



Community of St. Bridget
an inclusive catholic experience

St. Bridget of Kildare, Woman of Peace – February 2, 2025

Liturgist: Nancy Tondy



Bridget's Fire: Joanna Powell Colbert

Suggestion: Please have a copy of the written liturgy and a piece of bread and cup of wine/grape juice so you can participate fully in this liturgy.

Come in. Come into this place that we make special by our very presence. Where the ordinary is sanctified, the human is celebrated, and the compassionate is expected.

ALL: Together we make this a holy place with our every act of celebration.

With the flame of St. Bridget, we proclaim the transformative power of God. We give thanks that God's transforming love has been, is now, and will ever be at work within us and in all creation. Amen.

Opening Song: **Gabhaim MoltaBride** Aoife Ní Fhearraigh, *If I Told You* (2006).

<https://youtu.be/tP5FS6IXJJA?si=2iWHFw30soTJQ8hd&t=40>

(video; begin at .40)

*Gabhaim molta Bríghde
Ionmhain í le hÉirinn
Ionmhain le gach tír í
Molaimís go léir í:*

I am praising Bridget
Who is daughter of Ireland
She is a daughter of all countries
We all praise her

*Lóchrann geal na Laighneach
Soilsiú feadh na tíre
Ceann ar óghaibh Éireann
Ceann na mban ar míne*

The bright light of Leinster
Bringing light to the country
The leader of the youth of Ireland
Our leader of gentlewomen

*Tig an geimhreadh dian dubh
Gearradh lena ghéire
Ach ar lá 'le Bríghde
Gar dúinn Earrach Éireann*
(repeat verse 1)

Here comes the dark, hard winter
Cutting with its sharpness
But on St. Bridget's Day
Ireland's spring is close by

Today, we celebrate the Feast of Saint Bridget, goddess and saint, soul friend and spiritual ancestor of this community—Bridget, Woman of Peace. We welcome her compassion, her healing energy for, to become peacemakers, we must first have peace within ourselves. And so, we invite Bridget to pray with us now, in the name of the Divine: Source of All Being, Eternal Word, and Holy Wisdom-Sophia. Amen.

Transformation Rite

Holy Source of love and grace, open us to your transformative power:

1. When darkness and cold sink into our bones and threaten to overtake us, embrace us with your warmth, fill us with your light.
ALL: Heal us, and empower us to bring healing to others.
2. When we're tempted to wallow in our own discomforts, open our hearts to the suffering of your people. Make us willing to stand with them.
ALL: Show us a world of equality and justice.
3. When we seek false refuge in consumerism, addictions, and mass media, awaken us from the trance. Remind us that you are our only true refuge.
ALL: Let us learn to love as we are loved by you.
4. When we ache for the world to be "normal," inspire us to create a world transformed. Show us glimpses of creation as you intend it to be.
ALL: Free us to be peacemakers in our time.

We now join Bridget of Kildare and all creation in the cosmic dance of praise!

Gloria Richard Bruxvoort Colligan and the River's Voice *Wordmaking* © 2004.

https://youtu.be/HP8NkIp44nU?si=aY6vqjoX55ZG_reg&t=56

(no video; set to start at 0.55)

Gloria! Gloria! Highest Glory to You!
Gloria! Gloria! Highest Glory to You!
Maker, Spirit, Friend, you are Great Mystery.

Gloria! Gloria! Highest Glory to You!
Gloria! Gloria! Highest Glory to You!

Opening Prayer: Bringer of Every Good Gift, bless our gathering here today. Remind us that the Heart of You—our God—beats in each and every one of us. Help us see your face and honor your presence among us. Make us a people of discernment, who walk with integrity and speak truth from our hearts. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD*

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

First Reading: *Rekindling the Flame: A Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of St. Brigid of Kildare*
A reading from the writings of Rita Minehan of Solas Bride in Kildare, Ireland:

We are at peace when we come home to the body. We are at peace when we come home to the earth. We are at peace when we come home to the realization of our bodies and the body of the earth—as sacred. We are at peace when we include the sacredness of Mother and of Mother Earth in our lives.

Whether at holy well or at sacred fire, we can remember our connection to the earth and to Christ, to the Mother and the Water, to ourselves and to Spirit.

The inspired words of Brigidine Sister, Rita Minehan. Amen.

Responsorial: Psalm 146 (Nan C. Merrill, adapted)

Cantor: *We praise you always with free and joyful song!*

Put not your trust in riches, in illusionary things that fade away.
For when our day comes to depart this world, at that very time,
We carry only the love imprinted upon our soul. **R**

Blessed are those whose strength is in the Beloved,
Whose trust is in You, O Divine Lover, who gave birth to the universe —
The heavens, the earth, and sea — and all that is within them. **R**

You are ever faithful, bringing balance and harmony to earth,
Nourishment to body and soul. You free us from the bonds of fear.
You give sight to those who would see. **R**

Cantor: Alleluias

Second Reading - Gospel: Luke 6:35-38 (adapted)

A reading from the Holy Gospel attributed to Luke:

Jesus said, “Love your enemies and do good to them. Lend without expecting repayment, and your reward will be great. You’ll rightly be called children of God, since God is good even to the ungrateful and the wicked.

