tent.  
Accept my sadness,  
missing the place of memories and love.

For I know that worship online,  
and meetings, too  
are precious in your sight,  
and I would rather be a distance-keeper  
in the virtual house of God,  
than re-open too soon and risk the health  
of one of God's children.

I know that God bestows a blessing  
on livestream and facetime  
honor on Youtube and Zoom.  
No good thing does God withhold  
from those who worship digitally.

But, God of the temple in our hearts,  
we trust you with our lament,  
our discontent, our loss ... and our longing  
to be glad when we hear them say —  
Let us go to the house of God!<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Today's centering and closing prayers were inspired in large part by Maren Tirabassi, "Improv on Psalm 84 (with just a touch of 100 and 122) A Lament for Worship in the Temple ...," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted April 24, 2020, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2020/04/24/improv-on-psalm-84-with-just-a-touch-of-100-and-122-a-lament-for-worship-in-the-temple/> (accessed June 20, 2020).

**Hymn: *As the Deer Pants for the Water*, an English Christian worship song**  
[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with. For those of you who are trying to remember, “As a deer pants for water” opens Psalm 42.]

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 temple of our hearts

We pray for the health and welfare of all nations. . . .

We extol your righteousness forever,  
and by your favor our horn is filled.

We pray for the strength and vitality of your church. . . .

We exult in your name, O God,  
and sing in our hearts of your righteousness.

We pray for those lifted up with joy,  
For you are with them as they sparkle,

For haircuts after too long

For a craft fair, with space and time to talk with the artisans

For birthdays to remember and celebrate

For shooting something close to last year’s score on the golf course

For safe arrivals after long journeys, even if they end in quarantine

For Julian’s graduation from high school and heading on to college

And we walk in the light of your countenance.

We pray for all who suffer from sickness, hardship, or danger . . .  
for you are the glory of our strength

For the challenge of weaning off tea in the morning

For Donna's mom and extended family as they find a path forward through  
the thicket of deepening dementia

For Dave, who's returning to radiation therapy because of a new cancer on  
his adrenal gland

For Daniel, Yi-fan's friend, who journey from Texas to Florida for work, only  
to return home to learn that his job was on hold and he had been exposed  
to Covid-19,

For those who are longing for someone to simply see them

O God you are our shield in times of concern.

We pray for the goodness and well-being of your creation. . . .

Your steadfast love is declared forever;  
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

We remember those who make their procession home to you this day  
and live eternally in the light of your countenance.

Unite us in one unending song of praise to you,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 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](mailto:minister@bccnh.org) or call/text (978) 494-6953.]

### **Hymn: *It is Well with My Soul* by Chris Rice**

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

### **Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 28:5-9**

[\[Jeremiah 28:5-9 read for you\]](#)

Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the  
priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD; and the  
prophet Jeremiah said, 'Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD fulfil the  
words that you have prophesied, and bring back to this place from Babylon the  
vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. But listen now to this word  
that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. The prophets

who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.'

**Reflection on the Scripture: [\[The video of the reflection.\]](#)**

The people of Israel could really use a word from God because everything's a hot mess. When life just goes along, you don't really need God's input.<sup>2</sup> But when everything, and I mean everything, is turned upside down and inside out, a word from God would be really helpful. If we in the sanctuary together, I'd probably ask for an "Amen" here, but then, if we were in the sanctuary, everything wouldn't be upside down and inside out.

At this point in history, Israel is controlled by Babylon. They're on their third king in a few years because the first one rebelled against Babylon and was killed when Babylon reasserted power over Israel and demanded more taxes. The second one was so unpopular, even Babylon could see he wasn't going to work, plus he was corrupt, which never helps. So they're working with King Number 3, and he is also deciding whether to rebel against Babylon. Yeah, that worked so well when his now dead uncle tried it.

Everything is in a uproar, and it would be nice to have the true word from God. So they begin to look around for a prophet. And look, there's not one, but two, Jeremiah and Hananiah. Now it would be awesome if they were saying the same thing, but they aren't. They're saying opposite things.

