



*Brookline
Community Church*

January 16, 2022

*Rev. Catherine A.
Merrill, Minister*

Prelude: Simple Gifts

Call To Worship, Psalm 36:5-10

Leader: Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

All: **Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgements are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O LORD.**

Leader: How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

All: **They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.**

Leader: For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

All: **O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your salvation to the upright of heart!**

Hymn: Your Love Oh Lord (Psalm 36) by Third Day

Your love, oh Lord
Reaches to the heavens
Your faithfulness stretches to the sky
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountain
Your justice flows like the ocean's tides
And I will lift my voice
To worship You, my King
And I will find my strength
In the shadow of your wings

(Repeat)

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 do you like to add to your stone soup?

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: Spiritual Gifts by Heather Parker

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, p. 933

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says ‘Let Jesus be cursed!’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Reflection on the Scripture: Gifts are Trickier Than We Realize

Hymn: [Lift Every Voice and Sing](#) by James Weldon Johnson, J. Rosamond Johnson

Lift ev'ry voice and sing
'Til earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on 'til victory is won

Stony the road we trod
Bitter the chastening rod
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died
Yet with a steady beat
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered
Out from the gloomy past
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast

God of our weary years
God of our silent tears
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path, we pray
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee
Shadowed beneath Thy hand
May we forever stand
True to our God
True to our native land

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

We offer our gifts with grateful hearts.
Bless them and our lives to your service,
that they may reveal your glory,
nurture faith, and manifest the common good.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 36)

- Leader: Your grace and truth are big enough to fill all of creation
All: **You save all of creation, from the depths of the sea to the mountain tops.**
Leader: Your righteousness and judgment shelter us, resting on us light as a feather, surrounding us as fierce as a mother hawk.
All: **You care for us out of your abundance, a mighty river of water and time and mercy, flowing from the beginning of the world**
Leader: You have set the fountain of life and light going, so we marvel at its beauty even as we dance in its light
All: **Protect your creation, O Lord, bring us safely to your familiar home. 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: [Gifts from God by Chris Tomlin, featuring Chris Lane](#)

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Psalm 36

This psalm is a prayer of trust in God by one who has experienced betrayal and alienation from other members of the community. The psalm is divided into two primary parts, verses 1-4 concerning the destructive behavior of the wicked and verses 5-9 concerning God's steadfast fidelity. These two contrasting themes are brought together in the petitionary prayer of verses 10-12.

The wicked live in devious, destructive and arrogant ways, alienated from God, but the speaker is focused on destructiveness in social relationships.

In verses 5-6, four characteristic terms are used to fully bear witness to God: "grace and truth" and "righteousness and judgment". The four terms together summarize God's responsibility seen in the sustenance of all creation. "Human and animals" suggests a focus on the goodness and reliability of all creation,

The "shadow of your wings" and "abundance of your house" likely refer to the Jerusalem temple, where the extravagance of God is fully exhibited and experienced. The "rivers of delight" (in which the word "delight" is "Eden") alludes to creation, an image reinforced with reference to a fountain and light.

In the end, the psalm is dismissive of those evil doers who are now "unable to rise," that is, without power and therefore without power to hurt. They are contrasted with those who have known God and are therefore safe, fed, watered, cared for, and surrounded in the well-being that God can give and the wicked cannot negate.

Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms*, in *New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 177-180.



PRAYER LIST (1/16/22)

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, Elly Austin, Patty Birner.
- 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 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 Candy and Hailey, who have both been diagnosed with Covid and are recovering at home
- For Clarence Farwell, recovering from a stroke
- For Eric, Rena's son, who had a benign tumor removed in late December
- For Sarah, John Panto's sister, who is suffering with the loss of her son Steven, may she know that her grief is supported
- For David Johki, firefighter in town, who is facing some medical challenges
- For Morris, John Nicholson's dad, who has some medical challenges to overcome.
- 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

Enlivening God, each morning I am awakened by your goodness nudging the earth to life. I am filled with wonder. Your steadfast love extends to the sky, your constancy reaches to the clouds. How precious is your steadfast love! It shines like the dawn, and dews the desolation of my soul. Manifest in me the gifts of your Spirit that I may rejoice in you as I delight in serving your world this day.

Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

As evening falls and darkness shutters the day,
do not forsake us, O God.

Crown the sky with jewels of light
that your salvation may burnish the heavens

and illumine the earth,

and all find refuge in the shadow of your wings. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

The Holy Spirit enlivens each of us with unique gifts that nurture faith and serve the common good. To identify those gifts we can ask ourselves such questions as, When do I feel most alive? What do I love to do? What things, tasks, or actions fill me with a sense of purpose? What am I doing when time seems to stand still? These questions help us discern the Spirit's movement in our lives. Created in the image of God, each of us is uniquely gifted to reveal divine likeness. When our deep joy is united with meaning and purpose, vocation is birthed. How or where is God calling you?

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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 or via Zoom.

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.