

**A SERVICE OF PRAYER
FOR HEALING**

Sunday, July 19, 2020



St. Columba's Episcopal Church
Boothbay Harbor, Maine



CELTIC EVENING PRAYER

In this time of the Pandemic, we are changing and being changed.

What once was urgent in our daily lives is now put on pause.
Other more immediate ways of living and dying are transforming us.

As we contemplate and experience our collective living and dying,
we pray that we can be even more unified
as One in God's Love all across the world.

There is great hope in all that is happening in this world,
we embrace it all.

Now in these unprecedented times, our world is hushed . . .
In the quiet and the chaos,
we're witnessing the wellspring of new life,
even in the midst of death.

All the world is now, perhaps for the first time ever,
singularly focused on the healing of one another
and the healing of "this fragile Earth, our island home."

Almost since time began,
this is also the spirit in which our evenings always have begun.
At this holy hour of twilight, we are hushed throughout all time,
breathing in more deeply, lighting our candles,
pausing at the end of the day together
to pray into the love of God's welcoming embrace.

In this widened space at the end of the day,
our prayers encircle the world continuously.
We rest into the power of quietness and the healing touch of God.

As were all those who have gone before us,
we too are comforted and calmed
at this hour of twilight by candlelight, music and prayer.

The Celtic tradition holds
that we find God in Christ in our hearts,
in each other, and in all creation.

As always, we welcome all to join with us in these timeless prayers.

So come as you are, let down your burdens,
find your rest in God's expansive Love.
This love is sweeping over you and all of Creation,
sweeping 'round and 'round the world
throughout all time and in all places.

Let us pray, this prayer offered up by our friends in Virginia,

Almighty God: Our times are in your hand. We call upon you in this hour of our need, when we are lonely and must stand apart. Be our strength, O Loving God, our calm in the midst of raging seas, our refuge and our dwelling place. Sanctify to us this time drawn away from others, even as your Son, O God of All Creation, drew away to a lonely place for prayer. Deepen our need of you, dear God, that every breath may be a whisper of the Spirit's prompting, a renewed searching of the deep things of God. Stir up in us the great act of intercession, that we may spend our time apart in prayer for the world you created and sustain. Bless us in our turning toward you, and make us a blessing to those who stand in need of you, the whole fragile earth. All this we ask in the name of great Physician our healer, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

<https://mailchi.mp/vts/a-prayer-and-worship-resource-pack-from-vts-2615050>

With God's help, our gifts become the blessings we seek for the world.

THE GATHERING

Welcome

The Rev. Maria J. Hoecker

This service of prayers for healing comes to us from Iona Abbey in Scotland. These prayers from the Iona Abbey Worship Book reflect our belief that God's purpose for us all is a life of wholeness, as expressed in the life and teaching of Jesus. The ministry of healing is an integral part of our Christian witness.

We each stand in need of healing, but in this ministry, we also recognize the social dimension. The healing of divided communities and nations, the healing of the earth itself, have their place alongside the healing of broken bodies, hurt minds, and wounded hearts, and of the hurts and divisions within ourselves. So too our prayers are complementary to the world of medicine and other forms of healing, which are also channels of God's loving and transforming purpose.

In our healing service, we are given space to write down or say the names of particular people, places, and situations for which prayers have been specifically asked. We do this because each person and situation is known to God, not as a problem to be solved, but as a focus for God's acceptance and love. We are not seeking to change God but to change the world; and we trust God that our prayers will be answered in the fullness of time, although we do not know when or how the healing will happen.

During this pandemic, healing prayers take many forms, often without our being able to gather together, lay our hands upon the sick, nor anoint them with oil. We trust and affirm that the ministry of healing is not limited by our proximity, but rather is all-inclusive by the power of our prayers. God's healing purpose, the promise of God's fulfilling and sustaining love, is for every one of us, no matter where we are.

