

Morning Prayer in the Celtic Tradition
First Sundays at 8:00 a.m.
The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
October 4, 2026



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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**Welcome to Celtic Morning Prayer
at St. Paul's
First Sundays at 8:00 a.m.**

*This is a service of silence and prayer,
loosely based on the order for morning prayer in the Northumbrian
Community and including prayers from the Iona Community. It is led by
Lay and Clergy Worship Leaders and is intended to include long silences,
which begin and end with the ringing of a bell.*

*(At the beginning of worship,
you are invited to place an
offering in the Alms Basin.)*

Leader: Kevin Pleas and Abby Pettee

St. Paul's Territory Acknowledgement

(In accordance with Diocese resolution and approved by Vestry in winter/spring '23)

We acknowledge that we stand on territory that was taken from the Abenaki people of the Wabanaki Confederacy, the people of the Dawnland. May we always remember that the Earth does not belong to us, that we belong to the Earth, and that we are all companions in life. May we learn from our past sins and be instruments of justice and peace for all people in today's world. We ask for inspiration that we might be compelled to take action and support our native neighbors as they continue to seek their sovereignty here in Maine.

Opening Prayer and Thanksgiving

Leader: Great and Wonderful Lord, God Almighty, Merciful Savior...

You are beauty

All: You are gentleness

Leader: You are our protector

All: Our guardian and defender

Leader: You are our courage, our heaven and hope

All: You are our faith, our great consolation.

Leader: You are our eternal life...

All: Great and Wonderful Lord, God Almighty, Merciful Savior.

Prayer of Approach and Reconciliation

Kevin: All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made, And first my Lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and light you give us through him. How beautiful he is, how radiant in all his splendor! Of you, most high, he bears the likeness.

Abby: Those who love God are happy and blessed. They do as our Lord himself tells us in the Gospel, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul...and thy neighbor as thyself.

All: O Saint Francis, the world longs for you.
It has need of your heart, open always to God and to others.
O Saint Francis, help us to become free
From the structures of sin that oppress our world.
May the powerful intercession of Saint Francis bring us closer to Christ,
Closer to the Church, and closer to each other.
May his prayers comfort us,
Empower us and protect us,
As we strive to live the Gospel and share God's love.
Saint Francis, pray for us!

Readings

I only know that I did not know what love was until I encountered one that kept opening and opening and opening.

—Christian Wiman, My Bright Abyss

Father Richard Rohr describes the “eagerness to love” that characterized the life and spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

If the only goal is to love, there is no such thing as failure. Francis of Assisi succeeded in living in a single-hearted way in which his only goal was to love. This intense eagerness to love made his whole life an astonishing victory for the human and divine spirit and showed how they work so beautifully together. Francis encountered a love that just kept opening to him, and then he passed on the same by “opening and opening” to the increasingly larger world around him. He willingly fell into the “bright abyss”, as poet Christian Wiman calls it.

(Five minutes of silence begins and ends with the bell)

The Scriptures

An Interpretation of Psalm 19, by Nan Merrill
(Responsively by half verse, the leader beginning)

The heavens declare the glory of the Creator; *
the firmament proclaims the handiwork of Love.
Day to day speech pours forth *
and night to night knowledge is revealed.
There is no speech, nor are there words; *
their voice is not heard;
Yet does their music go out through all the earth, *
and their words to the end of the world.
In them a tent for the sun is set,
Which is like a bride and groom on their wedding night, *
as they sing love's song and celebrate the dance of life.
Its rising is in eternity, and its circuit to infinity; *
There is nothing hid from the sunlight.
The law of Love is perfect, *
reviving the soul;
The testimony of Love is sure, *
making wise the simple;
The precepts of Love are right, *
rejoicing the heart;
The authority of Love is pure, *
enlightening the eyes;
The spirit of Love is wondrous, *
enduring forever;

The rites of Love are true, *
awakening compassion.
More to be desired are they than gold, *
even much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey, *
and drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them are the loving alerted; *
in keeping them there is great reward.
But who can discern their own weakness? *
Cleanse me, O Love, from all my hidden faults.
Keep me from boldly acting in error; *
let my fears not have dominion over me!
Then shall I become a beneficial presence, *
freely and fully surrendered to your Love.
Let the words of my mouth
And the meditation of my heart *
find favor in your Heart
O my Beloved, *
my strength and my joy!

