



Brookline Community Church

February 14, 2021

Reverend Catherine A. Merrill, Minister

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: [Old Rugged Cross](#) by YoungMin You

[An instrumental piece to help you get settled for worship]

Centering Ourselves for Worship:¹

[Join Cindy Perkins, today's lay leaders, [in our centering prayer](#).]

God, we are on the pancake, bugle-bead brink
of forty days to prepare for Easter.

We reflect on Jesus as the party-guy,
the LED-on-the-mountain guy,
before we focus
on his teaching and healing,
his love and willingness to suffer.

¹ Today's Centering Prayer and Prayer to Send Us Back out into the World were inspired by The communion liturgy was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Transfiguration prayer and Ash Wednesday liturgy ... Valentine's Day, really?," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted February 1, 2016, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2016/02/01/transfiguration-prayer-and-ash-wednesday-liturgy/> (accessed February 7, 2021).

We linger in our own
Super-Bowl commercial sentimentality,
before the journey of self-understanding
and honesty when the masks drop.

We don't know what to say,
or how to say it,
and we often end up saying the wrong thing.
But somehow, when we give up trying,
and just let you speak through us,
we sparkle a little and come closer to saying the right thing.

Thank you, God,
for the glitter and the grace.
Amen.

**Hymn: *Feast of the Transfiguration, Doxastikon from Orthros (Tone 8)* by
Orthodox Christian Chants**

[[Click here](#) for a video that will give you the lyrics and someone to sing with. This hymn comes from the Christian Orthodox tradition, so you may find the arrangement different from what you expect.

If you have a favorite hymn you'd like to include in our worship service, just send it along and I'll look for a good place for it.]

Lifting up Our Joys and Concerns:

[Rev. Cath [sharing our joys and concerns.](#)]

Speak to us, O Lord our God,
and let the fire of your Spirit
burn brightly in our hearts.

Open us to know your presence in the joys in our lives,
We pray for those lifted up with joy

For Amy, getting to see her grandmother for the first time since February
2020

For having a Super Bowl to distract us and to unite us over the ads

For being able to pray for those who are struggling, even if their struggles
keep them from healing

For strategies that kick in to keep us from draining ourselves to much in an
attempt to help others

When we are lifted up with joy,
Let the fire for your Spirit
Burn brightly in our hearts.

Open us to know your presence
when we are weighed down with concerns
We pray for those carrying concerns,

For Donna & her Dad, in a week of anniversaries and birthdays that are
hard on the heart

For Elie, continuing to heal after his cancer surgery

For the Friends and Family of Ann Shattuck, who passed away this week

For Sanjay's dad, who fell and is recovering

For the guy who was rescued from the ice and airlifted to Boston, may he
recover fully and swiftly

For our siblings, whom we love and may not be able to heal

For those involved in Thursday's 133-car pileup in Ft. Worth, whose lives
were changed in the blink of an eye

When we are weighed down with concerns,
Let the fire for your Spirit
Burn brightly in our hearts.

Open our minds to receive
the wisdom of the law,
the hope of the prophets,
and the life of the gospel:
Jesus Christ, your living Word. **Amen.**

[\[The Lord's Prayer\]](#)

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.

[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 (978) 494-6953.]

Hymn: *Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies* by St. John's Episcopal Church, Boulder, CO

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

Scripture Reading: Mark 9:2-9

[Mark 9:2-9 [read for you](#)]

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

There's a lot coming at Peter all at once in today's reading. A million details, whiter than white clothing, Elijah and Moses, a voice from the cloud. He thought he knew what a messiah was, he thought that Jesus was that messiah. But it appears that Jesus is another kind of messiah who needs a different kind of disciple. Peter says, "Let us make three dwellings" (Mark 9:5), three booths like they do to celebrate Sukkoth. Not that he wanted the booths. That was just how they had kept the memory of God's acts in the wilderness alive and fresh all those years.² He was trying to make this New Creation fit in his world by shoving it into an old paradigm.³ Mark says, "Peter did not know what to say, for they were terrified." (Mark 9:6)

And we have all been there. Information coming at us far too quickly. A million details and we don't know which ones we should pay attention to and which ones we can ignore. We want to understand, it matters to us a lot that we understand, but we can't seem to keep up, and if we don't keep up, we know we're going to miss something important. Play a game of pool, visit Disney World during school break, meet your kid's fiancé. Anything you do for the first time. There are too many details coming at you and not enough experience to know what is signal and what is noise.

