



Community of St. Bridget
an inclusive catholic experience
St. Bridget of Kildare, our Namesake and our Guide
Black History Month
January 31 – February 1, 2026
Presider/Homilist: Rose Gordyan



EvitaWorks

Suggestion: Please have a copy of the written liturgy, 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. Together we make this a holy place with our every act of celebration.

ALL: Let us celebrate the richness and diversity of life!

We begin our prayer today with the lighting of the fire:

With St. Bridget, we light the fire of God's desire as prophets of a new vision of hospitality, welcoming all to the Banquet Table of Infinite Love as we dance the dance of the Spirit embracing all.

Opening Song: **Song for Bridget**, by Mick Brown; ©2017 Mick Brown, Music & Lyrics, All Rights Reserved <https://youtu.be/UW-4Qy6h0YY?si=jWoaiamqc1B3vIg3> (lyric/video)

Our prayers we raise to Brigid, woman of the earth
The winter it is leaving us, and the land is giving birth
The birds will soon arrive here, and the lambs are in the fields
We kneel on Mother Earth with you, the Springtime it is here

You Walked the fields and forests, over mountain valley plain
Through a land of Adoration, singing out its praise
The trees the flowers, the fishes, the blackbirds in the air
Mother Earth provides for us, from earths abundant praise

Refrain: Brigid, Brigid, your fire is burning bright
Take us from the darkness, lead us to the light

Your Celtic prayers ran deep as the river rolled along
Calling all with ears to hear to join you in your song
Word rang through the valley, everyone belongs
All on earth are welcome, to the banquet in the Sun **R**

Today, as we celebrate the Feast of Saint Bridget, revered as goddess in ancient history, and lovingly embraced as saint, soul friend and spiritual ancestor of this Community today—Bridget, our faithful guide—we welcome her compassion and healing energy. And so, we join in prayer with Bridget now in the name of the Divine: Source of All Being, Eternal Word, and Holy Wisdom-Sophia. Amen.

Transformation Rite

The flame of Bridget inspires our hearts as 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.

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 with St. Bridget, in this 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 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. **(pause to reflect)**

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 (**pause to reflect**)

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: Rose Gordyan

Sunday, February 1st, celebrates the Feast of St Bridget of Kildare. Her power is expressed in the 'helping' miracles of healing, feeding the hungry, and rescuing the weak from violence. Most of her miracles were humble affairs for people of "low rank" and she "never dictates the course of dynastic politics".

This day also marks the beginning of Black History Month, an annual observance that does more than commemorate achievements; it calls the nation to moral memory. Black History Month insists that African American history is woven into the fabric of the American story. This remembrance mirrors the biblical command to *remember* — to recall not only triumphs, but suffering, resistance, and God's saving action in the midst of oppression. Memory, in Scripture, is never neutral; it is formative. It shapes identity, responsibility, and hope.

This year's observance unfolds amid profound national turmoil. The challenges facing Black Americans, Immigrants and other marginalized communities are intensified by political instability, moral recklessness, and leadership marked more by vengeance than by justice. In such a moment, Scripture does not allow the Church the luxury of detachment. Instead, the Word of God interrogates our public life and summons us to a faithful response.

The first reading from *Rekindling the Flame A pilgrimage in the footsteps of St Bridget of Kildare* calls us to seek peace. When we come home to our bodies and the body of the earth as sacred, we are at peace, and those who remain faithful not through dominance, but through trust, righteousness, and obedience. The remnant analogy resonates deeply with the Black religious experience, where faith has often been sustained not by institutional power, but by spiritual resilience and communal trust in God's abiding presence.

The Gospel reading begins with the words of Jesus: "Love your enemies and do good to them", which articulate Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God — as a "child of God", a radical reordering of values that defines being a member of the Kingdom of God, affirming that judgment, condemnation and pardon are not of this world. But love and doing good is an orientation toward God that is manifested in creating the Kingdom of God. This is not an abstract spirituality; it is discipleship shaped by following The Way.

Paul's message to the Ephesians reinforces strength inwardly with power by the working of the Spirit's importance. In our own context, in Paul's words, "Divine glory will strengthen you inwardly with power". True Christian identity, Paul insists, is rooted in Christ's love for all. God's holy ones are filled with all the fullness of the Spirit.

Today's readings offer us a response to our present moment. They declare that this is not a time for despair or silence, but for recommitment — a recommitment to God's justice, to Christ's vision of the Kingdom, and to the Spirit's work through faithful communities. Black History Month is not only a cultural observance but a summons, reminding the Church that Black faith traditions have long embodied a gospel that resists dehumanization and proclaims hope amid suffering.

Ultimately, the question before us is not merely what is happening in our nation or the wider world, but who we are becoming as the People of God. Will we mirror the chaos, pride, and vengeance of the age, or will we embody the humility, mercy, and courage proclaimed by Jesus? Will we forget the source of our gifts, or will we offer them in service to God's reconciling work? Scripture assures us that even when institutions falter and leaders fail, God remains faithful, working through a remnant who live the Beatitudes not only in word but in witness, right here and right now.

And Bridget remains steadfast in showing us the way of confronting the needs of people who are ignored and vulnerable. May the source of our strength be found in her life's work and the promises of Christ who lives in, around, and among 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.
May it be so. 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 very 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 lifeforce of the new and everlasting 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 abiding 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: **Light the Fire** - composed by Liam Lawton, January 1993
<https://youtu.be/juAeEhRWZRk> (no video)

There travels forth from the passages of history
A woman's voice that is heard across the plains,
That calls once more, for a people of new vision
To heal our wounds and green our Earth again,
To heal our wounds and green our Earth again.

She spreads her cloak 'cross the land and far beyond it,
A shadow cast on a people void of hope.

She speaks of peace and the chains that weigh upon it
And there her light shall glimmer from the oak
And all that binds the people shall be broke.

Refrain: So light the Fire of God's desire
Within all hearts, let sorrows end.
So light the Fire of God's desire
God's chosen one, Your peace upon us send.

And we today need a prophet of new vision,
To lift the low – the forgotten child to heed,
To be the voice of the wounded and the weary,
To plant anew a fresh and peaceful seed
To dance the dance of God's own Blessed Bríd. **R**

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. 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.

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: ***Lean In Toward the Light*** - Words and Music by Carrie Newcomer; from the 2016 album: "The Beautiful Not Yet"

<https://youtu.be/fxAUmNjWaIs?si=OQ1C6w3hwSZUxupp> (lyric/video)

Winter is the oldest season
But quietly beneath the snow
Seeds are stretching out and reaching
Faithful as the morning glow

Carry nothing but what you must (lean in toward the light)
Let it go, shake off the dust (lean in toward the light)
Today is now, tomorrow beckons (lean in toward the light)
Keep practicing resurrection (lean in toward the light)

Refrain: The shadows of this world will say
There's no hope why try anyway?
But every kindness large or slight
Shifts the balance toward the light

Waters wind and open wide (lean in toward the light)
Don't just walk when you can fly (lean in toward the light)
When justice seems in short supply (lean in toward the light)
Let beauty be your truest guide **R**

The prayer I pray at eventide (lean in toward the light)
All left undone be put aside (lean in toward the light)
When forgiveness is hard to find (lean in toward the light)
Help me at least to be kind (lean in toward the light)

***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*, 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).