



*Brookline
Community Church
March 13, 2022
Rev. Catherine A.
Merrill, Minister*

Prelude: [*The Lord is My Light \(Psalm 27\)*](#)

Call To Worship, Psalm 27, a Psalm of David

Leader: The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

All: **When evildoers assail me
to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes—
they shall stumble and fall.**

Leader: Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me,
yet I will be confident.

All: **One thing I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD,
and to inquire in his temple.**

Leader: For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.

**All: Now my head is lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.**

Leader: Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,
be gracious to me and answer me!
'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!'
Your face, LORD, do I seek.
Do not hide your face from me.

**All: Do not turn your servant away in anger,
you who have been my help.
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,
O God of my salvation!
If my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will take me up.**

Leader: Teach me your way, O LORD,
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.
Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they are breathing out violence.

**All: I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.
Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!**

Hymn: [Psalm 27 \(One Thing\) by Shane & Shane](#)

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):

How do you get down from an elephant?

Lifting up Our Joys and Concerns:

I wanted to share this poem with those of you who may not have heard it already, I'll collect our joys and concerns at the end.

"I No Longer Pray For Peace" by Ann Weems

On the edge of war, one foot already in,

I no longer pray for peace:

I pray for miracles.

I pray that stone hearts will turn
to tenderheartedness,
and evil intentions will turn
to mercifulness,
and all the soldiers already deployed
will be snatched out of harm's way,
and the whole world will be
astounded onto its knees.

I pray that all the "God talk"
will take bones,
and stand up and shed
its cloak of faithlessness,
and walk again in its powerful truth.

I pray that the whole world might
sit down together and share
its bread and its wine.

Some say there is no hope,
but then I've always applauded the holy fools
who never seem to give up on
the scandalousness of our faith:
that we are loved by God.....
that we can truly love one another.

I no longer pray for peace:

I pray for miracles.

Poem by Ann Weems, a Presbyterian elder and poet
written for Ash Wednesday 2003

<https://www.squanlife.com/squanlife/2013/01/i-no-longer-pray-for-peace.html>

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.

[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.]

Hymn: *How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord*

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can he say than to you he has said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed,
for I am your God, and will still give you aid.
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

“When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be your supply.
The flames shall not hurt you. I only design
your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.

“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes.
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!”

Celebration of Holy Communion¹

Invitation to Communion

Leader: Jesus said, "I want to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings." So, who is gathered at this table?

All: This table gathers together all who offer compassion, all who need compassion, all who long for welcome.

Leader: Jesus said, "I want to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings." So, who is gathered at this table?

All: The fighters, the refugees, the zoo keepers, the people cooking for others, the parents kissing their children good-bye, the journalists and the analysts, everyone who is not willing to look away.

Leader: Jesus said, "I want to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings." So, who is gathered at this table?

All: All God's children, ones I know, ones I don't know yet. Even when I feel alone, I am never alone.

Leader: Together in spirit we eat this bread and drink this cup

All: This is the bread and the cup Jesus offers to all who need safety and protection. This is the bread and the cup Jesus offers to all of us.

Words of Remembering

We remember the stories of wanderers
bringing first fruit in a basket
to give thanks for finding a home,
and we give thanks for our kitchen tables
and our precious sanctuary,
both homes and places we share.

And we remember that Jesus Christ
sitting among those
whose feet he had washed
at the Passover table
of precious and ancient tradition,
anticipated betrayal and desertion,
pain and even death,

¹ The communion liturgy was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Holy Communion Liturgy for March 6, 2022," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted February 24, 2022, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2022/02/24/holy-communion-liturgy-for-march-6-2021/> (accessed March 9, 2022).

but made a new thanksgiving,
a new hope, a new way for peace,
a new Covenant,
of blessed bread and poured wine
on a global table,
inviting us always to share
from our brokenness and grace.

Prayer of Consecration (Psalm 27)

O God, our light and salvation, you are our stronghold, keeping us safe from fear. Nothing is hidden from you, and you make no barriers for human understanding. We live in your house, we behold your beauty in this world. Beyond even the bright and sweet parables of our lives, you free us from definitions of relationship based in dominion and being dominated and you lead us to words of reconciliation and grace. So reconciled, we pray –

Let the Bread of our mouths and the Cup upon which our hearts meditate, be acceptable to you, O God, at this ordinary table and in our lives of redeeming.
Amen

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: Let us receive the gift of God, the Bread.

All: We are never alone; we live in this Bread.
(Eat the bread)

Leader: Let us receive the gift of God, the Cup of Covenant

All: We find Christ in the Cup because we share it.
(Drink from the cup)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of feast and fast, help us eat always with compassion for the earth, delight in the flavors of every people, and generosity in sharing, in spite of temptations to hoard or control. Praise to you, walker in all our wilderness, protector of all the chicks who need shelter and safety, bring all of us home to your table. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 13:31-35, p. 849

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." '

Reflection on the Scripture:

Hymn: [A Mighty Fortress is Our God by HeartSong Cedarville University](#)

A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.

For still our ancient foe
does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing.

You ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord of Hosts his name,
from age to age the same;
and he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us.

(Repeat)

A mighty fortress is our God,
His kingdom is forever;
(Repeat)

Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,

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

Loving God,

We are so aware of the gifts you have given us.

Thank you for food in plenty while others are hungry.

Thank you for homes where we may safely sleep while others wake to shattered nights.

Thank you for work where we can contribute to the well-being of our community, while others leave their jobs behind.

We offer back to you a small fraction of what we've received,

**Knowing that there is much more work to do in this world
before your kingdom arrives.**

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 27)

Leader: When life asks me to choose between trust and fear, I'm picking to trust in the LORD.

All: Because God has my back and will trip up the bullies.

