



*Brookline Community Church &  
Congregational Church of Hollis  
Worshiping Apart*

*Reverends Catherine Merrill &  
Tanya Stormo Rasmussen*  
December 27, 2020

Every part of worship has a video, so we've gathered them [together in a play list](#). [If you click on "Play All"](#), they'll play from the beginning of the service to the end! And you can just follow along, never clicking on another link. Or you can go through clicking on all the individual links – your choice.

**Prelude: [O Little Town of Bethlehem and I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day](#) arranged by Mark Hayes, piano by Julie Oliver**

[A pair of instrumental pieces to help you get settled for worship.]

**Call to Worship<sup>1</sup>:**

[Join Cindy Perkins and Jenna Zullo [in our centering prayer](#).]

One: Here on the heels of Christmas,

**All: We speak of love.**

One: We speak of joy.

**All: We speak of candle light and fireside.**

One: We speak of dreams being fulfilled.

**All: We speak of "glorias" and angel choruses.**

One: We speak the words, "Do not be afraid."

**All: Here on the heels of Christmas, we are called to speak, for the world needs a light.**

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<sup>1</sup> Today's liturgy was inspired by Liturgy by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org).

One: A light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness does not overcome it.

All: **Let us worship and listen. Then, let us speak. Amen.**

### **Simeon's Song by First Baptist Hurst Norwood**

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with.

The *Song of Simeon* or *Nunc Dimittis* is used in services of evening worship. You'll see there are three different *Songs of Simeon* in this service, all very different from each other. Yet all three share the same Biblical roots, Simeon's assertion that God was dismissing him because Simeon had seen the Messiah. In evening services, we are dismissed to our night's rest assured that we have seen the Messiah.]

### **Where Have You Seen God Today?**

Seeing God in your midst is one thing. Speaking it out loud for all to hear, that's entirely different. The world needs this good news. We are not called to be silent.

[Where Rev. Tanya & Rev. Catherine have seen God today, [a conversation](#)]

**Rev. Catherine:** One of the things that we see in the story of Anna and Simeon is that they were having an experience of the divine. So one of the questions we thought we would start the service with his where have you seen God today? Seeing God in your midst is one thing. Speaking it aloud all to hear is completely different. But the world needs more good news, and we are not called to be silent. So. If we we're going to ask you to do something, we'd better ask each other to do it, too, and I'll start: Tanya, where have you seen God today?

**Rev. Tanya:** I am sitting in the meeting house which here in Hollis, which our folks know that our entire building and works are under construction, and we're coming near to the end. Coming in today, I spoke with a couple different gentlemen--a couple of the workers here. And one in particular was very accommodating (and I think of God as being very accommodating). I was asking him to shuffle some things around, and he was very happy to do that, and accommodating of me. So, that was a bit of grace that I needed this morning.

And then, I had a conversation with another worker who has had to shuffle other things around. He was reflecting on So, his hope for the glimmers of light that he's seeing for the end of the pandemic, for the vaccine, but also talking about the hope he has for when this is all behind us. And I think that anytime I hear hope expressed and I hear people leaning forward, I see God in that. In their ability to see a future that's better than the present, but also acknowledging the goodness of this moment.

**Rev. Catherine:** And I also think there's a part of God's grace that says we get to have a hand in it. That we get to have a part in it. So the shuffling around and the, whatever they can influence to bring that hope and that progress forward, that's also part of being a part of working with God and being a part of God.

So, mine is much more ridiculous and mundane, but I was just so I was so touched. I have been up here in Maine (I'm at my folks' house) basically since March, and I've gone up and down when I needed to. But my car was supposed to be inspected back in November and it's still running around with its November sticker on it. So I knew I was coming down in Massachusetts, if for no other reason, you know, for church stuff somewhere around the 24th. So I called the car dealership and I said, "I need to get my car inspected." And they said, "Well, we don't book appointments for that." I was just like Ah! great, that's just what I need. So, I explained to woman the challenge that I was facing and I really had a really small

window. So just if she could kind of steer me to the best time to get there so I could wait the least, that would be really, really helpful.

