



Prelude: [The Joy Candle by Steelehouse Media](#)

Call To Worship¹

Leader: I will light Candles this Christmas,
All: Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Leader: Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
All: Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Leader: Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
All: Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Leader: Candles of love to inspire all my living,
All: Candles that will burn all year long.

¹ Today's Call to Worship was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "A Simple Advent Candle Lighting for Home or Church based on Howard Thurman's "I will Light Candles this Christmas" and "This is Christmas" from The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted November 21, 2021, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2021/11/21/a-simple-advent-candle-lighting-for-home-or-church-based-on-howard-thurmans-i-will-light-candles-this-christmas-and-this-is-christmas-from-the-mood-of-chri/> (accessed December 7, 2021).

Lighting the Advent Wreath²

The Advent wreath is shaped in a ring. It shows the circle of God's unbroken love. Each week we will invite a "family" to light the candles in the wreath. This week the folks who handle the finance and administration of the church will light the candles to bring us together in the warm light of God's love.

Lighter 1: In the Gospel of Luke, John the Baptizer points to Jesus:
as the people were filled with expectation, ...
questioning whether John might be the Messiah,
John answered them by saying,
"I baptize you with water,
but one who is more powerful than I is coming ...
He will baptize you
with the Holy Spirit and fire." (*Luke 3:15-16*)

Lighter 2: If we follow Jesus Christ,
we will get everything we hope for,
and more than we bargained for
We light our third candle to praise God
whose Spirit comes to us
with disturbing and wonderful blessings.
(Light the pink candle)

Lighter 1: Living Christ, give us faith to trust you
hope to follow you,
and love to live for you.

All: We trust you, we love you, we praise you. Amen.

² Today's Advent Wreath Lighting, Prayer of Joys & Concerns and Prayer to Send Us Back Out into the World are from Brian Wren, *Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany: Liturgies and Prayer for Public Worship* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).

Hymn: [Joy to the World by Vineyard](#)

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
And glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love

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.

And wonders, wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
And glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love

Children's Message (for kids of all ages):

What does it say on the tin?

Lifting up Our Joys and Concerns:

[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 (857) 259-7269.]

Let us pray the Lord's Prayer together:

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: [O Little Town of Bethlehem](#)

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together

Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to men on earth

O holy child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born in us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel!
Our Lord Emmanuel!

Sacrament of Communion³

Invitation to the Table from Todd Jenkins' longer poem "Advent(ure)" (*used by permission*)

Leader: ... The sacred unfolding
 of these four gifts —
 hope, peace, love, and joy —
 in their unvarnished glory,
 will flip our political
 and socioeconomic culture
 on its head,
 ushering in a new vision of community
 that's more flush with justice
 than we've ever dreamed,
 as it invites everyone
 to the table,
 which causes us
 to scramble for more chairs.

³ The communion liturgy was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Holy Communion Liturgy for the Second Sunday in Advent, the Sunday of Peace," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted November 24, 2021, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2021/11/24/holy-communion-liturgy-for-the-second-sunday-in-advent-the-sunday-of-peace-2/> (accessed December 7, 2021).

Come to think of it,
maybe searching for ways
to extend the table
is precisely what Advent
is supposed to be about.

Words of Remembering

Leader: We remember that Jesus was always
about more chairs –
for the “friendly beasts”
a cow whose manger fed him,
the birds that never fall unloved,
and the comforting animals
of his forty wilderness days.

All: **Jesus was always about more chairs,
for the poor, lonely, grieving, hungry,
the most vulnerable and rejected,
and even those deep in deserved regret.**

Leader: And we remember that Jesus
sat in the chairs of anyone who welcomed him.
He came to tables and asked for food,
not to see the guest list.
He knew how multiply barley loaves
but, also, how to grill fish.

