



Brookline Community Church
Worshiping Apart
Reverend Catherine Merrill, Minister
October 11, 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: [Be Thou My Vision for Cello & Piano](#) by David Abramsky

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

Centering Ourselves for Worship¹:

[Join Amy Razzaboni & Candy Tiner, today's lay leaders, [in our centering prayer](#).]

Leader: The whole world is in God's hands.

All: Everything that lives and breathes. Everything that simply is.
Everything.

Leader: From the farthest spaces, to the inmost places!

All: God is with us and we are with God. Alleluia!

Leader: As people of Christ, gathered at table, with our sisters and brothers around the world, to remember whose we are, we praise —

All: Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

¹ Today's open and closing prayers as well as the communion liturgy were inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Holy Communion Liturgy for World Communion Sunday, October 4, 2020," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted September 25, 2020, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2020/09/25/holy-communion-liturgy-for-world-communion-sunday-october-5-2020/> (accessed October 5, 2020).

Leader: Shall we pray?

With all that we have, with all that we are, we worship you, God-of-all-Being. Bless this day. Bless this time. Bless this gathering. Bless this world, with your overflowing love. Alleluia! Amen!

All: Alleluia! Amen!

Hymn: *Lord I Need You* by Matt Maher

[[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.

Invitation to Communion:

Leader: We rejoice in the God of life, who gives us bread. God gives us the fruit of the earth worked with human hands. God makes it into the bread of life.

All: We rejoice in the God of life who gives us wine. God joins us in tending the fruit of the vine with daily care. God puts the flavor the new world into it.

Leader: As the wheat and grapes are joined on this table in bread and wine – into a visual symbol for us –

All: May our church join together into a visual symbol for the entire world.

Words of Reconciliation and Remembering:

Leader: Let us join together to offer words of reconciliation

**All: I commit, God, to searching for:
The healing of my relationship with you.
The healing of my relationship with myself.
The healing of my relationship with others.
The healing of my relationship with all your creation.
I commit to search for SHALOM, God's promised peace.**

Leader: It is said: Forgiveness is forgetting bad things, remembering good things. Forgiveness is accepting God's love.

Leader: Let us remember, the Lord, the friend of sinners,

All: who were the oppressed, the estranged, the weak, the sick, widow, orphans.

Leader: Let us remember, the Lord, the one disliking of the common structure and power.

All: Let us remember, the Lord, the one sharing of daily food in life.

Leader: Let us remember, the Lord, the one liberating from a dictator.

All: We remember thy suffering, O Lord, at thy Last Supper.

Prayer of Consecration

Leader: You emptied yourself completely, keeping nothing for yourself.
Now, naked, utterly stripped,
you give yourself to us as bread that sustains us
and as wine that consoles us.

You are Light and Truth
You are the Way and the Hope
You are Love. Grow in us.

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: The ears of wheat are broken and scattered on the hillside to grow.

All: Gathered, they are broken again and scattered throughout the city to make bread.

Leader: The bread is scattered to each home and broken to make nourishment.
Broken and scattered,

All: broken and scattered,

Leader: and some becomes Christ's body broken for us

All: as we are the people of God scattered through the land

Leader: and, perhaps, broken to give nourishment to others.

**All: We receive this bread, broken, scattered and made whole.
(Pause)**

**All: We drink this cup, thirsty, longing, willing to be poured.
(Pause)**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: We give you thanks O Lord, for all food that has arrived at our table
from your generosity.

**All: Bless the people who have made it possible, from the cultivation
of the earth until it arrived to us.**

Leader: Give bread to those who are hungry,

All: and to those who have bread, give us hunger for you.

All: Amen

Hymn: *Resurrection Power* by Chris Tomlin

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

Lifting Up Our Joys & Concerns:

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

Let us pray for the needs of the world, saying,
God of hosts, hear our prayer.

Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

For your beloved, chosen people,
the vine you brought out of Egypt,
God of hosts, **hear our prayer.**

For the church of Jesus Christ,
your beloved Son,
God of hosts, **hear our prayer.**

For lifted up with joys,
Celebrating your great love in this world,
We pray

For being able to work from home and truly do my job;

For being able to smash to flinders and take to the dump a storage cabinet
from the garage;

For Howard & Christine's 25th wedding anniversary;

For Joe, Susan's relative, being out of rehab and home with the help of
friends and family, so he can get ready for cardiac surgery;

For Samantha & her grandfather's joint birthday;

For Luca, Amy's nephew, back in school and getting the services he
needs;

For Andrea's birthday, Donna & Peter's daughter-in-law;

For Emma's birthday, Barbara's granddaughter;

For Baby Jack, Susan's friend's son, celebrating his first birthday, despite
starting life with a tough struggle in the hospital;

For being able to pray, "not my will but thine" with a whole heart

God of hosts, **hear our prayer.**

For all who are suffering,
Longing to feel your presence a little closer this week,
We pray

For a life so full, we wonder where the extra time we thought we'd have
went;

For those feeling the burden of Covid-19 in the community, not only those
who are ill or recovering, but all the extra work it generates, like at the food
pantries;

For the friends and family of Ellie, Linda's aunt, who passed away;

For Bill & Nancy's new grandson, born 7 weeks early, who has whisked off
to the NICU;

For our friends who are losing their parents, for their loss, and the reminder it brings to us about our own parents, and our own children;

God of hosts, **hear our prayer.**

For the coming of your kingdom,
with justice and peace for all,
God of hosts, **hear our prayer.**

Turn again, O God of hosts;
look down from heaven and see;
have regard for your people;
through Christ, the vine,
in whom we are branches. **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: *No Turning Back* by Brandon Heath

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

Scripture Reading: Matthew 21:33-46

[Matthew 21:33-46 [read for you](#)]

'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'

Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures:
“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes”?’

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.’

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.” (Matthew 21:41). *They said.* Not *Jesus said.* But, *they said.* Who are the “they”? They’re the chief priests and the Pharisees (Matthew 21:45) who have figured out that Jesus is talking about them. And they really want to arrest Jesus, but they’re afraid of the crowds.

Now this whole parable is a tough one to understand. It appears in Mark, Luke, Matthew and even the Gospel of Thomas. And with some minor changes, it’s basically the same, meaning the landowner starts the vineyard with all the gear, sends servants to collect the rent, the servants are set upon, the son is sent and killed. So in that sense, we have a fairly consistent and fairly well attested version of the story. Chances are good that Jesus said something like this, even if you allow for changes from later editors and scribes.

But the interpretation a lot of us were taught as kids: God chose the Jews, but they killed God’s son, so now the Christians are in charge of God’s vineyard, woohoo, we are the champions, doesn’t seem like any message Jesus would ever send. It’s not enough to say that old interpretation is wrong. If that’s not what the parable is saying, then what is it saying?

I’ll be honest, it’s not really clear what it’s saying. So let’s look at it the way we look at any parable of Jesus. When Jesus tells a parable, and Jesus is definitely telling a parable here because he says so flat out, *Listen to another parable* (Matthew 21:33). When Jesus tells a parable, you’re invited to step into the world of the parable. You go along in the parable’s world and everything is familiar, just like real life. And then there’s a twist. And suddenly you see the real world in a way you never saw it before.

So a rich guy sets up a vineyard (Matthew 21:33). Cool. Leases it to tenants (Matthew 21:33). Normal. Goes to another country (Matthew 21:33). A little weird, but whatever. Sends his slaves to collect the rent (Matthew 21:34). That's what rich guys do.

The tenants beat the slaves, kill one and stone another (Matthew 21:35). Wait, what?

He sends more slaves (Matthew 21:36). Same thing happens. Huh?

He sends his son (Matthew 21:37), his son, after at least six members of his household have been killed, because according to the landowner, apparently the issue is one of respect (Matthew 21:37). And the tenants decide to kill the son which will get them the inheritance (Matthew 21:38). On what planet does that work?

Normally, this is what we'd call the twist in the parable. Jesus underlines the moment by breaking into the world of the parable and asking a question, "Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" (Matthew 21:40). The chief priests and the Pharisees say to Jesus, "*He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.*" (Matthew 21:41). OK, that feels normal, bring the hammer down on those wicked, murdering tenants.

