



Community of St. Bridget
an inclusive catholic experience
Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 21-22, 2024
Communal Reconciliation Service
Liturgist: Rose Gordyan



patch.com

Suggestion: *Please have on hand bread and wine/juice so you can fully participate in this liturgy.*

Into this day will break moments of awareness, tiny shards of light in the midst of darkness that illumine the whole reality of existence. May the words we hear and share be such moments and may we be thankfully blessed by their gifts.

ALL: Together we open our hearts to the Holy Wonder of Life.

Opening Song: **Waiting for You** The Many, *Love Greater Than Fear* (2020).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-ElOoOYxws&feature=youtu.be> (lyric/video)

The earth cries out, nothing feels right.
The world cries out, no justice in sight.
Fires burning everywhere,
Too many, too hot, too bright.

Refrain: We are waiting for you. We are waiting for you.
We are waiting for that
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

The child cries out, “don’t turn out the light.”
Broken hearts cry out, no end of hurt in sight.
Greed and guns rule everywhere,

Too many, too strong to fight. **R**

Let us be a sign of hope
Let us be your arms of love
Let us be the ones that say
There is another way. (x3)

We are waiting for you. You are waiting for us, too.
We are waiting for that
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

We are waiting for you.
You are waiting for us, too. (x2)

Today we begin with Lighting the Advent Candle recognizing our spiritual journey of Advent. We will then go forward with a Communal Reconciliation Service together opening ourselves to trust in God's ever-present love for us even when we are not aware of our part in living and following The Way.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

1. May we, during this holy season, reflect on the many and different ways we can begin to make the Holy One's compassion and love available to our broken world.
2. May we learn together to reflect on the Divine call to generous response in the light of Christ's life. As *we light our candles today in hope, peace and joy with love*, may we look forward to the new birthing of Eternal Love in all creation, expressed anew in our love for all.
Candles are lit. (two purple, one pink, and last to be lit is another purple)
3. This is a personal call to become Christ's presence and action in our world. Together we begin to image Christ whose compassion never fails.
4. We give you thanks, O Loving Mystery of Life, for this time of waiting when we search to find you present in our midst. May we be attentive, be reflective, and be responsive to your Advent Presence among us!

ALL: God of promise, God of love, into our darkness come.

Communal Reconciliation

God—creatively active for billions of years in this emerging universe—comes to expression in us. In God we live, and move, and have our being. In, with, and

through us, God can be generous, loving, creative, happy, delighted, sad, and disappointed.

ALL: God loves in us; God cares through us; God laughs in us; God cries in us.

5. As we open ourselves to the power of God in and around us, we often cling to our desire for control, our self-centered nature, and our fears.

ALL: Together in the presence of God and to one another, we confess that our failures have all too often defined us.

6. O Holy One, you call us to be your voices in this world,

ALL: And we often stay silent.

7. You call us to be your hands in this world,

ALL: And we keep them hidden.

1. You call us to be your feet in this world,

ALL: And we go our own way.

2. When we meet those who are doubting and say nothing,

ALL: Forgive us.

3. When we meet those who need your touch and do nothing,

ALL: Forgive us.

4. When we are called to take up your cross and end up carrying nothing,

ALL: Forgive us.

5. By the power of the Spirit who lives and breathes in, with, and through us, we can let go of all that separates us from God and from one another.

ALL: Together, we confess our sorrow for the limits we have put on God's Spirit at work in us. We confess that we often fail to live in ways that foster our relationship with God and with one another.

6. In Jesus we have met the One whose life teaches us to act justly, walk humbly, love selflessly, expand our notions of neighbor, love of our enemies, care for creation, and forgive as we are forgiven.

ALL: In Christ, we freely let go of our fear, and we open ourselves to the Spirit's power to heal and strengthen our relationships.

7. In Christ, we have learned the healing power of compassion.

ALL: In Christ, we freely let go of our own arrogance, our tightly held grudges, our temptation to seek revenge, and our desire for victory.

1. In Christ we have seen the power of grace.

ALL: In Christ, we open ourselves to the powers of mercy as we begin the work of forgiving ourselves, our neighbors, and our enemies.

