



*Brookline Community Church*

*March 27, 2022*

### **Announcements**

Today's worship service will follow an unusual format. So we'll do announcements at the beginning.

### **Scripture Reading: Luke 15:1-3, 11b**

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable:

'There was a man who had two sons.

### **Reflection on the Scripture Reading**

**Prelude:** [\*Light of the World \(Sing Hallelujah\) by We the Kingdom\*](#)

### **Scripture Reading: Luke 15:11b-13**

There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country,

### **Prayer for Ukraine**

The churches of the New Hampshire conference of the UCC have been invited to join their voices together by participating in a Sunday of prayer and support for Ukraine. Part of the younger son's journey to a distant country was his attempt to sever the connection between one life and another. But we are all connected. Let us pray:

## **Prayer for the Ukraine<sup>1</sup> by Rev. Maren Tirabassi**

God of plowshare and pruning hook,  
may these old words be our hope for Ukraine,  
May shattering bows and swords,  
mean in our time an end  
to missile strikes, long-range artillery,  
terror in Kyiv and Mariupol.

We pray your tenderness to surround  
those who flee, or who shelter in place,  
those who grieve family or home,  
troops already exhausted  
in danger every minute,  
and kind people of Poland and Moldova  
opening borders for refugees.

We pray for guidance of nations' leaders  
for many will live or die  
because of their decisions.

And today we especially ask your blessing  
on all these gifts that we send  
to plant a sunflower of hope in Ukraine,  
for we pray in the name of Jesus  
who wept for the world a long time ago  
and weeps right now  
that we may all learn  
the things that make for peace. Amen

### **Scripture Reading: Luke 15:13**

A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

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<sup>1</sup> Maren Tirabassi "Prayer for Ukraine," Wider Church Relations Ministry, A Sunday of Prayer and Support for Ukraine, posted March 24, 2022, <https://nhcucc.org/conference-ministries/wider-church-relations-ministry> (accessed 24 March 2022).

**Call To Worship, Psalm 32, p. 440, Of David. A Maskil.**

Leader: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,  
whose sin is covered.  
Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity,  
and in whose spirit there is no deceit

**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: While I kept silence, my body wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.  
Selah

**All: Then I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not hide my iniquity;  
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD',  
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.  
Selah**

Leader: Therefore let all who are faithful  
offer prayer to you;  
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters  
shall not reach them.  
You are a hiding-place for me;  
you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.  
Selah

**All: I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.  
Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,  
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,  
else it will not stay near you.**

Leader: Many are the torments of the wicked,  
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the LORD.

**All: Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,  
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.**

## Baptism Liturgy

Leader: Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to Avery Rose Lubelczyk, as she lives and grows in Christ?

**All: We promise our love, support, and care.**

### Affirmation of Faith

Leader: Do you believe in God?

**All: I believe in God.**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus?

**All: I believe in Jesus.**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**All: I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

### Prayer for the Baptized

Let the whole church say, **Amen.**

**Hymn: [#242 In the Garden by Mahalia Jackson](#)**

I come to the garden alone  
While the dew is still on the roses  
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear  
The Son of God discloses

And He walks with me  
And He talks with me  
And He tells me I am His own  
And the joy we share as we tarry there  
None other has ever known

He speaks and the sound of His voice  
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing  
And the melody that He gave to me  
Within my heart is ringing

And He walks with me  
And He talks with me  
And He tells me I am His own  
And the joy we share as we tarry there  
None other has ever known

I'd stay in the garden with Him  
Though the night around me be falling  
But He bids me go through the voice of woe  
His voice to me is calling

And He walks with me  
And He talks with me  
And He tells me I am His own  
And the joy we share as we tarry there  
None other has ever known

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.

**Scripture Reading: Luke 15:13-17**

A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself

**Lifting up Our Joys and Concerns:**

**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](mailto:minister@bccnh.org) or call/text (857) 259-7269.]

**Scripture Reading: Luke 15:17-24**

But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

**Reflection on Scripture**

**Hymn: [#362 Morning Has Broken by Cat Stevens/Yusuf](#)**

Morning has broken like the first  
morning  
Blackbird has spoken like the first  
bird  
Praise for the singing  
Praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from  
the Word

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from  
heaven  
Like the first dewfall on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet  
garden  
Sprung in completeness where His  
feet pass

Mine is the sunlight  
Mine is the morning  
Born of the one light Eden saw play  
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry  
morning  
God's recreation of the new day

Morning has broken like the first  
morning  
Blackbird has spoken like the first  
bird  
Praise for the singing  
Praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from  
the Word

**Scripture Reading: Luke 15:22-32**

But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

**Reflection on Scripture**

### Scripture Reading: Luke 15:24b-32

And they began to celebrate. 'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found." '

### Reflection on the Scripture:

#### Hymn: [Lord of the Dance by Jean Watson](#)

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,  
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,  
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,  
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

#### Refrain

Dance, then, wherever you may be;  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.  
And I'll lead you all wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,  
But they would not dance and they would not follow me;  
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;  
They came to me and the dance went on.

