

# Celtic Evening Prayer and Communion



**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**December 22, 2024, at Half-Past Five o'clock in the Evening**

**WELCOME**

*We are glad you are here. We are aware that many who attend this service come from other churches and faith traditions, and we are delighted to have many who consider Saint Paul's to be their second church home. The mixture of faith traditions represented at this service makes up a community we especially cherish.*

# Celtic Evening Prayer and Communion

Prelude

Laura Tomlin

*In order to prepare for worship and allow for private prayer,  
we ask that silence be observed upon entering and that you turn off cell phones.  
At the sound of the bell, all stand.*

**Opening** *Patient Trust*

**Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

*Leader* Above all, trust in the slow work of God  
We are quite naturally impatient in everything  
to reach the end without delay.  
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.  
We are impatient of being on the way to something  
unknown, something new.  
And yet it is the law of progress  
that it is made by passing through  
some states of instability—  
and that it may take a very long time.  
And so I think it is with you.  
Your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,  
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.  
Don't try to force them on,  
as though you could be today what time  
(that is to say, grace and circumstances  
acting on your own good will)  
will make of you tomorrow.  
Only God could say what this new spirit  
gradually forming within you will be.  
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing  
that his hand is leading you,  
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself  
in suspense and incomplete.

*Please be seated.*

**"O come, O come, Emmanuel"**

**Laura Tomlin**

**Prayer for the Evening**

*Leader* Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*Please be seated. A period of silence is observed.*

*Reader* A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

*Reader* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*A period of silence is observed after the reading.*

**Reflection**

**The Reverend Eric Biddy**

*A period of silence is observed.*

**Music for Meditation**

**Laura Tomlin**

**Prayers for Ourselves and Others**

*Please stand.*

*Celebrant* God calls us to love one another. As a sign of that love, let us lift up our prayer to God for the needs of all people throughout the world, saying: O God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

*Leader* We pray for the peace of the world, that our instruments of war may be transformed into instruments of peace, and that nations shall cease to learn war any more. O God, in your mercy,

*People* **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the church, that we may become more and more a means of grace and peace in the world. O God, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all people of good will who seek to cast off the works of darkness, that we may be enlightened through our service of others in the name of Christ. O God, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, that we may be alert to the presence of Christ in them and ready to reach out in love. O God, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

*Leader* We pray for those who are assembled here today, that we may be clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ and go forth from this place to be Christ in the world. O God, in your mercy,

*People* **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have asked for our prayers that we may faithfully wait upon God with confidence in that love which sustains us in every moment of our lives. O God, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered. The People may add their petitions aloud or silently.*

*Celebrant* We praise you, Lord our God, that you have called us to be your people and the instruments of your presence in the world. Grant us grace to discern your will and the strength to do it, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Confession and Absolution**

*from a New Zealand Prayer Book*

*Celebrant* God has promised forgiveness to all who truly repent, turn to Christ in faith, and are themselves forgiving. In silence, we call to mind our sins.

*Silence.*

*People* **Merciful God, we have sinned  
in what we have thought and said,  
in the wrong we have done  
and in the good we have not done.  
We have sinned in ignorance:  
we have sinned in weakness:  
we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry. We repent and turn to you.  
Forgive us, for our Savior Christ's sake,  
and renew our lives to the glory of your name. Amen.**

*Celebrant* Through the cross of Christ, God have mercy on you, pardon you, and set you free. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. God strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal.  
**Amen.**

## **THE HEALING SERVICE**

*Celebrant* Holy Scripture teaches us that in acts of healing and restoration our Lord Jesus and his disciples laid hands upon the sick. By so doing they made known the healing power and presence of God. Pray that as we follow our Lord's example, we all may know his unfailing love.

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

*All* **O God of peace, who taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*All are invited to come forward to receive the laying on of hands and anointing with oil  
in prayer for healing for yourself, for others, for our world.*

## Additional Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving

*Please sit.*

*During the instrumental music and anytime hereafter, you may come forward to light votives as a symbol of your prayers. After lighting a votive, please fully extinguish the lit taper and return it to the holder.*

## Music for Meditation

Laura Tomlin

### The Grace

*Celebrant* Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air and consider the lilies of the field, how God cares for them. How much more will God care for you? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? But strive first for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

*People* **Amen.**

### The Peace

*Celebrant* Christ, the Good Shepherd, bind us with a bond of love that cannot be broken. My sisters and brothers, the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*All greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

## Announcements

The Reverend Eric Bidy

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

*The alms basin is not passed at this service, but stands in front of the Baptismal Font.*

## The Offertory Music

Laura Tomlin

### Eucharistic Prayer

*All stand.*

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

*Celebrant* It is our joy and delight to give you thanks and praise, Emmanuel, God with us. We give you thanks and praise for your hallowing of human flesh. We rejoice at your light which shines out of darkness and enlightens all who seek you. We praise you that you brought forth new life in the family of Mary and Joseph as you do today from all who faithfully await the fulfillment of your word. We praise you that you were known first by poor shepherds and wise seekers as you are known today by the poor and the outcast. We rejoice with the angels at your promise of peace for those who trust in you. We rejoice that the extraordinary is given birth in the ordinary places of life.