But Jesus doesn't say, "Preach it brother." He doesn't say, "Amen." He says, "*Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?'*" (Matthew 21:42). Which is his way of saying, "wrong answer."

But how can it be the wrong answer? They murdered not one, not two, but three sets of people. If God seeks justice and righteousness as the fruit of God's vineyard, then how is this possibly the wrong answer. As an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, I try pretty hard to not be on the same side as the chief priests and the Pharisees. It never ends well. But I can see their point.

[Pause]

And, that my brothers and sisters in Christ, is the point. We didn't stop when the parable started to go off the rails. When the landowner sent the first set of slaves to collect the rent and they were beaten, killed and stoned, we didn't stop right there. We didn't ask how did we end up in a killing rage over vegetables? What is going on that the tenants see this as their best and only option? What is their reality that this is their go to move three times over? How can they possibly have convinced themselves that if they kill enough people and throw enough bodies over the wall, they'll inherit the land? Where is all that rage and fear and violence coming from?

Do you see it? Look out into our country, our state, heck, our town and our church right now. Where is all that rage and fear and violence coming from? Before we decide what to do about the other tenants in this real world of ours, we'd better look at why it's going off the rails and work on fixing that. Because something's really wrong when we live in a world full of rage and fear and violence and we have no idea where it's coming from and what we need to do to diminish it, to give folks who feel they have so few alternatives a few more options. The fruits of the vineyard are justice and righteousness, but they don't come from suppressing violence with more violence. They come from eliminating rage and fear and violence at the root.

It's our jobs at Christians to go into these parables and stand in the shoes of Jesus' opponents and make sure we're not repeating their mistakes.² Even when the parable, especially when the parable, is confusing, we may miss the point of it because we're feeling so secure that Jesus can't possibly be talking to us, can't be speaking about us. *"He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."* Who said that? They said that? Or did we? We better make sure we know the answer if we want to remain as the current tenants of the vineyard.

Hymn: *Press On* by Building 429

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

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

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

Leader: O God of Hosts, without Christ, all that we have is nothing.

All: With Christ, all that we have is everything.

Leader: We give you thanks and praise, O God, for all your good gifts, and above all,

All: for the gift of knowing Christ our Savior.

Leader: Strengthen us as we continue to strive for the heavenly prize that you offer:

All: eternal and abundant life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

² Ira Brent Driggers, "Commentary on the Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46", Working Preacher "Lectionary Commentaries for October 5, 2008, Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost", https://www.workingpreacher.org/wp_print_all.aspx?lectionary_calendar_id=45&print_type=comm&is_spnish=0 (accessed 18 June 2020).

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

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

Leader: May the God of Hosts, be your guide on the road every day,

All: be your refuge in times of uncertainty

Leader: and be your rest in times of fatigue.

Leader: May the God of Hosts, strengthen you when you feel weak,

All: comfort you when you feel sad

Leader: and hug you when you feel alone.

Leader: May the God of Hosts,

All: who loves you and knows you,

Leader: cover you with the tenderness of a Mother. Forever. Amen

All: 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: [My Story](#) by Big Daddy Weave

[Something 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 (10/11/20)

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.

- Friends & family of Jerry King, Tre Rouse, Tasha Feller, Pat Tiner, Terry House and Rev. Tom Atherton.
- 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 a life so full, we wonder where the extra time we thought we'd have went;
- For those feeling the burden of Covid-19 in the community, not only those who are ill or recovering, but all the extra work it generates, like at the food pantries;
- For the friends and family of Ellie, Linda's aunt, who passed away;
- For Bill & Nancy's new grandson, born 7 weeks early, who has whisked off to the NICU;
- For our friends who are losing their parents, for their loss, and the reminder it brings to us about our own parents, and our own children;
- 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 hosts, at the dawning of this day, let your face shine upon me. Restore me, and be my salvation; through Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Christ Jesus my Lord, as you have lived with me this day, let me rest with you this night; and when this life has ended, let me live with you forever. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Study the parable of the Landowner and the Vineyard. What are the “fruits of the kingdom” to which Jesus alludes in Matthew 21:43? How does your life bear fruit for God’s realm? What do you contribute to the harvest of God that Jesus describes?

