



Brookline Community Church
Worshiping Apart
Reverend Catherine Merrill, Minister
November 8, 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: [O God Almighty Father](#)

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

Centering Ourselves for Worship¹:

[Join Carol Cherian and John Nicholson, today's lay leaders, [in our centering prayer](#).]

Leader: Hold onto us O God, in the aftermath of the election

All: Let us trust in your love, your grace, your forgiveness

Leader: Help us find a way to build bridges,

All: to find a path through

Leader: Remind us again of not just our belovedness

All: But the belovedness of those with whom we disagree

¹ Today's open and closing prayers as well as the communion liturgy were inspired by Carol Hallman's "Guest Post – Election Day Prayer by Carol Hallman," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted November 2, 2020, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2020/11/02/guest-post-election-day-prayer-by-carol-hallman/> (accessed November 2, 2020).

Leader: Remind us that whoever wins
**All: We are the ones that make our state and our country what it is
and what it becomes**

Leader: Open our ears so we may listen
All: Open our eyes so we may see

Leader: And open our arms so that
All: We might come together through love

Everyone: Love of you and love of neighbor. Amen.

Lifting Up Our Joys & Concerns:

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

Let us pray for the world, saying,
O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Let us offer our prayers and intercessions to God,
confident that the love of Christ continues to appear in our lives
in surprising and unexpected ways.

We pray for all who seek your radiant light
in the darkened corners of our world;
may we find our way to you
through our love for one another.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

We pray for all who are lifted up with joy,
 For texts from our sisters when they are in a good mood
 For a successful take home meal and whoopie pie extravaganza
 For texts from our kids, showing how much they can do on their own,
 including cook Indian food,
 For a socially distanced Halloween when we ran out of candy

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

We pray for all those who are weighed down with concerns
For a friend of the church, who is facing a tough diagnosis
For Barbara's friends, facing medical challenges of heart and hip
For Mark Searles, Susan & Russell's friend, returning home after a month
at MGH
For Barbara Thaxter, receiving hospice care at home
For Melanie and all the candidates and their families, who have put
themselves out there in this bruising election season, may they know how
much they are admired for standing for what they believe in
For Miriam, Sanjay's sister, like many folks, she's feeling the pressure
For all of us, may peace on earth come soon
For the strength to do right and speak justly without judgment

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

We pray for all who are oppressed
by institutions and structures unjustly ordered;
bless us with a joy for justice
that all may share in the blessings of this life,
walking in right relationship with you
by caring for our neighbor.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

We pray for all who have no work,
for those without adequate health care,
and for all who hunger or have no shelter.
Bless us with meaningful work and ample provision,
as we love and care for each other
under the protection of your sheltering sky.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

We pray for all who suffer violence
on dangerous streets and in war-torn places;
keep them from harm's way.
Bless us with your vision of peace,
that all may flourish as one family under God
with justice and freedom for all.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

We remember before you all who have died
that they may know your peace.
Bless each of us with a sure and certain hope of the resurrection,
that we may know our risen Lord,
as we share eternal life in 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 or call/text (978) 494-6953.]

Hymn: *One Family Under God*

[\[Click here\]](#) 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.

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

[1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 [read for you](#)]

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

The church at Thessalonica are believers. They know Jesus came once and is coming again. A couple of times in his letters, Paul has to remind them to keep going to work (1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:10-12), that the end is not here yet. So they are fully on board with Jesus coming again. But they have questions. Because some members of their community have died between the time they

became believers and Jesus' return. And the church wants to be sure that they are included in the reunion with Jesus that Paul has said is coming.

It makes sense. Death separates, relationships are severed, hopes are dashed, the stories we tell about our futures have to be re-written.² But I think the Thessalonians are asking about more than particular individuals. They want to know if they will be together again as a community.³ Everyone together. Living. Dead. I don't think I really understood that until this year.

Will we be together again as a community? Everyone, old and young, pre-existing condition or not? Will we be together again singing in the sanctuary? Because it is hurting me to only see some of you when I'm thinking of all of you. I want to have communion again where we eat from the same plate, where the bread I break is put on the plates and handed out.

