



**Community of St. Bridget**  
*an inclusive catholic experience*

**Third Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 26, 2025**

*Sunday of the Word of God*

Liturgist: Donna Nagel



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**Suggestion:** *Please provide a piece of bread and cup of wine/juice, and a copy of this liturgy so that you can fully participate.*

Welcome to the Community of St. Bridget. We thank you for choosing to pray with us and your participation in our liturgy makes this celebration very special. Here the ordinary is sanctified, the human is celebrated, the compassionate is expected.

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

With the flame of St. Bridget's fire, 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. Christ's Spirit is alive and living among us! May the fire of this light continue to shine! Amen.

Opening Song: **Word of God Speak** written by Bart Millard, Pete Kipley, Peter C. Kipley *Word of God Speak* lyrics © 2002 Essential Music Publishing, Warner Chappell Music, Inc. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrPKSZCnXDM> (no video)

I'm finding myself at a loss for words  
And the funny thing is it's okay  
The last thing I need is to be heard  
But to hear what You would say

**Refrain:**

Word of God speak  
Would you pour down like rain  
Washing my eyes to see  
Your majesty

Be still and know  
That you're in this place  
Please let me stay and rest  
In your holiness  
Word of God speak

I'm finding myself in the midst of You  
Beyond the music, beyond the noise  
All that I need is to be with You  
And in the quiet hear Your voice **R** (x2)

I'm finding myself at a loss for words  
And the funny thing is it's okay.

Today we honor the Word of God which is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Heb 4:12a,12b). As we listen to God’s Word we will understand the truth of its power and effectiveness. So, with open minds and hearts let us begin in the name of the Divine: Source of All Being, Eternal Word and +Holy Spirit, Sophia. Amen.

### Transformation Rite

As we prepare to celebrate this sacred meal, and as we acknowledge all that prevents us from accepting God’s loving forgiveness and healing touch, let us be open to the transformative power of our indwelling God:

1. Jesus, you spent years among us preaching the Word of God and inviting us to allow the message to transform our lives.

**ALL:** Give us courage to act on your Word and change our way of life.

2. Jesus, your teaching not only challenges our way of thinking, but it also promises the reward of peace.

**ALL:** Help us choose to live by your Words of life and find the peace that no one can take from us.

3. Jesus, you invite us to preach the message you gave us and so bring others to the fullness of their lives.

**ALL:** May we set aside time to read and ponder your Word so we will be prepared to articulate its message in our speech and demonstrate it in our actions. Amen.

Gloria: **Praise, Give Glory to God** by Denise Pyles on *Creation of Love*, © 2010-03-19.  
<https://youtu.be/tA22QokvwPA?si=1gXks20MeRTt-8UC&t=25> (no video; begin 0:25)

Praise, praise, give glory to God! Nations, peoples, give glory!  
Strong the love embracing us, faithful our God forever.  
Alleluia, alleluia! (x3)

### Opening Prayer

Gracious Creator, you have shown your unconditional love for us by sharing your plan for our eternal happiness through the life and teaching of Jesus. He commissioned his followers to share this vision throughout the world, so everyone would know how blessed they are. Give us the strength and dedication to continue the mission of sharing your living Word among us through our prayers, actions and conversations. Amen.

### 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:** Nehemiah 8:2-4a,5-6,8-10

A reading from the Ezra Source in the Book of Nehemiah:

On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the scribe brought out the Book of the Law before all the assembled people of all genders, including women, men, and children old enough to understand the reading. Ezra read the book aloud from early morning till noon while facing the broad expanse before the Water Gate, in the presence of all the people, women, men, and children. All listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Ezra stood on a raised, wooden platform made for the purpose. He opened the book in the presence of all the people. When he opened it, all the people stood; and when Ezra blessed the Most High, the Greatest God, all the people raised their hands with the response, “Amen, Amen.” Then, they bowed their heads and worshipped God, prostrate on the ground. Reading from the Book of the Law, Ezra interpreted it and gave it meaning so that the people understood it.

