



Brookline Community Church

June 20, 2021

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: [Abide with Me](#) by the Church at Clawson

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

Centering Ourselves for Worship, Psalm 107:23-31:

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

Leader: Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the mighty waters;

**All: they saw the deeds of the LORD,
his wondrous works in the deep.**

Leader: For he commanded and raised the stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea.

**All: They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their calamity;**

Leader: they reeled and staggered like drunkards,
and were at their wits' end.

**All: Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he brought them out from their distress;
he made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.**

Leader: Then they were glad because they had quiet,
and he brought them to their desired haven.

**All: Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.**

Lifting up Our Joys and Concerns:

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

O Lord our God,
when we cry out to you in distress,
you bring us through desperate circumstances.
When we are weighed down with concerns,
you come ever closer.

We ask for your loving presence

For Carl, Rena's son-in-law, who has blood clots in his lungs and leg,

Please quiet the storm to a whisper,
and hush the sea's waves.

When we are lifted up with joys,
You sing with us like wind in the rigging.

We ask you to share your song with those for whom we pray

For Luca, Amy's nephew, who has a pediatrician in Nashua who's taking
good care of him and his family,

For Brenda, Barbara's neighbor, home recovering with her new knee

For everyone who supported the bedding drive for homeless veterans,
your generosity made a difference in people's lives

For Donna's dad, making it through surgery midweek with flying colors

Bring all of us joy, bring all of us to a safe harbor
And let us rest in our desired haven.

You can quiet the storm to a whisper
and hush the sea's waves,
so great is your power.

Help us to trust you, then,
whatever we may face,
knowing that you will lead us
to the harbor we have been hoping for.
We offer you our thanks and praise. **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: *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* by Thomas Dorsey

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

[A Prayer for Father's Day](#)¹

God, we're praying for fathers –
fathers, up at night with newborns,
fathers, bent under college debt,
fathers who are good with one age of child
and haven't a clue with another.

We're praying for fathers
balancing self and home and work
and parenting,
especially when no one seems to notice.

We're praying for fathers of adolescents.
and for those who are adolescents themselves,
as well as many who prop up their elbows
when their hands slip
on the gift of accountability.

¹ Today's Father's Day Prayer was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Father's Day Prayer," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted June 12, 2018, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2018/06/12/8936/> (accessed June 17, 2021).

We're praying for grandfathers,
godfathers and grieving fathers,
foster fathers and adopting fathers,
solo fathers and step-fathers,
fathers-in-law and fathers-in-neighbor,
more grandfathers –
tiptoeing around divorce,

and also teachers, pastors,
coaches, counselors
who mix a tiny bit of what they know
from fathering into relationships
with dozens of children,
and learn the rhythm to step back.

We're praying for those living
with their mistakes as fathers—
small thoughtlessnesses
that call for self-forgiveness,
or deep damage
needing repentance, transformation.

We're praying for those who want
to be fathers,
and those who have wanted,
but it never happened.

We're praying for those who miss their fathers
because of death or distance,
deep difference or disappearance.
and we're praying those who miss their children
because of death or distance,
deep difference or disappearance.

Be a parent to them, O God,
on this day and all the days of the year.

We are praying for those
who have been so hurt by men
in relationship to them,
that the very name "father" is a wound.

Heal them with time and anger,
memory, love and support.

As we approach this day
with its tangle of knotted emotions,
draw out for each of us
from your fathoms of tenderness
care and strength, for our most intimate needs –
named here, barely whispered to ourselves,
or still hidden
in the cave-rooms of our souls.
Amen.

Hymn: *Eternal Father, Strong to Save* by Melissa Oretade

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

Scripture Reading: Job 38:1-11

[Job 38:1-11 [read for you](#)]

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:
'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
Gird up your loins like a man,
I will question you, and you shall declare to me.

'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone
when the morning stars sang together
and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?

'Or who shut in the sea with doors
when it burst out from the womb?—
when I made the clouds its garment,
and thick darkness its swaddling band,
and prescribed bounds for it,
and set bars and doors,
and said, "Thus far shall you come, and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stopped"?

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

In my life before ministry, I often managed folks fresh out of college and often mentored folks who were in their first management jobs. And because I worked in high tech start-ups, I often had to lay people off, or coach beginning managers through how to have those conversations. When you are laying someone off, the words matter. You can't be perfect, we're human after all, but you need the right

words. You have to convey information clearly, you have to make space for intense emotions, and you have to do it in such a way that the meeting wraps up on time so you can go through the whole thing again with the next person.

There are situations where it matters that you get the words right. When you have to discipline your teenager, when you've been pulled over by the cops, when you have to take away your Dad's car keys. We could make a whole list of situations where it matters that you get the words right, even if we didn't all agree about that each situation needed the same amount of care.