Will we be together again as a community? With so many dear members of this community making take home meals and senior luncheons, getting gift cards for SHARE families and doing tech support so the worship service isn't just me howling into my phone. So many people picking huge gorgeous videos to fill our hearts and our sanctuaries while we can't sing together. So many people working on budgets and turning the clocks back and getting the mail and paying the bills, selling tickets and jam and putting together a phenomenal fire pit that will keep friends together even as they hang out outside in a New Hampshire winter. So many people praying for the babies come too early and parents lost too soon, for recoveries that are taking too long and burdens shouldered that are just too heavy. Will we be together again as a community?

Paul's answer to that is, of course, we will all be together again. God came as a wee baby to a stable in Bethlehem. God came again on Easter morning. God is with us now every moment in this life. We will meet God as if God was a visiting dignitary, and then we will fall back to earth and get down to work. In this world. We won't be whisked away to some cloud somewhere else. We'll all be together here in this world.

Will we be together again as a community? Everyone? Republican and Democrat? Independents of all stripes? Will we come together regardless of ball cap? Of course we will. If death can't keep our community apart, I can't see how a few lawn signs are going to do so.

² Mark B. Lee, "Proper 27, Exegetical Perspective, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18" in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A, Volume 4*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 281.

³ Jane Lancaster Patterson, "Commentary on the Secondary Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13 18", Working Preacher "Lectionary Commentaries for November 12, 2017, Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost", https://www.workingpreacher.org/wp_print_all.aspx?lectionary_calendar_id=731&print_type=comm&is_spnish=0 (accessed 23 June 2020)

Except. Except that those lawn signs are keeping us apart, more and more.

Paul is talking about Jesus' return. And somehow, between when Paul was writing to the Thessalonians and now, we've turned the idea of Jesus' Second Coming into an ending. Jesus comes and we flash "The End" on the screen and that's it. That's not what Paul is saying. He's saying that Jesus comes again and the work on this sweet earth begins. We rise up into the air to greet God, everyone, all together, the whole community and then we get to work.

And we don't have to wait until for Jesus to arrive, because God is already with us. We can rise up in the air on the work and emotions that went into this week's election. And then we can come down to the ground and do what our community knows how to do. We can check in on each other and make sure everyone who needs a casserole has one. We can make sure that every whoopie pie has a home. We can rake and shovel and insulate so no one is struggling with the early arrival of snow.

More than that, we can get everyone around one table. There are no purity tests, no oaths you have to swear. Color doesn't matter, black, brown, white, red, blue, everyone is welcome. We have to confess our shortcomings. We have to accept graciously the gifts we've been given, the bread of life and the cup of salvation. We love our God and we love our country and because of that we are willing to put in the work, together, as a community, to make connection, to build relationships, so no one can be described in a single word, Pharisee, prostitute, leper, Democrat, Republican.

Being part of a church, in Thessalonica or in Brookline, is saying that you will work with anyone who turns up and is willing to work. Even if they are tough to work with. Even if you don't agree with them. Because if they show up, they are willing to come to that one table, where we confess our sins and commit to love.

So let us use this election to mark a new beginning, where we confess and then commit to live love, be love, grow love, share love. Regardless of color.

Regardless of lawn sign. Because that's how we come together as a community again.

Hymn: *We Are One*

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

Words of Remembering:

Leader: We the people are divided
By politics, by policies
On issues ranging from refugees to poverty
To racism and sexism and even ageism

Names are called
Anger spreads
Fears too
Some are afraid of voter fraud
Others voter suppression
Even wearing masks has become political

Many of our families, O God
Are divided and refuse
To speak to each other
Brother against sister
Sister against mother

It's tearing our very
Soul as a nation and as a people

It is a sign of our brokenness a sign of our failure to
Live love
Be love
Grow love
Share love

Leader: We have forgotten that we are called to one table
Where bread and body are broken for us
Where love and wine are poured out for us
Not because we are on the right side of the division
But because we are working to set aside our divisions

**All: And so now we come,
Not perfect, God is perfecting us all
Not sinless, God forgives sin
Not because we must, but because we may
We come to see what God offers us
And all our imperfect, sinful brothers and sisters around the same
table.**

Prayer of Consecration

Leader: Gracious God, we ask you to bless this bread and cup and all of us with the outpouring of your Holy Spirit. Through this meal, make us the body of Christ, the church, your servant people that we may be the salt, and light and leaven for the furtherance of your will in this world.

Help us to break bread with each other, that we may not break each other's hearts.