And all of a sudden there was this massive typing on the other end of the phone, and then she said, "Oh yes, on such and such a date and such and such a time, you're going to have a tire rotation." And I said, "I am?" And she said, "Yes. Because that takes the same amount of time with the same techs, in the same bay. And when you get here, we'll discover I made a terrible mistake!" I was just profoundly grateful that she was just human with me, and was like let me get creative. And that's the thing that, when I think of God coming into this world to solve a problem there's nothing--there's no rule that will hold God. But then, there's no limit to the creativity that God will come up. God says, "We can solve a problem together, child."

**Rev. Tanya:** Yeah. It's the creativity, it's out-of-the-box. Like, I would never have come up with that! So that's perfect.

**Rev. Catherine:** Yep. And also, there's that part that I think that God does, that that sees us as who we are. You know, flawed and frail and frazzled and... I really, really need an appointment!

**Rev. Tanya:** Yeh. And for that woman to have knowingly set herself up to "make a mistake." Wonderful.

**Rev. Catherine:** Yes, it was lovely. The other thing I thought as I was thinking, "Oh, I'm going to be recorded--I'd better have something good to say! --was... how hard it is to do this, to answer this question, when you don't have a lot of humans in your life. When we're so limited with the number of people. Because, you know, I'm in a beautiful part of Maine--it's a rural part of Maine--and I can honestly say I see God every day because of the sunrise over the water and the ducks, and the ya know... But. That didn't satisfy me for answering this question. I think we need people to really get that full answer. And it's more than the pandemic, that I can't answer it as readily without people.

**Rev. Tanya:** It's interesting, because as I was reflecting on it just in the last week, we had a very successful Luminaria Stroll event, which is a relatively new tradition here in Hollis. But the Luminaria Stroll, which wound up being postponed from Saturday night to Sunday because of the rain, but they kept the chili supper on Saturday (they were serving it on the walk of the church beneath canopies) --and yes, the people coming together, enjoying each other's company. The presence of God. And again, the next night, when the luminaria were out and they had a bake sale, again people milling about the center of the town, appreciating the beauty of the tea lights, but also just the fellowship. And, the holding to certain traditions--even though they're only 4- or 5-year-old traditions, people saying, "This is what we've come to understand as normal" for us (even though it was different). But that desire to "keep things normal." And, the encounter with the holy as they encountered each other.

**Rev. Catherine:** Right. And part of God's story through Scripture is that "I will--I have been faithful in the past, I will be faithful in the future"... this commitment that the past has a right to influence where we go in the future. That we take the goodness of the past and we bring it with us into the future.

So, that's where I saw God this week. That's where you saw God this week. And we'd love to hear from other folks what they thought, to answer that question.

So family of faith, please join Cora Shaklee and Keith Hamer in our [prayer of confession](#):

Reader 1: **God of today and tomorrow,  
We know  
That your fingerprints are all over this world.  
And we know  
That those who dream cannot keep silent.**

Reader 2: **So today we pray,  
Give us eyes to see you.  
Give us courage to trust you.**

**And give us lips to speak of you in our midst.  
Gratefully we pray, Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon, offered by Tonda Davies:**

**Friends, hear the Good News:**

**We may not always have eyes that see the holy all around us; we may overlook and even sometimes ignore God's immanence. But God sees every aspect of our life and activity, and loves us with lavish forgiveness and a grace that invites us away from hurtful habits, into a newness of life guided by an alert and attentive Love. We have this assurance through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying:**

(join Kevin Duquette in reciting the Lord's Prayer)

**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.**

**Nunc Dimittis (Song of Simeon) by Koiné**

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with.]

**Scripture Reading: Luke 2:22-40**

[[Jessica Marchant reads Luke 2:22-40 for you](#)]

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

### Reflection on the Scripture Together:

[\[The video of reflection.\]](#)

**Rev. Catherine:** In a minute, we're going to invite you guys to grab some Post-It notes and put some thoughts down to three questions that are in your bulletin. But, again, we thought: let's go there, between Tanya and I, and see how we would answer those questions and what we would do. So, the first question we were talking about was (once you've heard the Scripture read), Anna and Simeon begin speaking by praising God. And that's an easy way to get into this conversation. Write down something that you're grateful for. A piece of good news that's worthy of praise.