Then Nehemiah, the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, along with the Levites, instructed the people, saying to all of them, “This day is holy to the Most High God, your God. Do not mourn. Do not weep”—for all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah continued, “Go now! Enjoy rich food and sweet wine! Be certain that you send a share to those who cannot provide for themselves. For this day is holy to our God. Let no one be sad, for the joy of God is our strength.”

The inspired teachings of the school of Ezra in the Book of Nehemiah. Amen.

**Responsorial:** 1Corinthians 12:4-11

**Cantor:** *Different gifts come from the same Spirit.*

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. There are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same God. There are many different forms of action, but it is the same God who inspires them all in all. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **R**

Through the Spirit, one is given a message of wisdom. By the same Spirit, another the gift to express understanding. By the same Spirit, another is given faith. By the One Spirit another the gifts of healing. **R**

Through the Spirit, another works wonders. Through the Spirit another prophesies. Another discerns spirits. Another speaks in many tongues. Another interprets those languages. All these gifts are inspired by the one and same Spirit. She gives to each individually, as She moves. **R**

Let your Love be known to the nations, your glory to our children's children. Let the grace and gentleness of the Holy Spirit be upon us, guiding our feet upon paths of Love consciousness. **R**

**Cantor:** 8 Alleluias

**Second Reading – Gospel:** Luke 1:1-4,4:14-21

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke:

Many others have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events fulfilled among us, just as they were passed on to us by the original eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word. I, too, have investigated everything carefully - from the beginning - and have decided to write an orderly account for you, noble Theophilus, so that you may know the truth of the teaching you received.

...

After Jesus was baptized, the Spirit led him to the desert where he was tested. Then, Jesus returned to Galilee with the power of the Spirit in him. His reputation spread throughout the region. He was teaching in the synagogues in Galilee, and all were loud in their praise. When Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, as was his custom. He stood up to do the reading. When the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

*“The Spirit of God is upon me. The Most High has anointed me to bring Good News to those who are poor.*

*God has sent me to proclaim liberty to those held captive, recovery of sight to those who are blind, release to those in prison—to proclaim the year of God’s favor.”*

Rolling up the scroll, Jesus gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then Jesus said to them, “Today, in your hearing, this scripture passage is fulfilled.”

The inspired words of the evangelist, Luke. Amen.

**Cantor:** 8 Alleluias

**Third Reading:** Book of Revelation 5:1-5  
A reading from the Book of Revelation:

In the right hand of the One who sat high in the heavens, I saw a scroll. It had writing on both sides and was sealed with seven seals.

Then I saw a commanding angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” But no one in heaven, on earth or under the earth could be found to open the scroll or reveal its contents. I wept bitterly because no one could be found to open or read the scroll.

One of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Offspring of Bathsheba, has overcome and will open the scroll with the seven seals.”

The Word of a late 1<sup>st</sup> century visionary. Amen.

Homily/Reflection: Donna Nagel

Our scriptures today reflect a variety of responses by the people who listened to the Word of God. When the Book of the Law was read to the people, the reason they were weeping was not disclosed. Given the circumstances that led up to this reading, we may safely assume that for some it may have been tears of joy for their liberation from captivity. Others may have felt guilt over their failure to uphold their commitment to the covenant they made with Yahweh. Regardless of the reason, Nehemiah instructed the people to cease weeping and instead celebrate the mercy and love of God by sharing their goods with the people unable to provide for themselves. This is an important lesson for us today. God does not want us to wallow in our mistakes. Rather, believing in the mercy and love of God, we need to celebrate our forgiveness and begin anew by doing acts of kindness not only to those we know and love, but to strangers as well.