(breaking, touching or lifting bread)

Help us to share the cup of blessing with each other, that we may be a blessing to one another

(pouring, touching or lifting cup)

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: Taste and see that God is good. Eat this bread.

**All: The gifts of God for the people of God.
(Let us eat the bread)**

Leader: Taste and see that God is good. Drink of this cup.

**All: The gifts of God for the people of God.
(Let us drink from the cup).**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Loving Christ, in a time of division, you invited everyone to your table, even those who would betray you.

All: Help us to invite those into our hearts who fear betrayal.

Leader: Loving Christ, in a time of division, you offered hospitality to all, not requiring people to give up who they were to be offered a place at your table.

All: Help us to offer a place in our hearts for those who fear loss.

Leader: Loving Christ, we give you thanks for example you offered all the world from a time when division was making the world less, not more.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn: *People of the Earth Come to Jesus*

[[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.](#)]

O great and loving God, we give you thanks

that you have given your faithful people

a love for justice and the gift of generosity.

Bless the gifts we offer and with them reveal your righteousness

as we await the coming of your peace. Amen.

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

[[Let's pray together](#). Thanks, Carol and John, for being our Lay Leaders this week!]

Leader: Loving God, we ask that we might come through this time of division with more love, love of you and love of neighbor.

All: Help us open our arms and our hearts.

Leader: Open our eyes so we may see.

All: Open our ears so we may listen.

Leader: We are the ones that make our state and our country what it is and what it becomes.

All: Regardless of who wins

Leader: Remind us of the belovedness of those with whom we disagree,

All: As well as our own belovedness.

Leader: Help us to find a path through

All: to find a way to build bridges

Leader: Let us trust in your love, your grace, your forgiveness

All: Hold onto us O God in the aftermath of the election

Everyone: Hold onto us O God in all the days that are to come.

[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: [Let Justice Roll](#) featuring Taylor Wilding & Alicia Bushen

[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 (11/8/20)

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, Rev. Tom Atherton, June Hoff.
- 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 friend of the church, who is facing a tough diagnosis
- For Barbara's friends, facing medical challenges of heart and hip
- For Mark Searles, Susan & Russell's friend, returning home after a month at MGH
- For Barbara Thaxter, receiving hospice care at home
- For Melanie and all the candidates and their families, who have put themselves out there in this bruising election season, may they know how much they are admired for standing for what they believe in
- For Miriam, Sanjay's sister, like many folks, she's feeling the pressure
- For all of us, may peace on earth come soon
- For the strength to do right and speak justly without judgment
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning

I give thanks for the gift of life this day and for the privilege of loving you by serving others. Give me an opportunity to grow in right relationship with you by promoting justice in the world today through my life, my choices, and my witness. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

It is evening, and it is time to sleep. Throughout this day, I have endeavored to serve you by making a difference in the world. Thank you for all caregivers and workers who devote themselves tonight to the well-being of so many. Help me to rest in peace this night and rise tomorrow ready to serve your justice. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

In our fast-paced world, daily encounters with delay are sometimes difficult to accept. How can we be intentional in practicing the presence of God, cultivating steadiness and peace in our lives and the world while extending God's hospitality and love? How can such spiritual attributes empower us to be better advocates in working to create a more just and equitable world?

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 +/-
October	77,968	\$70,830	\$7,137

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.

Christmas Blues Service

Jazz Sanctuary service at First Congregational Church, Concord will offer a Blues Christmas service for this year which has so many of singing the Blues. It will premiere on [their YouTube channel](#) on November 15th, and be available after that to stream and enjoy.

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:

Cooking Oil	Bread
BBQ Sauce	Canned Chicken
Laundry Detergent	Canned Ham
Bleach	Paper Towels
Vinegar	Tissues
Coffee	Sandwich Bags (and other zipper bags)
Peanut Butter Crackers	Trash Bags
Pudding (cups or mix)	Baked Beans
Butter/Margarine	

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)

SHARE CHRISTMAS



Please consider giving in the following ways:

Purchase a gift card for a child in any increment to Amazon, Target, Walmart or any local store

Purchase a gift card for a single adult in \$25.00 increments to an area grocery store, Walmart or Target.

Make a monetary donation for Share to buy Gift Cards.

Place in Box in front hall at the church

Or

Mail to church at PO Box 507 Attn Outreach

By November 10th

**Thank You
Outreach Board**

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)