



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: [There is a Fountain](#) by Greg Howlett

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

Centering Ourselves for Worship:¹

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

When children play with their toy arks, they lose pieces along the way. Just one giraffe remains. The monkeys disappear, only to turn up years later under the bureau. Today we have lost more than our toys. We have lost a lot.

We are desperate for a forty-day calendar invite – and none is forthcoming. We are counting the days one "slice" of toilet paper at a time; those paper perforations let us laugh at how scared we are.

We so want to come out of zombie zoom and unmute ourselves. We want to touch or be touched. For now we are all untouchables and very touchy.

¹ Today's Centering Prayer and Prayer to Send Us Back out into the World were inspired by Rev. Donna Schaper in the UCC Daily Devotional from April 1, 2020.

I miss the future. And from within the ark, all I can see is a different future. The end of the office. The end of school. The end of church. The end.

Advice-givers say, "Lower your expectations." So, I will. I will make this journey without a suitcase, without a map, without guides. I'll travel itinerary-free. Noah probably did too, until the dove and the rainbow changed his mind.

O steadfast God of flood and ark,
of calendars and eternity,
draw near.

Future us in new ways. Amen.

Hymn: *Noah, God's Friend* by Robbie Rieder and the Crossroads Kids' Club

[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with. I've been missing having a Children's Message, so maybe this can help fill that niche.

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 and Concerns:

[Rev. Cath [sharing our joys and concerns](#).]

Steadfast God,
thank you for sheltering us in the storms of life.

Thank you for ministering to us through angels
seen and unseen
in times that test us.

Thank you for claiming us as a people beloved forever.
Because of your great love and care for us,
we trust you in our brightest joys and deepest needs.

We rejoice when dark clouds of trouble are overtaken
by the light of your presence and new possibilities,

We join with those rejoicing and pray

For getting our shots, with appointments or without,

For bike rides in the snow and bike shops who will repair a broken chain
and save an afternoon ride

For a grease fire that didn't get as slippery as it might have

We rejoice when things settle down after a time of tossing about,
when the great storm is over,
and when the promise of resurrection life takes hold in us
with sure and certain hope.

Hear our prayers, we ask, for the deep needs of the world.
When we are weighed down with concerns,
overwhelmed by the chaos of life,
we need your presence even more

For all those struggling with concerns, we pray

For Bob Higgins and his daughters, Barbara's family, who are navigating a
stubborn Covid patient through a tough illness

For the folks in Texas who are without power and water in the midst of a
cold snap

For the people of Myanmar, facing a loss of their young democracy

Make us bold to ask for help
when we are confused, lost, or afraid.

In places of violence and warfare,
give us the courage to lay down our weapons of death
and promote life and well-being instead.

In places of drought and fire,
bring rains that make the earth colorful and verdant again.

In places where the waters overtake their boundaries,
allow the overflowing chaos to recede.

In the midst of death and grief,
even though we are weary,
we return again and again, praying for comfort,
for an easing of the pain that comes from loss,
and for the light of your presence to pierce
the present darkness.

As the heavens were torn open at Jesus' baptism,
and the curtain in the temple was torn
at his crucifixion,
so now tear open anything that divides us from you
or hides your presence in our lives or in the church.

We desire to hear your voice of love,
to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,
and to see you clearly.

Lead us to serve others faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ,
in whose name we pray. 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: *Lift Up Your Eyes by Shining Light*

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

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

[1 Peter 3:18-22 [read for you](#)]

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

What are you drowning in?

Some of us have been emptying our garages. Some of us have been getting the photos into albums. Some of us have been almost paralyzed with loneliness because we've been cut off from our friends. This pandemic has been teaching us about drowning. We're drowning in loneliness, we're drowning in unneeded possessions, we're drowning in misinformation and political division. Some of us are bobbing up on the surface of the flood. Some of us are so deep under the water that the light is gone and the bubbles aren't coming up anymore.

