

A CELTIC SERVICE FOR JUSTICE

Thursday at 6:30 PM, St. Paul's on the Green, Norwalk, Connecticut

Welcome to St. Paul's on the Green. We're glad you're here.

Please prepare for worship in silence and in prayer.

You are invited to light a taper and place it in the candle stand on entering the church.

As the ringing of the bell fades, the people stand.

GATHERING

Leader: Exalted God,

People: **you are the constant lover who never forsakes us; you are the mother who cradles her children; you are the teacher patiently repeating your words for us. We worship you.**

Leader: Jesus Christ,

People: **in you we are convinced God loves us; through you, we are formed into your people; with you, we serve those the world has forgotten. We follow you.**

Leader: Holy Spirit,

People: **you are the power that gives us peace; you are the wisdom that reveals the broken in our midst; you are the spokesperson of the voiceless to whom we are deaf. We welcome you.**

HYMN

introduced by the cantor, then sung three times



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.
Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

words: Rory Cooney (b.1952); from Luke 1:46-58

music: *Star of the County Down*, Irish traditional melody, arr. Rory Cooney

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OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Unless the eye catch fire,

People: **the God will not be seen.**

Leader: Unless the ear catch fire,

People: **the God will not be seen.**

Leader: Unless the tongue catch fire,

People: **the God will not be seen.**

Leader: Unless the heart catch fire,

People: **the God will not be seen.**

Leader: Unless the mind catch fire,

People: **the God will not be seen.**

The people sit.

THE READING

The reader announces and reads the first passage from today's lectionary.

Reader: Hear what the spirit is saying to the people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Following the reading, we pause to reflect on what we have heard.

HYMN

led by the cantor

The king - dom of God is jus - tice and peace and
joy in the Ho - ly Spir - it. Come, Lord, and
o - pen in us the gates of your king - dom.

words and music: Taizé community
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THE GOSPEL

The reader announces and reads the Gospel from today's lectionary.

Reader: Hear what the spirit is saying to the people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

The hymn is repeated at the conclusion of the Gospel.

THE REFLECTION

Following the reflection, a bell rings, introducing a period of silence.

At the second ringing of the bell, the people stand.

THE PRAYERS

Leader: Guide me in your truth and teach me, God, for it is you who saves me.

Let us pray for all people: that they may seek the kingdom of God before all else.

People: God, hear our prayer.

Leader: Let us pray for those who are distressed, whether in mind, body or spirit.

People: God, hear our prayer.

Leader: Let us pray for those who have died, that their souls may rest in your justice and peace.

People: God, hear our prayer.

Leader: Let us pray for those who have lost hope: that they may find the joy of the Holy Spirit within their lives.

People: God, hear our prayer.

Leader: Let us pray for ourselves: that we may seek more energetically to work with the Lord in establishing justice and peace on earth.

People: God, hear our prayer.

Leader: You are above us, O God; you are beneath. You are in the air; you are in the earth; you are beside us; you are within. You are in the betrayed and suffering people of our world just as you were in the broken body of Jesus. Grant that we may know your resurrection as blessing and goodness in our lives.

People: Amen.

Leader: I invite us to add our own prayers and thanksgivings.

The people may add their own petitions, either silently or aloud.

Leader: Let us affirm our faith in God's work in our lives.

People: We believe that God is present in the darkness before dawn; in the waiting and uncertainty where fear and courage join hands, conflict and caring link arms, and the sun rises over barbed wire. We believe in a with-us God who sits down in our midst to share our humanity. We affirm a faith that takes us beyond the safe place: into action, into vulnerability and into the streets. We commit ourselves to work for change and put ourselves on the line; to bear responsibility, take risks, live powerfully and face humiliation; to stand with those on the edge; to choose life and be used by the Spirit for God's new community of hope. Amen.

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TAUGHT US

Leader: Let us pray.

People: Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever. Amen.

Leader: Be present, Spirit of God, within us, your dwelling place and home, that this house may be one where all darkness is penetrated by your light, all troubles calmed by your peace, all evil redeemed by your love, all pain transformed by your suffering, and all dying glorified in Your risen life.

People: Amen.

The people sit.

A MOMENT FOR JUSTICE

The leader will introduce a time for holding our concerns together in community. You are invited to offer a prayer or reflection about an issue you feel needs justice. Your reflection could take the form, "I wish for justice for..." or "May there be justice in...." Please keep your reflection to one or two sentences. A period of silence will follow each statement.

HYMN

introduced by the cantor, then sung two times



Let jus - tice roll, roll down like wa - ter, and
right-ous-ness like a flow-ing stream. Let jus-tice roll, roll down like
wa - ter, and right-ous - ness like a flow - ing stream.

words: Amos 5:12 and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)

music: Mark Miller (b. 1967)

THE PRAYER AND PEACE

Leader: Is not this the fast that I choose:

People: **to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?**

Leader: Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see them naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

People: **Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly.**

Leader: If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,

People: **you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.**

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Leader: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

As the people depart, they share a sign of peace with one another.