Leader: No matter what the world throws at me, I'll stand confident, trusting in God, as I have always done.

All: When you strip away all the other yearnings – work, pleasure, money – there is only one thing I long for, God's beautiful presence in my life and community.

Leader: In times of peril, I hide beside God, in God's home and tent or wherever God puts me,

All: Victorious, I'll hold my head up high and offer grateful gifts, including music, to God

Leader: And when life catches up with me, and the fear comes crashing in again, as it always does, I'll cry out to God, asking to once again to be in the presence of God, face to face.

All: Even if the rest of the world has turned me away, God won't forsake me, a faithful servant.

Leader: When lies further tear apart my community, God will set me on the straight and narrow. God won't let the enemies of truth and trust win.

All: I will see God in the good life I live here on this sweet earth. God has promised an alternative to the broken mess of this world. That promise and that alternative is reliable and will endure until it comes into fruition. I will wait. I will hope. I will trust. 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: [Psalm 27 by Acts Church](#)

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Psalm 27

Psalm 27 urges trust as an alternative to anxiety or fear, even the face of an urgent threat. The poem calls on various images to urge that trust: light, salvation, refuge, and shelter coming from God in the face of threats. It is not an alternative to denial, for the presence of trouble and woe are front and center in the psalm. Such trust is nurtured in worshiping communities. Psalm 27 concludes with the imperative “wait for the Lord.” This waiting is not a passive, anxious waiting but an active waiting. Perhaps we could paraphrase it as hoping and believing that the covenant God will act as the one who delivers and blesses in the present troubling crisis and thus makes possible a way forward. The psalm, time and again, comes back to the temple and the divine presence there as central to its affirmation of trust. In worship, the community of faith is shaped and molded. In worship, the encounter with the life-giving divine presence brings the renewal that makes it possible to face opposition. The threat in Psalm 27 is from enemies, but a loss of trust is also a threat. Trust is not a private affair but needs the renewal and the nurture that comes from the encounter of the divine in worship.

Psalm 27 recognizes the power of language in nurturing trust and also in nurturing fear or anxiety. In one sense, the question the psalm presents is, in which language will we put our trust – the language of trust or the language of fear? The false accusers feed anxiety and fear. The true worshiping community embraces the psalm’s first verse, and in the face of opposition, confesses trust in the Lord as “my light and my salvation.”

Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms, in New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 137-142.



PRAYER LIST (3/13/22)

- Friends & family of June Hoff, Braedon O'Connor, Elly Austin and Patty Birner.
- 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 Barbara's relative, struggling with depression
- For UMC Bishop Eduard Khegay who serves in Russia and Ukraine, as well as Patrick Streiff & Christian Alstead who serve in Ukraine
- For the people of Ukraine and Russia, drawn into a war they did not want
- For Luca, Amy's nephew, who had complications when his port was put in. He's home now, but could use some prayers
- For Amy, Nancy & Bill's very active daughter, who has to take it easy after knee surgery
- For Polly, John Panto's sister, recovering from a stroke, who's moving into another facility
- For Ann's parents, contemplating a move into a facility that should meet their medical needs better.
- For Joe, Megan's friend, whose recovery from knee surgery now includes a huge blood clot
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning²

Dear God, I do not know all of the challenges that face me this day, but still I pray: if I should be tempted by desire for earthly gain, remind me of my citizenship in heaven. If I should be distracted by hunger, satisfy me with your Holy Spirit until I hunger no more. Let me walk in the way of Christ so that my life testifies in deed and word, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.” Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Dear God, great is your mercy to me, even when I have not remembered you. Where I have strayed from your path, forgive my sins and show me the way to salvation. Grant me rest this night that I may rise refreshed in my commitment to the way of my Lord, Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

In Luke 13:35 Jesus says, “And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’” To what sort of “seeing” does Jesus refer? Is Jesus calling for more than a verbal declaration that he is the Messiah? How might I live so that I become a testimony that Jesus is truly the one who comes in the name of God?

Daily Awareness Reflection³

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 ...

² 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.

³ 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 +/-
February	\$15,030	\$17,194	(\$2,164)

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.

Basement Insulation going in on March 24

We're ready for the insulation folks to come and get the basement buttoned up. Please contact [Susan Haight](#) via email or 603-582-0964 if you have any questions.

Helping Keep the Church Safe and Welcoming, aka Shoveling

The Trustees are looking for folks to help shovel out the church. While the lot is plowed, we need to clear the walkways and the steps as well. We can offer a warmer welcome if getting in is safe and easy. Please contact [Susan Haight](#) via email or 603-582-0964 if you could take a turn.

Save the Date: Discerning When God is Calling the Church, 3/20, after coffee hour

We'd like to begin a time of discussion to discern where God is calling our church to go and grow. We want to explore questions like:

- What have we learned in this time of turmoil and change?
- Who is today's Brookline Community Church?
- What do our choices reveal about what we truly want to be?

Free Covid Home Tests

1. 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.

2. The federal government will deliver four tests to your home. Just enter your details on a special [US Post Office web page](#). And if you've ordered 4 in the past, you can get four more the same way!

Reading Together During Epiphany

We've decided to read Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary*. We also decided to meet in person in Fellowship Hall (but I can add a zoom meeting if you want to try that). We'll meet to finish the book on March 13, 11:30/after coffee hour, for chapters 23-end.

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:

Ensure or similar (other than Chocolate)	Paper Towels
Carrots	Kitchen Sponges
Condiments (other than ketchup and mustard)	Dishwasher Detergent
Mayo	Contact Solution
BBQ Sauce	Shaving Cream
Flour	XL Overnight Men's Undergarments
Shortening	Luv's Size 4 Diapers
	Pampers Water Wipes (baby wipes)

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.