One of the places it matters is when we talk to God. Now, I know some of you are thinking, "Oh I talk to God all the time." Amen and so do I. And most of the time, it's just a rambling "Thanks for X and please watch over Y and the people of Z really need some help." But there are times, mostly when I am frightened, exhausted, angry, when I am at my limit, where I want to speak to God and those rambling, day-to-day words aren't what I need. I want to say,

Look, my life is overwhelming me

All I can see at this point is that I am not enough for the challenges I'm facing

Everyone else is just piling things on

And it's not fair.

Because I'm doing what You asked me to do, with loving my neighbors (whom no one could love) and loving myself (whom I can barely stand to be inside of at the moment).

I need Your help and You are nowhere to be found.

But then I think of Job, who was saying basically the same thing, "Why do I get the short end of the stick?" and God's reply, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding." (Job 38:4). The whole reading from Job today is God asking Job how Job has the nerve to question God, to make demands of God. Job is claiming he knows what's going on and God is saying it plain. Job has no idea about the intricacies of the world.

That moment of needing to speak to God and not having the words, that's what the Psalms are for. They are templates for those times where we really want the right words to speak to God. When things are on edge, when we are on edge, and we need the words. The psalms are written in the human voice, presenting us to God when we are the most vulnerable in hurt, the most ecstatic in joy, the most sensitized to life, the most driven to the extremities of life and faith, when all the "covers" of modern rationality or ancient wisdom have disappeared or become dysfunctional.² They are models of how to speak to God, but they are also permits.³ They inspire us to recognize when our own situation needs words

² Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 7.

³ Brueggemann, 34.

closer to our deepest hurt. They authorize us to speak for ourselves, because we are part of the tribe who has prayed to God using the words of the psalms for millennia.

Instead of worrying about whining to God about being overwhelmed, I step into Psalm 107,

Look, I went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the mighty waves,
And You commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves
of the sea

I am at my wits' end and I'm crying out to you in my trouble.

Please make the storm be still and hush the waves of the sea

I'm drowning here, and it feels like You are the only one who might notice

All I want is quiet, a safe harbor

I thank You for your steadfast love, for your wonderful works to humankind.

Mostly it's Psalm 107, but one of my real fears, that no one will notice if I disappear under the waves, is in there.

This summer I want to explore with you what an amazing tool kit the psalms are. But there are 150 of them and we only sort of know Psalm 23. So I thought if we explored a general framework and then used a small part of our worship services to just get exposure to some of the psalms themselves, you might start your own collection of psalms to build on. The images in Psalm 107 really speak to me. But I'm confident they don't speak to everyone. And I'm confident that there are psalms that will speak to you.

There are all sorts of ways to classify psalms, but here's a way I found most helpful. There are three categories: psalms of orientation, psalms of disorientation and psalms of reorientation.⁴

Psalms of orientation are the least common.⁵ They basically thank God for the orderliness, goodness and reliability of life. Or they thank God for reliable retribution, in which good is rewarded and evil is punished. There aren't a ton of these, mostly because I think we don't need as much help finding the words for those situations.

Psalms of disorientation are the most common.⁶ All the psalms of lament are psalms of disorientation. Essentially, we find ourselves in a new distressful situation in which the old orientation has collapsed. Sometimes we're still trying to claw our way back to the old world that has disappeared. Sometimes we're reaching for what we think the world should be like, even though it clearly isn't

⁴ Brueggemann, 9.

⁵ Brueggemann, 10.

⁶ Brueggemann, 11.

that way yet. Sometimes we're denying the world is the way it is and we're longing to stay cocooned in our denial.

Regardless of where the disorientation is coming from, almost all the psalms of disorientation have one common and key element. There is a conviction that God will act and, in acting, God will bring a new order. There is a turn from yearning for the old orientation to a recognition that it is gone and is not retrievable, and a readiness for a new orientation. And that "turn" is part of the psalms of disorientation. Even in the middle of the disorientation, we remember that God is making all things new.

Finally, there are psalms of reorientation.⁷ When God has acted, as God always does, we need to articulate the amazed recognition that a newness has been given. The newness is not achieved, not automatic, not derived from the old. It's a genuine newness and it is a gift freely given by God. It's not easy to put into the words when we recognize that there is something genuinely new, not the old thing revived. We have to articulate our surprise, because what is before us couldn't have been anticipated. And we have to acknowledge that it is a gift, not something we did ourselves. All the reversals need to be celebrated and we need the language to do it.

