



Brookline Community Church

March 20, 2022

Rev. Catherine A. Merrill, Minister

Prelude: [Verbovaya Doschechka a Ukrainian Folk Song, by Violinists Support Ukraine](#)

Call To Worship, Psalm 63:1-8, a Psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah.

Leader: O God, you are my God, I seek you,
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**All: So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.**

Leader: So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.
My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

**All: when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.**

Leader: My soul clings to you;

All: your right hand upholds me.

Hymn: [Psalm 63 \(Lyric Video\) by The Corner Room](#)

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.

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: [There's a Wideness in God's Mercy](#)

There is welcome for the sinner,
and more graces for the good.
There is mercy with the Savior,
there is healing in his blood.

But we make his love too narrow
by false limits of our own,
and we magnify its strictness
with a zeal God will not own.

Chorus

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in his justice,
which is more than liberty.

If our love were but more simple,
we should take him at his word,
and our lives would be more loving
in the likeness of our Lord.

Chorus

There is kindness, there is justice
There is mercy that is wider than the
sea

There is goodness, there's
forgiveness
God's mercy over me.

Chorus x2

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, pp. 931-932

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.' We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Reflection on the Scripture:

Hymn: [Come Ye Sinners by Fernando Ortega & Amy Grant](#)

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy
Weak and wounded, sick and sore
Jesus ready, stands to save you
Full of pity, love and power

Chorus

I will arise and go to Jesus
He will embrace me in His arms
In the arms of my dear Savior
Oh, there are ten thousand charms

Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome
God's free bounty glorify
True belief and true repentance
Every grace that brings you nigh

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden
Lost and ruined by the fall
If you tarry 'til you're better
You will never come at all

Chorus

Feel Him prostrate in the garden
On the ground your Maker lies
On the bloody tree, behold him
Sinner, will this not suffice?

Lo, the incarnate God ascended
Pleads the merit of his blood
Venture on him, venture wholly
Let no other trust intrude

I will arise and go to Jesus
He will embrace me in His arms
In the arms of my dear Savior
In the arms of my dear Savior
In the arms of my dear Savior
Oh, there are ten thousand charms

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

**God of wilderness and Promised Land,
in days of want and in days of plenty
you have been with us.**

**By these gifts we now share,
may others know of your providence and care.
Send us—not only our offerings, but our very selves—
to console and comfort,
to lift up and reach out,
to listen and sit beside
your children everywhere
at the one Table you have set;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 63:1-8)

Leader: Bring me out of the wilderness of my life, O LORD. Where I my hunger and thirst for you are taken care of, because you love me more than I can understand.

All: I have come to the place I expect to find you, in your holy sanctuary, where others are finding you as well, grateful for your loving kindness, relieved that you are still with us.

Leader: Being with you is like the richest dessert, the most delicious meal, I can stop tearing around to find you when I just rest and let your presence come to me.

All: In your sanctuary for worship, in my own bed at night, my fragile self can come in contact with you, in all your power, in all your love.

Leader: I will hold onto this feeling of a God so powerful and so loving that even a really limited being like me can shelter in your wings,

All: You hold me up, when every thing and every one else would let me down.

Leader: Amen.

All: 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: [To You O Lord by Graham Kendrick & Matt Redman](#)

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Psalm 63

Psalm 63 puts into words the desert experience of hungering and thirsting after God. The satisfying of hunger and quenching of thirst is found in the God who comes to deliver. The psalmist encounters God in the sanctuary's worship and so confesses trust for life's journey. The faithful psalmist trusts that the God who delivers will embrace the pain of this wilderness time and bring hope. That is the task of the covenant God.

The first eight verses of the psalm articulate the speaker's confession of trust. The psalmist speaks and thirsts, and faints as if in "a dry and weary land." Verse 2 ties the sanctuary to the divine presence in terms of "power and glory," suggesting that God is decisively present and active in the world. It is in the sanctuary as a place of divine presence that the speaker's thirst can be quenched and life nurtured.

The confession in verse 3 is a notable one. It claims that God's steadfast love is even better than life and thus leads to praise. It becomes clear that the confession of trust becomes a hope for fullness of life that only divine *hesed*, steadfast love, can bring.

The "But" at the beginning of verse 9 is a clue to readers that the psalm's last three verses provide a clear contrast for the first eight. The confession of trust in the first part of the psalm is still operative, however, verse 9 affirms that the lying oppressors will go down to the realm of death. They will also roam unprotected as prey for jackals. Their lying mouths will be stopped by utter and complete defeat.

Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms, in New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 276-279.



PRAYER LIST (3/20/22)

- 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 Luca, Amy's nephew, whose treatments continue
- For Sanjay's dad, pacing himself in his return to work after injury
- For the friends and family of Dave Glover, Amy's friend, who was very active in the Brookline baseball program when Amy's kids were that age
- For Mary, Donna's friend, who is struggling with the sudden decline of her parents suffering from dementia
- For Joe, Megan's friend, whose recovery from knee surgery now includes a huge blood clot
- For Joe's wife, Megan's friend, who's scheduled for heart surgery, and for their whole family because it's raining and pouring on them now
- For Leslie, Susan Haight's relative, who is out of the ICU but still in the hospital, and for Susan's nephew who is bearing a great deal of the burden
- For Polly, John Panto's sister, recovering from a stroke, who's moving into another facility
- For Clarence Farwell, recovering from a stroke
- For the people of Ukraine and Russia, drawn into a war they did not want
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning¹

Gracious God, this new day carries the potential for growth and new life. Help me to attend to those things in me that need care and attention. Sow your word in me that I may grow in faithfulness and understanding. Shake me out of dull routines, so that I may take part in the good news you continue to tell urgently and passionately. In Christ's name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

As I lie down this night in the shadow of your wings, God of my life, I know that you will be with me even as you have helped me through this day. Whether I am weary from the day, or whether the day has been a rich feast of blessings, I give thanks for your power and glory, which are present in every circumstance. As I give myself over to rest and sleep, I remember that your steadfast love is better than life. So, I pray, surround me with your love tonight and always. In the peace of Christ I pray. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Luke 13:1–9 tells the story of a fruitless fig tree that the owner is ready to cut down. The gardener, however, asks for a little more time. The gardener wants to tend and cultivate the soil in the hope that figs may yet grow. The gardener is open to a different future for this tree, in spite of its present condition. Think about my own life, or the life of someone I love, in relationship to this story: What needs special tending? What will cultivate the “soil” of daily life so that new growth, new possibilities, might emerge? And what can I learn from this gardener about allowing for a different outcome, a new possibility?

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 +/-
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.

Getting Referrals for our People in Need Fund: See a Deacon!

This is a reminder that the Deacons have a fund we can use to anonymously give folks a hand. If you know of someone who could use help with groceries, gas, insurance, heating oil, unexpected car repairs, something that just came up out of the blue, please let Rev. Cath or a deacon (Jill, Russell, Barbara, John Panto, Candy) know. We may be able to help out.

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?

Looking for feedback on changes in our Covid protocols

Over the next few weeks we'll be experimenting with changes in our Covid-19 protocols, trying to relax some of our guidelines. Our intention is to help folks feel more connected with one another. But the same changes might feel great for some and off-putting for others. Please speak with Rev. Cath, Ann or any of the deacons to let us know how the changes make you feel.

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!

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.