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 +/-
August	\$74,646	\$64,492	\$10,154

Christmas Faire

There will be a Christmas Faire (or maybe this year we will have an Un-Faire??). Please email carolcherian@gmail.com if you are interested in participating or if you have ideas for this year's faire.

Register to Vote

The Town of Brookline has put out guidelines on the variety of ways you can register to vote. You can certainly register to vote on election day, but to avoid standing in line, you can do it ahead, either in person or by mail.

For more information, see the information on the [town website](#).

Volunteer at the Polls

The polls for the general election on November 3 need volunteers. If you are able to volunteer, in this time when so many of our neighbors cannot, please contact the Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Patricia Howard-Barnett at (603) 673-8855 x4 or patti@brooklinenh.us

Complete Your Census Form

You can help Brookline and NH get its share of federal resources as well as all the other goods and services driven by the census data. Make sure [you've filled out your census form!](#)

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/>

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:

Juice and Juice Boxes	Chips
Butter and Margarine	Cereal
Cheese (sliced, shredded or block)	Cat Food (Dry and Wet)
Cheese Crackers (like Cheese Nips)	Tissues

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.

Video Discussion Group

Starting on October 18, I'd like to try a video discussion group using the Nooma videos by Rob Bell. We'll watch them together (they're 10-15 minutes long) and then we'll discuss them. Filmed beginning in 2001, released in 2013, they're meant to give church groups a jumping off place for discussion of what it means to be Christians today.

They're not church-y, but they are Scripturally based and really thought provoking. I think you'll find the discussions interesting and challenging. If you find the discussions are interesting, there are 24 videos in the series. We can certainly do another set later.

I know that some folks like to think about a video before having to discuss it, so I've included links to each of the videos, so if you'd like to watch them before seeing them with the group you can. But you certainly don't have to. We'll start each session watching them together.

I've designed the four-part series around the Patriots schedule. All the sessions will use the same Zoom link.

Sunday, October 18, 4:30-6:00pm: [Nooma 001 Rain](#)

Sunday, November 1, 4:30-6:00pm: [Nooma 018 Name](#)

Sunday, November 8, 4:30-6:00pm: [Nooma 005 Noise](#)

Sunday, November 22, 4:30-6:00pm: [Nooma 006 Kickball](#)

Zoom Meeting:

This link should get you in:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85827353669?pwd=bUYzNTZ4QIBJSm5GZG81a3NXUWZwUT09>

Meeting ID: 858 2735 3669

Passcode: 746626

Dial by your location

- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Brookline Community Church 2021 Pledge Form

Where is Brookline Community Church headed?

- Deepen our faith through ministry, witness, and shared learning experiences
- Share the fellowship bubbling up among us more broadly within and without
- Learn and practice invitation in traditional and unexpected ways
- Experiment with turning our faith into actions that benefit our community

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ - _____

Street Address: _____

Where are you feeling called in 2021? What new things could BCC do to meet your faith and fellowship needs, especially during this time of pandemic? What talents are you willing to share in God's service?

Financial Support:

In response to God's gift of love through Christ and because I desire to support the church's ministries, I plan to give:

\$_____ each week / month / other _____ (please circle one)

or

\$_____ as a one time gift

I understand that this is an estimate of my ability to give and that if circumstances change, I can put a note in the offering or contact Treasurer Rena Duncklee to adjust my pledge.



Please return your completed pledge form by November 22nd, in the offering or by mail to:

Brookline Community Church
Attn: Treasurer, PO Box 507, Brookline, NH 03033

Pledge On-line:

If you would like to set up and control the amount of your weekly or monthly pledge, you can do so [on-line](#). Just click "Sign In" and then "Register for a New Account" and you can set up your recurring pledge for next year. (If you'd rather set up your pledge via text, text "GIVE" to +16035064455. You'll get a link back, which you can use to sign in and register for a new account, set your PIN and set up your pledge)