So with the angels who sing "Glory" and with all the saints and ancestors who have known you to be with us, we say together:

*All* ***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.***

*Celebrant* We bless you for Jesus, born of the Spirit's love and a woman's body and blood. We bless you for Jesus who shows us how to live the fullness of our humanity and thus become one with you. We remember Jesus who laughed and wept and felt tiredness and fear; who praised Mary when she anointed him for death and blessed a woman of the city who washed his feet with tears. We remember Jesus who touched lepers and the sick and feasted with tax collectors and sinners. We remember Christ who lives on in all who courageously and faithfully bring forth the light of his love in earth's darkest places. We remember Jesus who on the night before he died, shared a meal with his friends. He took bread, blessed it and broke it and gave it to them saying: "Take and eat. This is my own body given for you. Do this to remember me." After supper he took the cup of wine, gave thanks and gave it to them saying: "This is my life-blood given for you. Do this to remember me." So we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*All* ***Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.***

*Celebrant* Oh God who is known to us in human flesh, send your Holy Spirit on us and on these material things of bread and wine, that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ, and we may be the body of Christ, food and life for the world. We ask these things through Christ, with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, be glory now and forever. ***Amen.***

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Celebrant* As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

*All* ***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.***

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

*A period of silence is kept.*

## The Invitation to the Lord's Table

*Celebrant* This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love him and for those who want to love him more. So, come, you who have much faith and you who have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is the Lord who invites you. It is his will that those who want him should meet him here.

*You are welcome to stand or sit until you come forward to receive.*

## Music during Communion

Laura Tomlin

## After Communion

*All Stand.*

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

*All* **Lord Jesus Christ, you have put your life into our hands; now we put our lives into yours. Take us, renew us and remake us. What we have been is past; what we shall be, through you, still awaits us. Lead us on. Take us with you. Amen.**

## The Blessing

*Celebrant* May this new night of rest  
Repair the wear of time,  
Restore your vision of a deeper light,  
Heal the wounds of disappointments,  
and restore youth of heart  
For the adventure  
That awaits you tomorrow.  
And the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be among you  
and remain with you, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## The Dismissal

*Leader* Go out into the world with joy. The Lord is coming with justice and peace, and will give you hope and courage to meet the days ahead.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

## Music for Meditation

Laura Tomlin

*Please feel free to remain or depart during the closing music, and honor the silence for all in prayer.*

## SERVING TODAY

The Reverend Eric C. Biddy  
Robin Merriman, Mat Merriman  
Patsy Davis  
Nancy Trefz, Ian McQueen, Mary Lynn Ford, Barbara Coleman

Celebrant  
Eucharistic Ministers  
Vestry Person of the Day  
Altar Guild

## FALL STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

The majority of our pledges have now been offered, and God once again reminds us of his faithfulness. The 2025 pledge total to date is \$811,000 (from 135 donors) With two or three dozen outstanding and/or potential pledges, our budget could easily close in on \$900,000. If you haven't made your pledge yet, please take a few moments to do so now; you can submit an online pledge using the QR code to the right or simply call or stop by the church office.



## PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Christmas Schedule**—“O come, all ye faithful” Our Christmas Eve Service with all three of the parish choirs, brass, & drums is offered at 4 PM. The Nursery will be open for the 4 PM service. The 10 PM service features the Saint Paul's Choir with brass and drums and will also be broadcast live on WGAC. Christmas Day Eucharist with Carols in the Chapel will be held at 10 AM.

**Schedule Updates - Christmas Week: No Compline**, December 25, returning 1/1/25; **No Mid-Week Eucharist**, Dec. 26, returning 1/2/25; **No Lectio at Lunch**, Dec. 26, returning 1/2/25. **The Parish Office** will be closed Wednesday, December 25 - Friday, December 27 and January 1, 2025.

**Year end gifts— Offerings or Special Gifts of cash/check must be dated and postmarked no later than December 31, 2024, to qualify as 2024 charitable contributions.**

**Confirmation Classes Begin January 5th.** Six classes Sundays, January 5 - February 16; 12:20 PM, in Tyler Hall. This class prepares confirmands for confirmation, reception, or reaffirmation of baptismal vows on the Bishop's visit (February 23). Lunch will be offered. Contact Fr. Biddy (ebiddy@saintpauls.org) to express your interest or for more information. **Youth Confirmation: Students in grades 9-12** who have not been confirmed are encouraged to contact the clergy to let them know of your interest.

**We will celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism on Saturday, January 12, 2025**, on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord. All who wish to be baptized are invited to contact Fr. Eric at ebiddy@saintpauls.org.

**Beginning Sunday, you will find a LARGE Blue Bin in Tyler Hall for your donations to Goodwill.** As you begin spring cleaning, we invite you to share your donations to Goodwill using this new bin. Saint Paul's will receive five \$50 vouchers for each filled bin. Our clergy can share these vouchers, which may be used at Goodwill, with those seeking assistance. Contact Mtr. Kimberly (kdunn@saintpauls.org) for more information.

**You are invited to join Saint Paul's parishioners, family, and friends on a mission trip this summer to Ecuador.** An information sheet is available in the *Weekly Postings*. If you would like additional information please contact Gene or Rose Helmich at ehelmich21@comcast.net, or call 803-640-3405. The deadline to join the trip is January 31, 2025.

**The Vestry Nominating Committee is seeking candidates whom you believe would make outstanding Vestry members for Saint Paul's.** If you'd like to suggest someone, including yourself, please contact retiring Junior Warden, Erick Montgomery at erickdmontgomery@gmail.com. Vestry responsibilities and criteria for nominations are included in Friday's *Weekly Postings*.

**Make a gift—“All that we are and all that we have comes from God. In gratitude, we honor him by giving of ourselves and our gifts to care for his world.”** Gifts can be made using the QR Code to the right, on-line at [saintpauls.org/giving](http://saintpauls.org/giving), or by mail to Saint Paul's Church, 605 Reynolds St., Augusta, GA 30901. Thank you for your generosity.



Saint Paul's Church is a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia.  
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