“Be compassionate, as your loving God is compassionate. Don’t judge, and you won’t be judged. Don’t condemn, and you won’t be condemned. Pardon, and you’ll be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you: a full measure-packed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For the amount you measure out is the amount you’ll be given back.”

The inspired words attributed to the evangelist, Luke. Amen.

Cantor: Alleluias

Third Reading: Ephesians 3:16-19

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians:

I pray that God, out of the riches of Divine Glory, will strengthen you inwardly with power through the working of the Spirit.

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, so that you, being rooted and grounded in love, will be able to grasp fully the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ’s love and, with all God’s holy ones, experience this love that surpasses all understanding, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The inspired words of the apostle Paul. Amen.

Shared Homily: Nancy Tondy

We honor St. Bridget of Kildare as a woman of peace, a woman for our times, and a role model for gospel living. She is a midwife who embraces us and guides us across the many thresholds of life, reminding us that *the heartbeat of God beats within each of us*. Our first reading underscores this—our path to peace begins within our very selves. We come home to the body, to the earth. We recognize that *we are* God’s Creation; our bodies are sacred, connected to Spirit. And in our gospel, Jesus calls us to *our true nature* as humans. Because we are made in the image and likeness of God, compassion is our nature. Simply put, our path to peace is to *love the way God loves*.

Historical facts about St. Bridget are limited, yet the Celtic wisdom and legends surrounding her are rich. She is well-known as a healer and friend to the poor. It is said that Bridget was *infatuated with* the poor. As a young woman, she constantly gave away food, clothing, and other resources from the household of her wealthy father—much to his dismay.

As the story goes, her father became so fed up with Bridget giving away his possessions that he decided to marry her off to the King of Leinster. She would then be his problem. When her father entered the palace to meet with the King, he left Bridget outside along with his valuable jeweled sword. Of course, she promptly gave it away—to a poor family who could trade it for food. Bridget desired both to feed the hungry and to end violence. This story reminds us we must “beat our swords into plowshares” (Isaiah 2:4). We must find a way to *access the power of nonviolence*, even as a thriving weapons industry visits unspeakable suffering, death, and destruction upon God’s people. Bridget urges us to end the proliferation of weapons and to build solidarity with each other in our search for peace.

After the sword incident, Bridget’s father complained to the King, “She does things without permission,” he said. John Philip Newell points out that *this is why* we need Bridget today; some things we must do without waiting for permission. In sanctuary places, protectors of immigrants and refugees are not waiting for permission. Champions of diversity, equity and inclusion, healthcare workers, and peace organizers are not waiting for permission. Individuals claiming their sexual identity and gender identity, choosing who and how to love; those in need of reproductive care and their allies are not waiting for permission. Women called to ordination, speaking truth to power, are not waiting for permission.

May the example of Bridget embolden us and remind us that every time we show up—every hand we hold, every sorrow we share, every act of kindness, *however large or small*, is an act of courage, a way to love as God has loved us.

I invite you to share the wisdom rising in you today.

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

- 5.** We have faith
in one God, one Source of all life,
one Ground of the whole Earth,
who created all things good.

6. And we have faith
in Christ, in whom we have been shown the special role of humanity to bear
God's likeness in working and caring for Creation,
in seeking to understand her mysteries and powers,
in working with these powers for the wellbeing of life on Earth.
7. And we have faith
in God's Spirit who leads us to a meek, unselfish and
compassionate lifestyle.
So that the Earth is inherited in peace,
her life is transformed for all creatures and her bounty shared justly.
So be it. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

We now bring to this Table our cares and concerns—for our loved ones, our
countries, our leaders, and our world. After each request, we respond:

We awaken to your call.

For whom and for what shall we pray?

Holy Creator, let us hear the heartbeat of the world. Empower us to companion
the wounded and to be bearers of peace. 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 the earth's fruits.

Prayer Over the Gifts

ALL: O Gracious One, giver of the gifts we bring, receive them from your
church gathered here today, affirming the sacrament of your Presence
among us. Amen.

The Holy One is with us, abounding in Love!

1. Giving thanks to the Source of All Life, we open our hearts in the name of
Jesus, who lives and loves, heals and empowers, through us.

2. We praise you, O God of wonder and life, as we celebrate Jesus' life and ministry, a witness to the life of compassion and love we are all called to live. We lift up our hearts with Bridget and all the saints and angels:

Holy, Holy, Hosanna, Richard Bruxvoort Colligan © 2019 Worldmaking.net.

https://youtu.be/XFR5opb0f2k?si=En0l-KQxLTR_dzQR&t=5 (lyric video)

Holy, holy, holy Hosanna!
Everything everywhere is full of you!

3. Creator God, we see around us the work of your hands, the fruit of your wisdom and love. The unfolding story of creation witnesses unceasingly to your creative power. We, your creatures, often deviate from that wisdom, hindering your creative presence in our midst.
4. Sending among us Jesus, our Light and Hope, you birth afresh in our world the power of Sophia Wisdom, and in the gift of the Spirit, your creative goodness blooms anew, amid the variety and wonder of life.