Reflection: **O Tender God Have Mercy** Richard Bruxvoort Colligan © 2004 Worldmaking.net.
https://youtu.be/ucR1a3ilxqw?si=HT2w9w2UORRies_c (lyric video)

O tender God, have mercy
For you are for us.

O living Christ, have mercy
For you will heal us.

O tender God, have mercy
For you are for us. For you are for us.

2. O Holy One, breathe life into our bones, bring freedom to our lives, that we might declare with heart and soul and voice that you are our God.

ALL: In Christ, our power to forgive is realized. May we continue to find generous and courageous expression in, with, and through one another as we absolve ourselves, our neighbors, and our enemies. We breathe deeply of the Spirit, as we continue Love's reconciling work!

We rejoice in our God always! Let your gentleness be evident to all! We give life to ourselves and others in +the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, now and always. Amen.

Opening Prayer

O Holy One, we enter a sacred time, a time of waiting, a time of mystery, when we together open ourselves to share the brightest Light of Love entering our world. Let us continue our journey of Advent together in prayer.

LITURGY OF THE WORD*

We experience the Spirit of Our Living God as we listen to the Scripture readings broken open and shared by all.

First Reading: Baruch 4:1, 36-5:4, 7-9

A reading from the writings of Baruch:

She, Wisdom, is the book of the instruction of God, the law that endures forever; All who cling to Her will live, but those will die who forsake Her.

[Wisdom dwelt with God's people in exile, and will journey with them home.]

Look East! See Wisdom's joy that is coming to you from God! Look! Here come your children, from whom you were parted! From east to west, they are gathered by the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in God's glory.

Take off your garment of sorrow and distress. Put on forever the splendor of God's glory. Wrap the mantle of justice around you. Place on your head the diadem of the Holy One's brilliance. God will reveal your splendor to all under the heavens. You will be named by God forever: "The Peace of Justice" and "Divine Glory."

God has commanded that every lofty mountain and the age-old hills be made low, that the valleys be filled to make level ground, that all may walk safely in God's glory. The forests and every fragrant tree will give shade along the way, at God's command. God is your guide, leading you in joy. God is leading you with compassion and justice.

The inspired words from our ancient tradition. Amen.

Responsorial: Micah 5:1-4a

Cantor: *We long for Your splendor, we long for Your peace.*

But from you, Bethlehem, David's country, from you will come a leader. From you will come one who will shepherd-rule all my people, one whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. **R**

You will feel abandoned for a while, until the time when she who is in labor bears her child. Then, the scattered family will return home. **R**

The child will grow in stature. This new leader will shepherd-rule not with a human army but with God's strength, not with the majesty of might, but with God-revealed royalty. **R**

All people will have a good and safe home. The whole world will hold the newborn leader holy. This reign will bring harmony and wholeness. The child will be called Peace. All will know peace. Peace. **R**

Cantor: Alleluias

Second Reading- Gospel: Luke 1:57-80

A reading from the Holy Gospel from Luke:

When the time arrived for Elizabeth to give birth, she bore a son. Elizabeth had kept to herself till now; but her neighbors and relatives heard that God had lavished love on her, and they shared her joy.

On the eighth day after the birth of her child, it was time to have him circumcised. They decided to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, “No. He is to be called John.” They said to her, “None of your relatives has this name.” They began motioning to Zechariah to find out what he wanted the child to be named. The father asked for a writing-tablet and wrote: “His name is John.” They were all astonished. At that instant, Zechariah’s mouth was opened and his tongue freed. He began to speak, praising God.

Awe overcame all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. Everyone who heard about them pondered them and said, “What, then, will this child be?” Then Zechariah, his father, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied, saying:

Blessed be God, Who visits humanity bringing healing and wholeness to all, raising a horn for liberation and wholeness within the house of David and Bathsheba, God's servants of old, as promised through the holy prophets of the ages.

You reconcile us with our enemies and all who hate us. You show compassion to our ancestors. You remember Your holy covenants and the oath sworn to Abraham and Sarah, our ancestors in faith.

