

Brookline Community Church

May 8, 2022

Rev. Catherine A. Merrill, Minister



Photo from [*A Stroll through the Market: Saint Louis du Nord, Haiti*](#) by Sarah Jane Sanders

Prelude: [*Oi u lizi chervona kalyna*](#), a Ukrainian patriotic march, written in 1914 by Stepan Charnetsky, performed by Eliza Izmalkove, a 2014 Ukrainian refugee in Vilnius, Lithuania with 300 Lithuanian singers who joined her to show their support for Ukraine.

Oh, in the meadow a red kalyna has bent down low,
For some reason, our glorious Ukraine is in sorrow.
And we'll take that red kalyna and we will raise it up,
And we shall cheer up our glorious Ukraine, hey - hey!
And we'll take that red kalyna and we will raise it up,
And we shall cheer up our glorious Ukraine, hey - hey!

Call To Worship, Psalm 23, A Psalm of David, from *The Message*

Leader: God, my shepherd!

I don't need a thing.

You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools to drink from.

All: True to your word,

you let me catch my breath
and send me in the right direction.

Leader: Even when the way goes through
Death Valley,
I'm not afraid
when you walk at my side.

All: **Your trusty shepherd's crook
makes me feel secure.**

Leader: You serve me a six-course dinner
right in front of my enemies.
You revive my drooping head;
my cup brims with blessing.

All: **Your beauty and love chase after me
every day of my life.
I'm back home in the house of God
for the rest of my life.**

Hymn: Psalm 23 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.

Meeting Wiznadine, our adopted daughter from Compassion International:

How has she grown over the years?

A Prayer for Mothers' Day:¹

Let us recite Psalm 23 (King James version) together:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

[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.]

¹ Today's pastoral prayer was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Prayer for places of hospitality," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted March 25, 2022, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2022/03/25/prayer-for-places-of-hospitality/> (accessed May 3, 2022).

Hymn: Our Psalm 23 by Sharon Irving, Common Hymnal Praise & Protest

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23, a Psalm of David, from the Jewish Publication Society (1985)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me to water in places of repose;

He renews my life; He guides me in right paths as befits His name.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me.

You spread a table for me in full view of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my drink is abundant.

Only goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Reflection on the Scripture:

Hymn #330: The Lord's My Shepherd by New Scottish Hymns

MINISTRY OF SHARING

***DOXOLOGY: #809 “Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.”**

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

Holy God, Divine Shepherd,
you anoint us with the oil of gladness;
your love overflows our hearts.
Accept our offering for the good of the world
as we joyfully give thanks for our life in you.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Announcements

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World (a riff on Psalm 23)

- Leader: The LORD is my shepherd. I have everything I need: a place to rest, plenty to eat and drink. I just need to notice the abundance I have.
- All:** **God puts me back together when I have fallen apart, sets me on the right path when I have gotten off track.**
- Leader: When life is taking into the darkest ravines, God is with me, guarding me, nudging me forward, comforting me.
- All:** **Even though there are enemies all around me, some of my own making, God offers me a feast**
- Leader: God offers me healing and vitality
- All:** **Goodness and mercy pursue me every day, never letting me get away. I will live in the home God made just for me every day I'm given on this sweet earth.**
- 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: Psalm 23, The Lord is My Shepherd

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.

Notes:

Psalm 23

This is the psalm we say to remember. We recite it together in funerals. Much of the power of this psalm comes from the contexts we remember when we recite it. And yet we recite it to remember because its imagery evokes grace, hope and abundance. Still that grace, hope and abundance are encountered in the real world, where we walk through Death Valley, where our enemies have taken our place at the table.

Our good shepherd has given all that is needed – good food, food water, good paths. Notice that all the verbs of action are for the shepherd. The sheep have no verbs. The sheep wait and enjoy the gifts. Because the shepherd is generous, the sheep live a safe, trust-filled life, surrounded by generosity. That is the grace that is offered.

