



Brookline Community Church
Worshiping Apart
Reverend Catherine Merrill, Minister
August 2, 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: [Reflections](#) by Gjeilo

[An instrumental piece to help you get settled for worship]

Centering Ourselves for Worship:

[Join Bill & Nancy Dunbar, today's lay leaders, [in our centering prayer](#).]

Leader: So many things we learn along this ride called life.

All: Some of them we learn many times, because something erases them over and over and over.

Leader: Eventually, the pencil's indentation on the tablet of our mind, and the faint shade of the graphite on our souls that refuse to give up, outlast the erasers of pride, privilege, power, and possessions.

All: These are the times we're finally free to be who we were created be; the moments when our reason for being rises across the horizon, shining hope for all the world to be.¹

¹ Todd Jenkins, "Along the Way" Tuesday's Muse, posted June 30, 2020, <https://tuesdaysmuse.wordpress.com/2020/06/25/along-the-way/> (accessed July 23, 2020).

Hymn: *Jesus Feeds Me* by Lisa Lakey Smith

[[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.](#)]

Compassionate God, you are generous to all.
Help us to trust in you and to share what we have
with a hungry world.

We pray for the earth
and all the creatures who look to you
for their food in due season.
May we do our part
in restoring the balance of your creation
and deepen our commitment to follow Jesus
in ministries that feed and serve others.
**Jesus said, "They need not go away;
you give them something to eat."**

We pray for those lifted up with joy,
Enable us to join with them in singing for
For the safe arrival of Xander Jameson Matthews, Ann & John's first grandchild;
For Ryan & Andrea making a surprise visit to Donna over the weekend
For July birthdays that give us cause to celebrate in new ways (the 8 in Ann & John's family, Cindy's, Donna's dad's 87th, Stella's car parade);
For the take home meal that went home to so many homes (108!)
For winning at mini-golf for the first time, with not one but two holes in one!;
For [tomato pie](#), with or without mayonnaise;
For the Union St. Grille serving distanced tables in the park;
For golf games taking us to new places and presenting new challenges;
For a brother moving closer to work so his commute is less arduous;
For the Black Lives Matter rally in Hollis, organized by the youth who see the possibilities of the world differently;
For a bike and a quiet stretch of rail trail;
For getting diplomas in special ceremonies;
For "hello"s from distant corners of the world;
For the stories we have cared for and fostered;

**Jesus said, "They need not go away;
you give them something to eat."**

We pray for all those who suffer from physical ills
and for all those who wrestle with you
for personal identity and spiritual peace.
May they find their truth without money
and peace without cost.

We pray for those weighed down with concerns for
For the friends and family of Rev. Tom Atherton, a former minister of this church, who passed away after a long journey with Parkinson's. He has returned to the God he served so well and loved so much;
For the friends and family of Cindy Hanks, Ann's friend;
For the friends and family of Rebekah Mani, Sanjay's friend;
For the stories we have not treated with respect;

**Jesus said, "They need not go away;
you give them something to eat."**

We pray for all the people of the world,
for all ethnic groups, nations, and leaders,
that wars will cease,
that the hungry will be fed, and
that refugees will return home in safety and peace.

**Jesus said, “They need not go away;
you give them something to eat.”**

Compassionate God, abounding in steadfast love,
we join our voices with all that you have made
in speaking your praises and blessing your name,
for, with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit,
you are just in all your ways and kind
in all your doings. **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: *One Basket* by Audrey Ayers

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

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:13-21

[\[Matthew 14:13-21 read for you\]](#)

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’ Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’ They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’ And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

Today's reading starts in the middle of something, *Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself* (Matthew 14:13). In the Gospels, that happens all the time, because we're going from event in Jesus' life to another. Most of the time I just forge ahead. But this week, it really matters what was happening before. Today's reading about the Feeding of the 5,000 (and really way more than 5,000 since they didn't count the women and kids) is a compare and contrast with the story of Herod's birthday party.