It is the first Sunday in Lent, when we begin the journey to Good Friday and the Cross in Jerusalem. So now is the moment to take stock and see what we're drowning in. Because we are all drowning in something. Left to our own devices, we'll continue to drown. Those of you have cleaned out a closet or created crazy recipes to clear out the weird stuff in your pantry, what do the shelves look like now? Pretty much the same. Right? Because what you were

drowning in before has just been replaced with more of the same, only with expiration dates that are further in the future.

Now is the time to leave the waters of the flood and return to the waters of baptism. That is the invitation of Lent. To pivot and take a different path. And to take that path with a good conscience and a righteous companion, with Jesus. Jesus knows that taking that path, following God's plan, doing good, fighting for justice, that will lead to suffering. Jesus knows that taking that path will make you vulnerable.² The world will see you doing good and standing up for justice and will persecute you. Or at least make your life more difficult, more full of shame. And the way to make the suffering go away is to go with the flow, stop doing good, stop standing up for justice.³

Lent is a time when we look at the world as it is, we look at ourselves as we are, and we reflect on what our baptism could change if we let it. In our baptism, Jesus claimed us.⁴ Jesus promised us that the one passage through the waters of baptism would provide as many resets as we needed. We could keep following Jesus, keep doing what was right, keep fighting for justice, keep being vulnerable, keep suffering to stay with that plan, and Jesus would be right there with us, every step, every flutter kick and dog paddle of the way. Jesus would be right there with us, because Jesus suffered too.

Our baptism doesn't eliminate suffering. It guarantees it. If we are going to accept Jesus, do good in this world, fight for justice, we are going to suffer. Somehow, it seems we have decided that suffering is a sign of failure, something to be feared.⁵ Jesus suffered, and suffered terribly, because he stuck with his mission of reconciling us with God, of giving us a new path back to a right relationship with God (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus accompanies us as we suffer. Jesus not only models a life full of suffering, Jesus shows us what it is like to accompany those who suffer. Because sometimes the only thing we can do is accompany people. "The willingness to be wounded may be all we have to offer."⁶

Whatever battering we take in the flood, whatever vulnerabilities are exposed, whatever shame is heaped upon us, Jesus has claimed us. Jesus who knows

² Charles Cousar, "First Sunday in Lent: 1 Peter 3:18-22" in *Texts for Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV – Year B*, ed. Walter Brueggemann et al. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 197.

³ Cousar, 197.

⁴ Judith Jones, "Second Reading: Commentary on 1 Peter 3:18-22", Working Preacher "Lectionary Commentaries for February 22, 2015, First Sunday of Lent", <https://www.workingpreacher.org/?print-all=30049%2C30047%2C30048%2C30050> (accessed 15 February 2021)

⁵ Shawnthea Monroe-Mueller, "First Sunday in Lent, Pastoral Perspective, 1 Peter 3:18-22" in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B, Volume 2*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 40.

⁶ Monroe-Mueller, (quoting Abraham Verghese, "Close Encounters of the Human Kind," *New York Times Magazine*, September 18, 2005, 192.), 42.

what it is to suffer in this world has claimed us. Jesus, *who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him* (1 Peter 3:22), has claimed us. In the chaos of the flood, in the struggle to keep from drowning, in the fight to do good and justice in this world regardless of what the world thinks, it is easy to forget that we are claimed by the One of Infinite Power and Compassion. In the heart of the flood, it is easy to forget that the Risen, Living Lord is the one who has claimed us. It is the Risen, Living Lord who will provide the strength we need to return to the promise of our baptism.⁷

During Lent, it is time to ask, what are you drowning in? During Lent, it is time to ask, how can your baptism save you?

Hymn: *Great is Thy Faithfulness by Maranatha!* Music

[[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.](#)]

God of steadfast love and faithfulness,
we are humbled as we try to do what is right
and to walk in your ways.

Receive, we ask, our offerings,
and use them for your own good purposes
in the church and in all creation.

We pray in Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

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

O steadfast God of flood and ark and baptism
of calendars and eternity,
Draw near.

As we head out into this coming week,
help us to acknowledge honestly what we have lost,
what others have lost.

