



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: [He Leadeth Me](#) by Brandon Fiechter and Derek Fiechter

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

Centering Ourselves for Worship:¹

[Join Jill and Kevin Aitken, today's lay leaders, [in our centering prayer](#).]

Leader: In this time of isolation,

All: we pray for the deepest companionship.

Leader: In this time of uncertainty,

All: we pray for the glow of a better future.

Leader: In this time of extinctions,

All: we pray for life's renewal.

Leader: In this time of greed,

All: we pray for the joy of the common good.

¹ Today's Centering Prayer and Prayer to Send Us Back out into the World were inspired by *Dr. Catherine Keller, George T. Cobb Professor of Constructive Theology*, who offered the *UMC's Daily Prayer* during this COVID-19 Crisis on February 22, 2021.

Leader: In this time of futility,
All: we pray for the courage to act.

Leader: In this time of fake faith,
All: we pray for a riskier honesty.

Leader: In this time of lost faith,
All: we pray for your unexpected guidance.

Leader: In this time of lost ways,
All: we pray to join each other on the Way

Leader: Which is You.
All: After all. Before all. In all. Beyond all.

Leader: Amen.
All: Amen.

Hymn: *Trust and Obey* by the Vagle Brothers

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

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.](#)]

Holy God,
you have called us to live before you
and with one another
in all faithfulness.
We pray for healing and reconciliation where trust
has been broken,
hostility has flared, or misunderstanding has grown.
Restore us not only to one another,
but reconcile us to ourselves and to you, loving God.
If restoration proves beyond hope,
then grant new beginnings and possibilities for all.
In every relationship, we seek your grace as we
honor others
by caring for them,
being truthful,
and working for their welfare.
Root out in us any jealousy toward what others possess,
and let generosity grow in and among us instead.

We pray for those who are lifted up with joys,
knowing that we too will know joy. We pray

For playing music together

For the Covid numbers that are going down, may they keep dropping

For letting go of our own burdens we've been carrying too long

For the new opportunities that God is laying before us

Let joy flourish that we might know your presence in our lives.

Gracious God,

we pray for those who are ill, in mind, body, or spirit;

for those lonely and isolated from community;

for those burdened by guilt or grief,

by depression or despair.

We pray for those weighed down with concerns,

For the people of Texas as they continue to recover

For Luca and his family, Amy's relatives, who could use some prayers

For how challenging it is to be a servant of the divine in such a human world

For Phoebe and her family, Rev. Cath's friends, who are going through a rough patch

Do not let us turn inward as a church,

lest we shut out or neglect

those who long for a community of welcome

and companionship.

Send us out in love, with open eyes, ears, and hearts.

Make us true neighbors to one another

and true children of your own calling.

We pray in the name of Christ,

who has come to set us free. **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: *The Ten Commandment Song for Kids*

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

There's a typo in here, but I figure only God is perfect and it's a fun video.]

Scripture Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

[Exodus 20:1-17 [read for you](#)]

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Reflection on the Scripture:

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

Lent is a time to walk in the Way of Jesus, from where our lives are now all the way to Jerusalem. Sure, we want to get to Easter and the lilies and the chocolate bunnies and *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*. Lent will take us there, but first we have to go through the hosannas of arrival and the betrayals at the Last Supper, and the betrayals in the garden, and the betrayals in the trials. First we have to go past “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” and begging

that you be allowed to bury your teacher's body with respect. We walk in the Way of Jesus during Lent, and, sure, we're headed to Easter.

But we have to actually walk in the Way of Jesus. And there is some pretty real stuff that is part of that Way. Some pretty real stuff that we'd rather skip over or walk past looking the across the street. And yet, if we've learned anything in the last year of pandemic, skipping over real stuff, walking past reality because we don't like what we're seeing, is going to get us in a heap of trouble.

