

CELTIC EVENING PRAYER

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Sunday, March 14, 2021



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.

EVENING LITURGY

Opening Sentences

Leader: The Love of Christ surround us.

People: *The Light of Christ lead us.*

Leader: The Peace of Christ fill us.

People: *The Power of Christ aid us.*

Leader: The Joy of Christ thrill us.

People: *The presence of Christ be with us evermore.*

The Lighting of the Three

Leader: We light a light in the name of the Maker.

People: *The Lord is with us, With might to protect us,
With strength to defend us, The Lord is with us.*

silence

Leader: We light a light in the name of the Son.

People: *The Lord is with us, With wisdom to guide us,
With peace to refresh us, The Lord is with us.*

silence

Leader: We light a light in the name of the Spirit.

People: *The Lord is with us, With love to enfold us,
With joy to crown us, The Lord is with us.*

silence

Opening Prayer

Leader: Our spirits hunger for your love, O Divine Maker of hearts, for the taste of your joy and a sense of your peace. May this time of prayer fill us with the whisper of your presence and the touch of your hand upon our hearts. We long for the depths of your love, to know your quiet constancy, the feast of your friendship that feeds us without end. Awaken us to your presence now, this moment, in our hearts. **Amen.**

A Prayer for the Evening

Leader: Lord, eventide is upon us. It is a time for stillness. Let us be still in the presence of God. Night follows after a long day. What has been done has been done; what has not been done, for now will be left undone; let it be. The night is dark. Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you. The night is quiet. Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all who are dear to us, and all who have no peace. The night heralds the dawn. Let us look to a new day, new joys, new possibilities. The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. **Amen.**

Leader: Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

People: *The maker of heaven and earth.*

Leader: Let us confess our hopes to God.

The Confession of Hope

from The Rabbinical Assembly of the United Synagogue of America

*All: We marvel at the mystery of the stars.
Moon and sky, sand and sea.
We marvel at the mystery of the sun.
Twilight, high noon, dusk and dawn.
Though we are mortal, we are Creation's crown.
Flesh and bone, steel and stone.
We dwell in fragile, temporary shelters.
Grant steadfast love, compassion, grace.
Sustain us, Lord; our origin is dust.
Splendor, mercy, majesty, love endure.
We are but little lower than the angels.
Resplendent skies, sunset, sunrise.
The grandeur of Creation lifts our lives.
Evening darkness, morning dawn.
Renew our lives as You renew all time.*

Leader: O God, make speed to save us.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Opening Collect of the Day

Leader: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray,

Leader: Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn #685 "Rock of ages, cleft for me"

1 Rock of a - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee;
2 Should my tears for ev - er flow, should my zeal no lan - guor know,
3 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, when mine eye - lids close in death,

let the wa - ter and the blood from thy wound - ed side that flowed,
all for sin could not a - tone: thou must save, and thou a - lone;
when I rise to worlds un - known and be - hold thee on thy throne,

be of sin the dou - ble cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power.
in my hand no price I bring, sim - ply to thy cross I cling.
Rock of a - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.

Words: Augustus Montague Toplady (1740–1778), alt.

Music: *Toplady*, Thomas Hastings (1784–1872)

THE WORD OF GOD

Gospel for the Day John 3:14-21

The Message

Born from Above

“No one has ever gone up into the presence of God except the One who came down from that Presence, the Son of Man. In the same way that Moses lifted the serpent in the desert so people could have something to see and then believe, it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up—and everyone who looks up to him, trusting and expectant, will gain a real life, eternal life.

“This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person’s failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him.

“This is the crisis we’re in: God-light streamed into the world, but men and women everywhere ran for the darkness. They went for the darkness because they were not really interested in pleasing God. Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won’t come near it, fearing a painful exposure. But anyone working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light so the work can be seen for the God-work it is.”

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

Canticle Prayer

Leader: We weave a silence on to our lips.

People: *We weave a silence into our minds.*

Leader: We weave a silence within our hearts.

People: *We close our ears to distractions.*

Leader: We close our eyes to attractions.

People: *We close our hearts to temptations.*

Leader: Calm us, O Lord, as you stilled the storm.

People: *Still us, O Lord, keep us from harm.*

Leader: Let all the tumult within us cease.

