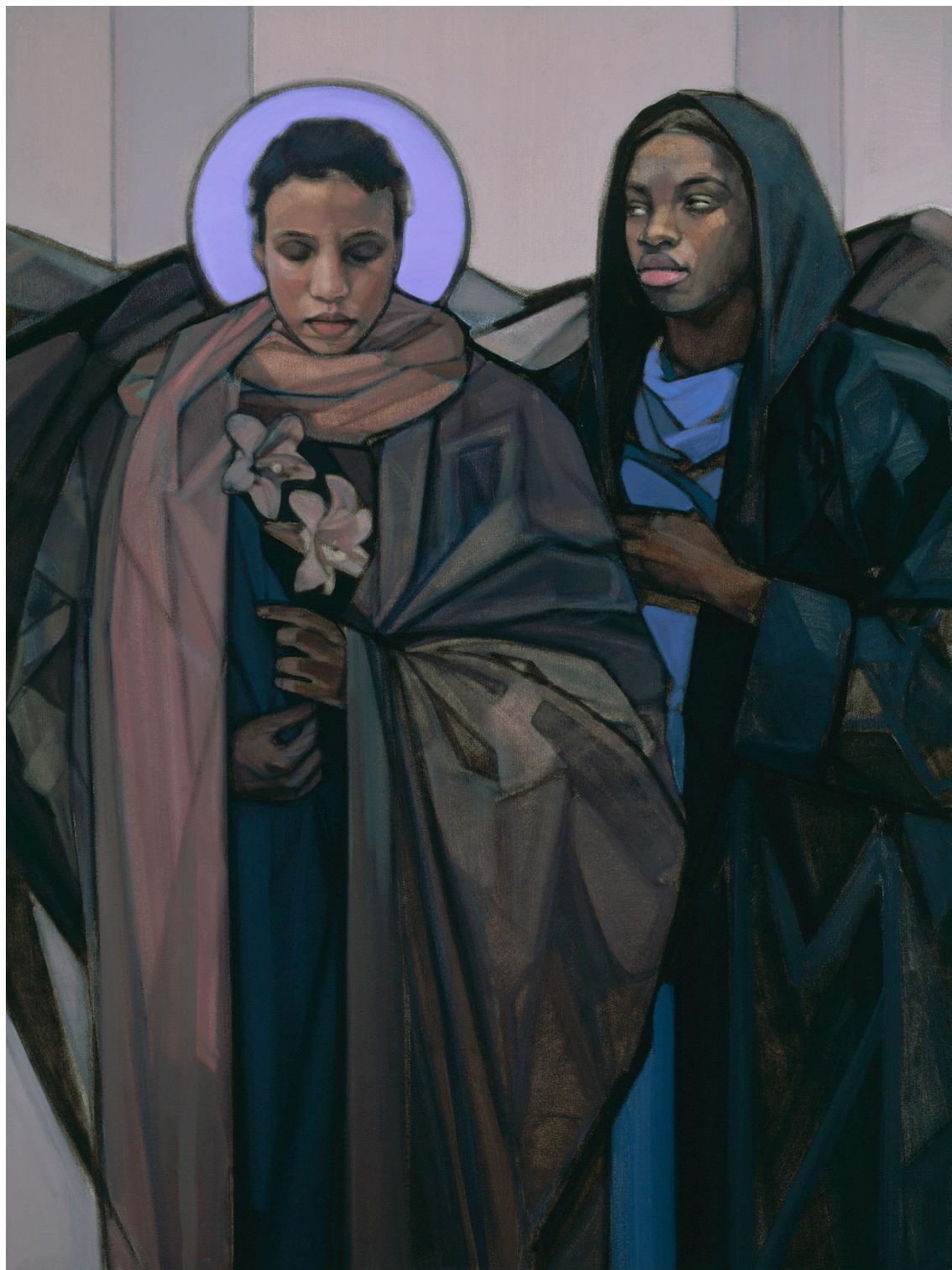


# Service of Celtic Worship

February 4, 2018





# Celtic Worship

at St. John's Church

February 4, 2018

*Welcome! We are delighted that you have joined us today - we cherish your attendance.*

*In order to prepare for worship, our time this afternoon commences with a period of silence which you may enjoy in any way that is meaningful to you: prayer, meditation or simple reflection. We ask that this silence be observed immediately upon entering, and that you turn off all electronic devices.*

*The value of silence and being present to what is immediate is all too often lost in our busy world. We hope that today's service of presence, contemplation, and periods of quiet provides nourishment and recharging for you. To that end, perhaps you may wish to turn those electronic devices all the way off if you are able!*

