



Brookline Community Church
Worshiping Apart
Reverend Catherine Merrill, Minister
October 18, 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: [Prelude to Worship](#) by William McDowell

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

Centering Ourselves for Worship¹:

World Teachers' Day was October 5th

[Join Jill & Kevin Aitken, today's lay leaders, [in our centering prayer](#).]

Leader: God, we give thanks for teachers – the ones who changed each of our lives,

All: and the ones who are changing lives now for people older or younger.

Leader: For gifts of training freely given, and gifts of imagination in constant new constellation, for hours of planning and correcting, hours of meeting and workshopping,

All: and hours taken from family, friends, exercise ... sleep.

¹ Today's open and closing prayers were inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Prayer for World Teachers' Day, October 5, 2020," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted October 5, 2020, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2020/10/05/prayer-for-world-teachers-day/> (accessed October 13, 2020).

Leader: For the nimble management of in-person, virtual and hybrid classes, the grave risks in a season of coronavirus

All: we give thanks.

Leader: For just showing up smiling for a kindergartener or HiSET² student, for preschool and college chaos, for culinary school, band, athletic coaching, Special Needs – English Language Learning, and so many other unique subjects –

All: we give thanks.

Leader: And thanks for those left out of my incomplete assignment, (and that geometry teacher who never gave up) for their work is written in a chalk of love that can never be erased.

All: We give thanks for all that. And especially for gifts of caring that notice and respond to needs no one else may see – we give thanks.

Hymn: *This is the Day that the Lord Has Made*

[[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 Communion³:

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.**

² HiSET is an alternative to the GED. HiSET is both less expensive to take and offers more ways of taking the test depending on a student's learning preferences.

³ Today's communion liturgy was 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).

**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.](#)]

Ever teaching God,
you have made us in your image,
and we belong to you alone.
Therefore we offer ourselves to you,
in service, love, and praise.

Send us out into the world to teach of your love,
when joy rises and we want to sing.

Help us to teach others to pray for those lifted up, to pray for

For the marriages where you end up really working as a team;

For Grant Allan, Bill & Nancy's new grandson, being the Houdini of the NICU, attempting to escape from all the technology;

For Samantha Razzaboni getting engaged to Rich, congrats on this wonderful news;

For the Outreach team and everyone who helped with the moveable feast of the Senior Luncheon on Saturday;

For everyone involved in the NH UCC Annual Meeting, held virtually on Saturday, for supporting all the changes that required;

We were made in your image to celebrate joys together.

Send us out into the world to teach of your love,
When concerns come and we just want to rest for a moment.
Help us to teach other to pray for those weighed down,
To pray for

For Barbara Thaxter, whose cancer has returned;

For Leslie, Bill & Nancy's daughter, recovering from a pulmonary embolism
after the delivery of little Grant;

For Dave, whose phone and email are giving him grief (if you got an email
saying he needed a gift card that wasn't from him);

For Dave, with more tumors returning and a VA bureaucracy that doesn't
make anyone feel better;

For the people who have ended up in prison, no matter what the reason

We were made in your image to ease each other's concerns.

Send us out into the world as teachers of your Word,
made in your image so that we may teach of your goodness to everyone.
Use us for the glory of your realm
and the good of your people;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **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: *Sing Unto the Lord a New Song*

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

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7

[Isaiah 45:1-7 [read for you](#)]

Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped
to subdue nations before him
and strip kings of their robes,
to open doors before him—
and the gates shall not be closed:
I will go before you

and level the mountains,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron,
I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I surname you, though you do not know me.
I am the LORD, and there is no other;
besides me there is no god.
I arm you, though you do not know me,
so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD do all these things.

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

Recently I called my insurance company about a referral, and the person I spoke with said, "Hmm, I can't see any problem from our end. Let me call your primary care doctor's office and see what the problem was." I was totally unprepared for that. I spent the entire time on hold wondering what parallel universe I had stumbled into where the insurance company representative was genuinely helpful.

When today's passage in Isaiah was written, the Israelites were in exile in Babylon. They had challenged the King of Babylon, sure that God was on their side and would never let them be defeated in battle, and there they were, defeated in battle. They were living in exile in Babylon, modern day Iraq, and they were waiting for a savior. Because God had promised a savior, an anointed one, a messiah, who would come and rescue the nation of Israel. They were totally ready for that.

What they were not ready for was that the anointed one, the Messiah, would be the King of Persia, the King of modern day Iran. Everyone knew who the King of Persia was, because Cyrus was a Big Deal. He conquered the Babylonians and had an empire that stretched from India to the Mediterranean. Cyrus had a cylinder made that read, "I am Cyrus, king of the world, great king, legitimate

king, king of Babylon.”⁴ That is not a man trying to hid his light under a bushel. Cyrus was the top dog and he knew it and he wanted to make sure everyone knew he knew it.

Cyrus goes along with his army, ready to kick in doors of bronze and break through bars of iron (Isaiah 45:2), and God is there ahead of him, leveling mountains (Isaiah 45:2). Cyrus is the richest man in the world, and God is giving him treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places (Isaiah 45:3). For the Israelites held captive in Babylon, having the Messiah, the anointed one, be a gentile was unthinkable. God, who formed light and create darkness (Isaiah 45:7), is making life easier for Cyrus, a gentile who didn't even know God's name (Isaiah 45:5).

There's no doubt what God's intention is: for the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen (Isaiah 45:4). God's doing this for God's chosen people, Israel. And indeed, it is Cyrus who releases the captives in Babylon to return home. As the great king, legitimate king, king of the world, Cyrus preferred to rule an empire where the conquered people didn't hate him with every fiber of their being. It may seem like sensible politics when you think about it. But for the Israelites, it taught them something about God they never knew before.