Jeremiah is saying that resistance is futile (yep, *Next Generation* Star Trek right here). Jeremiah is saying that the Israelites have sinned against God and God is using Babylon to teach them the lesson they need to get right with God. There's nothing for it but endurance. Hananiah is saying that God will not abandon Israel, so rise up, throw off the oppressor. God will bring God's great power to the battle and Israel will win. Because the cause of Israel is just.

Jeremiah replied that he sure hoped Hananiah was right. But then he reminded the people and the leadership, *The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.* (Jeremiah 28:28-29). Basically, he's saying that you don't know the true prophet until you see what comes to pass. Only in hindsight can you know for sure.

---

<sup>2</sup> Mark W. Bartusch, "From Honor Challenge to False Prophecy: Rereading Jeremiah 28's story of Prophetic Conflict in Light of Social-science Models." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 36, no. 6 (2009): 457.

But in their case, it will be another two years before they know that they were standing on a cliff.<sup>3</sup> And they had to follow one of the two prophets in front of them, either they were going to resist Babylon or they were going to endure and learn their lesson.

Our time and our nation is at one of these moment in history, where time itself changes pace.<sup>4</sup> Our standing in the world is changing, our leadership on issues which are key to our national identity is being perceived very differently around the world. Our commitment to justice and equality is at an inflection point, where it will go in a different direction after this point. How we address economic injustice will change in the history that is yet to be written because of choices we make right now. How we respond to the global pandemic will teach us important lessons we'll need to know in order to respond to climate change. In this moment where the decisions we make are so important, it would be nice to have a true word from God. Do we endure or do we resist?

Or is that even the right question? Because, more than anything, while Jeremiah is pointing out that we need to act. It's just that the action he is urging is that we need to learn the lesson that God is offering us. Maybe the right way to look at these two prophets is that one is asking us to discern God's will as a community and the other is saying, "follow me!".

Hananiah is arguing that the people of Israel need to rebel against Babylon, that if they resist that oppression, God will be with them. And that's a popular position. It's what the people and King Number 3 want to hear.

Jeremiah is saying, "There's something more here. Of course, God will always be with the people of Israel. But that's on God's terms, not yours. So don't assume that just because God is with you, God cannot be with you while you are in exile in Babylon, your Temple destroyed, with your country gone, your prestige lost, your economy in ruins." Jeremiah is arguing that our destiny is not a fixed or unalterable future determined by God in advance of how reality played out. Human discernment and action play a role in determining how God engages with history as it is being written.<sup>5</sup>

Empirically, a true prophet is the one whose prophecy is proven to be correct once history has played out. But when you cannot wait for history to unfurl, when you have to make the call, the true prophet is the one that calls a community to work together to figure out the deeply faithful path forward. A true prophet is the one that is calling for the hard work of loving God and loving neighbor. A true

---

<sup>3</sup> Rachel Sophia Baard, "Proper 8, Theological Perspective, Jeremiah 28:5-9" in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A, Volume 3*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 170.

<sup>4</sup> Baard, 170.

<sup>5</sup> R. E. Clements, *Jeremiah*, in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988): 167.

prophet is the one that is calling for the hard work of caring for the widow and the orphan and the stranger among you, because you were once a stranger in the land of Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:17-19).

So at this moment, when everything is upside down and inside out, when the flow of history is quivering and will clearly flow in a different direction after this moment, where are the prophets who are speaking the true word of God? Not necessarily the ones we want to hear. Not necessarily the ones telling us to do what we already know how to do. But the ones which are calling people into community, into recognizing how much we rely on each other, and the ones who are calling us, and recalling us, to our faith. To love God and love our neighbors. Because when we follow them and history unfurls, we will know *that the LORD has truly sent the prophet* (Jeremiah 28:9).