*There are several stations of interest around the church for your perusal or quiet contemplation. We invite you to visit these spots at any time before, during or after the service. You may wish to leave a prayer request for yourself or others at the prayer station, browse the Celtic station icons and information, or light a candle for someone or some purpose. Your written prayers deposited at the prayer station will be prayed in the coming days by members of the Celtic Worship Guild.*

*In today's service, we celebrate the Divine Feminine. You may wish to light a candle or to add a written expression to the prayer station box to celebrate the revelation of the divine feminine within your life, or perhaps in recognition of those who have nurtured you through your life. The Celtic Guild will be sure to add their prayers of thanksgiving to yours!*

*Healing ministers will be available to pray with you, to hear your expressions of gratitude, or to offer you a blessing during the period of extended silence later in our worship.*

*Children are welcome at our worship. To help pass time, please find Celtic themed coloring sheets near the entrances - for children of all ages!*

*At 5 pm, a singing bowl tone will break our preparatory silence and today's service will commence.*



**February 4, 2018**

***The theme for our worship this month is "Divine Feminine."***

**Words of Welcome:** *The Reverend Susan Pinkerton*

*Please stand after Susan's comments.*

**Opening Prayer:** **"Our Father, Holy Mother"**

*Jan Phillips*

*Read by Mary Davies Cole*

Our Father, Holy Mother,  
Creator of the Cosmos, Source of Life,

You are in my mind, in my garden,  
in my cup of wine and loaf of bread.

Blessed be your names:

Mother, Allah, Goddess, Beloved, Father,  
Radiant One, Yahweh, HaShem, Sophia.

Your presence has come, your will is done  
on earth as it is in the Cosmos.

May we give each other strength, mercy,  
tenderness, and joy  
as we forgive each other's failures,  
silence, pettiness, and forgetfulness  
as we ask to be forgiven  
by those we've hurt.

Lead us home  
to ourselves, to You,  
to clarity, to oneness  
and deliver us from the darkness  
of our ignorance and fear.

So we pray and so we receive. Amen.

*Source: No Ordinary Time: The Rise of Spiritual Intelligence and Evolutionary Creativity by Jan Phillips [www.janphillips.com](http://www.janphillips.com) Used with permission*

**Song: "Give Yourself to Love"**

*Kate Wolf (1942 – 1986)*

*Led by Norb Spencer*

Kind friends all gathered 'round, there's something I would say:  
That what brings us together here has blessed us all today.  
Love has made a circle that holds us all inside.  
Where strangers are as family, loneliness can't hide.

*CHORUS:*

You must give yourself to love if love is what you're after;  
Open up your hearts to the tears and laughter  
And give yourself to love, give yourself to love.

I've walked these mountains in the rain and learned to love the wind;  
I've been up before the sunrise to watch the day begin.  
I've always knew I'd find you, though I never did know how;  
Like sunshine on a cloudy day stand before me now.

*CHORUS*

Love is born in fire; it's planted like a seed.  
Love can't give you everything, but it gives you what you need.  
And love comes when you're ready, love comes when you're afraid;  
It'll be your greatest teacher, the best friend you have made.

*CHORUS*

*Please be seated.*

**Reading for Reflection: "Gabriel's Annunciation"**

*Jan Richardson*

*Read by Tom Neal*

For a moment  
I hesitated  
on the threshold.  
For the space  
of a breath  
I paused,  
unwilling to disturb

her last ordinary moment,  
knowing that the next step  
would cleave her life:  
that this day  
would slice her story  
in two,  
dividing all the days before  
from all the ones  
to come.

The artists would later  
depict the scene:  
Mary dazzled  
by the archangel,  
her head bowed  
in humble assent,  
awed by the messenger  
who condescended  
to leave paradise  
to bestow such an honor  
upon a woman, and mortal.

Yet I tell you  
it was I who was dazzled,  
I who found myself agape  
when I came upon her—  
reading, at the loom, in the kitchen,  
I cannot now recall;  
only that the woman before me—  
blessed and full of grace  
long before I called her so—  
shimmered with how completely  
she inhabited herself,  
inhabited the space around her,  
inhabited the moment  
that hung between us.

I wanted to save her  
from what I had been sent  
to say.

Yet when the time came,  
when I had stammered  
the invitation  
(history would not record  
the sweat on my brow,  
the pounding of my heart;  
would not note  
that I said  
*Do not be afraid*  
to myself as much as  
to her)  
it was she  
who saved me—  
her first deliverance—  
her *Let it be*  
not just declaration  
to the Divine  
but a word of solace,  
of soothing,  
of benediction

for the angel  
in the doorway  
who would hesitate  
one last time—  
just for the space  
of a breath  
torn from his chest—  
before wrenching himself away  
from her radiant consent,  
her beautiful and  
awful yes.