#### Refrain

I danced on the sabbath when I cured the lame,  
The holy people said it was a shame;  
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high;  
And they left me there on a cross to die.

#### Refrain

I danced on a Friday and the sky turned black;  
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back;  
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,  
But I am the dance and I still go on.

#### Refrain

They cut me down and I leapt up high,  
I am the life that'll never, never die;  
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.

#### Refrain

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

Gracious God, seeker of the lost,  
Here we are, lost from you and from ourselves  
We're struggling to keep track of the gifts we've been given  
Because there are so many, even if we don't notice.  
So accept what we offer, our time, our money, our music, our selves,  
And make the party you are calling all of us to  
Even more full of music and dancing and love.  
Amen.

## **Reflection on Scripture**

### **Scripture Reading: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32, pp. 850-851**

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable:

'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found." '

### **A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 32)**

Leader: Forgive my transgressions, O LORD. There's no reason you should, and I certainly don't deserve it, but I ask for forgiveness anyway.

**All: Your steadfast love is live giving, and I could use some more of it in my life.**

Leader: I like to pretend I can hide it from you, but my heart and soul and body know better, and I am so much weaker without you,

**All: You make it so easy for me. I acknowledge and you forgive.**

Leader: You protect me even in the heart of chaos, even when I am the most beset by trouble, even when I am lost to myself,

**All: If I can just stop being stubborn, and accept the grace you offer, I can stay near you, I can walk in your way.**

Leader: If I trust in you, I am welcomed home, I am surrounded by your steadfast love.

**All: So let me celebrate with you, every day, O LORD. Let me make music and dance, so everyone knows I am rejoicing.**

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: [Peace on Earth by Austin French](#)**

*Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.*

## Notes:

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### Psalm 32

Psalm 32 is divided into three parts, with the middle having the most interest. The psalmist announced the conclusion at the beginning. Namely, for a full life, there is nothing like being forgiven. The psalm does not trouble over the question of a life free of transgression. It assumes transgression. It has observed the killing burden of sin unforgiven, and it knows that forgiveness is the power for new life.

The middle part of the psalm states the movement concisely: paralysis (vv. 3-4), acknowledgment (v. 5), rescue and well-being (vv. 6-7). Everything in disorientation, everything for future life, everything in relation to God – everything depends on confessing to God. This psalmist understood the need for spoken release and admission, the liberation that comes with actual articulation to the one who listens and can respond.

There is no doubt here about the reality of God, the reality of accountability, the clarity of expectation, and the need to come to terms with that clear, unavoidable relationship. God is not an elective or a hypothesis, but a definitional and determinate partner who establishes norms and with whom we must deal. Freedom from guilt requires embracing it and having it dealt with by the mercy of God.

In verses 8-11, the one who has found this way to freedom wants to share it. We could be stubborn and miss the whole point. But the “narrow gate” to new life is the way of coming to terms with God, facing God’s holy will and the contrasting failure of our life.

The guilt to be acknowledged concerns our idol-making, which reduce all of life to management and reduces the terror of God’s holiness to a set of religious niceties. For what the psalm finally commends is *yielding*. Against that, our social values are oriented to *unyielding control*.

Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 95-98.



## PRAYER LIST (3/27/22)

- 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 the friends and family of Les Reed, Barbara's neighbor, who passed away at home in hospice, as he had wanted.
- For the friends and family of Jane Dwyer, Cindy's friend from the Lakes region, who passed away this week of Covid.
- For Jane Jukes, who fell and broke her leg and is now in rehab
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

### **Household Prayer: Morning<sup>2</sup>**

Loving God, in all I do this day, use me as a sign of your reconciling love. Let me not view anyone from a human point of view, but let me see all whom I will encounter with the eyes of Christ, through whom I pray. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

Merciful God, if like the Prodigal Son, I have strayed from you this day, call me back to your loving embrace. If like the elder son, I have harbored resentment for the grace you give to others, reprove me. Help me claim in thought and deed the inheritance of the saints who share with Jesus compassion and forgiveness to all who lose their way. Amen

### **Questions for Reflection**

In what ways am I like the Prodigal Son? In what ways am I like the elder son? In what ways am I like the father?

### **Daily Awareness Reflection<sup>3</sup>**

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 ...

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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](https://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.

### Contributions to the UCC Ukrainian Relief Fund during March

All of March's Take Home Meal revenue went to the UCC Ukrainian Relief Fund. If you'd like to make a donation, please give the donation to anyone on the Outreach team and let them know it's for the Ukrainian donation.

### Next Take Home Meal: April 8, Ham Tetrazzini

You know it's going to be delicious. Order soon because they're going to fly out of here.

### 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](mailto:Susan.Haight@brooklinechurch.org) via email or 603-582-0964 if you could take a turn.

### 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:

Cleaning supplies

Body wash

Shampoo and conditioner

Detergent

Paper towels

Protein shakes (Ensure or similar) in a variety of flavors

Yogurt

Pet food

Canned carrots

Juice boxes

What we don't need:

Peanut butter

Pasta

Rice

Beans (all kinds)

Adult incontinence

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.