### **Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given**

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

O God of the temple of our hearts  
We give you thanks  
that you have entrusted us with  
the gift of hospitality and generosity,  
and that you have set us free  
to be generous givers  
of the gifts you so freely give to us.  
May our offerings this day  
draw us closer to you  
as we share them with others  
for righteousness' sake. **Amen.**

### **Anthem: *The UK Blessing***

[\[Click here\]](#) for a video that will give you someone to sing with if you want to sing along. This was recorded during the height of the pandemic in the UK.]

### **A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World**

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

O God of the temple of our hearts  
We go out into the world  
and leave our screens behind,  
touched by your love and the love of those we worshiped with,  
but still longing for the Right Hand of Fellowship  
and the Hip Bump of Coffee Hour.

Help us to see your sacred presence  
in all the efforts to connect  
imperfectly, digitally, socially distantly.

Help us to see how precious this world is in your sight  
that you never take your eye off of us,  
that you keep sending your prophets of peace.

Help us to be the physical body of Christ in this world  
even at a time when bodies have to be distant,  
So that we know we have been there all along,  
when someone cries out,  
Let us go to the house of God!

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: [In Christ Alone](#) by Shane & Shane**

[No lyrics, but feel free to sing along and let it help you gear up to return to the  
world.]

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



## PRAYER LIST (6/28/20)

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;
- For Clarence, who went to the hospital with a high fever and a bladder infection. He's now in rehab to build up his strength.
- For the challenge of weaning off tea in the morning
- For Donna's mom and extended family as they find a path forward through the thicket of deepening dementia
- For Dave, who's returning to radiation therapy because of a new cancer on his adrenal gland
- For Daniel, Yi-fan's friend, who journeyed from Texas to Florida for work, only to learn that his job was on hold and he had been exposed to Covid-19,
- For those who are longing for someone to simply see them
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

### **Household Prayer: Morning**

Gracious God, I awake this day in expectation and thanks and ask to receive the opportunity to share your hospitality with all whom I meet. May I welcome you in serving others and grow ever deeper in holiness and right relationship. This is my prayer; this is my hope. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

Steadfast God, you have traveled with me this day and have seen those places where I flourished and those where I floundered. I give thanks for the gift of finding you at every turn and for the gift to learn of my need for you, in both times of failure and times of attainment. I seek your rest this night, that upon awakening I may find your strength to serve your world with constancy and joy. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

The life and witness of the prophet Jeremiah remind us that in challenging times we often choose denial and despair and resort to easy answers. How can we more faithfully discern God's will during times of trial in our life, nation, or church? At the expense of comfort, ease, and half-truths, to whom or to what do you turn for the courage to choose justice, hope, and truth, and what is the reward that you seek?

### **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 ...

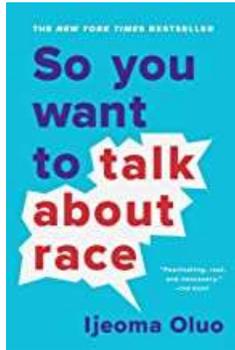
From Elizabeth Liebert's *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), p. 31.

## Announcements:

Please shop [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose Brookline Community Church as your charity to support the church. Thanks!

The church's financial obligations continue. If you are able, please mail your offering to: Brookline Community Church, PO Box 507, Brookline, NH 03033.

## Book Group at the Congregational Church of Hollis



The nation is grappling with issues of race and racism in profound ways that are asking white people, especially, to become more genuinely curious and educated about the lived experience of people of color. In the month of July, Rev. Tanya will be facilitating a book group exploring the best-selling book by Ijeoma Oluo called, *So You Want to Talk About Race*.

According to a review in the Washington Independent Review of Books, “white readers open to educating themselves will come away from *So You Want to Talk About Race* with a fairly nuanced understand of race relations and of the traumas enacted, in particular, on black bodies through the systematic inequalities present in American society.”

We'll meet on Zoom, Wednesday evenings from 7-8 p.m. starting on July 1. Please purchase a copy of the book from your favorite bookseller, and participate in what promises to be an engaging and thought-provoking conversation! Please email Rev. Tanya ([pastor@hollischurch.org](mailto:pastor@hollischurch.org)) to get the Zoom call details.

## 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

## 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

- 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/>

## **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.