So when we hear the reading from Exodus, it doesn't take very long before we know where we are. The Ten Commandments, we say to ourselves. A quick check: nope, no murder, no stealing, no false witness, honored father and mother just last night. I'm good. And we skip over the tiny bit of coveting we did last Thursday in the check out lane at Market Basket. And we skip the catching up on stuff from the office we did on Sunday afternoon. Because what's a little coveting?² What's a little dent in the Sabbath? Everyone covets a little bit or the advertising industry would have collapsed long ago. And church goers keep Sabbath way more than everyone else.

In getting to the coveting and the killing and the bearing false witness, have we walked right by a piece of reality that changes everything that comes after? *I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;* (Exodus 20:2). God saw us in the house of slavery and God brought us to freedom. God's saving actions have drawn the people of God into a new orbit of life and blessing.³ After hearing our cries, after freeing us and leading us through the wilderness, God said, "here, let me make it clear what living in my zone of liberation means." "Because the Lord is your God," the Ten Commandments say, "you are free not to need any other gods. You are free to rest on the seventh day; free from the tyranny of lifeless idols; free from murder, stealing and covetousness as ways to establish yourself in the land."⁴

That much love, that we have been offered freedom from what enslaves us. That much love, that we have been brought through a wilderness to a Promised Land. That much love, that God is with us still. And we don't even notice it. We keep on with all the human things, the small scale coveting, the commitment to constantly producing, as if we were still working for Pharaoh back in Egypt.⁵ We keep on with all the things that pull us away from God, just a little bit. While the whole time God is saying *Trust me. All those little human things that you think*

² Barbara Brown Taylor, "Third Sunday in Lent, Homiletical Perspective, Exodus 20:1-17" in *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B, Volume 2*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 77.

³ Terence E. Fretheim, "First Reading: Commentary on Exodus 20:1-17", Working Preacher "Lectionary Commentaries for March 8, 2015, Third Sunday in Lent", <https://www.workingpreacher.org/?print-all=30037%2C30036%2C30038%2C30039> (accessed 3 January 2021)

⁴ Thomas G. Long, "Dancing the Decalogue." *The Christian Century* 123, no. 5 (2006): 17.

⁵ Walter Brueggemann, "Sabbath as Alternative." *Word & World* 36, no. 3 (2016): 255.

*don't matter are not good for you. The life you think they bring you is not real life.*⁶

God is calling us to live a real life, with so much freedom, setting out guidelines so we can have that freedom in abundance. And instead we keep dragging ourselves away to serve Pharaoh's production quotas and miserable resource management skills. Why?

Because we worship idols. Not the Golden Calf kind of idol, we've caught on to when we go astray there. But the kind of idol that says, I can predict how someone else is going to rip me off so I'm going to get what's due to me in advance. The kind of idol that says, I can predict how much that other person loves me, so I'm going to love them the same amount back and no more. The kind of idol that says, I can predict what God is going to do so I'm going to make some judgments the way God would.

We worship idols for our own convenience, our own egos, our own satisfaction. We worship idols so we don't have to accept the freedom we've been given. We worship idols so we don't have to notice the love that surrounds us. We worship idols so we don't have to live in the real world. When we live in the real world, we get to experience a God that can't be tied down to one image. God is not constrained by some earthly magic to only be present when certain words are spoke by certain people in a certain room. When we live in the real world we meet not a general purpose, theoretical God, but a specific God,⁷ the God that saw me personally, enslaved to an eating disorder and is walking with me still as I navigate the wilderness. When we live in the real world, our God gets personal and real, our relationship with God gets personal and real. And the things that we would rather skip over or ignore as we pass by become too precious to ignore.

Because if we are living in the real world this Lent, the real world where God really saved us from a real slavery in our lives, then we are surrounded by images of God. God can't be limited. Instead God is present in the crazy diversity of humanity, where each specific individual and each particular life carries the divine spark.⁸ When we skip ahead, when we ignore that, to get to the good part, we are missing the real part, the best part, of walking in the Way. No matter how challenging that real part is. So this Lent, let us walk with Jesus. Yes, absolutely, let's walk into Easter. But let us walk through the real and hard parts deliberately. So we can catch a glimpse of the love that surrounds us even when life is beyond challenging. God freed us from slavery to do just that.