Now, it isn't that our whole life needs only one kind of psalm. We can be oriented in our work life, disoriented in our family life, reoriented in our faith. And the next month, week, day, moment, we can be disoriented with our dads, reoriented with our sisters and oriented with our younger sons. But any part of our life can drive us to want to find the right words to speak to God. And that what the psalms do.

One other thing. I said there were a lot of different ways to classify the psalms. I chose to share this one: orientation, disorientation, reorientation. Part of why I find this model useful is because I recognize it from the Good News of Jesus Christ.⁸ We start in orientation, in an orderly life that struggles to come to grips with Jesus' ministry. Then comes the disorientation of the crucifixion when the way life was is lost forever. And the reorientation of the resurrection when God's surprising gift makes something wholly new.

Next week, I'll dig in a bit more to how the psalms do what they do and what we learn about God from how the psalms are written, even though they are written from a human perspective. But for now, let us make the turn, to remember that God is committed to creating newness in our lives and in our world.

Hymn: *Psalm 107* by Rachel Cohen

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

⁷ Brueggemann, 14.

⁸ Brueggemann, 34.

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

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

We are invited, even urged, to open our hearts wide
and to place no boundaries on our affection
for God's people.

Let us then share generously our provisions
with others.

We pray that all we return to God
will be used faithfully
in ministry to the world.
In the name of Christ, we ask it. **Amen.**

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

(This is where I went Psalm 107 this week. Another week? Who knows!)

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

Leader: As we head back out into the coming week, we will step back into
the ships of our daily lives, doing business on the mighty waters,

**All: knowing we are unlikely to see the deeds of the LORD, or God's
wondrous works all around us.**

Leader: Chaos will rise around us, some of it by our own doing, some of it by
others, some of it from God,

**All: And our courage will melt away, as we ride out the highs and
the lows.**

Leader: As we head back out into the coming week, let us remember to look
for God's hand, let us remember to cry out to God when we need
help or are afraid,

**All: Let us remember to accept God's gift, when we are offered
stillness and hushed waves.**

Leader: As we head back out into the coming week, let us give thanks when
we have quiet, when we are resting in our desired haven,

**All: Let us thank the LORD for the steadfast love and the wonderful
works to humanity that God provides without ceasing.**

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.”

[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: God So Loved the World by Camille & Gabriel

[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 (06/20/21)

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, who's working with a new pediatrician who's helping him and his family
- 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 Carl, Rena's son-in-law, who has blood clots in his lungs and leg,
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning⁹

Did you hear, O God, the morning stars sing together this morning – just as you heard them at the dawn of creation? Open my ears today to the music of creation:

where it sings and rejoices,
where it groans in travail,
where it waits in silent longing.

Though I am very small in the grand scheme of your design, teach me to tend the earth in ways that increase joy; to mend the earth in ways that restore fruitfulness; and to wait with the earth for the hope of redemption; in the name of Christ, my Savior. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Loving God, in your earthly life, when evening had come you led your disciples away from the crowds and the busyness of the day. You were so tired, you fell asleep in the boat . . . so tired that even a storm did not wake you up! You know our weariness well, our need to rest and sleep soundly. Help me too, then, to leave behind this crowded day, my crowded thoughts. Speak to me the words you spoke to the wind and the waves: Peace! Be still!

And, in faith, I will try to let go of all that has been today and rest, trusting in you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Mark 4:35–41 tells of a time when the disciples were in great fear in a storm. Can you remember a time when you were in a frightening storm (literal or figurative) and felt in danger of being “swamped”? Did God feel far away or near to help you?

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.

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 +/-
May	\$34,212	\$35,905	(\$1,693)

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

What Community Events/Fundraisers Would Share the Spirit?

With the easing of Covid restrictions, we can start to think about events and fundraisers that would share our sense of the Holy Spirit's presence in our daily lives. We have plenty of willing hands, but we need some folks to get us running in the same direction. Breakfast Buffets? Spaghetti Supper for the Ghost Train Trail Race? Christmas Faire? Something we haven't thought of yet?

If you have ideas, speak to Rev. Cath, Ann Desrochers or anyone on the Cabinet!

Shortening our July 4th Service to Enjoy the Parade!!!

We'll be having a much shorter than normal service on the side lawn on July 4th so we can enjoy the July 4th parade.

Take Home Meals on SALE!!!! 3/\$20

We will not be making any new Take Home Meals for the months of July and August this summer. And we're clearing out the freezers to make room for more meals in the fall. So any three meals are going for \$20, such a deal!

Trustees Work Party: What Saturday Works Best for YOU???

The trustees are looking to have a work party get together on an upcoming Saturday to lug the excess wood out of the basement and re-shingle the roofs over the parking lot side doorways. Please email Susan Haight (sdlhaight@gmail.com) if you're available on a Saturday.

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.](#)

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.

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.

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.

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