And you know, I found this question a little challenging, personally, because in a way I want to praise God for everything. And, in a way I was like, "Oh that's so boring! That's so not ... worth... praising ... like, you know, Congratulations, Cath--you just got out of bed this morning. And then I thought, just step back a moment. And then I thought, Oh. Of course. We have a vaccine to this terrible pandemic. Isn't it amazing that God gave us science? That God gave us the curiosity and the skills and the people willing to dedicate their lives to learning all the pieces that had to go into a vaccine, and then all the pieces that had to go into getting a vaccine from the lab to the arm. And I just thought, you know God, I am so grateful and thank you for that.

**Rev. Tanya:** I've been reflecting on the remarkable--I mean truly astonishing--success that the Hollis Community has enjoyed over the last several weeks, well, year really... we're in the midst of this \$1.9/\$2-million-dollar capital renovation project. And people have given generously. But then, over the last few weeks, we've had our Christmas fair and silent auction, and raffles, and there was a chili supper, and just-fund raising. But also, community-building: there was food drive, we give food baskets 40-50 food baskets out at Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter. And it's this community--it's Hollis and Brookline together--we collected more food than ever before. It was an enormous contribution of time and talent from people in our church to get that all set up and ready to go, and then people's response in participating... So many people who are recognizing, "Out of my abundance I can help those who have less--because there are a lot of people who really are struggling. And even though a lot of us in this community feel the blessing of abundance I'm just moved by the response to recognize, 'I can share from this abundance.' Because you can have a response that suggests, 'Well, I have an abundance, but I may need it for later'. That's a scarcity impulse, which is natural for lots of human beings. But the response

that I've seen is "Let's share--there's so much joy in sharing from our abundance." So, I've been really grateful for that.

**Rev. Catherine:** I wonder if part of that sharing and abundance is also coming from having lived with this pandemic for a while. That, back in March, we stripped the grocery stores. But now that we've been here for a while, and now that we've realized how dependent we are on each other, yeah we can be a little more we can be a little bit more open to what we have to share. So, I also wonder if we're what kind of resetting our expectations on how dependent and independent we are. Like, you see Anna and Simeon, right? And they have been sitting in that Temple for a LONG time. But they knew what they were looking for. And I wonder if some of what's happened in the pandemic is we've gotten woken up in a way that Anna and Simeon already were. That they knew what they wanted to look for.

**Rev. Tanya:** Yes--that they were watching and waiting. I think that's one of the things about the season of Advent that's hard for us to learn sometimes, the watching and waiting. With all our myriad distractions--we can just turn on the television, we can jump online and we can be entertained in oh-so-many ways, just to distract us from the discomfort of the waiting, the wanting that our souls feel. We want to feel fulfilled and it's not, we don't have that experience yet, so we just deaden it with all the different ways that we can numb ourselves to the gnawing pain within. And yet, they were in the temple as you say. That's what their focus was--it was just waiting and watching. And so the recognition Simeon expresses, "Ah! Now I can depart in peace because I have seen the glory of the Lord." And Anna--the thing I love about Anna is that ... women often get stereotyped as the "chatty ones" or gossips, right? But, the men in the gospel stories identify Jesus as the Messiah TO Jesus--they say, "I know you are the Messiah." But Anna's the one, as are some of the other women--the woman at the well, Mary Magdalene, it's Anna--it's the women who going out and telling OTHER people "I've seen the Lord! I know who he is!" And it's so wonderful that it's the women who get to present that joy, to share it with the world. That was something that struck me as I read the scriptures again this time: another woman's voice bringing the Good News to other people!

**Rev. Catherine:** So, one of the other parts of this story of Anna and Simeon is sharing the dreams that they have for the world. And, that they speak and they are heard. And their words echo forward two thousand years. But there are so many people in this world who speak in or not heard or not attended to. So, when I was thinking about, what are the dreams that I have for a better world if I were in Anna and Simeon shoes, I just thought about our two churches, that are the center of their Community. They are places where red and blue come together, where old and young come together. And there aren't a lot of places like that left. And not only do they come together, but we DO stuff together. You talked about the chili supper and the building project, and the luminary walk. And, we have our take-home meals that are roaring away at the Brookline Church... part of that is because we talk to each other and we ask each other about our grandkids. Or, we know enough about each other's lives that one aspect of who you are, old and Republican, or young Democrat, or whatever it is--we don't let that separate us. We see, we accept it. It isn't that we ignore it, we accept it and welcome it, and work with it. So, one of the dreams that I have is that the rural churches that I think have been dismissed in a lot of ways, could be lifted up as places where we remember how to do this thing that so much of the culture has forgotten.