Opening Responses

Leader: We gather here in your presence, God,

All: *in our need,
and bringing with us the needs of the world.*

Leader: We come to you, for you come to us in Jesus,

All: *and you know by experience what human life is like.*

Leader: We come with our faith and with our doubts;

All: *we come with our hopes and with our fears.*

Leader: We come as we are, because you invite us to come;

All: *and you have promised never to turn us away.*

Opening Word “Aftermath”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

When the summer fields are mown,
When the birds are fledged and flown,
And the dry leaves strew the path;
With the falling of the snow,
With the cawing of the crow,
Once again the fields we mow
And gather in the aftermath.

Not the sweet, new grass with flowers
Is this harvesting of ours;
Not the upland clover bloom;
But the rowen mixed with weeds,
Tangled tufts from marsh and meads,
Where the poppy drops its seeds
In the silence and the gloom.

This poem is in the public domain, and may be read in a live-streamed worship service.

Hymn #291 "We plow the fields, and scatter"

1 We plow the fields, and scat - ter the good seed on the land,
 2 He on - ly is the Ma - ker of all things near and far;
 3 We thank thee, then, O Fa - ther, for all things bright and good,

but it is fed and wa - tered by God's al - might - y hand;
 he paints the way - side flow - er, he lights the eve - ning star;
 the seed - time and the har - vest, our life, our health, our food:

he sends the snow in win - ter, the warmth to swell the grain,
 the winds and waves o - bey him, by him the birds are fed;
 the gifts we have to of - fer are what thy love im - parts,

the breez - es and the sun - shine, and soft re - fresh - ing rain.
 much more to us, his chil - dren, he gives our dai - ly bread.
 but chief - ly thou de - sir - est our hum - ble thank - ful hearts.

Refrain
 All good gifts a - round us are sent from heaven a - bove;
 then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all his love.

Words: Matthias Claudius (1740–1815); tr. Jane Montgomery Campbell (1817–1878), alt.
 Music: *Wir Pflügen*, Johann Abraham Peter Schulz (1747–1800)

WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

Gospel for the Day Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

The Message

The Meaning of the Harvest Story

He told another story. "God's kingdom is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. That night, while his hired men were asleep, his enemy sowed thistles all through the wheat and slipped away before dawn. When the first green shoots appeared and the grain began to form, the thistles showed up, too.

"The farmhands came to the farmer and said, 'Master, that was clean seed you planted, wasn't it? Where did these thistles come from?'

"He answered, 'Some enemy did this.'

"The farmhands asked, 'Should we weed out the thistles?'

"He said, 'No, if you weed the thistles, you'll pull up the wheat, too. Let them grow together until harvest time. Then I'll instruct the harvesters to pull up the thistles and tie them in bundles for the fire, then gather the wheat and put it in the barn.'"

The Curtain of History

Jesus dismissed the congregation and went into the house. His disciples came in and said, "Explain to us that story of the thistles in the field."

So he explained. "The farmer who sows the pure seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the pure seeds are subjects of the kingdom, the thistles are subjects of the Devil, and the enemy who sows them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age, the curtain of history. The harvest hands are angels.

"The picture of thistles pulled up and burned is a scene from the final act. The Son of Man will send his angels, weed out the thistles from his kingdom, pitch them in the trash, and be done with them. They are going to complain to high heaven, but nobody is going to listen. At the same time, ripe, holy lives will mature and adorn the kingdom of their Father.

"Are you listening to this? Really listening?"

Here ends the reading.

Response

All are invited to reflect on the readings with a symbolic action to declare their engagement with their prayers of thanksgiving and concern; be it lighting a candle, meditating, placing stones in sand, ringing a bell, planting seeds, drawing or writing.

a period of silence follows

Hymn #657 "Love divine, all loves excelling"

1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cell - ing, joy of heaven, to
2 Come, al - might - y to de - liv - er, let us all thy
3 Fi - nish then thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less

earth come down, fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -

faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - way bless - ing,
ly re - stored in thee: changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,

pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our

thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.
with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise.

Words: Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Music: *Hyfrydol*, Rowland Hugh Prichard (1811–1887)

Invitation

Jesus says, 'Come to me all you who are troubled and I will give you rest.' So come, you who are burdened with regrets and anxieties, you who are broken in body or in spirit, you who are torn by relationships and by doubt, you who feel deeply within yourselves the divisions and injustices of our world. Come for Jesus invites us to bring him our brokenness.

