



*Brookline
Community Church*

January 9, 2022

*Rev. Catherine A.
Merrill, Minister*

Prelude: [*Home By Another Way* by James Taylor](#)

Call To Worship, Psalm 72:1-7, 12-14

Leader: Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.

All: **May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.**

Leader: May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.

All: **In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.**

Leader: For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.
He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.

All: **From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.**

Hymn: [Psalm 72 Hymn 'Give the King Your Judgments, oh God!' by Jesse & Leah Roberts](#)

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 gifts did the magi bring to the infant Jesus?

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: [We Three Kings by Nathan Drake](#)

1. We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and
mountain
Following yonder star

Chorus
Oh, star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light

2. Born a king on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign
(Repeat chorus)

3. Frankincense to offer have I
Incense owns a deity nigh
Prayer and praising, all men raising
Worship him God most high
(Repeat chorus)

4. Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breaths a life of gathering gloom
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding dying
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb
(Repeat chorus)

5. Glorious now behold him arise
King and God and sacrifice
Alleluia, Alleluia
Earth to heaven replies
(Repeat chorus)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6, pp. 602-603

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Reflection on the Scripture: What Kind of Epiphany Were We Expecting?

Hymn: [Let His Glory Be Seen](#)

Oh I saw a distant land,
and its glory was so grand
I cried oh Lord how I long to be there
Then I heard his gentle voice,
"Come my child, it is your choice"
Oh such hope that I'd never heard before

CHORUS:

Oh arise, let us run,
for the morning light has come
And the darkness of the night flies away
He has risen, He has come,
and our home He has won
Let His glory be seen on you today

Then the way grew dark with care,
my heart trembled in despair
I turned my eyes to my Lord with a prayer
Through the dimness of the dawn,
deeper truth than I was drawn
Oh such hope, even brighter than before!
(Repeat Chorus)

There a lonely soul I saw,
standing near but yet withdrawn
I bade him come to the land bright and fair
With hope's glimmer in his eye,
to the darkness said goodbye
Then we sang, a note higher than before!
(Repeat Chorus)

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

Leader: Glorious God,
you led three men of wisdom
to seek Jesus, your Holy Child, born of Mary.
Overjoyed in the presence of his radiant light,
the men knelt down at the infant's crib
and offered him precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**All: We, too, offer our gifts
in gratitude, reverence, and thanksgiving
for the birth of your child,
whom you called to lead the world into fullness of life.
Receive and bless this offering
as a joyful sign
of the boundless love and abundant life
we are called to share in Christ. Amen.**

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 72)

Leader: Lead us to high expectations of the leaders of your people,
That they may build up systems of justice, righteousness and
prosperity for all the people

**All: May the leaders defend the cause of the poor, the needy and
the oppressed. May the leaders do their work in our name.**

Leader: Knowing that our leaders are frail and fallible, that we are frail and
fallible, and that it is easier to see to our own comforts than to attend
the discomforts of others.

**All: True leadership endures throughout all time, it is as refreshing
as the rain that falls on mown grass,**

Leader: Let us deliver those who have needs from their struggles, let us help
those who are poor and have no one to help them.

All: Not just once, but every time there is need and isolation.

Leader: God's justice and prosperity is our model,

**All: God redeems the lives of the oppressed, precious is their life in
God's sight. 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: [Arise, Shine, For Your Light Has Come by Jered McKenna](#)

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Psalm 72

One of the Royal Psalms, Psalm 72 argues that the king has a responsibility to support and sustain the life of the poor and the marginal when they have no resources by which to sustain themselves. The psalm envisions a quite assertive, initiative-taking royal government on behalf of the poor and the needy.

The notion of justice and righteousness has to do with economic maintenance and with the maintenance of an independent judiciary that would not be merely an exploitative tool of the powerful. Thus, the verbs in verse 4, “defend, deliver, crush,” surely concern a viable court system in which the marginal can expect reliable redress from the rapaciousness of an acquisitive society.

The juxtaposition of verses 1-4 and 12-14 concerning care for the vulnerable by the regime and verses 5-7, 8-11, and 15-17 envisioning extravagant well-being for the regime form the contrast that makes the point of the psalm: care for the poor that becomes the basis for economic prosperity in the realm. The unstated but surely implied negative counterpoint is the recognition that neglect of the poor through economic indifference will inevitably lead to military failure and economic collapse.

But what human king or political leader has ever lived up to such expectations? Psalm 72 reminds us that while we cannot perfectly reflect the community creating justice that characterizes God’s purpose, we should also reject a self-indulgent refusal to attempt to bend public power toward genuine communal well-being.

Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms*, in *New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 311-316.