**Rev. Tanya:** You know, I had... that was one of my dreams, that resonates with my dream--I mean, talking about the red and the blue talking with each other and living life together. So, my dream was yes--that we can learn to listen even better to each other. To become more genuinely curious about people who are different from us. Not to just note that they're different and then say, "And I'm having none of that!" But, to say "But help me understand a little better where you're coming from." And especially with respect to our faith, to say "I hold such a different position from you..." I believe we're all living with the greatest integrity that we can, right? I want to believe that people who hold different positions than mine have a reason for it, that they cohere in their own mind--but my mind isn't theirs, and I don't understand how their mind works, and that's why it's so important for us to have a loving exchange of ideas. To be compassionate toward each other the benefit of the doubt. Which I think there's so little of today in the wider society. But we see it in our churches because we've covenanted in love to be a community with each other. We trust that the Spirit of Christ is at work in all of us, and it's a matter of getting curious about how that is. How can you hold that position and be a follower of Jesus Christ, because I believe that you are a follower of Jesus Christ--just help me understand how that works in your world, and equally be curious about me? Ask me questions about why I hold my positions, and let's see whether we can find

where there might be disconnects. And also be curious to how our minds can be transformed. You know, Paul talks about "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." And I think there are so many things that are changing so fast. And one of the hardest things to change is our minds. So, that's one of my dreams. That we can become more curious about people who are different from us. Genuinely curious. Not to change them, but potentially to ourselves be changed.

**Rev. Catherine:** And that's when, you know when Simeon says, this baby that he's holding in his arms is destined for the falling and rising ... like, he sees something that Mary and Joseph can't see. And it's because of his perspective and it's because of this waiting and it's also, because he's Simeon, and he's not Joseph and he's not Mary. And he can give them insight that they can't have otherwise. But they have to be open to it--they have to be willing to listen, right?

**Rev. Tanya:** Yes! And to be willing to hear it and just to hold it--even if they can't understand it right then, but to hold it and carry it with them so that they can remember later. But the other thing I appreciate about Simeon is that he talks about the good AND the painful realities. He's not just focusing on, "Oh, your son is going to be the redeemer of our nation and of our lives." He says, "No, a sword will pierce your soul, too", to Mary. That there's going to be suffering involved. But it's through the suffering that we experience redemption. So that, holding the two together is a remarkable thing.

**Rev. Catherine:** Yeah! And, I'm not going to get the quote exactly right, but he said, "This baby boy, this amazing child, this thing we've been waiting for all this time--is gonna irritate the starch outta people. And their souls are going to be revealed, and it's not gonna be pretty."

**Rev. Tanya:** That's it--exactly! "The inner thoughts of many will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul, too." Yeah, that's such a powerful observation Simeon makes.

**Rev. Catherine:** The way, the tsunami is coming--like, it's gonna open, it's gonna burn down, it's gonna open up a whole lotta stuff. Not all of it's gonna be happy.

**Rev. Tanya:** So who are some of the voices we're not necessarily hearing today?

**Rev. Catherine:** I think, one of the things--as I thought about this question--I was like, you know in a way, there so many. So many. And yet, I thought of Simeon and Anna, and I thought of them sitting in that Temple--and there were there were plenty of people who aren't being heard then, either. And then I thought, okay, one of the things that Simeon and Anna did they spoke their truths. So, for me when I thought of the people who aren't being heard, I thought of--maybe it's because it's my own personal experience--I thought of the people with eating disorders. The people who live with this struggle every day, and I will say in the pandemic time, where a lot of us have been asked to stay home, we are shut in and shut away from some of the coping mechanisms that make managing an eating disorder easier. And, I just feel quite often people with eating disorders, whether they overeat or under-eat, they're judged by their size. They're not judged by who they are. They're judged by this one, tiny part of who they are. And it makes me, I think, maybe more aware to be able to go to other people, and look at other people and say, Oh, you know it isn't eating disorder for them, it's something else--but I can get that they aren't heard because of this one part of themselves. And that's the part that I hope we can, like you said, remain open and curious--not that we want to take on their experience, and not that we want to change them. But that we just want to hear from a broader spectrum. And accept them as people, as Jesus did.

