



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: [Hymn to Freedom](#) by Oscar Peterson

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

Centering Ourselves for Worship:¹

[Join Bill & Nancy Dunbar, today's lay leaders, [in our centering prayer](#).]

Leader: On this Trinity Sunday, would you tell me what God is like?

All: God is like a braid, not a crew cut.

Leader: God is like a symphony, not a soloist?

**All: God is like a family,
any shape family –
steps and blends and chosen,
water cooler family and
recovery group family ...**

¹ Today's Centering Prayer and Prayer to Send Us Back out into the World were inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Trinity Sunday Afternoon," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted June 1, 2015, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2015/06/01/4570/> (accessed May 23, 2021).

Leader: So, not like a hermit.

**All: God is like a soup kitchen
where everyone eats together,
worker and guest.**

Leader: Then, God is not like take-away.

**All: God is like a rambling farmhouse,
or a trailer park
or public housing
all those many, many rooms ...**

Leader: God is not like a penthouse.

If God is like so many things
so many relationships,
so many spaces for so many things to come together,
what must I do to
join that family?
eat in that kitchen?
live in that farmhouse?

**All: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that
everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have
eternal life.**

Leader: Amen.

Hymn: *Where the Spirit of the Lord Is* by Life.Church Worship

[[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.](#)]

Holy God, source of all goodness,
you gave your Son
for the life of the world
and sent your Spirit that your love might abide within us.

Be with us now with those who are lifted up with joy.
We pray for them that they might feel your presence
as their hearts sing. We pray

For Susan & Russell's 35 years of marriage (in this very church)

For a surprise visit from a friend that wasted a whole day that wasn't a
waste at all

For Amy, Donna & Ron Long's birthdays (lots of 29-year-olds in town!)

For Melanie's trip to Peterborough, NH and her witness of their social
justice work

For Bert Desrochers recovering well at home after a stay at Mass General

For building the skills to recognize the wisdom God's offering
May they know your love abides with them.

Be with us now with those who are weighed down with concerns.

We pray for them they may might feel your presence

As their hearts break. We pray

For the white supremacists demonstrating in front of Nashua City Hall, may
they find a way to understand that we are all created in God's image,

For peace in our families as we struggle with old patterns of behavior

For Roman Protasevich, dissident, arrested in Belarus after forcing the
plane he was in was forced to land, in violation of international law

May they know with confidence that your love abides with them.

Be with our military veterans and families,

Who serve far away from the ebb and flow of our lives.

Be with them when they are joyful or concerned,

When their hearts and bodies are broken,

When their service passes unnoticed by those they protect.

Teach us how to love each other this day,

that we may have life, and have it abundantly,

with you, in Christ, and through the 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: *Hymn of the Holy Spirit* by Pat Barrett

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

Scripture Reading: John 3:1-17

[John 3:1-17 [read for you](#)]

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Reflection on the Scripture: [[The video of the reflection.](#)]

There are plenty of things I'm frightened of in this life. Barking, lunging dogs. Having memory loss and not knowing it. But I'll just pick one that comes up a lot. I get that shudder of adrenaline across my palms, I can feel my heart speed up, when I see people at heights. A drone can fly over a tall building and I'm fine. But that picture of the guys eating lunch on the steel beam from the 30s², that freaks me every time. My parents and I like to watch [Escape to the Chateau](#) and there's a shot in the opening credits of a guy in a harness sitting on top of the

² "Lunch atop a Skyscraper," Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunch_atop_a_Skyscraper (accessed 25 May 2021)

chimney 100 feet up in the air. You can see his rope. You can see his harness. He's not going to go anywhere. I've watched the credits dozens of times. He never, ever falls. Still have to fast forward through it.

So fear is a part of life in this world. We all know that. Fear of disease. (Man, have we had a lesson on what that does to people.) Fear of going broke. Fear of death and loss. Fear of being mocked and humiliated. Fear of being shunned, of not fitting in. We know fear causes people to do the craziest things. A really, really important thing we do as adults is to teach the kids in our lives how to be afraid and not let it dictate our actions.

I think that's why so many people are drawn to John 3:16: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.* Because those of us who have crossed over and believe in Jesus Christ, know that eternal life doesn't happen later, on a cloud, after we're dead.³ Eternal life happens now, in this world of steel beams and lunches and Rockefeller Center, in this world of fear.

In the dialogue leading up to John 3:16, we hear Jesus offer Nicodemus new life by offering the kingdom of God by being born from above (John 3:3).⁴ But Nicodemus refuses the offer, because it's not possible to return to our mother's womb (John 3:4). Jesus offers new life again, this time explaining it in terms of water and the wind (John 3:5-8). And again Nicodemus refuses, because those things can just not be (John 3:9). We've all been Nicodemus. We know how the world works and someone is arguing that it doesn't work that way.

But then we've all been Nicodemus. We know how the world works and someone is arguing that it doesn't work that way. George Floyd is killed and we have to look at how policing works differently on black and brown bodies. Not the way most of us thought it worked. Vanessa Guillen's body is found and we have to look at how the military treats sexual assault. Not the way most of us thought it worked. Even Nicodemus himself changes with time. Jesus is killed on the cross and Nicodemus helps prepare his body for burial (John 19:39-42).⁵

That's what eternal life does. It opens you up to the love of God in this life. Being born from above lets you be afraid, be confused, to doubt, and to keep going. And to keep going on a path that lets you stand up for changes in policing, changes in sexual assault reporting, changes in how you move through the world and the possibilities you're open to.

