

# SNAKES in the WILDERNESS

Wednesday March 17, 2021

## SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

Meeting: Zoom LINK:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82934746801?pwd=Y1hNRzQ0R2JwbktSR0QrSm82VHVURUT09>

Meeting ID: 829 3474 6801

Passcode: 376309

**WELCOME:**

**INVOCATION:**



The MYSTERY which IS LOVE  
is with you all.

**THANKS be to ALL that IS HOLY!**

Let us pray:

In this wilderness, it is easy to see that our world is broken.  
The snakes we fear, the snakes we see, the snakes we cannot see,  
the snakes we deny, the snakes we think we have tamed,  
the snakes waiting to be tamed, the snakes lying in wait,  
the benign snakes, the poisonous snakes,  
both terrifying and amusing,  
imagined, real, and metaphorical, all bound up in our lives,  
all impossible to banish.

Is it any wonder that in their presence there is healing?

Let us learn the art of being present to healing, wherever and when ever  
healing appears, darting, swiftly, across our paths,  
startling, disturbing, intriguing, delighting, interruptions.

In this wilderness, the ONE who breathes life into us,  
brings forth healing in the most unexpected of ways.

May the HOLY ONE continue to bemuse and mystify us,  
in our work of making all things new. Amen.

**MUSIC: Prayer of St. Patrick** music by John Rutter

CHRIST within me,  
CHRIST behind me,  
CHRIST before me,  
CHRIST beside me,  
CHRIST to win me,  
CHRIST to comfort and restore me,  
CHRIST above me,  
CHRIST beneath me,  
CHRIST in quiet,  
CHRIST in danger,  
CHRIST in hearts of all that love me,  
CHRIST in mouth of friend and stranger,  
CHRIST in mouth of friend and stranger.

**GOSPEL: JOHN 3:14-21**

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so the Chosen One must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in the Chosen One might have eternal life.

Yes, God so loved the world as to give the Begotten One, that whoever believes may not die, but have eternal life.

God sent the Only Begotten into the world not to condemn the world, but that through the Only Begotten the world might be saved.

Whoever believes in the Only Begotten avoids judgment, but whoever doesn't believe is judged already for not believing in the name of the Only Begotten of God. On these grounds is sentence pronounced that though the light came into the world people showed they preferred darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. Indeed, people who do wrong hate the light and avoid it, for fear their actions will be exposed; but people who live by the truth come out into the light so that it may be plainly seen that what they do is done in God.

**CONTEMPORARY READINGS: On Morning Prayer** by Padraig O'Tauma

"Neither I nor the poets I love found the keys to the kingdom of prayer and we cannot force God to stumble over us where we sit. But I know that it's a good idea to sit anyway. So, every morning I sit, I kneel, waiting, making friends with the habit of listening, hoping that I'm being listened to. There, I greet God in my own disorder.

"I say hello to my chaos, my unmade decisions, my unmade bed, my desire and my trouble. I say hello to distraction and privilege, I greet the day and I greet my beloved and bewildering Jesus.

"I recognize and greet my burdens, my luck, my controlled and uncontrollable story. I greet my untold stories, my unfolding story, my unloved body, my own love, my

own body. I greet the things I think will happen and I say hello to everything I do not know about the day. I greet my own small world and I hope that I can meet the bigger world that day.

"I greet my story and hope that I can forget my story during the day, and hope that I can hear some stories, and greet some surprising stories during the long day ahead. I greet God, and I greet the God who is more God than the God I greet. Hello to you all, I say, as the sun rises above the chimneys of North Belfast. Hello."

## **MUSIC:**

### **SPIRIT Open My Heart**

Text: Ruth Duck:

Music: traditional melody, Ireland: arr. Arthur G. Clyde,  
WILD MOUNTAIN THYME

#### *Refrain*

SPIRIT, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.  
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,  
SPIRIT, open my heart.

God, replace my stony heart  
with a heart that's kind and tender.  
All my coldness and fear  
to your grace I now surrender.

Write your love upon my heart  
as my law, my goal, my story.  
In each thought, word, and deed,  
may my living bring you glory.

May I weep with those who weep,  
share the joy of sister, brother.  
In the welcome of CHRIST,  
may we welcome ONE ANOTHER.

## **The Facts of Life**, a poem by: Padraig O' Tauma

That you were born  
and you will die.  
That you will sometimes love enough  
and sometimes not.  
That you will lie  
if only to yourself.  
That you will get tired.  
That you will learn most from the situations  
you did not choose.  
That there will be some things that move you  
more than you can say.  
That you will live  
that you must be loved.  
That you will avoid questions most urgently in need of  
your attention.  
That you began as the fusion of a sperm and an egg  
of two people who once were strangers  
and may well still be.  
That life isn't fair.  
That life is sometimes good  
and sometimes better than good.  
That life is often not so good.  
That life is real  
and if you can survive it, well,  
survive it well  
with love  
and art  
and meaning given  
where meaning's scarce.  
That you will learn to live with regret.  
That you will learn to live with respect.  
That the structures that constrict you  
may not be permanently constraining.  
That you will probably be okay.  
That you must accept change  
before you die  
but you will die anyway.  
So you might as well live  
and you might as well love.  
You might as well love.  
You might as well love.

## PRAYER:

Glimpses of the DIVINE MYSTERY  
which is our SOURCE.  
are darting in and around us.  
The blessing of our lives  
gifts us with the time and space to notice the evidence  
of the LOVE which is GOD  
as LOVE crosses our paths.  
Startled though we may be,  
let us take delight in the knowledge  
that the HOLY ONE notices our presence on the path.  
Let us breathe deeply of LOVE's SPIRIT  
to find the strength we need  
to follow the Way of Jesus.  
May those in need of healing  
find in us the CHIRST who is  
the power of the ONE  
who IS BEYOND, the BEYOND and BEYOND that also,  
to be LOVE in the world  
in, with, through, and beyond us,  
here, now, and always,  
**AMEN.**

**MUSIC:**        **Deep Peace** music by Bill Douglas

Deep peace of the running wave to you,  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,  
Deep peace of the quiet Earth to you,  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,  
Deep peace of the gentle night to you,  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.  
Deep peace to you,  
Deep peace to you,  
Deep peace to you,  
Deep peace to you.

**Question & Responses:**    *an opportunity for conversation*

**As Holy Week approaches, the old institutional tropes about Jesus' life and death are trotted out not just by the church, but also by the culture in which we live.**

**Are there healing balms which you have access to which empower you to follow Jesus, even to the cross?**

**Blessing:            Go In Pieces** a blessing by Padraig O' Tauma

The task has ended. Go in pieces.  
Our faith has been rear-ended, certainty amended,  
and something might be mended that we didn't know was torn.  
And we are fire, bright, burning fire,  
turning from the higher places from which we fell,  
emptying ourselves into the hell in which we'll find  
our loving and beloved brother, mother, sister, father, friend.  
And so friends, the task has ended.  
Go in pieces  
to see and feel your world.



**Saint Patrick's  
Breastplate Prayer**

CHRIST, be with me, CHRIST within me,  
CHRIST behind me, CHRIST before me,  
CHRIST beside me, CHRIST to win me,  
CHRIST to comfort and restore me.  
CHRIST above me, CHRIST beneath me  
CHRIST in quiet, CHRIST in danger,  
CHRIST in hearts of all that love me,  
CHRIST in mouth of friend and stranger,  
CHRIST in mouth of friend and stranger.

**Season of Lent**  
Creation Our Original Sanctuary



**Sundays online: 10:45am**  
[www.holycrosslutheran.ca](http://www.holycrosslutheran.ca)