**Rev. Tanya:** Yes. As beloved children of God, as each and every one of us are. To be curious about their reality, because their reality reflects an aspect of the entirety of reality. So, why would we not be curious about how God is at work in and through their experience of this world?

I used to, before pandemic, was going up to Manchester a couple times a month and walking for the refugees and asylum seekers who were going to appear before judges to hear their immigration cases. And so I think, having spoken with some refugees and asylum seekers and others who work with them, and also having been an immigrant to foreign countries myself--knowing the experience of being the "outsider", wanting to feel like I have a place, like there's room for me in this foreign culture, I have compassion for them. And especially for those who asylum seekers and refugees, who are desperately trying to escape oppressive situations. I wasn't going to foreign countries to escape anything... and I learned there's always the longing for home. You long for your homeland, but if your homeland is under attack or is a threatening place, if it's not a place where you or your children can flourish, of course you're

going to do whatever you can to allow for life to flourish. But wanting to be accepted and understood for who one is, rather than for the labels that are slapped on by an anxious society wanting to make all the ills of so, the world the problem that "others" bring to the world, I just think that that become so simple to do. And it's heart-wrenching, but it has to do with a lack of curiosity about each other's stories. And a lack of a willingness to trust that on the whole, people are of good intent. Every one of us is a mixture of goodness and wickedness, or light and dark, but I think wanting to draw out the light can only happen when we love others into their best form of being. By listening.

**Rev. Catherine:** Yeah, and isn't there a lovely moment when Mary & Joseph show up, eight days later with this baby boy at the Temple, buy the doves--like, they're doing what they're supposed to do. And all of a sudden--they're not going to meet Anna and Simeon and have this amazing experience. They're going to observe the rituals of their faith. Hey, we're in Jerusalem, may as well take advantage of this situation, right? Because if they were way up in the Galilee, they would probably not have tried to do this. So, here they are just living their life. Just trying to be faithful people. And they have this amazing experience because they're willing to pause when this old woman, and this guy--they're random strangers--who tell them something about their baby boy they didn't know.

**Rev. Tanya:** That's part of the whole "paying attention" thing for Advent, isn't it? Again, it brings us sort of full-circle. Anna and Simeon had been watching and waiting for all those years. And for Mary and Joseph then to be attentive, and to listen--to just be open. And for us today, in 2020, leaning into 2021--how are we going to be open and attentive to, what are the new opportunities for us to go deeper, to love more vulnerably and also more rewardingly (because when we're open to loving vulnerably, we're more open to the rewards). What's God got in store for us in this coming year?

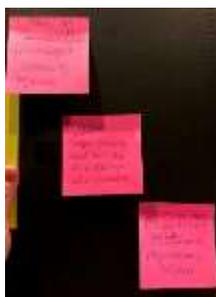
**Rev. Catherine:** Amen! Amen. So, that's a great place for us to end. Let's end looking forward to 2021 and look forward to what God has to offer us and what will show up in surprising ways in our journey.

## ***Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis) by Kathy Dickens, Laura Skvortsov and Ginger Kirkland***

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with.]

### **Reflecting on the Scripture Apart:**

[This is where you'll need your three post it notes & a pen.](#)



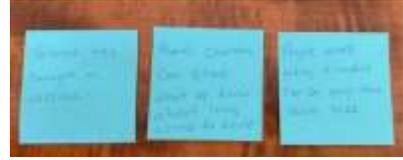
There are some dreams that we keep to ourselves, but there are others that must be spoken out loud. Anna and Simeon speak about their dreams for Jerusalem. They speak of their dreams for the Messiah. They could not keep silent.