We know from scripture that the Word of God refers not only to the written word, but to Jesus himself. He is the Word of God made flesh and he certainly had an immense impact upon those he spoke with, as many changed their very attitudes and actions. When Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah and authoritatively claimed he was the fulfillment of this prophecy, the temple authorities were skeptical at best. You can almost hear them gasp for breath as they mentally questioned how this simple carpenter’s son could claim to be the long-awaited Messiah.

Regardless of their doubt, Jesus proceeded to bring the Good News to the poor, to the outcasts of society, and to anyone willing to hear his message of a loving merciful God. As he went about his mission Jesus changed the minds and hearts

of those who embraced his teaching. And today, that same teaching continues to challenge conventional thinking as we define what it means to be happy and successful. Look no further than the Sermon on the Mount.

Our reading from Revelation informs us that only Jesus, the Word of God and Lion of the tribe of Judah, can open the scroll with its seven seals. And what does the scroll tell us? That in the end evil will be overcome and in the interim, we must continue the mission of Jesus by utilizing the gifts of the Spirit that each one of us has been given. We know that there are a variety of gifts and we must work together to use our gifts for the common good. We cannot claim one gift is better than another as the Spirit is the giver of all gifts. Therefore, let us honor our diversity and take up our responsibility to preach the Word of God by our own words and actions.

*You are invited to share how God's Word today challenges you to take a new direction.*

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

- 4.** We believe that where people are gathered together in love, God is present and good things happen and life is full.
- 5.** 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.
- 6.** We believe that through his mother Mary's 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.
- 7.** 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.
- 1.** And most deeply we believe that in our struggle to love, we incarnate God in the world.
- 2.** 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 fruit of the vine poured out to be shared by all. Amen.

#### Prayer of the Faithful

We know that when we raise our minds and hearts in prayer to the Holy

Presence within and among us, extraordinary things happen! Mindful of our Creator's love and care for us, we now bring to this Table our blessings, cares, and concerns, and respond: ***We awaken to your call.***

*For what and for whom shall we pray?*

Creator Spirit, we know that you hear the prayers of your people, and all unspoken concerns that we hold in our hearts. In your compassionate love, strengthen our faith so we may believe that with your guidance we will transform our world. 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 blessings to one another with joy. May the peace that our brother, Jesus, offers, be always with us!

#### Offertory (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.

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

The Holy One is with us, abounding in Love!

3. We open our hearts in Christ, who lives and loves, heals and empowers through us and give thanks to the Source of All Life.
4. O Loving God, you bring to birth the world of our dreams for mutual respect and partnership. Give us courage to act justly and work collaboratively to change systems that keep people poor and marginalized in our society.
5. We thank you for the women and men who are working for justice and equality in our church and world. Your gift of the Spirit gives us hope that one day, through our unselfish work in your vineyard, all will be living in peace and harmony within your kingdom. With thankful hearts in the company of the angels, saints and all souls created in your love, O God of Abundance and Welcome, we praise you in song:

***Holy, Holy, Holy Hosanna*** by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan © 2019 Worldmaking.net  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFR5opb0f2k> (lyric video)

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

6. 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.
7. 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, fruit of the vine, and our very lives, be +transformed into food that will nourish and sustain us in our time of need.

1. We remember all the courageous companions who have gone before us, the holy women and men who have lived lives of love and service in the midst of hatred, violence and injustice. They are ever-present with us at this Table of Friendship.

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 this bread to us now, saying: **(All raise bread)**

**ALL:** *Take and eat, this is my very Self given to you. (pause)*

When supper ends, Jesus takes the cup of blessing, speaks the grace, and offers it to us now, saying: **(All raise the cup)**

**ALL:** *Take and drink this cup of my life, the life 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. (pause)*

In sharing this bread and cup, let us embrace the Gospel of justice and peace as we proclaim this mystery of faith:

**ALL:** Nurtured by your word, nourished by your food;  
Called anew to be your people, we acclaim your praise!

2. As we celebrate this sacred meal, we recall the wise and gracious gifts bestowed on us down through the ages; and we look forward in hope, knowing that you, our wise and faithful God, will continue to endow us with abundant blessings.