⁶ Taylor, 77.

⁷ Glen Harold Stassen, "The Ten Commandments: Deliverance for the Vulnerable." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 35, no. 4 (2008): 353.

⁸ Kathryn L. Roberts, "Exodus 20:1-6." *Interpretation* 61, no. 1 (2007): 62.

Hymn: *How I Love Thy Law, O Lord* by United Church of God, Atlanta & Buford

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

Sacrament of Communion⁹

Invitation to the Table

Leader: God brought us to this table, a place safe from human slaveries.
We shall not treat our traditions like gods, or make idols of a particular Bread and Cup.

We will not imply that a sacrament shared at a kitchen table is less real than any other, for that is to misuse God's name.

We set down this sacred offering, confessing our complicity in things that kill, that betray, that steal and committing to a reconciliation as real as this Bread and Cup.

We will not bear false news of our neighbors, or share, re-post, re-tweet it, nor will we doom scroll God's Spirit within us.

We will not covet last year's service or next year's service. We will not covet any other experience of the Body of Christ or the Cup of Blessing than the one we are sharing now.

Words of Remembering

Leader: In Lent we come to remember
that there is a time not to eat the stones
even when it seems useful,
and there is a time for a meal scented
with the uneconomical joy
of a broken alabaster jar.

All: We remember.

Leader: We remember that Jesus
suggested in Bethany that one bowl
with one selection is a good meal,
but served a hillside picnic
with so many leftovers,
their gathered abundance
could be shared with others.

All: We remember.

⁹ The communion liturgy was inspired by Maren Tirabassi's "Holy Communion Liturgy for March 7, 2021," Gifts in Open Hands Blog, posted February 26, 2021, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2021/02/26/holy-communion-liturgy-for-march-7-2021/> (accessed March 1, 2021).

Leader: We remember that Jesus
turned over tables in the Temple
and we confess that our church tables
practices, plans and programs,
should be overturned,
until our house be one of prayer
and our table serve compassion
to those most vulnerable.

All: We remember.

Leader: And we remember that Jesus Christ
sitting among those
whose feet he had washed
at the Passover table
of precious and ancient tradition,
anticipated betrayal and desertion,
pain and even death,
but made a new Covenant
of blessed bread and poured wine
on a global table,
inviting us always to share
from our brokenness and grace.

All: We remember.

Prayer of Consecration

Leader: O God, the sky speaks your glory and deep space your creation.
Daybreak announces hope and starlight sings rest in a language
that needs no translation but joy. Nothing is hidden from you, and
you make no barriers for human understanding. We are revived,
enlivened, warned and comforted. Beyond even the bright and
sweet parables of our lives, you free us from definitions of
relationship based in dominion and being dominated and you lead
us to words of reconciliation and grace. So reconciled, we pray –

Leader: Let the Bread of our mouths and the Cup upon which our hearts
meditate, be acceptable to you, O God,

All: At this ordinary table and in our lives of redeeming. Amen

Sharing of the Elements

Leader: Let us at many tables receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

All: We come to Christ in the Bread we share.

[Eat the bread]

Leader: Let us in many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

All: We come to Christ in the Cup we share.

[Drink from the cup.]

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: In thanksgiving for this sustenance on our Lenten journey and the grace of holy dispersion in virtual worship, we claim the story of Jesus Christ as our own, a path of healing and service, the cross and the ever-present truth of the resurrection.

O Holy One, we come to you with our weariness and hope. We thank you for the rest and strength of this Communion so that we may re-turn our tables to service in the world and hear your words of guidance every day and every night through Christ who has taught us to pray, saying ...

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

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.

