



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: [The Summons](#) words and music by John Bell

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

Centering Ourselves for Worship:¹

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

In our wilderness wandering, so often our eyes are kept from recognizing you.

Instead we focus on our fear, our sadness, our grief ...

because our screens are filled with dire predictions, heart-breaking stories, and death tolls.

You try to remind us that we've been here before ...

That you were there and still are here ...

You try to feed us with bread that sustains ...

But we don't see it, or it is too fleeting ...

¹ Today's Centering Prayer and Prayer to Send Us Back out into the World were inspired by Rev. Erica Robinson-Johnson, Director of Connectional Ministries/Assistant to the Bishop in the UMC Daily Prayer from April 22, 2020.

There are signs of the Rising ...
people making face masks, health care heroes, first-breaths after days on ventilators, extravagant generosity, shared art, spring's burst of new life ...

Keep appearing, Risen One ...
don't stop walking beside us and urging us to follow you toward life ...
to remember, to smile, to eat,
to embrace your hope,
to see you,
and join with you as your Easter people.

Hymn: *Lift High the Cross* by Krista Stolarski

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

If you have a favorite hymn you'd like to include in our worship service, just send it along and I'll look for a good place for it.]

Lifting up Our Joys and Concerns:

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

God, your Son Jesus Christ bore the cross for our salvation
and was raised from the dead for the redemption
of the world.

Jesus celebrated with those who were lifted up with joy.
Let us pray for those with joy in their life,
For Sandy Garvin doing well

For the Diaper Drive for Marguerite's Place filling up a truck

Give us the courage to celebrate when it is time.

Jesus wept with those weighed down with concerns.

Let us pray for those with concern in their life,
For the Adams family in Worcester, who lost three members of the family
to fire.

For Sanjay's dad, who fell again. He's ok, but needs to keep his footing.

For the families in Texas, who are getting their lives back together after a
terrible week without power and water.

For Eileen and Ed, Rev. Cath's friend's family, who had to flag down a
neighbor in Tyler, TX to help open the electric garage door so they could
get in their car and get warm.

For Marion McNeice, Lynn Abt's mom, who's been admitted to the hospital
in Florida with Covid and other complications

Give us the courage to weep when it is time.

Give us the courage to take up our cross
and follow him,
that through his grace we may accept
the cost of faithful discipleship
and receive the joy of everlasting life with Christ,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **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: *Just a Closer Walk with Thee* by The Worship Team

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

Scripture Reading: Mark 8:31-38

[Mark 8:31-38 [read for you](#)]

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

I've been thinking a lot about how I'll know when the pandemic is over. I mean for me, though there will probably be some official pronouncements, or probably multiple ones. When my parents are vaccinated? When my sister can come to visit from Hong Kong? When we go have pancakes at Moody's Diner? I've decided that the pandemic is over for me when we can sing together in church.

I don't know what your thing is that will tell you that the pandemic is over. When your kiddo is back in the classroom full time. When your grandkids sleep over for the weekend. When you hug someone you don't live with. When you go to a concert or go on a cruise or take a spin class. But there's a thing that will mark that moment for you. A thing that will say that what you have been waiting for has arrived.

We've been waiting for a while for that thing to come. At first, it seemed like there was no point thinking about it. If we couldn't keep toilet paper on the shelves, why think about what had to fall into place before we would sit in an airport lounge again? But whether we actively think about it or not, there's something we're each waiting for that will signal to us that this pandemic time is over. And we'll know it when we see it.

Peter, and everyone Peter knew, had been waiting for the Messiah. And in Jesus, Peter had found the Messiah. Jesus had been teaching and healing all over Galilee. Jesus had been talking about the Kingdom of God, about how it was breaking forth, here and now, in Peter's home town, in Peter's own life time. Jesus had been talking about justice and righteousness and the powers and principalities being overthrown. This was exactly what Peter had been waiting for. He knew it when he saw it and it was more wonderful than he had ever imagined and he was being invited to be a part of it.

In today's reading we see the whole Gospel, the whole story of the Good News, pivot. After this, Jesus will no longer focus on healing and teaching. From here on out, the focus is on discipleship.² This passage ends the tour of Galilee and begins the journey to Jerusalem.³ And suddenly the Messiah is saying that he will have to undertake certain activities, certain events that are absolutely not what Peter thought was a part of being the Messiah. Undergo great suffering? Rejected by those in authority? Be killed? (Mark 8:31) What? There is no way to get from there to beholding the Kingdom of God in this world, in this lifetime.

So Peter rebukes him (Mark 8:32).

² Lamar Williamson, Jr., *Mark*, in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1983), 150.

³ Williamson, 150.

Because we know what the Kingdom of God looks like. God's strength is finally on full display. The righteous are rewarded for all the times they did the right thing and no one noticed. God's wisdom is plain to everyone.