People: *Enfold us, O Lord, in your peace. Amen.*

Prayers of Intercession

Leader: God of love
Hear the cry of those who yearn for love
Fractured families, broken homes
Neglected, unwanted, alone
God of love

People: *hear our prayer*

Leader: God of justice
Hear the cry of those who yearn for justice
Persecuted and oppressed
Exploited, ill-treated, broken
God of justice

People: *hear our prayer*

Leader: God of peace,
Hear the cry of those who yearn for peace
In battle zones and broken states
Frightened, fearful, anxious
God of peace

People: *hear our prayer*

Leader: God of healing
Hear the cry of those who yearn for healing
Physical and spiritual
Hurting, weakened, depressed
God of healing

People: *hear our prayer*

Leader: The Spirit of our God fills the whole world.
The Spirit of our God moves over the deep.
The Spirit of our God warms our hearts.
The Spirit of our God fills all things.

Silence

Leader: Spirit of God, you give life to the world.

People: *Breathe on us, breath of God.*

Leader: Spirit of God, you give guidance to all rulers.

People: *Breathe on us, breath of God.*

Leader: Spirit of God, you give talents to all peoples.

People: *Breathe on us, breath of God.*

Leader: Spirit of God, you direct all artists and craftspeople.

People: *Breathe on us, breath of God.*

Leader: Spirit of God, you give strength to the baptized.

People: *Breathe on us, breath of God.*

Leader: Spirit of God, you give comfort to the troubled.

People: *Breathe on us, breath of God.*

Leader: Spirit of God, you renew your church.

People: *Breathe on us, breath of God.*

Silence: Please add your prayers, either silently or aloud.

Concluding Collect

Leader: You are our shelter, O Lord, a light upon our path, a presence in our darkness, a companion in our travels, there at the journey's end. Hear our prayers and may your mercy be upon us. **Amen.**

Hymn #671 “Amazing grace! how sweet the sound”

1 A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 The Lord has prom - ised good to me, his
 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
 3 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 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!
 3 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 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)

Closing Prayers *please remain seated*

Leader: Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;
People: *For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.*

Leader: Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of your eye;
People: *Hide us under the shadow of your wings.*

Leader: Lord, have mercy.
People: *Christ, have mercy,*
 Leader: Lord, have mercy.

The Lord's Prayer

BCP pg. 364

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.*

Give us today our daily bread.

*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us.*

*Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.*

*For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.*

Leader: Lord, Hear our prayer;

People: *And let our cry come to you.*

Leader: Let us pray.

Leader: Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Leader: Gracious God, you have called us to serve you.

People: *Help us to journey beyond the familiar
and into the unknown.*

*Give us the faith to leave old ways
and break fresh ground with You.*

*Christ of the mysteries,
we trust You to be stronger
than each storm within us.*

*We will trust in the darkness
and know that our times, even now,
are in Your hand.*

*Tune our spirits to the music of heaven, and somehow,
make our obedience count for You. Amen.*

Hymn #693 “Just as I am, without one plea”



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy
 2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - ya
 * 3 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; sight, rich - es,
 4 Just as I am: thou wilt re - ceive; wilt wel - come,
 5 Just as I am, thy love un - known has bro - ken



1 blood was shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me
 2 con - flict, man - ya doubt; fight - ings and fears with -
 3 heal - ing of the mind, yea, all I need, in
 4 par - don, cleanse, re - lieve, be - cause thy prom - ise
 5 ev - ery bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea,



1 come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 2 in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 3 thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 4 I be - lieve, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 5 thine a - lone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6 Just as I am, of thy great love
 the breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,
 here for a season, then above:
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Words: Charlotte Elliott (1789–1871)

Music: Woodworth, William Batchelder Bradbury (1816–1868)

The Dismissal

Leader: Let us pray.

All: *Lord, you now have set your servant free
to go in peace as you have promised;*

*For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:*

*A Light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.*

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

Leader: Let us bless the Lord,

People: *Thanks be to God.*

Leader: My friends, life is short and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us, so be quick to love and make haste to be kind. Rest assured that God is infinitely more concerned with our future than our past; may the One Holy and Undivided Trinity bless us along the way and remain with us always. **Amen.**



*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*

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