ALL: Spirit of Life, all that exists is blessed and enlivened by your presence. May these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine, and our very lives, be the nourishment we need to sustain us.

5. As a Christian people we celebrate the Open Table, proclaimed by Jesus our liberator and our friend, a Table of abundant life, inclusive love, and liberation, where all are welcome, and from which no one is to be excluded.

At this gathering, we take bread, as Jesus took bread, and we remember, as Jesus remembered, the constant presence of the Spirit of Life and Love. And Jesus offers it to us now, saying: **(All raise bread)**

ALL: *Take and eat, all of you. This is my Self, the Bread of Life which I give to strengthen you.*

Jesus then raised a cup of blessing, spoke the grace, and offers it to us now, saying: **(All raise cup)**

ALL: *Take and drink this Cup of Life, the Covenant made new again through my life in you. Whenever you remember me like this, I am among you.*

We give thanks for who we are in Christ:

ALL: Matter becomes conscious, the universe coming to reflect on itself, earthen vessels that hold a treasure, temple of God's Spirit, the Body of Christ.

(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!

Communion Rite

We pray as these gifts are shared among us:

6. Loving God, you call us to live the Gospel of peace and justice.
We will live justly.

7. Loving God, you call us to be your presence in the world.
We will love tenderly.

1. Loving God, you call us to speak truth to power.
We will walk with integrity in your presence.

(Presider raises bread and cup)

This is the Bread and Cup of Life, through which we are nourished, and we nourish one another.

ALL: We receive this bread and fruit of the vine as the presence of Christ among us!

All are welcome to receive at our Tables of Friendship!

Communion Meditation: **Woman of Grace**, Jan Novotka, *Anam Cara* (2010).

https://youtu.be/OraOZQq2ktY?si=Zz-eK_Nkpfrs9nfh (no video)

Woman of grace, of light and love! Oh, woman of peace and truth!
Walking beside you our hearts are full. Your presence here blesses our soul.
Woman of Grace!

Woman of grace, of light and love! Oh, woman of peace and truth!
Rooted in stillness you wakened in God. Faithful and free, you walked as Light.
Woman of Grace!

Woman of grace, of light and love! Oh, woman of peace and truth!
Filled with courage you lived your truth; moving as one, one with Love. Woman
of Grace!

Woman of grace, of light and love! Oh, woman of peace and truth!
Walking beside you our hearts are full. Your spirit strong lives in us here!
Woman of Grace!

Together we pray to God as Jesus did: (Center for Christogenesis)

- 2.** O Creative breath,
 ebbing and flowing through all forms,
 soften the ground of our being
 and hollow a place for the planting of your presence.

- 3.** Moving to the heartbeat of your purpose,
 make us the embodiment of your compassion.
 Fill us with your creativity
 that we might bear the fruit of your vision.

- 4.** Give us the wisdom to produce and share
 what each one needs to grow and flourish.
 Untie the tangled webs of destiny that bind us
 as we release others from the entanglements of past mistakes.

- 5.** And let us not be seduced
 by that which would divert us from our true purpose,
 but illuminate the path before us.

- 6.** For you are the ground of the fruitful vision,
 the birthing power, and the fulfillment,
 as all is gathered and made whole once again. Amen

Closing Prayer

Eternal Listener, rekindle in us an awareness that we are bearers of your sacred presence. And keep us faithful to our commitment to honor that presence in each other. Strengthen us for the great work of transformation through small acts of kindness, through compassion, through all our holy labors. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing – *Let us extend our hands to bless one another:* (Numbers 6:24-26)

May God always bless you and keep you.

May God's face always shine upon you.

May God look upon you with kindness and fill your hearts with peace.

Amen.

7. We go our own ways but will not be separated, for we are held together by the Source of All That Is, clothed in the nature of Jesus our Companion, and reinforced by the strength of Spirit Sophia. Amen.

Closing Song: ***Peace Like A River (Extended)***, Lea Morris, *A New Song*, released January 1, 2025. Used with permission.

▶ [Peace Like a River \(Extended\) | Lea Morris \(no video\)](#)

I've got Peace like a river

I've got Peace like a river

I've got Peace like a river in my soul (repeat)

I've got ...

Joy like a fountain

Love like an ocean

Faith to move the mountains

Strength for the journey

Hope for tomorrow

Light like a beacon

***Thank you for your courage to worship in a spirit of
equality and justice!***

***You are welcome to join us again—and to invite a friend—to support
this Community with your presence and prayer.***

* First Reading: excerpted from *Rekindling the Flame: A Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of St. Brigid of Kildare*, by Sr. Rita Minehan. Psalm 146: *Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness*, by Nan C. Merrill (adapted). Gospel: *Inclusive Lectionary, Cycle C*, published by the Quixote Center, MD (adapted). Third Reading: *The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation*, Priests for Equality (2007).

** Affirmation of Faith (Adapted From India. Source: *Sinfonia Oecumenica*, Gütersloher Verlag-shaus, Gütersloh 1998. Reproduced by ECEN for Creation Time 2003).