And isn't that the temptation? And isn't that what Satan is offering to all of us who have chosen to call Jesus the Christ, the Anointed One of God? The temptation is that we define the Kingdom of God the way we want to define it. We want to believe that God's anointed can avoid suffering, rejection and death.⁴ We want to believe that God's rule means power without pain and glory without humiliation.⁵ There is no way for humans to go from suffering, rejection and death to the Kingdom of God, so Jesus must have gotten his signals mixed up.

But no. Jesus is laser focused and crystal clear. Jesus has set his mind on divine things (Mark 8:33) and he's living his life that way, all the way to Jerusalem and the cross. God's mercy is given to sinners.⁶ God's strength is exposed in weakness.⁷ God's wisdom is veiled in parable and paradox, so we save our lives by losing them (Mark 8:35).⁸ God doesn't work the way we think God should. God is found in uncertainty, danger and suffering ... precisely where human wisdom sees God's absence.⁹

Jesus is the true Messiah. True discipleship means we don't get to take painless shortcuts.¹⁰ We don't get to come up with our own substitute for the way of the cross, one that is easier or less taxing.¹¹ The way of the cross includes suffering.

We know that. We've always known that. But because we know that Easter's coming, we let ourselves skim over the Good Friday part. We let ourselves look past the Cross to the empty tomb. At some point, I don't know when, I'll sing *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*, hopefully with swelling chords and a whole mess of brass and a ton of people. I'll sing with the smell of lilies and furniture polish and the rustle of chocolate egg wrappers as folks sneak a bite from their Easter baskets. And when I sing *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*, I will skim over this pandemic part. I will overlook what it felt like to worship without other people in the room, without singing together. I will be so happy to be catching a glimpse of

⁴ Williamson, 153.

⁵ Williamson, 153.

⁶ Joseph D. Small, "Second Sunday in Lent, Theological Perspective, Mark 8:31-38" 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), 72.

⁷ Small, 72.

⁸ Small, 72.

⁹ Small, 72.

¹⁰ W. Hulitt Gloer, "Second Sunday in Lent, Homiletical Perspective, Mark 8:31-38" 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), 73.

¹¹ Gloer, 73.

the Kingdom of God, that I will short change the suffering that was always there, is always there, will always be there.

We face that same temptation every Lent, breezing past Good Friday to get to Easter. Skimming over the suffering. So this year, as an act of discipleship, observe the suffering. Observe how you are being forced to confront suffering. Take some time to notice what it feels like to live longing for an Easter that you don't know when it's coming. This year, you don't have to overlook the suffering you're experiencing to pretend that all is well in your little world in order to blend in with everyone else. This year pause in the uncertainty, danger and suffering and instead of seeing God's absence, reassure yourself that while it feels like God is absent, this is just the way of the Cross. We don't have to understand it. We don't have to like it. But we have to stay with it if we are to be disciples of the Messiah.

Hymn: *Lead Me to Calvary* words by Jennie Hussey, 1921; music by William Kirkpatrick

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

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

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

What will it profit us to gain the whole world
and forfeit our life?

Accept our gifts with the dedication of our lives,
that we may be for the world
a sign of your abiding love
and a testament to your enduring promise,
trusting not in worldly gain, but in God's sustaining grace.

In Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all honor
and glory are yours,
Almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

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

As we head back out into the coming week,
help us to keep our eyes focused on you,
recognizing you,
looking through and beyond the screens
that bring so much heart-breaking fear and grief
into our daily lives.

Help us to see the reminders
That we have been here before
That you were there then
And are here now.

Let us see the signs of your Rising
In the everyday
In the masks and the meals
In the vaccinations and the ventilators
In the generosity and the gentleness.

Keep appearing, Risen One ...
don't stop walking beside us and urging us to follow you toward life ...
to remember,
to smile,
to embrace your hope,
to see you,
and join with you as your Easter people.

[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: [Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus](#) by Guardian

[It's loud and fun, so 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 (02/28/21)

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 the Adams family in Worcester, who lost three members of the family to fire.
- For Sanjay's dad, who fell again. He's ok, but needs to keep his footing.
- For the families in Texas, who are getting their lives back together after a terrible week without power and water.
- For Eileen and Ed, Rev. Cath's friend's family, who had to flag down a neighbor in Tyler, TX to help open the electric garage door so they could get in their car and get warm.
- For Marion McNeice, Lynn Abt's mom, who's been admitted to the hospital in Florida with Covid and other complications.
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning¹²

Lord Jesus, help me walk with you this day. If you lead me where I fear to go, give me courage and keep me true, that I may bear my cross without shame and live in the promise of life eternal. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Jesus, if I stray, show me my fault, forgive my sin, and set me rightly on your path. Keep me on the way of the cross, and lead me to the eternal joy of Easter. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Jesus asks his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. How do you practice self-denial for the sake of the gospel? Is every instance of self-denial an act of obedience to Jesus? Can some forms of self-denial foster oppression?

Daily Awareness Reflection¹³

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 ...

¹² 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.

¹³ Elizabeth Liebert, *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), 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 +/-
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.

The March/April edition of *The Upper Room* is available in the mail room, if you're looking for a printed daily Scripture reading and reflection to add to your spiritual practice.

This Sunday! 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.



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/>

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!

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