



*Brookline Community Church*  
*May 23, 2021 – Day of Pentecost*  
*Reverend Catherine A. Merrill, Minister*

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:** [Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart](#) by Sue Nixon

[No lyrics but a lovely voice to help you get settled for worship]

**Centering Ourselves for Worship:**<sup>1</sup>

[Join Ann Desrochers & John Panto, today's lay leaders, [in our centering prayer](#).]

**Leader:** So, if the essence of Pentecost is this — the ability to speak a language that means nothing to me but shares the good news someone needs,

**All:** **I should be willing once in my life to download a tongue of fire,  
and try to speak a language of the heart**

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<sup>1</sup> Today's Centering Prayer and Prayer to Send Us Back out into the World were inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Pentecost, 2018," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted May 29, 2017, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2017/05/29/pentecost-2017/> (accessed May 17, 2021).

Leader: To speak sketch pad,  
or vtime, encaustic, fantasy football,  
scrapbook, sierra club, or  
“welcome to walmart,”;

**All: To speak gardening, hip chat, manga,  
foxnews, lacrosse, rallycross,  
palmpainting, paintballing,**

Leader: To speak friend-of-Bill, fan-of-Kardashian,  
de-clutter, tiny house, or live-rough.

**All: Of course, it will be tentative,  
embarrassing,  
and I will make so many mistakes  
(which is not something I like to do),**

Leader: I will trip up and stutter and wait to hear back the Word from Acts:  
“in our own languages  
we hear them  
speaking about God’s deeds of power.”

**All: Amen.**

**Hymn: *Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling* by Branches Band**

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

**Lifting up Our Joys and Concerns:**

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

Gracious God, you come among your people  
as One who fashioned all things,  
who, face-to-face, revealed your knowledge of our lives,  
and whose presence brings assurance and hope.

Come among us again, in times of joy.

We pray for those lifted up with joy,

For Sierra, Candy's daughter, whose medical tests have come back negative, so she's back to life as normal

For flowing water at the Haight home, after weeks living in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, hauling water from the river

For Barbara's daughter, having all three girls at home

For the grandchildren over 12 getting vaccinated

For Rachel, Sanjay's niece, and Mackenzie, Jill's niece, graduating from college

For the joy that surrounds us,

We give thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Come among us still, in times of concern,

We pray for those weighed down by concerns,

For the friends and family of Brian Moore, Peter's friend & colleague at the Fire Department, who passed away unexpectedly at the age of 58

For the friends and family and especially the children of Liz, Brookline resident, who passed away in childbirth this week

For James Hoff, Donna's dad, who's going in for an angiogram this week which will help determine his care

For Bert Desrochers who is currently at Mass General recovering from a stroke

For the friends and family of Amy's Aunt Lois, who passed away this week. Prayers especially for Lois' daughter, Mona, who wasn't able to cross the border from Canada because of the pandemic.

For Yifan's brother-in-law who was diagnosed with Covid, and for the rest of his household who are worried because of his diagnosis.

For the people of India in the grip of the firestorm of Covid

For the people of Israel and Palestine continuing to struggle to find a path to peace

For those who surround us when concerns

threaten to overwhelm us,

We give thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Come among us always,  
to support those in our community who sacrifice  
for others, like members of our military and their families.  
Keep them safe as they assure our safety and independence,  
to live our lives as you call us to do.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love  
so that in hearing and seeing the gifts of this life,  
we may know the way to live in thanksgiving;  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

[For next week, please feel free to send me your joys & concerns and I'll include them in our prayers: [minister@bccnh.org](mailto:minister@bccnh.org) or call/text (978) 494-6953.]

**Hymn: *Spirit of God* by City Hymns**

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

**Scripture Reading: John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15**

[John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15 [read for you](#)]

'When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

'I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?" But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

**Reflection on the Scripture:**

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

Here we are celebrating Pentecost. The joy of Easter is so big, we need weeks to fit it in every year. Pentecost is the last Sunday in Eastertide. We celebrate that the divine is with us still, every day, here on this earth, in the form of the Holy Spirit. Often on Pentecost, we read the story from Acts, which describes the

tongues of fire over the disciples' heads. This year, I thought we'd focus on the reading from John where Jesus describes what will happen when he's gone.

Today's reading comes in the heart of Jesus' Farewell Address. Jesus has joined his followers in the upper room for the Passover Meal, after a triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The next day, he will be tried and sentenced and executed on the Cross. At the Last Supper, Jesus begins by kneeling down to wash their feet, their sore and dusty feet that have walked with him all over Israel. He ends the evening in a prayer to God, asking God to protect his followers and guide them in their work. And in the middle, he talks about what it means, what we have to do, to be a follower of Jesus.

Now Jesus is never going to go viral with his message. He's not going to get many clicks on his post, because he says the same thing over and over. In the Farewell Discourse, the longest thing we hear Jesus say,<sup>2</sup> fifteen times Jesus says he is leaving, twenty-six times he refers to the Spirit he and God are sending. But the leaving and the sending are how the work of being a follower of Jesus gets done. Jesus has shown us the Way, now it's our turn and the Spirit is here to help us, to go along with us.