At Herod's party there was incredible food and wine, a talented dancing girl, rich and powerful people. And a man's head cut off because the ruler of the land couldn't figure out how to back away from a promise he had made as a boast, as a way of showing how powerful he was.

At the beginning of the story about the Feeding of the 5,000, Jesus is looking to withdraw from the world for a bit to get some perspective. His cousin, the prophet John the Baptist, had been beheaded by Herod. Herod didn't like that John called him out on the woman he married. And Herod really didn't like that someone was challenging his power. Jesus was grieving the death of the man whom he had grown up with, who baptized him, who had been humble and honest enough to say that he was not fit to tie Jesus' sandal (John 1:27). Jesus was reflecting on where his own call from God was leading him, basically right into the same challenge to the same power. And probably to the same horrible end.²

But the crowds follow Jesus. They want, they need, the healing he has been providing. So he doesn't get his time alone, to gain some perspective. Jesus has compassion and he heals them. The day runs along, as they do, it's evening and there's no sign of food anywhere. They're in the middle of nowhere. The disciples are thinking about the logistics, and suggest that it's time to get this mass of humanity moving back to civilization, where they can get something to eat. Jesus says that the crowd should stay where it is, and the disciples provide supper. The disciples say that they have nothing but five loaves and two fish. Jesus gets everyone to sit down, blesses the loaves by thanking God for God's generous gifts ... Give us this day our daily bread³ ... and sends the disciples out to distribute supper.

So there they are, the two meals. One, a lavish, invitation-only party at the palace, with all the powerful people and dancing girls, everything that everyone

² William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*. Vol. 2. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 99.

³ Iwan Russell-Jones, "Proper 13, Theological Perspective, Matthew 14:13-21" 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), 312.

should want. Or sitting on a probably muddy grass slope with well over 10,000 people sharing some rough loaves of bread after a whole day of nothing to eat. Which would you pick?

Because our Sunday school teachers did their jobs when we were little, we know we're *supposed* to pick the bread-only picnic. But many of us haven't been to a restaurant in so long, or at least to one that didn't involve a drive-thru window. I would love to go to a nice restaurant with a good menu and a well-trained wait staff. The reality TV producers aren't wrong to give us shows set in lavish, expensive locations. Jesus calls us to live in the real world, and part of doing that is being honest that, yes, sometimes it's nice to go to a fancy dinner and be waited on like a princess.

But look at what the crowd that day beside the Sea of Galilee chose. They sat down. And somehow five loaves and two fish turn into a meal for 10,000 adults and thousands of kids and 12 baskets of leftovers. If you like the image of the loaves never getting any smaller no matter how many folks ripped a chunk off, I'm good with that. That's a great miracle. If you like the idea of people putting their hand in the basket, pretending to take something out when in fact they were putting things in, I think that's pretty miraculous too, given how selfish we humans tend to be.

But for that many people to stay, for that many people to say they were satisfied enough that they didn't need the leftovers, what I see is a crowd who so wanted Jesus' dinner party to work.⁴ They wanted more dinner parties where everyone was invited. They wanted more dinner parties where no one was hungry. They wanted more dinner parties where no one was beheaded. They wanted more dinner parties where power and politics wasn't more important than human life. If the menu was a little basic, just the bread and fish of a normal peasant meal,⁵ but healing and compassion were on offer, then the Kingdom of God was in this world, not just the next.⁶

Jesus calls us to live in the real world, where we have real choices about the dinner parties we attend. Jesus asks us to really evaluate our choices, so that the glamor of a fancy menu in a fancy venue with fancy people is weighed against the glamor of healing and compassion and everyone getting fed. Jesus particularly asks his disciples to live in the real world. And in this story of the Feeding of the 5,000, he calls them out. He won't let them get away with not living in the real world.

⁴ Barbara Brown Taylor, *The Seeds of Heaven: Sermons on the Gospel of Matthew*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 52.

⁵ Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew*, in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1993), 166.

