



*Brookline Community
Church*

December 19, 2021

*Rev. Catherine A.
Merrill, Minister*

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

Call To Worship¹

Leader: Welcome. Worship God.
Speak of the promise that calls us.

All: **From a village called Bethlehem
comes a leader, God-beloved,
to govern God's people –
to lead us as a shepherd guides the flock
to water and good pasture.**

Leader: With origins deep in the past,
comes a child about to be born,

All: **the source of true security –
whose greatness shall reach
to the ends of the earth,
bringing peace.**

¹ Today's Call to Worship, 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).

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 reach out to the community that surrounds the church will light the candles to bring us together in the warm light of God's love.

Lighter 1: The Gospel of Luke tells how Mary meets her cousin Elizabeth:
When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting,
the child leaped in her womb.
And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit
and exclaimed with a loud cry,
"Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb." (*Luke 1:41-42*)

Lighter 2: God speaks in many ways:
through dreams, visions, new ideas,
and the kicking of a child not yet born.
We light our fourth candle,
asking that we may hear God's call
in our body, mind, and spirit.
(Light the last purple candle)

Lighter 1: Living Christ, give us faith to trust you
hope to follow you,
and love to live for you,
and wisdom to know 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: [What Child is This by Chris Tomlin](#)

What Child is this, who laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing!
Haste, haste to bring him laud
The babe, the son of Mary

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh
Come peasant king to own him
The King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone Him

Raise, raise a song on high!
The virgin sings her lullaby
Joy, joy for Christ is born
The babe, the son of Mary!

This, this is Christ the King
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing!
Haste, haste to bring Him laud
The babe the son of Mary

Nails, spears shall pierce him through
The cross he bore for me, for you
Hail, hail the Word made flesh
The babe, the son of Mary

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.

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

What are some of your family traditions?

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: [Hark the Herald Angels Sing by Reawaken Hymns](#)

Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King"
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
Nature rise and worship him
Who is born at Bethlehem
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King"

Christ, by highest heaven adored
Christ, the everlasting Lord
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a virgin's womb,
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail the incarnate deity

Pleased as man with men to appear
Jesus, our Emmanuel here
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King"

Hail the Heaven-born Prince of
Peace
Hail the Son of Righteousness
Light and life around He brings
Risen with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of Earth
Born to give them second birth
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn Kin

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-55

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Reflection on the Scripture:

Hymn: [The First Noel by Boney M](#)

1, 3: The First Noel, the Angels did say	2: They looked up and saw a star
Was to certain poor shepherds	Shining in the East beyond them far
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep	And to the earth it gave great light
On a cold winter's night that was so deep	And so it continued both day and night
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel	Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!	Born is the King of Israel!

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

**We thank you for all that draws us close together,
astounding us with lives transformed by gratitude.
Accept our gifts as signs of our gratitude
for what you give us every day
and as honor to your presence in our world;
for the sake of those who stand in need
and Jesus Christ, who saves us. Amen.**

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

Leader: Exuberant, Life-Giving God,
As Elizabeth, filled with the Spirit,
Was moved to bless Mary's child,
So fill us with your Spirit,

**All: that our neighbors' hidden hopes
May be blessed and brought to birth,**

Leader: To the glory of your name,

**All: Through the fruit of Mary's womb
Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Leader: 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: [Midnight Clear \(Love Song\) by Chris Tomlin](#)

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.



PRAYER LIST (12/19/21)

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, Braedon O'Connor and Elly Austin.
- 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 Clarence Farwell, recovering from a stroke
- For Xena, Cindy's beloved cat, who she had to put to sleep recently
- For Mary, Paul & John Nicholson's father, who are all working their way through chemotherapy and cancer surgery
- For those in the path of the tornados in Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee and Kentucky.
- 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: Morning³

Thank you, good and gracious God, for the morning light, for another day in which to live out what it means that you have magnified my soul and the souls of those around me in this world. Teach me the meaning of “Let it be.” Show me how to trust; in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Good and gracious God, we give you thanks that you have made incarnate in your world the breath of life, the life of hope. Keep us safe throughout the night that in the morning we may again rejoice and live in peace with all creation; in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Since some folks will be traveling for Christmas, I’ve included the household prayers for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Christmas Eve Household Prayer: Morning

Prince of Peace, On this morning before Christmas, I pray for an abiding sense of your peace, in my life and in the lives of those I love. I pray, too, for peace to come into every troubled heart, home, and community. This day may be rushed and busy, as it must have been in Bethlehem long ago. Let there be peace enough in my heart and mind to receive your good news, in light; in word; in song; in the faces of others. In peace, help me to treasure the blessings of this day and ponder your wondrous love. Amen.

Christmas Eve Household Prayer: Evening

Wonderful Counselor, As Christmas Eve draws to an end, I ready myself to close my eyes and sleep, to rest in the peace and confidence of your love. May all the weary world lie down in peace, confident that your love will break the darkness as surely as the sun rises each new morning. Thank you for memories that warm me this night. I praise you for the gifts that have blessed and sustained me all day. I entrust myself and those I love to your care, until we wake in the morning light of Christmas joy—to greet Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

³ 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.

Christmas Day Household Prayer: Morning

God of small things, you came among us as a tiny and vulnerable baby open to all who met you. Teach us to care for the quiet and tender places in our hearts and in those of others as we nurture your compassion in our world. Amen.

Christmas Day Household Prayer: Evening

Creator of the stars of night, we give you thanks for the love you have shared with us this day in the celebration of the birth of Christ. Blanket us in peace this night as you comfort all in need. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Where do you see the light of Christ magnified in your person, your life, and the ways of your family and community? Notice in the coming week one time each day when the light of Christ is made present for you by others.

Daily Awareness Reflection⁴

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 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 **TODAY!!**

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.

Boy Scout Troop 260 Collecting Trees Door to Door 12/30 & 1/8

For a \$10 suggested donation, you can have your tree taken care of once you've enjoyed it for the holidays. Email brooklinetroop260@gmail.com or call (603) 235-1263. [More details.](#)

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.

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 PLEDGE FORM
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