Jesus is leaving, the Holy Spirit is coming. "I am leaving... I am sending...". Call and response, we weave the work of God together. Go through the Farewell Discourse and you hear the shuttle passing back and forth through the loom. Jesus is leaving, the Holy Spirit is coming.

Everything Jesus said and did among them is continued in what they say and do.

I washed your feet; you wash one another's feet (John 13:14)

I have loved you; you love one another (John 13:34, 15:12)

You've seen me; you'll see the Father (John 14:9)

You've seen me work; you'll do my work (John 14:12)

I've been with you; the Spirit will be with you (John 14:16-17)

I live; you also will live (John 14:19)

You are in me; I am in you (John 14:20)

I am teaching you; the Spirit will teach/remind you (John 14:25-26)

Abide in me; I abide in you (John 15:4)

I was hated; you will be hated (John 15:18-25)

The Spirit will testify; you will testify (John 15:26-27)

I go away; the Spirit will come (John 16:7)

I haven't finished what I have to say; the Spirit will tell you (John 16:12-15)

Jesus is leaving, the Holy Spirit is coming.

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<sup>2</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, "The Story behind the Story." *Journal for Preachers* 26, no. 4 (2003): 4-8. Much of today's sermon is based on this lovely article. If you'd like to read it for yourself, let me know and I'll send you a copy.

Get on our knees, get our hands dirty taking care of someone else. Talk about, witness to, the work that we do for Jesus. Do the work and say out loud what the work is. Then lift our faces to heaven and pray. And in Jesus' prayer during the Farewell Address, Jesus makes more explicit the congruence between what he did while he was with us and what we'll do after he leaves.

I am no longer in the world; they are in the world (John 17:11)

Father, we are one; may they be one (John 17:11, 22, 23)

I don't belong to the world; they don't belong to the world (John 17:16)

You sent me into the world; I send them into the world (John 17:16)

I sanctify myself; they are sanctified in truth (John 17:19)

You are in me and I in you; may they also be in us (John 17:21)

You love me; you love them (John 17:23, 26)

Jesus is leaving, the Holy Spirit is coming.

Easter is a time of celebrating new life, of seeing life where there was only death before. Pentecost is the moment when we mark the end of the celebration and turn back to normal life. Jesus is no longer with us in the flesh, Jesus has left, but the Holy Spirit has come. But how do we make that turn? How do we keep ahold of the miracle that death is defeated for all time? How do we translate what we know about caring for each other, loving each other, experiencing the love of God in our daily lives in this world which really, really does not want to know about that?

We do it the way Jesus taught us to all those years ago. Get on our knees, get our hands dirty taking care of someone else. Talk about, witness to, the work that we do for Jesus. Do the work and say out loud what the work is. Then lift our faces to heaven and pray.

Jesus is leaving, the Holy Spirit is coming.

[\[The Lord's Prayer\]](#)

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.

**Hymn: *Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove* by The Lockwoods**

[\[Click here\]](#) 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 Holy Spirit was sent to increase our compassion and to make us glad to spread good news by caring for those in need.

The gifts we bring today acknowledge our debt to God and our intent to relieve others of their burdens.

Bless what we offer and bless those who will be shown deeds of power through them;  
in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

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

Leader: As we head back out into the coming week, we know you have tasked us to speak in a language that means nothing to us but shares the good news someone needs.

**All: Help us to speak the good news that someone else is listening for.**

Leader: Help us to set aside our own preference and speak in the language someone else wants to hear,

**All: Help us to remember God shows up for each of us in tiny, specific ways. God's ways are not our ways.**

Leader: When we're not fluent in this new language and we make a mistake,

**All: Help us to let go of our self-criticism and remember that first Pentecost, which wasn't flawless either.**

Leader: In this coming week let us speak of the good news. Then let us wait, and listen actively for the Word from Acts,

**All: "in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."**

Leader: 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."](#)

## Postlude: [I'm Listening](#) by Chris McClarney

[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 (05/23/21)

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 friends and family of Brian Moore, Peter's friend & colleague at the Fire Department, who passed away unexpectedly at the age of 58
- For the friends and family and especially the children of Liz, Brookline resident, who passed away in childbirth this week
- For James Hoff, Donna's dad, who's going in for an angiogram this week which will help determine his care
- For Bert Desrochers who is currently at Mass General recovering from a stroke
- For the friends and family of Amy's Aunt Lois, who passed away this week. Prayers especially for Lois' daughter, Mona, who wasn't able to cross the border from Canada because of the pandemic.
- For Yifan's brother-in-law who was diagnosed with Covid, and for the rest of his household who are worried because of his diagnosis.
- For the people of India in the grip of the firestorm of Covid
- For the people of Israel and Palestine continuing to struggle to find a path to peace
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