You swore that, once reconciled with our enemies, we might worship You in holiness and righteousness all our days.

And you, John, will be called a prophet of the Holy. You will lead us, preparing the way. You will give all people knowledge of their holiness through forgiveness, by making what is wounded whole. God's tenderness will turn Earth towards a healing sun enlivening those who dwell in the shadow of fear and death. You will guide our feet in a path of peace.

And indeed, the hand of God was with John. The child grew and became strong in spirit. He lived in the desert until the day he appeared openly to Israel. The inspired words attributed to the evangelist, Luke. Amen.

Cantor: Alleluias

Third Reading: Magnificat of Waiting for the Fullness of Time

A reading from *Miriam of Nazareth, Woman of Strength & Wisdom* by Ann Johnson:

My soul reflects quietly on your fullness,

and my spirit grows stronger in the hope of your promise, God my redeemer,
because you have filled me with the knowing that you are alive within me.
Yes, day by day through the course of time
my awareness of the call to blessed fulfillment increases
for you have done great things in me.

Holy is this time, and patient is your gift,
to all who nurture the seed of your love.
You have changed my life.
I was so confident in my unknowing.

You have deflected my fervent thrust toward iron-clad goals,
and spread before me your vision of fragile simplicity.
My longing to be a healing and reconciling person to your people
is affirmed within the daily comings and goings of my life;
my illusions of my own wholeness are mercifully revealed.

You are here now in this seeming emptiness of waiting,
remembering your intent,
...according to the promise made in the beginning of time...
remembering your intent to reach through the work of my life
that your fullness may be known now, in our time.

The inspired words from a current prophet, Ann Johnson. Amen.

Homily/Reflection: Rose Gordyan

Today we light the fourth candle of Advent: the candle of love.

Throughout Scripture, God reveals Divine love as unconditional and transformative. This profound love is at the heart of the Advent love shown through God's gift of becoming one of us in Jesus the Christ. This act of love calls us to respond in turn: *"Love your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself"*

In our first reading, Wisdom is with God's people as they cling to hope, faith and love. In God they will live. God will remain with them as they journey back home. In Wisdom, God tells them to look East, where the sun rises. The sun rise is spectacular! It gives us a new day and brings much joy over the beauty that we claim as Divine love and guidance.

We are reminded to look beyond what is going on in life, even in the difficult times of chaos in our own lives and in our world. Rooted in faith, we are inspired to look beyond our circumstances. God is leading us. We live our life and acknowledge all the ways God is moving in the world today that gives us reason to hope and find peace.

Our Gospel focus is on God's love and the dependence on Elizabeth and Zachariah's love for each other. The Gospel narrates the time for Elizabeth to give birth. She had not told her neighbors or her relatives of her pregnancy, but they heard of God's favor and shared her joy. It's interesting that some decided to name him after his father. But Elizabeth said, "No. He is to be called John." A woman speaking up in her time! Can you imagine? Zachariah wrote on a tablet the name, John. He agreed with his wife, and they were overjoyed! Then Zechariah spoke. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied with words we now identify as the Canticle of Zechariah. God's Hope, Peace, Joy and Love are found in Zachariah's prophecy.

Place yourself in the words of the Canticle and let it speak to you today. When the Spirit moves you, share how you would apply its meaning to your life.

Holding these thoughts in the sacred space among us and strengthened by the support of one another, we now proclaim our affirmation of faith:

Affirmation of Faith

- 3.** We believe that where people are gathered in love, God is present, and good things happen, and life is full.
- 4.** We believe that we are immersed in mystery, that our lives are more than they seem, that we belong to each other and to a universe of great creative energies, whose source and destiny is God.
- 5.** We believe that through Mary's willing resolve, the Spirit of God beat in the heart of Jesus of Nazareth, and God's Good News was heard by the broken and wounded.
- 6.** We are glad that the Spirit of Peace is present with us, the church, as we gather to celebrate our common existence and the fidelity of God.
- 7.** And most deeply, we believe that in our struggle to love, we incarnate God in the world.
- 1.** And so aware of mystery and wonder, caught in friendship and laughter we become speechless before the joy in our hearts as we celebrate the

sacredness of life in this bread broken and cup poured out to be shared by all. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

For a deeper coming of Christ in our world that we experience through the birthing of God anew in our lives, let us offer our prayers:

We awaken to your call!