Hymn: *Step by Step You'll Lead Me and I'll Follow You All of My Days*

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

Prayer of Dedication for the Gifts We've Been Given

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

O Lord our God,
we want to follow all your commandments—
to love only you, not worshiping the things of this world;
to love our neighbor freely,
not desiring for ourselves something they possess.
Accept our gifts and our lives, we pray,
and teach us to be generous,
giving fully of ourselves
that we may truly be the body of Christ in this world. **Amen.**

A Prayer to Send us Back Out into the World

[\[Let's pray together.](#) Thanks, Jill and Kevin, for being our Lay Leaders this week!]

Leader: As we head back out into the coming week, we know we're in a time of isolation and uncertainty.

All: Help us to be better companions who glow with hope for a better future.

Leader: In the coming days we will face greed and futility,

All: Help us to serve joyfully the common good and to act courageously.

Leader: When we see signs of faith that is false or lost,
All: Help us to be the ones to offer a riskier honesty or provide a conduit for your unexpected guidance..

Leader: In this coming week full of lost ways,
All: Help us join each other on the Way

Leader: Which is You.
All: After all. Before all. In all. Beyond all.

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."](#)

[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: [Perfect Wisdom of Our God](#) by Keith & Kristyn Getty

[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 (02/07/21)

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.
- 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 the people of Texas as they continue to recover
- For Luca and his family, Amy's relatives, who could use some prayers
- For how challenging it is to be a servant of the divine in such a human world
- For Phoebe and her family, Rev. Cath's friends, who are going through a rough patch
- For those who have no one to pray for them, accept our prayers;
- Individuals serving in our military & their families

Household Prayer: Morning¹⁰

God of heaven and earth, I listen this morning for the sound of your glory:
in the songs of birds,
in quiet conversations that begin the day,
in easy laughter among friends,
in sunlight's warmth, pattering rain, or silent snowfall.

Give me ears to hear your glory in its many forms. Give me eyes to see your glory in its many guises.

Throughout this day, I, too, will proclaim your glory, your grace, and your love so that I may be a part of the chorus of praise that stretches to the ends of the earth. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

God of freedom, I thank you for claiming me as your own and for setting me in the midst of the community of faith. Today the news was filled with stories of people who do not live according to your commandments, with grievous results. Lives are shattered as your ancient tablets of stone are broken again and again. And I struggle, too, in my own ways, to live before you and my neighbors in faithfulness, generosity, and love.

As the day comes to an end, I pray for forgiveness for myself and for this weary world, confident of your grace and mercy. Send your gift of Sabbath rest, and let me sleep in peace as, over and around me, night declares to night your power and glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

The third Sunday of Lent focuses on the gift of God's law (Exod. 20:1–17). John Calvin (1509–1564) described three uses for the Ten Commandments: First, they show us how to live before God and neighbor, and expose our sins in failing to live as God intends. Second, they instruct our civic or common life, showing us how to live responsibly in the freedom God gives. Third, rather than show us what we must do in order to receive God's grace and love, the commandments show us how we should live because we are a people who have already received God's grace and love in Jesus Christ. Does God's law restrict or enhance our freedom as human beings?

¹⁰ 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 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 +/-
February	\$18,520	\$14,242	\$4,277

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.

The March/April edition of *The Upper Room* is available in the mail room, if you're looking for a printed daily Scripture reading and reflection to add to your spiritual practice.

This Sunday! March 7, after worship: We're going to continue our discussion



about a project to share our church's mission with the wider community. We've been exploring doing a memorial for those lost to Covid-19.

Weekly Lenten Taize services:

Throughout Lent, the New England UMC is [posting Taize services weekly on Wednesday](#). The services tend to be very meditative, using simple and compelling chants. If you've never had a chance to go to a [Taize](#) service, you might find them moving, especially during Lent.



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/>



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

It's being postponed until later in the year. Stay tuned!

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:

Pickles	Apple or Cranberry Juice
Parmesan	Paper Towels
Cookies/Cookie Mix	Coffee
Cheese Nip (or similar) Crackers	Disposable Razors
Jello/Gelatin (any flavors)	Dry Cat Food
Sardines	Dry Dog Food
Cereal (especially Raisin Bran or "Fun" Cereals)	Dish Soap
	Zip-style Bags

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.

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