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: Let us pray, as we now bring before God our prayers:

Loving God,
you share with us the care of creation
and call each of us by name.

We remember that those who encountered Jesus found acceptance, healing and the possibility of new life; that the disciples, though imperfect human beings, through prayer and touch helped others find healing in the power of your Holy Spirit.

And so in the name of the Triune God, we pray . . .

Leader: Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those who suffer pain and ill-health, with their families, friends, and those who care for them . . . we pray especially for those we name, either silently or aloud.

All: *May they know the deep peace of Christ.*

Leader: Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those who suffer in mind and spirit, and all who care for them, especially . . .

All: *May they know the deep peace of Christ.*

Leader: Loving God, we hold in your healing presence the suffering people in our world, and the places where people are experiencing division, injustice, and violence, especially . . .

All: *May they know the deep peace of Christ.*

Leader: Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those struggling to overcome addiction or abuse, those supporting and working with them, and all whose suffering has distanced them from those they love, especially . . .

All: *May they know the deep peace of Christ.*

Leader: Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those facing bereavement. We also pray for those who have died, especially . . .

All: *May they know the deep peace of Christ.*

Leader: Loving God, we give you thanks for the health restored and prayers of thanksgiving offered, especially . . .

We hold in your healing presence and peace those whose needs are not known to us . . .

And those whose names we do not know, but who are known to you, and for whom we have been asked to pray.

And we name in our hearts those who are close to us, especially . . .

All: *May they know the deep peace of Christ.*

Leader: May your wisdom, God guide nurses, doctors, and those who work in every part of our healthcare system and emergency services across this nation and around the world. We pray also for those who work in medical research, epidemiology, and all who determine public health, education, and economic policies to keep us alive and thriving during this global pandemic.

God of compassion and love,
we offer you all our suffering and pain.
Give us the strength to bear our weakness,
healing even when there is no cure,
peace in the midst of turmoil
and love to fill the spaces in our lives.

Glory to God, from whom all love flows,
glory to Jesus, who showed his love through suffering,
and glory to the Holy Spirit,
who brings light to the darkest places.

All: Amen.

Prayer for Healing

Living God, breathe your Spirit upon us
and surround us with your love.
Giving Jesus, grant us your compassion.
Healing Spirit, come and bring us peace.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Watch now, dear Lord,
with those who wake or watch or weep tonight,
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.

Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ,
rest your weary ones,
bless your dying ones,
soothe your suffering ones,
pity your afflicted ones,
shield your joyous ones,
and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

And now may the God of hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
that we may abound in hope
in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Leader: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit!
All Thanks be to God!

Hymn #671 "Amazing grace! how sweet the sound" (st. 1, 2, 4, 5)

1 A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, that
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
4 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I
*5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

1 saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but
2 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
4 have al - rea - dy come; 'tis grace that brought me
5 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

1 now am found, was blind but now I see.
2 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
4 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
5 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Words: John Newton (1725–1807), alt.; st. 5, from *A Collection of Sacred Ballads*, 1790;
compiled by Richard Broaddus and Andrew Broaddus
Music: *New Britain*, from *Virginia Harmony* 1831; adapt. att. Edwin Othello Excell (1851–1921);
harm. Austin Cole Lovelace (b. 1919)



*Please note that during this time of pandemic
St. Columba's building is closed until further notice.
Donations can be sent to St. Columba's Episcopal Church
32 Emery Lane, Boothbay Harbor ME 04538*



*Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Brown
Bishop of The Diocese of Maine*

*Officiant: The Rev. Maria J. Hoecker,
Rector of St. Columba's Episcopal Church*

Musician, IT, and Sound Engineer: Guy Scott

All prayers from the Iona Abbey Worship Book. 2001.
All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked *The Message* or MSG are taken from
THE MESSAGE, copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson.
Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved.
Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service
obtained from OneLicense with license #A-700276. All rights reserved.

St. Columba's Church
32 Emery Lane
Boothbay Harbor ME 04538

All Saints by-the-Sea Chapel
All Saints Road
Southport ME 04576