For whom and for what shall we pray?

Creator Spirit, we know that you hear our prayers and the prayers of all people. In your compassionate love, hold them all close to your heart. Strengthen our faith, so we may believe that with your guidance we can transform our world. Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Sign of Peace

As we prepare this sacred meal, we reaffirm that just as Jesus was anointed, so is each of us. And so, we celebrate our Creator's fruitful love as we extend our blessing to one another with joy. May the peace that our brother, Jesus, offers, be always with us!

Offertory (All raise bread and cup)

We place on our plate the harvest to be won by labor's love. And into the cup, we pour all the sap, which is to be pressed out this day from Earth's fruits.

ALL: Holy Mystery, we offer this prayer in union with the whole church. We bless and are blessed by these elements: bread, fruit of the vine, gifts of Earth, the gift of ourselves, the gifts of the cosmic Christ.

The Holy One is with us, abounding in Love!

2. We open our hearts in Christ, who lives and loves, heals, and empowers through us, and we give thanks to the Source of all Life.
3. Birther God, you brought forth all creation from your Life-Giving Womb. O Love of the Ages, who was born from Mary's womb, we praise you and leap for joy in your presence.
4. O Holy One of ancient Israel, you revealed yourself in a shining star, in humble shepherds, in a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes. You embrace us with infinite love in every situation and relationship. You dwell in the depths of our hearts.

5. We invite you this day to set us free, heal us, transform, and empower us as we gather around the table of your love. As we celebrate this sacred mystery in the embrace of the Holy One of birthing, we proclaim your praise:

Holy, Holy: **Holy is This One** Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, *Our Roots Are in You*. 2013 Worldmaking.net.

<https://youtu.be/wc13T8GMuao?si=bUlcoXZ7ajP7khBB> (no video)

Holy, holy, holy is this one

Holy, holy, holy is this one

In the wilderness, on the
mountain, were you always?

Here among us, come to love
us, were you always?

6. Praise to you, all-giving God, born of Mary. You are the body and blood of woman. We glorify you, nurturing God, for the dawning of the sacred promise of God's Anointed, fulfilled in Jesus the Christ.

ALL: We acknowledge Sophia Spirit within the gifts of this Eucharistic table, as we celebrate the +transformative power in this bread and fruit of the vine given to nurture afresh in us the discerning gifts of wisdom, light, and truth.

7. We celebrate the birth of Jesus, our newborn Emmanuel who came to give us fullness of life. During this holy season we share the bread of freedom and lift the cup of blessing. We invite all, especially those on the fringe of church and society, to join us around this banquet of love.

As Jesus gave birth to the New Covenant, he took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread, and shares it with us now saying:

ALL: *Take this all of you and eat it. This is my very Self given to you.*
(All raise bread)

At the end of the meal Jesus took the cup, blessed you, Birther of Life, and shares it with us now saying:

ALL: *Take and drink this cup of the new and everlasting covenant. It is poured out for you and for all, so that you might be free. Whenever you re-member me like this, I am among you.* **(All raise wine)**

Let us proclaim the sacred presence of our nurturing God:

ALL: Christ, by your life, ministry, and death, by your rising to new life within us, you have given birth to your new creation.

(All raise bread and cup)

ALL: For it is through learning to live as Jesus lived,
And why he lived,
And for whom he lived,
That we awaken to your Spirit within,
Moving us to worship you truly,
Life-giving God,
At this time, and all time, and in all ways.

Cantor: Amen (x2)

Communion Rite

We pray as the bread is broken among us:

1. Loving God, you call us to live the Gospel of peace and justice:
We will live justly.
2. Loving God, you call us to be your presence in the world:
We will love tenderly.
3. Loving God, you call us to speak truth to power:
We will walk with integrity in your presence.