That's why it's nice to get some perspective. To get a bird's eye view. To get up on a high mountain apart (Mark 9:2) and reflect. The story of the Transfiguration is told just before Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem. In Mark in particular, Jesus's disciples simply don't see Jesus for what he is. They don't understand where he's going or what he's driving at. They will be blind to his true identity until after he is raised from the dead. They won't become the true disciples they can be until after he's ascended. Yet in this story of the Transfiguration, in its myriad of details, it's all there.

² Walter Wink, "Mark 9:2-8." *Interpretation* 36, no. 1 (1982): 66.

³ Wink, 66.

The dazzling white clothing, the presence of Moses and Elijah, the voice of God, all these point to the end of the world, when God's kingdom is at hand. They are about to go to Jerusalem where the one who is transfigured on the mountain is the one disfigured by pain and death on the cross.⁴ It would be so easy to stand in the shadow of the cross and say, "That's it. That's the end." Especially if you don't know Easter is coming. So before anyone takes another step in the Way of the Cross, there is a reminder of what the end will look like. It will not look like Death and Evil Triumphant. Even though it's so, so easy for us frail, limited, overwhelmed humans to believe that there is nothing more coming for us than death and destruction.

They go up on a high mountain, to the very boundary of heaven and earth,⁵ and Jesus meets a couple of friends there, Moses and Elijah. We know the Easter story, we know what happens on the far side of the Cross, at the end of that week in Jerusalem. But Peter and the other disciples do not. In the Transfiguration, we get to see Jesus, fully human, sure. But we also catch a glimpse of him fully divine. He is at home on both sides of the line, he is a part of both worlds. He will go to Jerusalem and he will do the most human thing possible, he will die, falsely accused, shunned by the people who knew him the best in this world. Yet before Easter morning shows something shockingly new, before he takes even one step on that journey to the Cross, we see him as fully divine as well. A Beloved Son of God (Mark 9:7).

Of all the details coming at Peter in this story, coming at us as we stand in the disciples' shoes, there's one that's hard to notice. Jesus is transfigured in this story, but so are his disciples. They don't get it. They don't get what Jesus has told them, what Jesus is telling them, what Jesus will tell them. They call him the Messiah (Mark 8:29) and then deny that he will suffer and die (Mark 8:32). They have their own ideas of what the Messiah should be, and they don't include dying on a cross, mocked by the people he has come to save.

But on that mountain top, they have caught a glimpse of something. They don't understand it, they don't really know what to say. They're trying to make it fit into the familiar rituals they use in their lives, but they already know that this something they've glimpsed isn't going to work with the ideas they already have. Somewhere in them, they are beginning to realize that they can watch Jesus heal and cast out demons and preach the Good News. They can follow him to the foot of the Cross. But what is the point of proclaiming him the incarnate Son of God if they, if we ourselves fail to incarnate the self-same power which he revealed and made available through God's Spirit to us all?⁶

⁴ Dorothy A Lee, "On the Holy Mountain: The Transfiguration in Scripture and Theology." *Colloquium* 36, no. 2 (2004): 152.

⁵ Lee, 150.

⁶ Wink, 66.

We don't see the whole picture. That won't come until Easter and maybe not even then. As witnesses to Jesus, we've been invited into his story. But we don't see that story, we don't hear that story, fully until we begin to live it. We're going to have to be content with mere glimpses, with a tiny foretaste of what is to come.⁷ We're going to have to live with limits to our understanding.

But as we prepare to once again walk that road heading for Jerusalem and the Cross, we have to live like we know what the end looks like, and it doesn't look the way the world looks now. As we head into Lent, we have to live like we follow Jesus to the cross itself, because he is fully human and fully divine. That may sound crazy, but it's just true. As we head down the mountain and into the bazillion details of our lives that come flooding over us and we don't know what to say or do and we're overwhelmed and afraid, we have to allow our relationship with Jesus Christ to transfigure us. This journey is not something we control or predict. This journey of faith is a gift of grace, a gift from God. It's a journey we take with imperfect knowledge, not sure what to say or do. Not sure of anything but the imperative to keep moving, keep sharing the Good News with everyone we meet. Because transfiguration only requires a tiny glimpse of what is coming, who Jesus really is, to change lives completely. Regardless of how much is coming at us.

Hymn: *Christ Upon the Mountain Peak*

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

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

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

Gracious God, we give you thanks
for the light of love around us
and the fire of faith within us.
As we go forth from this place
let our lives reflect the One
who is the image of your glory:
Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

[[Let's pray together.](#) Thanks, Cindy, for being our Lay Leader this week!]