### **Household Prayer: Morning<sup>3</sup>**

God of newness and delight, you greet your world again with light and life. I awaken to your presence behind, before, beneath, above, and within me. I thank you for another day and ask only that you keep me so firmly in your care that I can move gracefully through all I have to do. Guard my family, my friends, and all my brothers and sisters in faith. Let me be a peacemaker today; in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

Good and Holy One, you have led me through this day of many encounters to the time when I may close my eyes and dream. I thank you for the people you have sent my way today, for the work I have had to do, for the food, shelter, and safety you have given. I pray that people everywhere may have all necessary comfort and nourishment and that I may lie down in peace, resting in the trust that you are watching over all creation. I pray this in the name of the One who made Earth, called the children to come, and blows through our days with wisdom. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

In this coming week consider how many ways and through which persons you are shown a new path for your life. Watch for startling nudges or sudden epiphanies; listen for sighs that signal letting go of something pressing so that you can hear the Spirit's guidance. What have you learned? How can you give thanks?

### **Daily Awareness Reflection<sup>4</sup>**

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 ...

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Liebert, *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), 31.

## Announcements:

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 +/-
<b>April</b>	\$30,585	\$28,963	\$1,622

Please shop [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose Brookline Community Church as your charity to support the church. Thanks!

You can now use the Amazon Shopping app on your phone and still support the church through the Smile program.

How it works:

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=) & tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
3. Select "Church of Christ" as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the app

## One Free College Class for 2021 NH High School Graduates:

The Community College System of NH (CCSNH), the Foundation for New Hampshire's Community Colleges, and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF) have partnered to provide "A Gift to the Class of 2021."

Every 2021 graduate from any New Hampshire high school or home-school program is eligible to register for one free class at any CCSNH college this fall. The gift covers tuition for a three-credit course and fees, up to \$755 per student!

[Learn more.](#)

## Memorial Day Ceremony, 5/31, 9:30am at the Town Hall:

Please join members of the American Legion on the Town Hall lawn for their annual ceremony. Attendees are asked to practice social distancing for the safety of all.

## Greeting from the Open and Affirming Team

It has been over a year since we began the stay at home precautions due to Covid. We have greatly missed our church family. Last year we had just started to have conversations with our fellow members to listen to your thoughts and concerns around the Open and Affirming process. Due to Covid, we were not able to continue the one-to-one conversations, and we stopped our team meetings as well.

We have recently started to meet again as a team and are hoping to resume the one to one conversations with our fellow members. We will be reaching out to all members of the congregation throughout the spring and summer.

However, to help facilitate questions and suggestions we have also created a question box to gather any questions or suggestions you may have. It is located on the table in the upstairs hall as you enter the sanctuary. In addition, we welcome your comments via email or post. These can be addressed to ONA c/o Brookline Community Church, 2 Main Street, Brookline, NH 03033. This will help us to facilitate conversations and will help us through the process.

We look forward to our conversations as we thoughtfully explore the process of Open and Affirming together.

### **May is Military Appreciation Month**

Please say a prayer for our past or present service men & women and their families for their sacrifices in serving our country Outreach would also like to bring attention to our veterans and their families who may be struggling at this time with homelessness, finding a job, physical or mental health issues. Harbor Care in Nashua provides supportive services, reintegration programs and transitional housing for homeless veterans and their families.

From May 1st thru May 21st Outreach will be collecting:

- NEW twin size sheet sets, blankets & pillows (they cannot accept any used items)
- Walmart Gift Cards (they cannot accept any clothing items)
- Uber Gift Cards (Transportation to job interviews or places of employment)

You may place these items anytime in the plastic bin outside the church by the side door or drop off in person on Saturday May 15th between 9:00am-12:00pm or Friday May 21st between 1:00pm-5:00pm.

If you would like to make a monetary donation to buy bedding or gift cards you can mail a check to the Brookline Community Church, PO Box 507, Brookline NH 03033 and note that this is for the Veteran's Drive.

### **Habitat for Humanity Build in Nashua**

Although they are not accepting volunteer builders at the moment, we have provided a financial donation to Habitat for Humanity in Nashua. They are currently working on a duplex for two female veterans and their kids. Habitat would welcome financial contributions at this time as well.

### **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:

Pickles	Apple or Cranberry Juice
Parmesan	Paper Towels
Cookies/Cookie Mix	Coffee
Cheese Nip (or similar) Crackers	Disposable Razors
Jello/Gelatin (any flavors)	Dry Cat Food
Sardines	Dry Dog Food
Cereal (especially Raisin Bran or "Fun" Cereals)	Dish Soap
	Zip-style Bags

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.

Non-perishables can be dropped off at Brookline Town Hall (downstairs near the Town Clerk's Office), at the Brookline Post Office, or at the Cozy Tae Cart any time those places are open.

As always, perishable items such as bread, cheese, butter, eggs, meats, and milk can be donated during open pantry hours: Tues and Thurs, 10am - 2pm.

Thank you for your continued support to our church and our community.

### **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/>

### **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