This is the bread of life and cup of blessing, through which we are nourished, and we nourish one another.

ALL: In the sharing of this holy meal, may it be for us a sacred reminder of all that has been offered in this unfolding story as we give thanks for everything that gives us life, shapes and animates our bodies, our minds, and our spirits.

All are invited to receive at our Tables of Friendship!

Communion Song Meditation: **Ground and Source of All That Is** Richard
Bruxvoort Colligan © 2004 Worldmaking.net. Richard Bruxvoort Colligan and the River's Voice.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VB7kDHYncil> (no video)

Ground and source of all that is
One that anchors all our roots
Being of all ways and forms
Deepest home and final truth

We live and move in you, we live and move in you

Lover of ten thousand names
Holy presence all have known
Beauty ever welcoming
Mystery to stir the soul

We live and move in you, we live and move in you

Nature by whose laws we live
Author of our DNA
All-compelling call to life
Drawing one and all the same

We live and move in you, we live and move in you

Energy of heav'nly spheres
Spark within the insect mind
Unseen pulse to charge our plans
Bringing order and surprise

We live and move in you, we live and move in you

Call to kindness, call to serve
Freedom for our chosen course
Guide and friend for all who dream
Nourished by our ground and source

We live and move in you, we live and move in you

Let us pray together in the Name of Jesus:

- 4.** O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos
Focus your light within us. Make it useful.

- 5.** Create your reign of unity now—
through our fiery hearts and willing hands.
Help us love beyond our ideals
and sprout acts of compassion for all creatures.

- 6.** Animate the earth within us;
we then feel Wisdom underneath supporting all.
Untangle the knots within,
so that we can mend our hearts' simple ties to each other.

- 7.** Don't let surface things delude us,
But free us from what holds us back from our true purpose.

Out of you, the astonishing fire,
Returning light and sound to the cosmos. Amen.

Closing Prayer: O, Great Lover, alive in our hearts, stay with us. Abide with us, as you always have, are now, and always will be, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing: In this sacred time, we feel a great yearning for God to be born in our hearts. May we be an opening to love. May we use our gifts to mend and heal a broken and weary world that longs for the Light.

Gathered together,
ALL: We wait for the light.

Standing together,
ALL: We trust in the light.

Praying together,
ALL: We hope for the light.

Seeking together,
ALL: We step out with the light.

Singing together,
ALL: We are blessed by the light.

We go into this week, held together by the love of God, clothed with the nature of Jesus our Companion, reinforced by the strength of the +Holy Spirit. Amen.

*We go in faith to ponder in our hearts the mystery
and the wonder of this holy season.*

Closing Song: ***Holy Is Your Name (Magnificat)*** The Many. Presented by The Plural Guild. Video by Hutchinsons Media <http://www.hutchinsonsmedia.com> www.pluralguild.com
[Holy Is Your Name - The Many - Original - YouTube](#) (no video)

You have seen me in my sorrow.
You have heard me in my pain.
You have known me in my suffering.
You have loved me in my shame.

And I sing holy, holy, holy is your Name.
And I say glory, glory, glory to your Name.
The angels and the heavens sing of the new day that you bring.

They sing glory, glory, glory to your Name.

You have held me in my questions.
You have heard me when I pray.
You have looked on me with favor.
You have never looked away.

And I sing holy, holy, holy is your Name.
And I say glory, glory, glory to your Name.
The angels and the heavens sing of the new day that you bring.
They sing glory, glory, glory to your Name.

The proud will fall.
The poor will see that all hope's not lost
And grace flows free. *(repeat)*

And I sing holy, holy, holy is your Name.
And I say glory, glory, glory to your Name.
The angels and the heavens sing of the new day that you bring.
They sing glory, glory, glory to your Name.

***Thank you for your courage to worship with us in the
spirit of equality and justice!***

***You are welcome to join us again and support this Community
with your presence and prayer!***

*Today's scripture readings are taken from the Comprehensive Catholic Lectionary, published by the Women's Ordination Conference.