³ Gail R. O'Day, "Piety without Pretense, Faith without Falsehood: The Lenten Journey According to John." *Journal for Preachers* 20, no. 2 (1997): 12.

⁴ Gail R. O'Day, "New Birth as a New People: Spirituality and Community in the Fourth Gospel." *Word & World* 8, no. 1 (1988): 60.

⁵ O'Day, *New Birth*, 60.

But there is a difference between *believing* and *believing in*. If someone explained all the intricacies of rock climbing to me, I would believe them. But if somehow, they got me all geared up at the foot of a rock face, belaying me in my harness, with a rope, like the guy on the chimney on TV, I wouldn't *believe* them. I would *believe in* them. Because I was going to do something that wasn't part of my world, something I was afraid of, but I was going to do anyway. Instead of relying on an intellectual understanding, I have set myself in relationship with that person on the other end of the rope. I am trusting them with my life.⁶

That is the transition that John 3:16 is offering. You can go from *believing* God, which Nicodemus did when he first came to Jesus after dark, to *believing in* God, which Nicodemus did after Jesus' death on the cross. Only God's grace makes the transition possible. Our personal lives and our lives lived in community move from brokenness and fear to wholeness and hope when we accept God's grace. Jesus' gift, offered with his own life, is an invitation to cross over and enter the kingdom of God in this world.⁷

But there is a catch. Right after John 3:16 comes John 3:17 *Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world. We hear it. The world can be condemned. The world can be judged. But it's not God judging us. God's offer of love and grace in Jesus sets up the moment of judgment.*⁸ But we need to judge ourselves by our response to God. When we receive God's grace, we enter into new life. When we reject it, we exclude ourselves from that life.

That's what we need to share with folks. That our lives are different, better, because we believe in God, in Jesus. Because our relationship with them allows us to still be afraid, but to act not out of fear but out of love. That God's grace has brought us into a community where there are a whole bunch of people willing to act in the face of fear, to act on behalf of a love that transforms the world. We're not always perfect. Still, we improve our chances of doing the loving thing because we've entered into a relationship with God that we can trust. There's not an intellectual way of understanding that. But we have all had enough experiences where we just had to do something to get to the other side.

Fear is still real. It's still in our personal and communal lives. But there's something more there that's offering grace, that runs on love, that makes the fear less important, if no less real. Eternal life is here and now once we accept that grace and love. And it makes this world so much easier to deal with. Even if we choose to stay on the ground and leave the chimney tops to others.

Hymn: *Flame Start Over Ft. NF* by RM3

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

⁶ Barbara Brown Taylor, "Stay for Tea, Nicodemus." *The Christian Century* 113, no. 6 (1996): 195

⁷ O'Day, *New Birth*, 61.

⁸ O'Day, *Piety*, 12.

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

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

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that all who love him may have life eternally.

With loving hearts,
We have brought our offerings to God.

We ask that Jesus would bless these gifts that we offer
that they may spread God's blessing
in a world of hurt and need;
in Christ's name. **Amen.**

Hymn: *Born Again* by Third Day

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

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

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

Leader: As we head back out into the coming week, we know that a crew cut is easier, a soloist doesn't make much noise, a hermit never bothers the neighbors, take-away is quicker, the penthouse has a better view

All: But God is not trying to be easier, quieter, less bothersome, quicker, with a better view.

Leader: God is love in the middle of a family, however it was built, the middle of a soup kitchen, however it was staffed, a farmhouse, however it came to have that many rooms.

All: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Leader: As we head back out into the coming week, let us remember to listen for God's love, and to speak of God's love,

All: so the families expand to more folks, the soup kitchens feed all the hungry, the farmhouses welcome all who need a home.

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: *Restart* by Newsboys

[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 (05/30/21)

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
- 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 white supremacists demonstrating in front of Nashua City Hall, may they find a way to understand that we are all created in God's image,
- For peace in our families as we struggle with old patterns of behavior
- For Roman Protasevich, dissident, arrested in Belarus after forcing the plane he was in was forced to land, in violation of international law
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning⁹

Life-giving God, awaken me to your threefold presence in the world this day that I may share your love with others as freely as you have done for us in Christ.
Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Abba, I give thanks for the immeasurable gifts of this day, above all, for the gift of your love made known in Christ. How grateful I am that by his love I am counted as a precious member of your family. Mere words cannot convey the wonder of this love. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Jesus invites us to be born from above to receive new and abundant life. Salvation, or abundant life, is understood as a present reality in the Gospel of John. If the gift of God's love made known to us in Christ through the Spirit is stirred up by gratitude, what daily practice could increase your sense of gratitude? How could a simple practice of thanking God at any given moment in the day enliven your experience of salvation?

Daily Awareness Reflection¹⁰

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 ...

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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 +/-
April	\$30,585	\$28,963	\$1,622

Please shop 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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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