To practice speaking aloud our dreams for this world, we invite you to write three things on Post-It Notes, following these prompts:

1. Anna and Simeon begin speaking by praising God. Write something that you are grateful for—a piece of good news worthy of praise.
2. Anna and Simeon have dreams for a better world. Write a dream you have for the world that we need to speak about.
3. Anna and Simeon speak and are heard, but not all people are listened to with the same equality in our world. Think of one person or group of people that are

speaking, but are not being heard. May this be a reminder that we can use our voices for and alongside others.

When you're done, take a photo of the three post-its and email it (or just email what you wrote) to [minister@bccnh.org](mailto:minister@bccnh.org) by Wednesday, December 30. We'll assemble everything into a prayer to start off the New Year on January 3, 2021.



### ***What Child is This?* by Mandisa**

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with.]

### **Prayers of the People**

[[Let's pray together.](#)]

Holy Dreamer,

When they saw Jesus, Anna and Simeon spoke your praise. In this time, we now lift our own prayers of gratitude and praise:

[Speak your prayers aloud.]

Holy Dreamer,

Anna and Simeon had dreams for a better world. We, too, have these dreams—and we won't keep silent about them. We now offer our dreams to you:

[Speak your prayers aloud.]

Holy Dreamer,

When Anna and Simeon speak, their voices are heard and what they say is received with reverence. Yet, we live in a world where not all voices are heard—instead, many are silenced. We now lift our prayers for those whose voices are silenced or muted:

[Speak your prayers aloud.]

Holy God,

We lift all these prayers, written and unwritten, spoken and unspoken, to you. Hold them with care. Give them life. Breathe your grace into them and make all things new. Amen.

### **A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World**

[[Let's pray together with](#) Paul Edmunds and Sanjay Cherian.]

One: We believe in telling the story—

**All:** The story of a loving and merciful God, Who will not let God's people go; The story of a baby who grew up and changed the world; The story of our faith.

One: We believe in speaking up—

**All:** For our neighbors, For the oppressed, For the overlooked and marginalized.

One: We believe in speaking out—

**All:** Against violence, greed, abuse, fear, scarcity mindset, and bigotry.

One: We believe in passing the mic—

**All:** So that we are not the only ones speaking, so that we can lift up the voices of those around us, so that we too might listen and learn.

One: We believe in the good news of the gospel.

**All:** We believe that this good news is too good to keep to ourselves. We believe that those who dream cannot keep silent.

One: Speak to us, Holy God.

**All:** Speak through us, Holy God. May it be so, Amen.

**Our Common Commission offered by Izcar Desueza:**

Let us now go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Congregational Response from Brookline: God Be with You 'til We Meet Again

Congregational Response from Hollis: Three Part Amen

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

A special thanks to all our lay leaders this week, who made time to do the recordings during a busy holiday week.

Sanjay Cherian  
Tonda Davies  
Izcar Desueza  
Kevin Duquette  
Paul Edmunds

Keith Hamer  
Jessica Marchant  
Cindy Perkins  
Cora Shaklee  
Jenna Zullo

Thanks as well to Yifan Kang and Julie Oliver for the music.



## PRAYER LIST (12/27/20)

If you know those on this list, call on them & tell them we are praying for them. If you know others who should be added to this list please give their names to the minister or a deacon.

- Friends & family of Jerry King, Tre Rouse, Tasha Feller, Pat Tiner, Terry House, Rev. Tom Atherton, June Hoff.
- Luca, Amy's nephew, as his new treatment appears to be having effect
- Those affected by the corona virus and those working to limit its impact
- Those suffering from domestic violence, who are caught at home with their abusers at a time of rising stress, that they might find safe havens.
- 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 Mark and Susan, John's brother and mother, as Mark has returned to the hospital and Susan is worried about her son.
- For Donna's friend who has tested positive for Covid.
- For Beth and her mom, Cindy's friends, who caught Covid at Thanksgiving,
- For the friends and family of Jenna, Carol's cousin, especially her mom Jenn and siblings Tyler and Kerrigan. Jenna was only 24
- For Marcia & Clarence, who have tested positive for Covid, but are recovering in their own home in Florida
- For Lois, Amy's aunt, who's in the rehab hospital and diagnosed with Covid
- For Cassie, Amy's mom, who's got a lot on her plate
- For Margie, Amy's future relative, who's been diagnosed with Covid at 95, but who's determined to recover to be at Sam & Rich's wedding
- For Amy & George, both still recovering from Covid
- For Dave Larkin, who's continuing his cancer treatment
- For the homeless, may we help get them on their feet and make sure they have what they need in the meantime.
- For Mike, Donna's cousin, may he find a more stable situation
- For all those who spent Christmas alone this year because of Covid
- For the friends and family of Jenna, Carol's cousin, especially her mom Jenn and siblings Tyler and Kerrigan. Jenna was only 24.
- For the friends and family of Julie K. McNamara, Beverly Zimmerman's daughter, who lost her battle with brain cancer in September, only a month after her 55<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