Philippians 3:4b-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

(Five minutes of silence begins and ends with the bell)

Expressions of Devotion

The Canticle of the Creatures

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,

Through Sister Moon and the stars,

In heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,

And through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,

Through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord through our Sister Mother Earth,

Who sustains and governs us,

And who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

Let us praise and bless our Lord and give him thanks

And serve him with great humility.

The Prayer of Saint Francis

Leader: Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love. Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is discord, union.

All: Where there is doubt, faith; where there is error, truth.

Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

Leader: O Divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console; To be understood, as to understand;

To be loved, as to love:

For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

(Five minutes of silence begins and ends with the bell)

Invitation to Faith and Prayer

Like a tent in the wilderness, the Lord our God stands open and ready, with an offering of sanctuary and safety, of hospitality and healing. So come, all you who are weary and hungry. Come with your fellow travelers and find companionship and comfort. For here, Jesus—who knows what it is to wander, watch and wrestle in desert places—waits to meet us and welcome us in; offering us rest and restoration, solace and strength for the journey still to come.

Declaration of Faith

Leader: With the whole church...

All: We affirm we are made in God's image,
Befriended by Christ, empowered by the Spirit.

Leader: With people everywhere...

All: We affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity,
Planted more deeply than all that is wrong.

Leader: With all creation...

All: We celebrate the miracle and wonder of life;
The unfolding purposes of God,
Forever at work in ourselves and the world. Amen.

Leader: We hope for healing in our lives and the lives of others...

Intercessions and Thanksgivings may be offered, silently or aloud.

Leader: O Gracious God, hear our prayers

All: Heed our holy desires.

Leader: Give us wisdom to rely on you.

All: May we always trust in your goodness.

Leader: From the security of what we know to the adventure of what you will reveal,

All: O Loving God, lead, guide and inspire us.

The Casa Del Sol Prayer of Jesus

Leader: Let us join together in the prayer of our Lord.

All: Ground of all being,

Mother of life, Father of the Universe,

Your name is sacred, beyond speaking.

May we know your presence,

May your longings be our longings in heart and action,

May there be food for the human family today

And for the whole earth community.

Forgive us the falseness of what we have done

As we forgive those who are untrue to us.

Do not forsake us in our time of conflict

But lead us into new beginnings.

For the light of life, the vitality of life, and the glory of life

Are yours now and forever.

Amen.

(Five minutes of silence begins and ends with the bell)

The Blessing

(The blessing St. Francis desired to impart to his friend, Brother Leo)

Leader: May the Lord bless and keep you.

May the Lord make His Face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

May the Lord lift up the light of His Countenance upon you and give you Peace.

Both now and forevermore.

Amen.

Today’s readings have been drawn from the following resources:

Psalms For Praying, by Nan Merrill

The Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC.org) September 24, 2024

Assisiprject.com

The Diocese of Maine, The Rt. Rev. Thomas James Brown, Bishop

St. Paul’s Staff and Vestry
The Rev. Dr. Matthew R. Scott, Rector
The Rev. Katie Holicky, Associate Rector

Melissa Carbajal
Lead Administrator

Patsy Oehl
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Andrea Lauerman
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Sunshine Spaulding
Administrative Assistant

Nancy King
Junior Warden

Christina Spurling
Organist/Accompanist

Vestry
Term ending 2027 — Michael Anne Banks, Jonathan Bolton
Term ending 2028 — Roger Barras, Michael Turner, John Bilodeau
Term ending 2029 — Dieuwke Zolas, Leslie Walter