**(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

In the power of this Eucharistic meal, O Divine Spirit, and in union with all people, we unite our thoughts and prayers, asking for wisdom and courage:

3. To discern more wisely the Spirit's call to us in the circumstances of our daily lives;
4. To act justly and courageously in confronting the pain and suffering that desecrates Earth and its peoples;
5. To take risks in being creative and proactive on behalf of the poor and marginalized.

**(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 cup today as the presence of Christ among us!

*All are welcome to receive at our Tables of Friendship!*

Communion Meditation: **Be Our Vision Now** by Andra Moran, *Prayers from the Bridge*, © 2023 AMMO Music.

[https://youtu.be/PLM5OpPCYSY?si=RcL89G\\_PWTb-KYtI](https://youtu.be/PLM5OpPCYSY?si=RcL89G_PWTb-KYtI) (no video)

Be our vision now.  
In all that we do, let us see You.  
Be our vision now.  
In the shadow of night, let your presence be our light.

Be our wisdom now.  
Filtering through our words and the things we do.  
Be our wisdom now.  
Give us power to choose the way that is right and true.

**Refrain** Here in this moment and forever, help us to love more. Amen.  
Here in this moment together, help us to love more. Amen.

Be our loving now.  
Heart of our hearts, center of who we are.  
Be our loving now.  
Honest and true, as we were first loved by you. **R**

Be our vision now.  
In all that we do, let us see You.  
Be our vision now.  
In the shadow of night, let your presence be our light.

*We pray together in the Name of Jesus\*\* (translated from the Aramaic):*

6. Abba, let our lives honor your name. Let your home be with us.
7. Let your ways be our ways. Let heaven and earth be one.
1. Give us today simply the bread of tomorrow.
2. Forgive us our violences as fully as we have forgiven others. Do not let us stumble; give us refuge from evil ways.
3. Yours, O God, is the place, power and the wonder. Peace now and forever.  
Amen.

Closing Prayer \*\*\*

O Holy Word of God, you call us to walk with you each day in the mystery of your love. We are often anxious and worried about our own well-being. Help us to put aside false anxiety and to trust in your care for us. Grant us the grace to discern wisely, to act confidently, and let go courageously. We ask this in your name, Word Incarnate among us. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing: *Please extend your hands to bless one another:*

Time has now come for us to leave this sacred place.  
As we do, may we embrace the challenges of our lives and of our world.  
May we go in peace embraced by the light and warmth of our gathering  
and be ready to follow Jesus in love and service to the holy people of God.

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

Closing Song: **Listening Now** by Christopher Grundy (feat. Michaela Snypes) *Stepping In* ©  
2012 Christopher Grundy Auto-generated by YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aG-ZhLo6gSk> (no video)

**Refrain:** We're so thankful that you are still speaking,  
you're still speaking, gracious God,  
for the sake of the world you are seeking  
we are listening, listening now.  
(last verse: Listening now, listening now.)

O God, your precious word has been a lamp unto our feet  
every time we stray and still it lights the shadows  
out along our path showing us the way. **R**

Sometimes we hide in fear but still you whisper in our ears  
words of grace so fine that call us out to justice  
righteousness and peace, to let our light shine, let it shine! **R**

***Thank you for your courage to worship with us in the spirit of  
equality and justice, and please feel free to invite a friend to join us next  
week.***

***Know that you are always welcome to worship with us and support this  
Community with your presence and prayer!***

- \* Readings taken from the *Comprehensive Catholic Lectionary* made available through the Women's Ordination Conference.
- \*\* Prayer of Jesus translated from the Aramaic taken from *How To Live: What the Rule of St. Benedict Teaches Us About Happiness, Meaning and Community* by Judith Valente © 2018.
- \*\*\* Closing prayer is taken from the *People's Companion to the Breviary Vol. I* © 1997 by the Carmelites of Indianapolis.