We need to let ourselves be caught and embraced in love, like that of a sheep with safe pasture, like a traveler with rich and unexpected food. Our life is not willed by God to be an endless anxiety. It is meant to be an embrace by God. That's the hope, that we figure out how to let ourselves be caught.

What God gives will be enough for me. This is a statement of enormous confidence in the generosity of God, the one who knows what we need and gives well beyond all that we ask or think. “I shall not want,” is a decision made against the greed and lust and satiation and aggressive ambition of a consumer society. I will refocus my desire. I will not entertain all those other distractions that keep me busy and make me selfish and cause me not to notice my neighbor.

I will remember.

Walter Brueggemann, *The Threat of Life: Sermons on Pain, Power, and Weakness*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 92-93.



PRAYER LIST (5/8/22)

- Friends & family of 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 Joe, Megan's friend, recovering from knee surgery
- For Joelle, Megan's friend & Joe's wife, 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 Nancy Reinbold, friend of the church, whose family is going through a rough time
- For Cassie, Amy's mom, who lost her sister Lois last year. For all the crazy Covid reasons, Cassie will be helping to sort through her things, a tough moment for everyone.
- For the friends and family of Dave Kinney, whose life ended too soon
- For Louise, Rev. Cath's family friend, who has an inoperable brain tumor
- For Michael Esposito, friend of Susan and Russell's family, who is out of a coma but facing innumerable surgeries and other medical challenges
- For Cathy, a friend of Marjorie & David, suffering from illness.
- For Joanne, Bob's cousin, who's in the hospital
- For Nadia Weidman's family in Ukraine, who have left their home to seek safety.
- For the people of Ukraine, who are finding new life in the death that surrounds them this Eastertide
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning²

Holy God, you have called a people to be your family out of every tribe, language, and nation, to love and serve you daily in a world of beauty, complexity, and diversity. Help us to honor and respect the dignity of difference as we seek to be one with you and each other this day and always. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

O Shepherd of all, you have brought us to the close of another day; for this gift and the blessings we now name, we give you thanks. . . .

All that we have and all that we are come from you; and so, trusting in the goodness of your divine care, let us lie down this night in peace, that tomorrow we may rise to greet you in resurrection joy. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Psalm 23 affirms that God supplies our every need. How do our lives change when we trust this great promise 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 +/-
April	\$23.994	\$33,647	(\$9,654)

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.

Looking for Help Getting the Church Tidied up for Spring, May 7th:

Next Saturday morning, we're looking for some willing hands to help get the grounds tidied up for Spring. If you have an hour or two you could contribute to helping get us looking sharp, we'd appreciate the help. Contact Susan Haight (sdlhaight@gmail.com) for more details.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection - Sat., May 7th, 8am - Noon at Milford Public Works

The next Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event is this Saturday, May 7th from 8am to Noon at the Milford Public Works Department located at 289 South Street. Click [here](#) for more details.

Thank You for Supporting the UCC Ukrainian Relief Fund!

We raised \$1,617 for the fund which is very much needed. We will continue to support relief efforts in Ukraine, so watch this space!

Take Home Meal on May 13: Turkey Meatballs with Gravy on Mashed Potato

What could be better than a delicious meal you don't need to cook yourself!?!?

Order Your June Take Home Meal Now: Smoked Barbeque

On SATURDAY, June 18th at 4:00pm, there will be a special Take Home Meal pick up of barbeque, cornbread and other sides. There's a limited number of dinners (we really mean it!), so get your order in now.

May is Military Appreciation Month, bring in any extra cards we can send

Outreach is putting together a note writing campaign to send notes to our military personnel. If you have spare note cards, please bring them in. Contact Amy (arazz3914@gmail.com) for more details.

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:

Gas card donations

Flushable wipes (not baby)

Walmart Gift Cards

Empty Egg cartons

Small Women's Depends

If you know of anyone who could use some help from the Food Pantry, please let Angie 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