

Gathering Music

Welcome

Breathing + Heartbeat drum



Prayer

from the *New Zealand Prayer Book*

Lord, it is night. The night is for stillness. Let us be still in the presence of God. It is night after a long day. What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done; let it be. The night is dark. Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you. The night is quiet. Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace. The night heralds the dawn. Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities. In your name we pray. Amen.

Song: Christmas Must Be Tonight

The Band

Come down to the manger, see the little stranger
Wrapped in swaddling clothes, the prince of peace
Wheels start turning, torches start burning
And the old wise men journey from the East

Chorus

*How a little baby boy bring the people so much joy
Son of a carpenter, Mary carried the light
This must be Christmas, must be tonight*

A shepherd on a hillside, where over my flock I bide
Oh a cold winter night a band of angels sing
In a dream I heard a voice saying "fear not, come rejoice
It's the end of the beginning, praise the new born king"

I saw it with my own eyes, written up in the skies
But why a simple herdsman such as I
And then it came to pass, he was born at last
Right below the star that shines on high

Reflection

Song: **The Light That Has Lighted the World**

George Harrison

I've heard how some people, have said
That I've changed
That I'm not what I was
How it really is a shame
The thoughts in their heads,
Manifest on their brow
Like bad scars from ill feelings
They themselves arouse
So hateful of anyone that is happy
Or 'free'
They live all their lives,
Without looking to see
The light that has lighted the world

It's funny how people, just won't
Accept change
As if nature itself they'd prefer
Rearranged
So hard to move on
When you're down in a hole
Where there's so little chance,
To experience soul I'm grateful to anyone,
That is happy or 'free'
For giving me hope
While I'm looking to see
The light that has lighted the world

Prayers *Response:* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Prayer of St. Francis

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; where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

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. **Amen.**

Song: Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Hugh Martin; Frank Sinatra version

Have yourself a merry little Christmas
Let your heart be light
Next year all our troubles will be out of sight

Have yourself a merry little Christmas
Make the yuletide gay
Next year all our troubles will be miles away

Once again as in olden days
Happy golden days of yore
Faithful friends who are dear to us
Will be near to us once more

Someday soon we all will be together
If the fates allow
Until then we'll have to muddle through somehow
So have yourself a merry little Christmas now

Final prayer

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night,
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the
suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

The Final Blessing, The Peace, and Dinner



WE HOPE YOU FIND YOURS HERE

Here is a place that is ancient and new, a faith that we hold going back to Jesus, back to his spiritual ancestors, back to those who walked the earth and found holy ground. And what we do is often based on really ancient patterns—worship and music; loving service to the poor, the hurting, the lonely; working for justice and peace; lively, fearless education and formation of minds and souls. And that faith is also completely contemporary, engaged in the culture and the needs of the moment.

WHAT WE ARE FOR

The dignity and worth of every person. An open minded, passionate commitment to truth. The importance of everyone's own spiritual journey. God's friends wherever we find them. Seeking Christ in every person who comes through the door. The sacredness of life's rites of passage. The value of community. The hard work necessary to make sure that all are welcomed. Telling the truth about life's challenges. A "user-friendly" church experience. Children, youth and families. We believe that God is love, and we pray that God will use us to spread that love.

WHAT WE ARE AGAINST

Claiming to have all the answers. Elitism and exclusivism, especially in church. Bigotry for any reason. Authoritarianism. Indifference to injustice and suffering. Certitude in the face of ambiguity and superficial answers to hard questions. Boring sermons, bad music and general cluelessness. (So, God help us, because we don't always avoid these!)

WHAT WE VALUE

Community, open hearts, open minds, open arms. Faith. Fortitude. Staying current, but equally staying rooted in tradition. Reason and honesty. Civic responsibility. Debate that allows for mutual respect. Music and beauty for their own sake. Joy in God's creation. Anyone who makes an effort to get to know and follow Jesus.

WELCOME!

Originally written by the people of St. Bartholomen's, New York, this statement has been modified for our use with their permission.

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