They had lost to Babylon, they had seen Jerusalem fall and the Temple destroyed and the valuables carted off and the people sent into exile. In the thinking of the day, that meant the God of Israel was less powerful than the god of Babylon, so you might as well start worshipping the god of Babylon. But they had thought about that, about all that the God of Israel had done for them, and they had kept worshipping the God of Israel. Maybe they didn't have a Temple anymore, maybe they were in Babylon, not the Promised Land. But they had been in worse places before, and the God of Israel had saved them. And there was the promise of the Messiah.

So in the scheme of things, I think they were calling the Help Desk and they would not have been surprised if the Help Desk was actually helpful. Unlike me who was shocked it was helpful. What confused them so thoroughly that God needed to explain it to them was exactly how powerful God was.

God didn't need to send a Messiah to kick down Babylon's doors. God could work through the great king, the legitimate king, the king of the world. God was so powerful, God could work through someone who didn't even know God existed, didn't know God's name. Sure, the Israelites knew God was all powerful. God had created light and darkness, weal and woe (Isaiah 45:7). But

⁴ James K. Mead, "Commentary on the First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7", Working Preacher "Lectionary Commentaries for October 19, 2008, Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost", https://www.workingpreacher.org/wp_print_all.aspx?lectionary_calendar_id=47&print_type=comm&is_spnish=0 (accessed 18 June 2020).

to be able to work through the king of the world, to work through someone who wasn't a Jew, well, that was a powerful God.

That is the question of stewardship. Are you ready to work with a God so powerful that God will work through anyone, even the most powerful, on behalf of God's servants, on behalf of God's chosen? Are you ready to work with a God so powerful that God will send help from people you would never expect, from the last people on earth you would think God will work through?

I know you're saying "yes" and I know you. You're a thoughtful group of people, so you're saying "yes" with a bit of a gulp, because you know that working with whomever God sends might be more of a challenge than you're ready for. But it's stewardship season, so let's just go there. Are you ready to work with a God so powerful that God will send help to God's servants, to God's chosen, through you? Because if God is powerful enough to free the captives through the great king, the legitimate king, the king of the world, God is powerful enough to work through you. God is powerful enough to go before you and level mountains. God is powerful enough to break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, and give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places (Isaiah 45:2-3). The question is are you willing to accept God's help and steward the gifts you've been given as God expects you to do.

It's not a small thing. It's a huge challenge. But the power you need to accept it, to take it on, isn't yours. It's God's. That's question of stewardship. Are you ready to follow a God that powerful? Are you ready to accept that kind of help from the Holy Help Desk?

Hymn: *Jesus, My Treasure* by Canyon Hills Worship

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

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

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

The ever-teaching God made the heavens,
and all the earth belongs to the Holy One.
As Jesus taught us,
let us give to God
the things that are God's own.

All honor and majesty, strength and beauty
are yours, maker of heaven and earth.
Let these simple offerings we bring
be a sign of the great glory
that is due to your holy name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

[[Let's pray together](#). Thanks, Jill & Kevin, Jocelyn and Mr. Wiggle, KJ, for being our Lay Leaders this week!]

Leader: We give thanks for the teachers in our lives, the ones who stood up in classrooms, and the folks who never knew that's what they were doing on the tough road of life.

All: In the coming week, help us to be the teachers of God's loving presence in this world.

Leader: We give thanks for the teachers who showed up to work with our special needs, when we just couldn't get something that we needed to learn, about how the letters went, about how to speak to a pouty teenager, about how to offer patience to a forgetful parent

All: In the coming week, help us to be the teacher of God's unending patience in this world.

Leader: We give thanks for the teachers who taught us what it was like to stand under the unwavering focus of expertise that longed to be transferred from one place to another.

All: In the coming week, help us to be the teachers of God's conviction that we are better than we appear right now.

Leader: We give thanks for all the teaching given and received. 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: [Be Ready](#)

[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 (10/18/20)

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 Barbara Thaxter, whose cancer has returned;
- For Leslie, Bill & Nancy's daughter, recovering from a pulmonary embolism after the delivery of little Grant;
- For Dave, whose phone and email are giving him grief (if you got an email saying he needed a gift card that wasn't from him);
- For Dave, with more tumors returning and a VA bureaucracy that doesn't make anyone feel better;
- For the people who have ended up in prison, no matter what the reason
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning

Lord God, giver of light and darkness, from the rising of the sun to its setting you have called me by name; there is no God besides you. Go before me and guide me this day; bless and keep me forever. Amen

Household Prayer: Evening

Lord God, giver of darkness and light, from the setting of the sun to its rising you have called me by name; there is no God besides you. Stay with me and guard me this night; bless and keep me forever. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

This week, set aside some time to take inventory of your life. Consider your spiritual gifts. How do you use them in the service of God and others? Consider your material goods. How do you make use of these possessions?

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

No Christmas Faire in 2020

But we are doing some fundraising to help replace the money it generates. We have delicious homemade strawberry and apricot jam that is available for sale now until it's gone (\$5/jar). We have a Firepit Raffle "Basket" that we will be selling tickets for starting Sunday, Oct. 18 (if you can help sell some tickets that would be great!). Tickets are 1/\$5 or 5/\$20. One or two sale items and one or two other raffle items may be added soon. The raffle ticket drawing will be held on Sunday, December 6th. Please [email carolcherian@gmail.com](mailto:carolcherian@gmail.com) if you have any questions or are interested in helping out.

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

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)