God, as we head back out into the coming week,
We know we are on the brink of something ancient,
We are heading toward 40 days of preparing for Easter,
And we're not sure what to say or do.

⁷ James Boyce, "Gospel: Commentary on Mark 9:2-9", Working Preacher "Lectionary Commentaries for February 22, 2012, Transfiguration of Our Lord", <https://www.workingpreacher.org/?print-all=31971%2C31970%2C31972%2C31969> (accessed 8 February 2021)

We caught a glimpse on Jesus on the mountain top today,
And there seems to be a lot more shining there
Than we can put into words.

Please help us when we grope for a way to say "I love you"
In a way that sounds real,
Not like something we grabbed at Walgreens on the way over
But like we really feel.

Because we can love someone else like Jesus loved
Just because they are who they are
No changes, not expectations,
Just their shining selves,
As glittery and graceful as they already are.

We don't know what to say,
or how to say it,
and we often end up saying the wrong thing.
But when we give up trying,
please speak through us,
so we sparkle a little and come closer to saying the right thing.

Thank you, God,
for the glitter and the grace.
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."](#)

[The Music Ministry crew made this bit of video for us, so we could all sing
together, with each other and our former selves!]

Postlude: [The Change in Me](#) by Casting Crowns

[Feel free to sing along and let it help you gear up to return to the world.]

Here ends our worship, now let our service begin.



PRAYER LIST (02/14/21)

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 and Dave Larkin.
- 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 Donna & her Dad, in a week of anniversaries and birthdays that are hard on the heart
- For Elie, continuing to heal after his cancer surgery
- For the Friends and Family of Ann Shattuck, who passed away this week
- For Sanjay's dad, who fell and is recovering
- For the guy who was rescued from the ice and airlifted to Boston, may he recover fully and swiftly
- For our siblings, whom we love and may not be able to heal
- For those involved in Thursday's 133-car pileup in Ft. Worth, whose lives were changed in the blink of an eye
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning⁸

God of glory, I greet you at the dawning of this day. Let my life proclaim Christ Jesus and the good news of the gospel from the rising of the sun to its setting; to the glory of your name. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

God of glory, I greet you at the ending of this day. Overshadow me with your peace so that I may rest in your presence from the setting of the sun to its rising; to the glory of your name. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

The Old Testament reading for today presents Elijah as a “new Moses”—striking the Jordan with his mantle and causing its waters to part so that he and Elisha could pass through on dry ground (2 Kgs. 2:8). The Gospel reading builds on this comparison by placing Moses and Elijah together at Jesus’ transfiguration (Mark 9:4). There is also a parent-child dynamic in each of these passages. Elisha asks to receive a “double share” of Elijah’s spirit (2 Kgs. 2:9)—the appointed inheritance of a firstborn son (see Deut. 21:17). At the transfiguration, God’s voice from the cloud bestows on Jesus the mantle of divine authority: “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” What do these constellations of relationships suggest to you? How do they help you to understand the transfiguration of Jesus? How is Jesus a fulfillment of the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah)? (See also Luke 24:44.) How is Jesus revealed to be God’s Son, and what does that mean for us? (See also Luke 3:22, 38.)

Daily Awareness Reflection⁹

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 ...

⁸ 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.

⁹ Elizabeth Liebert, *The Soul of Discernment* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2015), 31.

Announcements:

Please shop 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 +/-
January	\$7,237	\$6,497	\$739

All people age 65+ are now in Phase 1b for COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

Phase 1b began scheduling on January 22 at 8:00am. Vaccines for Phase 1b started on January 26. [Use this page to determine in what phase you belong](#) and for further directions.

Open Mic Night at the Hollis Church: Sat. March 13, 7:00-8:30pm

The Congregational Church of Hollis is having an open mic night via Zoom. If you want to attend or perform, send an email to openmic@hollischurch.org to get on the Zoom invite mailing list. Should be a lot of fun!



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/>

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 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:

- Applesauce
- Cup O' Noodles
- Hearty Canned Soups
- Jello (any flavor)
- Peanut Butter Crackers
- Pickles and Relish
- Jelly (any flavor except grape)
- Juice Boxes
- Flavored Oatmeal
- Pancake Mix
- Syrup
- Microwave Popcorn
- Hot Cocoa
- Men's Deodorant
- Laundry Detergent
- Dishwashing Liquid

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