All: **In this sacrament on Advent’s day of Joy,
we remember that the starlit Child,
protected by angels
grew up to offer bread and cup
to a betrayer, a denier, a doubter,
several sleepers, many who fled
because at the cross there were no angels.**

Leader: We remember that Jesus is in the Bread and Cup
for those of us who know its blessing well,
and yet is still pulling out folding chairs
so that more, ... even all

All: **can come, sit, rest, eat.**

Prayer of Consecration

Leader: Emmanuel, God with us,
in the hopes and fears of all our years,
we come for comfort,
for peace of mind and peace on earth,
for a blessing on our hands and the Bread in them,
on our lips and the Cup we lift to drink.

Leader: May this Bread and Cup
be all your holy life,
that we may ponder in our hearts,

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: The Holy Child of Bethlehem descends to us,

All: and is born in us in these days.

Leader: Let us share the bread.
[Eat the bread]

All: **We hear Christmas angels their great glad tidings tell.**

Leader: Let us drink deeply for in every time Christ abides with us.
[Drink from the cup.]

All: In every time and every place Christ abides *in* us.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Joy-Bringer, Blessor of tables shared and some tables turned over,
we rise or roll from our places at this most welcoming meal prepared
anew to live Advent hospitality,

All: **by becoming your chair-people, not leaders, but ushers and
servers for the worldwide banquet of grace. Amen.**

Anthem: [Messiah by Francesca Battistelli](#)

Scripture Reading: Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Reflection on the Scripture

Hymn: [Come, Thou Almighty King by Keith & Kristyn Getty featuring the Getty Girls](#)

Come, thou Almighty King,
help us thy name to sing,
help us to praise.
Father, all glorious,
o'er all victorious,
come and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

Come, thou Incarnate Word,
gird on thy mighty sword,
Our prayer attend,
Come and thy people bless,
And give thy word success,
Spirit of holiness,
On us descend.

All glory be to the Father
All glory be to the Son
All glory be to Spirit
The blessed Three in One

Come, Holy Comforter,
thy sacred witness bear
in this glad hour.
Thou who almighty art,

now rule in ev'ry heart,
and ne'er from us depart,
Spirit of power.

All glory be to the Father
All glory be to the Son
All glory be to Spirit
The blessed Three in One

To the great One in Three
eternal praises be,
hence evermore.
His sov'reign majesty
may we in glory see,
and to eternity
love and adore.

All glory be to the Father
All glory be to the Son
All glory be to Spirit
The blessed Three in One

All glory be to the Father
All glory be to the Son
All glory be to Spirit
The blessed Three in One

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given:

**Let us bring to God our offerings,
with thanksgiving that God provides more than enough for all.
Let us give, as each is able, for the benefit of Christ's church and
God's world.
Let us help feed a world hungry for healing and hope;
for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

Leader: Help us, like John the Baptizer,
to act on your truth as we hear it.

**All: Redeem our mistakes and shortcomings,
And make us reliable witnesses
to the One who came after John,**

Leader: who comes today, and will come again,

**All: Jesus, your Word and Presence,
in whose name we pray. 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: Join the Angels by Matthew West

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.



PRAYER LIST (12/12/21)

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 June Hoff, Dave Larkin and Braedon O'Connor.
- 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 Patty, Sue Laub's sister, who is in hospice after four years of cancer treatment
- For Nancy, Yifan's American mom, who is going in for more breast cancer surgery
- For Clarence Farwell, recovering from a stroke
- For Linda, Barbara's friend, having a hip replaced this week
- For the friends and family of Elly Austin, who passed away last week
- For those suffering from addiction
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning⁴

God, surely you are my salvation. I begin this day without fear, trusting you, for you are my strength.

Help me to meditate all day on the thought that you are rejoicing in me! And keep me keenly aware, as I travel through this day, of ways that I may help others, especially those with special needs. Then bring me home to you at the close of the day. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Thank you, God, for the gift of today and for guarding my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus. All that I did and all that I left undone, I now give over to your safekeeping, trusting in your peace that surpasses all understanding. Be my rest as I sleep tonight, and renew me in your love for another day. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Imagine that you are in the crowd listening to John the Baptizer. You hear people in the crowd asking him, "What should we do to prepare?" How might John instruct you, or your church, to prepare for the coming of God's reign?