PRAYER LIST (1/9/22)

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 Judith Atherton, recovering from cardiac surgery
- For Clarence Farwell, recovering from a stroke
- For the friends and family of Patty, Sue Laub's sister, who passed away in hospice before Christmas
- For the friends and family of Pam Swick, friend of Dorothy & Ray Laneader, especially her wife TJ and their children; Pam passed away in the hospital from Covid
- For the friends and family of Brian Kurtz, especially his wife Melissa, a friend of Stacey Haight, who was killed in a car crash on Monday.
- For Eric, Rena's son, who had a benign tumor removed from his intestine last Wednesday
- 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: Morning¹

Glorious God, each day provides opportunity to awaken to the radiance of your presence, and to welcome your blessing into my life. How often I forget that I am your home! Help me to draw more closely to you, that I may manifest your love more deeply in the world. May every bright place and darkened corner grow ever more luminous as I bear your light this day. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Holy Jesus, I thank you for sharing your life with me today. As darkness comes and blankets the earth, be with all who suffer from sickness, hunger, or lack of shelter. Kindle in them the warmth of your presence, and surround them with your steadfast care. I am grateful for the blessings of this day. And in the light of your love I rest this night. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

In Epiphany when the magi make their great journey to see the Christ Child, we see Jesus drawing all creation to the divine life revealed in him, and we see the realization of God's dream of reconciled creation. In our own way, we are each endowed by the Spirit with unique and precious gifts for sharing God's healing love in a good but often divided world. What spiritual practices do you engage in that allow you to stay peaceful, courteous, and develop a respectful regard for difference? How do you stay present and create openness for finding, revealing, and activating God's reconciling love in the world?

Daily Awareness Reflection²

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 ...

¹ 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.

² 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 +/-
December	\$100,731	\$89,522	\$11,209

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.

Free Covid Home Tests for NH Residents

Gov. Sununu [announced a program to deliver free Covid home tests to NH residents](#). You just go to [the program's website](#), put in your zip code and then follow the prompts. They're delivered via Amazon.

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](#).

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.

Undecorate the Sanctuary on January 9th

If you can spare a bit of time after worship on January 9th, the Deacons would appreciate the help undecorating the sanctuary.

The Church is Looking for Someone to Plow

We're grateful for the many years the Farwells have plowed the church's driveway. But that era is coming to an end. If you have someone who might be a good candidate for the job, please email Susan Haight (sdlhaight@gmail.com).

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 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:

Juice boxes
Pop tarts
Pet food

Fruit snacks
Perishables (meat, eggs, bread, cheese)

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.

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

Reading Together During Epiphany

I'd like to try a book group again this Epiphany season to build our skills in noticing God's presence in this world and identifying the gifts we've been given and the gifts we need from others.

As before, I'll put forward three books and ask you to see which one the Holy Spirit leads you to. Because we need a bigger space with some airflow, let's meet in Fellowship Hall.

We'll select the book on January 16th. I'll have the reading assignments broken up for all three books, so we can leave that decision ready to read. (Remember to shop smile.amazon.com and choose Brookline Community Church as your charity to support the church.) We can pick to meet at 11:30am or 4:30pm.

I'd like us to try and meet on:

- January 30 (NFL games at 3:05 & 6:40pm)
- February 13 (Super Bowl kickoff at 6:30pm)
- February 27
- March 13 (depending on what book we choose, we may not need to meet)

I'd like to suggest we choose between:

Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir (478 pages). Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission - and if he fails, humanity and the Earth itself will perish. Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it.

His crewmates dead, his memories fuzzily returning, he realizes that an impossible task now confronts him. Alone on this tiny ship that's been cobbled together by every government and space agency on the planet and hurled into the depths of space, it's up to him to conquer an extinction-level threat to our species.

And thanks to an unexpected ally, he just might have a chance.

Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult (470 pages) Ruth Jefferson is a labor and delivery nurse at a Connecticut hospital with more than 20 years' experience. During her shift, Ruth begins a routine checkup on a newborn, only to be told a few minutes later that she's been reassigned to another patient. The parents are white supremacists and don't want Ruth, who is African American, to touch their child. The hospital complies with their request, but the next day, the baby goes into cardiac distress while Ruth is alone in the nursery. Does she obey orders or does she intervene?

Ruth hesitates before performing CPR and, as a result, is charged with a serious crime. Kennedy McQuarrie, a white public defender, takes her case but gives unexpected advice: Kennedy insists that mentioning race in the courtroom is not

a winning strategy. Conflicted by Kennedy's counsel, Ruth tries to keep life as normal as possible for her family - especially her teenage son - as the case becomes a media sensation. As the trial moves forward, Ruth and Kennedy must gain each other's trust, and come to see that what they've been taught their whole lives about others - and themselves - might be wrong.

***Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atul Gawande (282 pages).** Medicine has triumphed in modern times, transforming birth, injury, and infectious disease from harrowing to manageable. But in the inevitable condition of aging and death, the goals of medicine seem too frequently to run counter to the interest of the human spirit.

Nursing homes, preoccupied with safety, pin patients into railed beds and wheelchairs. Hospitals isolate the dying, checking for vital signs long after the goals of cure have become moot. Doctors, committed to extending life, continue to carry out devastating procedures that in the end extend suffering.

Gawande, a practicing surgeon, addresses his profession's ultimate limitation, arguing that quality of life is the desired goal for patients and families. Gawande offers examples of freer, more socially fulfilling models for assisting the infirm and dependent elderly, and he explores the varieties of hospice care to demonstrate that a person's last weeks or months may be rich and dignified.