



Brookline Community Church

April 3, 2022

Rev. Catherine A. Merrill, Minister

Prelude: [*Chopin in the Ruins of Her Home* by Karina Manyukina](#)

Call To Worship, Psalm 126, p. 499, A Song of Ascents.

Leader: When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;

All: **then it was said among the nations,
'The LORD has done great things for them.'
The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.**

Leader: Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.

All: **Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.**

Hymn: [*They that Sow in Tears Shall Reap in Joy*](#)

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 is the sermon we see?

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: [Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer by Chet Valley Churches](#)

Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer	When I tread the verge of Jordan
Pilgrim through this barren land	Bid my anxious fears subside
I am weak but Thou art mighty	Death of death
Hold me with thy powerful hand	And hell's destruction
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven	Land me safe on Canaan's side
Feed me now and evermore	Songs of praises, songs of praises
Feed me now and evermore	I will ever give to thee
Open now the crystal fountain	I will ever give to thee
Whence the healing streams doth	Songs of praises, songs of praises
flow	I will ever give to thee
Let the fiery cloudy pillar	I will ever give to thee
Lead me all my journey though	
Strong Deliverer, Strong Deliverer	
Be Thou still my strength and shield	
Be Thou still my strength and shield	

Celebration of Holy Communion¹

Invitation to Communion

Leader: Come to this table, wherever it is set,
all you who go out weeping,
bearing the seeds of desperate hope,
lingering sadness, loss, fear, or depression,
bearing the seeds of sunflowers.

**All: We come holding hearts,
even if we cannot hold hands.**

Leader: Come to this table, wherever it is set,
all you who come home with joy,
with release from pain,
with new tender love, soft vintage love,
child-smile, or good memory.

**All: We come to the ordinary table
of God's extraordinary love.**

Words of Remembering

We remember so many different
tables of Jesus –
his acceptance of hospitality
from Peter's mother-in-law and
Zacchaeus,
the Syrophenician woman's challenge,
the generous boy with his lunch.

We remember a meal Martha served,
with food Jesus didn't criticize,
a living but endangered Lazarus
sitting at the table,
and the gift of costly perfume
Mary poured over Jesus' feet.

There is always controversy
about how to love God
live in justice, share compassion.

Jesus remembered six days later
what Mary had done and washed
his disciples' dirty, calloused toes.

We, too, remember – the Passover
with a betrayer, a denier, a doubter,
all clean and loved.

Jesus used what was familiar,
accessible and ordinary –
bread already on the table
a cup for all lips.

And so we share these from our tables –
knowing that some of us cook,
some anoint, some argue,
some simply eat,
and there are many present
whom Christ has returned to life.

¹ The communion liturgy was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Holy Communion Liturgy for April 3, 2022," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted March 24, 2022, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2022/03/24/holy-communion-for-april-3-2022/> (accessed March 28, 2022).

Holy God, bless every piece of bread near the mouth of any one of your children so that it becomes the strength and hope and holiness we need. Bless a small plastic cup or a beautiful chalice, and every glass in between, reminding us that we can never spill our love and we always and in all places drink your healing. Amen.

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: You hold the Bread of heaven. Honor it.
It is consecrated to perfectly match your need. Receive it.

All: We eat it in hope.
(Eat the bread)

Leader: You hold the Cup of blessing. Honor it.
It is consecrated so you become a communion of saints.
Receive this one small sip – deeply.

All: We drink it in joy.
(Drink from the cup)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God, we give you thanks that we are the people chosen in this meal, chosen to make new paths, new ways in the wilderness of sorrows, losses and injustices, dangers to all creatures and the earth itself. From this blessed meal we take hope that even war may be quenched, and that we can recognize your new things springing forth, and commit ourselves to be the bringers of their blessings to all people. Amen.

Hymn: [Communion Song by Jonathan Stockstill & Bethany Music](#)

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21, p. 586

Thus says the LORD,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
who brings out chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched
like a wick:
Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;

now it springs forth, do you not
perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for
myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Reflection on the Scripture:

Hymn: [*I Will Do a New Thing in You* by Gary Fowler, Sr.](#)

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

Abundant God: You cause water to flow in desert places.

**You give wine to flow at a wedding feast,
and food to feed five thousand on a grassy mountainside.**

Your generosity astounds and humbles us.

**We bow before you in gratitude and awe,
asking you to receive what we have brought in response.**

**May these gifts be a pleasing and fragrant offering,
for the sake of the world you came to save.**

We pray in your holy name. Amen.

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 126)

Leader: God transformed our world once, more than once, and we laughed and sang and shouted for joy

All: Because who wouldn't shout for joy, when the world turns around? Even those who aren't quite sure about God and God's presence in this crazy world.

Leader: And the world certainly needs another transformation, like the desert after a spring rain.

All: The world needs another transformation, like when the seeds turn into lush wheat and sunflowers, and the harvest is so big our arms get tired from carrying it all home.

Leader: Transform this world and bring us home, O Lord

All: We are weeping now. We are ready to come home singing in the world you restored to new life.

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: [*Water in My Desert* by Rachelle Fletcher](#)

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Notes:

Psalm 126

Psalm 126 has two parts. Verses 1-3 celebrate the memory of God's transformative act for the sake of Jerusalem. Verses 4-6 ask God to, now, again, perform such a transformative act.