Sometimes wealthy people worry that God or the church is requiring them to be poor. What is the difference between being poor and being fair? How do you feel about sharing?

Daily Awareness Reflection⁵

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 ...

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 +/-
November	\$87,251	\$82,800	\$4,451

Please shop smile.amazon.com and choose Brookline Community Church as your charity to support the church. Thanks!

There are several ways to send your offering.

1. Text "GIVE" to 603-506-4455 for your first time. Click "Sign In" then "Register for an Account"

2. Scan the QR code



3. Mail to: Brookline Community Church, PO Box 507, Brookline, NH 03033.

Covid-19 Vaccination Clinic in Brookline on December 18th

Primary, third, booster doses, all three vaccines! No registration required, but they request you arrive "A" thru "M" – from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and "N" thru "Z" – from 12:30pm to 4:00 pm. At the Brookline NH Public Safety Complex - 3 Post Office Drive. [More details.](#)

Christmas Eve Bulletin Dedications due by December 19th

As we learned last year, Covid can make us change our plans very quickly. So we're inviting folks to send in the dedications they would like to have printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin by December 19th (see the form below). We're not going to order individual flowers this year in case everything has to be changed at the last minute.

Looking for help at the 5:00pm & 7:00pm Christmas Eve services

The Deacons are looking for volunteers to greet, drive the elevator, be lay readers, help with the luminaries (putting them out, re-lighting them for the second service, taking them back in). If you're going to be around and would be willing to help, please let Barbara (barbarajh@comcast.net) or Jill (jgoods4@gmail.com) know.

Lighting Up the Church with Holiday Lights

We're part of the town's Holiday Lights Spectacular. If you'd like to help everyone get into the holiday mood, please speak with Susan Haight (sdlhaight@gmail.com) and she'll make sure you have all the power and support you need!

2022 Calendars on Sale from the Historical Society!

The Brookline Historical Society is selling 2022 Calendars for \$20 at the Library and the Hollis Pharmacy. Email info@brooklinehistory.org for more details.

SHARE-ing the Christmas Spirit with Outreach

Please feel free to contact Amy Razzaboni at arazz3914@gmail.com or speak with any member of the Outreach Board with any questions or to get more information about our Outreach Organizations and other local non-profits.

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:

Spam	Coffee
Juice and juice boxes	Pet food
Canned carrots	Detergent
Rice or noodle sides	

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.

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.

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



Poinsettias

This year, the Deacons will be donating a small number of Christmas flowers to help decorate the sanctuary. We look forward to being able to invite the congregation to help us purchase flowers again next year.

For this year however, please fill out the form below and give it to a Deacon (Russell H, Barbara HH, John P, Candy T, Jill A), or email your dedication to Jill at jgoods4@gmail.com. We will include your dedication in the Christmas Eve bulletin, as we have done in past years.

Dedication deadline: Sunday, December 19th.

Placed by: _____

In Memory of: _____

and/or In Honor of: _____

Merry Christmas!

Thank you!

Brookline Community Church 2021 PLEDGE

Where is Brookline Community Church headed?

- Continue turning our faith into actions that benefit our community
- Deepen our faith through ministry, witness, and shared learning experiences
- Share the fellowship bubbling up among us more broadly within and without
- Learn and practice invitation in traditional and unexpected ways

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ - _____

Street Address: _____

Financial Support:

In response to God's gift of love through Christ and because I desire to support the church's ministries, I plan to give:

\$_____ each week / month / other _____ (please circle one)

or \$__ as a one time gift

I understand that this is an estimate of my ability to give and that if circumstances change, I can put a note in the offering plate or contact Treasurer Rena Duncklee to adjust my pledge.

Please return your completed pledge form by Dec 12th, in the offering plate or by mail to:



Brookline Community Church

Attn: Treasurer, PO Box 507

Brookline, NH 03033