Help us find and assemble the remaining pieces.

While we are trapped in our little zoom boxes, muted,
let us be honest about how much we want to touch or be touched.
and about how untouchable and touchy we feel right now.

⁷ William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 245.

You have brought us the future so many times,
with the ark and dove,
with the Red Sea and the tablets
with Bethlehem and the star,
with Calvary and the cross.

We don't like what we see coming
as we work through the obstacle course of qualifications,
and appointments
and where we are in the line.

The future doesn't look very familiar,
and that was one thing it always looked like,
for better or worse.

O steadfast God of flood and ark,
of calendars and eternity,
draw near.

Future us in new ways. 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: [Rainbow in the Sky](#) by Phyllis Unkefer

[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 (02/21/21)

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 and Dave Larkin.
- 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 Bob Higgins and his daughters, Barbara's family, who are navigating a stubborn Covid patient through a tough illness
- For the folks in Texas who are without power and water in the midst of a cold snap
- For the people of Myanmar, facing a loss of their young democracy
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning⁸

God of ancient covenants, your steadfast love and faithfulness are still new every morning. I thank you that I can begin this day in the confidence of your abiding love and unending mercy. Help me to treat others – family, friends, coworkers, classmates, and even strangers – with love and mercy in our encounters today. When I disappoint or am discordant, help me to show love to others. Open my eyes to the places, people, and circumstances in which your kingdom has come near. I pray in the name of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my Savior. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

God of peace, as the day draws to a close and the evening draws in around me, I think of the creatures of the earth that also seek rest in the hours of the night. You love them even as you love me, and your covenant faithfulness covers all of us. So, with the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the tiny ones who burrow in the ground, I offer you all thanks and praise:

for your unending goodness;
for the beauty of our home, the earth;
for your gift of life instead of a deserved destruction.

As your colorful bow now rests in the clouds, so may we color the earth with the ways of peace until all creation rests with you in completeness. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

The phrase “kingdom of God” occurs fourteen times in the Gospel of Mark. Though Jesus is described at the Gospel's opening as being “from Nazareth of Galilee” (Mark 1:9), at Jesus' baptism it becomes clear whence he comes and to whom he belongs. Jesus is God's beloved Son, and his baptism signals the only realm to which he owes allegiance. His baptism, then, not only is a religious act, but also is a political and economic one. In what ways does your baptism into Christ make claims on your political, social, and economic practices as well as your religious practices?

⁸ The Morning & Evening Prayer and Question for Reflection are reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion*. Copyright 2014.

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 +/-
January	\$7,237	\$6,497	\$739

All people age 65+ are now in Phase 1b for COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

Phase 1b began scheduling on January 22 at 8:00am. Vaccines for Phase 1b started on January 26. [Use this page to determine in what phase you belong](#) and for further directions.

Save the Date: Feb. 28 10:30am: We're going to continue our discussion about a project to share our church's mission with the wider community. We've been exploring doing a memorial for those lost to Covid-19. Our next step is to put together a rough description of what we'd like to do.



Weekly Lenten Taize services:

Throughout Lent, the New England UMC is [posting Taize services weekly on Wednesday](#). The services tend to be very meditative, using simple and compelling chants. If you've never had a chance to go to a [Taize](#) service, you might find them moving, especially during Lent.



Open Mic Night at the Hollis Church: Sat. March 13, 7:00-8:30pm



The Congregational Church of Hollis is having an open mic night via Zoom. If you want to attend or perform, send an email to openmic@hollischurch.org to get on the Zoom invite mailing list. Should be a lot of fun!

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 our community's needs.

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, they're looking for:

- Applesauce
- Cup O' Noodles
- Hearty Canned Soups
- Jello (any flavor)
- Peanut Butter Crackers
- Pickles and Relish
- Jelly (any flavor except grape)
- Juice Boxes
- Flavored Oatmeal
- Pancake Mix
- Syrup
- Microwave Popcorn
- Hot Cocoa
- Men's Deodorant
- Laundry Detergent
- Dishwashing Liquid

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