⁶ Hare, 166.

The disciples were absolutely right. It had been a long day, no one had had anything to eat and there was nowhere close at hand to buy it or any money to buy it with. But when Jesus challenged them to feed the crowd, they said, “We have nothing.” (Matthew 14:17). “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” Five loaves and two fish are not nothing. They’re something. Maybe not enough. Maybe not everything.⁷ Maybe less than what you’d need to keep 12 disciples and their teacher going for another day. But they’re not nothing.

When the disciples shared the something they had, they offered bread and fish. And they offered compassion and the healing that goes with it. They offered tangible proof of their conviction that the Kingdom of God was here and now. And that’s not nothing. That’s the meal that 10,000+ men, women and children were longing for.

So in this coming week, when you find yourself thinking you have nothing to offer, nothing to share, that your hand and your voice isn’t worth raising, check in with reality. It’s something. It may be the something that opens the Kingdom of God for someone else. Your tiny, barely enough to count as anything, little something may be the thing that becomes the feast that someone has been longing to attend their whole lives. Regardless of how many fancy meals they’ve been to.

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We’ve Been Given

[\[Let’s pray together.\]](#)

Compassionate God,
you provide for us and
even bless us in more ways than we can number.
We give our tithes and offerings
to tell of your wondrous and steadfast love
so that those who do not yet know you
may also come to your love. Amen.

Hymn: *Bread of Life* by ForeverBeSure

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

⁷ Anna Carter Florence, “Ninth Sunday after Pentecost,” in *Preaching Year A with Anna Carter Florence: Reflections on the Gospel Readings (2016-2017) Revised Common Lectionary*. (St. Paul, MN: Luther Seminary, 2016), 100.

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

[[Let's pray together](#). Thanks, Bill & Nancy, for being our Lay Leaders this week!]

Leader: Compassionate God, as we head back out into the world, we ask that this week,

All: That we learn a little more, Erase a little less.

Leader: We ask that we let go of our pride, privilege, power and possessions.

All: So that we can come closer to who we were created to be.

Leader: We ask that we feed all those who are hungry, in body, soul and spirit.

All: Because you have fed us and kept us close.

Leader: Even when the rest of the world was telling us to go away.

**All: Help us to show everyone that there is more than enough for them.
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: [Come to the Table](#) by Sidewalk Prophets

[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 (8/2/20)

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.

- For the friends and family of Rev. Tom Atherton, former minister of this church, who passed away after a long journey with Parkinson's. He has returned to the God he served so well and loved so much.
- Friends & family of Nell Smallwood, Beatrice Maude Charewicz, 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 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 the friends and family of Cindy Hanks, Ann's friend;
- For the friends and family of Rebekah Mani, Sanjay's friend;
- For the stories we have not treated with respect;
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning

Holy One, as I walk through this new day, help me to see each experience as an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be your servant and a chance to help Jesus feed those in need, guided by your steadfast love for me. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Gracious God, thank you for being with me throughout this day. As night falls, I give this day back to you, trusting in you and in your unearned gift of grace to give me peace and rest, for you are just in all your ways and kind in all your doings. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

The disciples were amazed at Jesus' feeding of the multitudes. How have you seen him make a way when there was no way?

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 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.

	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs. Expenses +/-
June	\$33,147	\$43,010	(\$9,863)

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:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Hot Dogs | Juice (Apple, Cranberry, other fruits) |
| Cheddar Cheese | Coffee |
| Eggs | Flushable Wipes |
| Olive Oil | Foil Wrap |
| Cookies | Trash Bags |
| Pudding (cups or mix) | Sandwich and Freezer Bags |
| Cereal | Bleach |
| Pancake Syrup | Dry Cat Food |
| | Fresh Fruit -- Apples and Oranges |

Also, a big thank you to mask makers who donated masks to the food pantry already. They have been a huge help for people. If anyone has more to donate, we are running low. We still have several kid masks, but could use more for adults.

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.

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.

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/>