That first wondrous act of restoration evokes a threefold response of gladness. First, it seemed like a dream, so unreal, so impossible, so beyond explanation, even beyond anticipation. Second, at the first "then," subsequent to the deliverance, the people of Israel were filled with joy and offered glad songs of thanksgiving. Third, the second "then", is that the other nations watched this magnificent restoration of Jerusalem and give praise to the God known in the world as the worker of wonders.

The second half of the psalm (vv. 4-6), asks God for one more wondrous restoration. The prayer for that renewal uses a contrasting correlation between weeping/sowing and reaping/laughter. The contrast between tears and laughter represents the change sought.

In the end, the double use of "restore fortunes" in verses 1 and 4 makes clear that in both celebrative memory and urgent appeal it is God's capacity for transformative miracles that is the center of attention. It is God alone who is the giver of all newness by which we live.

In the teaching of Jesus, this agricultural imagery clearly refers to his own resurrection, the gift of new life out of death. In the Old Testament, moreover, the imagery of resurrection is utilized to refer to exile and homecoming. Thus the imagery of the psalm voices the core claim of both Judaism and Christianity. In every such reference, the gap between being dead in the ground and alive in the world is occupied only by the doer of "great things."

Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms, in New Cambridge Bible Commentary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 538-541.



PRAYER LIST (4/3/22)

- 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 Luca, Amy's nephew, whose treatments continue
- For the friends and family of Lorne Casey, a resident of Lawrence, who has been missing for seven years and whose remains were found less than a mile from Rev. Cath's home.
- For Sanjay's dad, pacing himself in his return to work after injury
- For Joe, Megan's friend, recovering from knee surgery
- For Joe's wife, Megan's friend, recovering from heart surgery
- 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: Morning²

Merciful God, as I begin this day, place in me a spirit of generosity so that I may freely share love, joy, and encouragement with those I encounter.

Keep me from quick judgments so that I leave room for your grace in my life and in the lives of others. Make me your faithful disciple in my words and in my actions, as well as in the thoughts of my heart; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

All through the day, Lord Jesus, you have been present. As I settle into the routines of home and evening, I long to be at home in my relationship with you. Help me to put aside the cares of the day and the worries of tomorrow in order to fully enjoy the peace of your presence now. I pray that your peace will also be with those I know who have special need of your care tonight, and I pray for those who lie down this night without the safety of home or bed, without enough food or resources. Bring your light into the surrounding darkness so that all of us may sleep in the security of your love. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

John 12:1–8 draws our attention to three people: Mary, Judas, and Jesus. It is easy enough to identify Mary as “the good disciple” and Judas as “the bad disciple” not only in this story but also in the larger story of Jesus' life and death. We can (and do) make this judgment: Mary is accepted and affirmed, while Judas is rejected. But is this the judgment that the other person in the story would make? As one commentator puts it, “. . . if Jesus came to save the lost, surely there is no one in the gospel story who is more lost than the one who betrays Jesus. . . . If the Good Shepherd can and does go to any length to save a lost sheep, is Judas beyond the saving grasp of the Good Shepherd?” This is not a question with an easy answer. As this story ushers you into Holy Week, consider how the cross, the grace of Christ, speaks to this story and to your own life story, which like most life stories may not be a simple “either/or” example of faithfulness, but a “both/and” mix of faithfulness and unfaithfulness.

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.

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.

Plan for Holy Week

HOLY WEEK leads up to Easter. During that week, there are several extra services to help us prepare for the new meaning and purpose that Easter brings each year.

PALM SUNDAY, 4/10: We celebrate Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, celebrated by the crowds. We will welcome new members to the church. And we begin to reflect on the dark betrayal of Jesus which leads to the Cross.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, 4/14: We remember Jesus' Last Supper and the blessing he promised to his disciples. The 7:00pm service this year is at the Mason Congregational Church, 33 Valley Road, Mason, NH. You can also join the Zoom broadcast at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84117814432?pwd=aU5zbjY3eldlRE96Y1Zacm1OeHlFZz09>

Meeting ID: 841 1781 4432; Passcode: 613185

GOOD FRIDAY VIGIL, 4/15: From 3:00 to 8:00pm, the church is open for quiet reflection on Jesus' death at human hands. Many find this time of deep quiet profoundly renewing.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE, 4/17, 5:45am: As the sunrise breaks on Musket Mountain and the Andres Institute, we welcome the light and the promise of Jesus' resurrection.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE, 4/17, 10:00am: We celebrate the greatest of Good News – Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, indeed!

Easter Flower Dedication Form

We're inviting people to share their Easter dedications in the Easter Sunday bulletin. See the form below.

Looking for Lay Readers for the Maundy Thursday service in Mason

We're looking for some volunteers to read at the Maundy Thursday service in Mason. If you're willing, please let Jill (jgoods4@gmail.com) or Rev. Cath (minister@bccnh.org) know.

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@bccnh.org) via email or 603-582-0964 if you could take a turn.

Save the Date: Discerning When God is Calling the Church, 5/1, after worship

We're continuing our 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:

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.



This year, the Deacons will be donating a small number of Easter flowers to help decorate the sanctuary. We look forward to being able to invite the congregation to help us purchase flowers again next year.

For this year however, please fill out the form below and give it to a Deacon (Russell H, Barbara HH, John P, Candy T, Jill A), or email your dedication to Candy at secretary@bccnh.org. We will include your dedication in the Easter bulletin, as we have done in past years.

Dedication deadline: Sunday, April 10, 2022.

Placed by: _____

In Memory of: _____

and/or In Honor of: _____

Thank you!