## Joys

- For Maggie, Barbara's granddaughter, aced her organic chemistry final
- For the music in the recent weeks' services, Yi-Fan has found wonderful choices
- For seeing everyone over Zoom and having such a loving church family

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

In you, O God, I will greatly rejoice;  
in speaking, I will greatly rejoice;  
in silence, I will greatly rejoice;  
in travels, I will greatly rejoice;  
in resting, I will greatly rejoice;  
in working, I will greatly rejoice;  
in leisure, I will greatly rejoice;  
in duties, I will greatly rejoice;  
in freedom, I will greatly rejoice.

O God, my whole being exults in you, and my life shall evermore declare your praise, my light, my love, my joy. Amen.

### **Household Prayer: Evening**

Lord, let your servant sleep in peace this night and fulfill your gracious word. Reveal to me the salvation that you have prepared for all people. With Jesus Christ, help me be a light to the nations and a sign of your glorious promise to Israel. Amen.

### **Questions for Reflection**

Consider what it means to be a child of God by adoption. What does it mean to you to think of yourself as a brother or sister of Jesus, who is the Son of God?

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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.

**Announcements:**

Please shop [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and choose Brookline Community Church as your charity to support the church. Thanks!

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 +/-
<b>September</b>	\$74,646	\$64,492	\$10,154

**Christmas Blues Service**

Jazz Sanctuary service at First Congregational Church, Concord will offer a Blues Christmas service for this year which has so many of singing the Blues. It will premiere on [their YouTube channel](#) on November 15<sup>th</sup>, and be available after that to stream and enjoy.

**Volunteer Opportunity with Souhegan Valley Rides**

While the Blue Bus is still rolling, other parts of the program have had to be suspended due to Covid. If you are able to help with transportation or with financial support, please contact Carol Brooks at (603) 321-8321 or [info@souheganvalleyrides.org](mailto:info@souheganvalleyrides.org).

**Brookline Food Pantry**

Although we cannot be together physically at this time, Outreach is continuing to work with Rebecca Purdin through the Brookline Welfare office & CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) to address any needs in our community.

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, like last week, they’re continuing to look for:

- Juice and Juice Boxes
- Butter and Margarine
- Cheese (sliced, shredded or block)
- Cheese Crackers (like Cheese Nips)
- Chips
- Cereal
- Cat Food (Dry and Wet)
- Tissues

Also, a big thank you to mask makers who donated masks to the food pantry already. They have been a huge help for people. If anyone has more to donate, we are running low. We still have several kid masks, but could use more for adults.

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.

Donations can be dropped off downstairs at the Town Hall during regular hours of operation. There are large boxes for donations if there is no one in the Food Pantry. There is also a drop off at the Brookline Post Office.

Thank you for your continued support to our church and our community.

### **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

### **Covid-19 Scams Targeting Seniors**

The [NH Attorney General's office put out a press release](#) describing several scams that are targeting seniors. The claims range from needing personal information to get their Social Security payments, to being family members in need of cash to treat Covid-19 symptoms, to offers of fake medical products to prevent Covid-19, to needing personal information to get their stimulus checks, to fake charities. (Honestly, what are people like?!?). Please pass the word.

### **Covid-19 Information**

If people want to know the latest status of Covid-19 in NH and the Emergency orders to date, go to <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>