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**Reflection: "I Was Born For Just Such A Time As This" - Molly Louden**

*After Molly has completed her reflection, please take a moment to identify the person in your life who has served as a life-giving force: perhaps it was a teacher, a parent or grandparent, a neighbor, a therapist – or anyone else who has served you as a role model for incarnate, earth-based, real, approachable, Divine Feminine.*

*Molly will lead us in naming the incarnation of the Divine Feminine in our lives. We invite your participation in naming that person in whatever way you are comfortable: you may wish to share the name aloud, or speak it to yourself. You may wish to stand and state the name, or you may wish to softly and gently utter it from your seat.*

*To conclude this time of reflection, Tom Neal will lead us in singing a well-known song – one that features a direct quote from a Divine and powerful woman from the New Testament.*

**Silence**

*We enter an extended period of silent prayer, meditation or reflection. Please feel free to move about the church during this time. You may wish to visit the stations.*

*Our theme today is "Divine Feminine." Perhaps Molly's reflection inspires you to light a candle or deposit a prayer request? Of course, we invite you to pray through the warmth and energy of the candles and their light - or to seek solace through a prayer request - in whatever way you are called today.*

*In addition to the stations, healing ministers are available to pray with you or offer a blessing. They may be found near the baptismal font at the right side of the church. Today's Healing Ministers are Sarah Kieffer & Molly Louden.*

*After several minutes, Claudia Ayer will perform "O virtus Sapientie" by Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179).*

**O virtus Sapientie** *Antiphon for Divine Wisdom (R 466rb)*

O virtus Sapientie,  
que circuiens circuisti,  
comprehendendo omnia  
in una via que habet vitam,  
tres alas habens,  
quarum una in altum volat  
et altera de terra sudat  
et tertia undique volat.

Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet, O Sapientia.

O Wisdom's energy!  
Whirling, you encircle  
and everything embrace  
in the single way of life.  
Three wings you have:  
one soars above into the heights,  
one from the earth exudes,  
and all about now flies the third.  
Praise be to you, as is your due, O Wisdom.

**Intercessory Prayers:** “The Song of Mary”

*Led by Sarah Kieffer*

*Please stand when requested.*

*You are invited to raise your own prayers, either silently or aloud for all to hear, in the periods of silence during the Intercessory Prayers.*

My soul sings of you, O God.

**ALL: My spirit delights in your Presence.**

You have cherished my womanhood.

**ALL: You have honoured earth’s body.**

All will know the sacredness of birth.

**ALL: All will know the gift of life.**

Your grace is to those who are open.

**ALL: Your mercy to the humble in heart.**

The dreams of the proud crumble.

**ALL: The plans of the powerful fail.**

You feed the hungry with goodness.

**ALL: You deny the rich their greed.**

The hopes of the poor are precious.

**ALL: The birth pangs of creation are heard.**

You have been faithful to the human family.

**ALL: You are the seed of new beginnings.**

My soul sings of you, O God.

**ALL: My spirit delights in your Presence.**

*Source: Sounds of the Eternal: A Celtic Psalter by John Philip Newell*

*Please be seated for our closing reading.*



**Final Reading: "Nurture Life"**

Carol P. Christ

*Read by Mary Davies Cole*

Nurture life.  
Walk in love and beauty.  
Trust the knowledge that comes through the body.  
Speak the truth about conflict, pain, and suffering.  
Take only what you need.  
Think about the consequences your actions for seven generations.  
Approach the taking of life with great restraint.  
Practice great generosity.  
Repair the web.

*Source: Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding Meaning in Feminist Spirituality by Carol P. Christ*

**Closing Words and Silence:** *The Reverend Susan Pinkerton*

*Susan will bring our service for this evening to a close. We will then take a final brief period of silence for personal prayer, meditation or reflection upon today's service. After a short time, a final tone of the singing bowl will mark the conclusion of our worship together.*

*After the tone, we invite you to remain seated in silence for however long you wish. When you do stand to exit, please maintain the silence until you have left the sanctuary; our worship continuing in all that we do.*

*The stations continue to be available for you to visit after our service.*



***Today's greeters: Bruce Loudon, Molly Loudon & Tom Neal***

***Restrooms are in the corridor just beyond the parish hall, located through the doorway to the right at the front of the church.***

***Please join us after the service for refreshments and fellowship in the parish hall, located through the doorway to the right at the front of the church.***

***Special thanks to Sarah Kieffer and Susan Pinkerton for providing and preparing today's refreshments.***

**Isn't today's cover art by Janet McKenzie beautiful?  
We are excited to share information on an  
upcoming exhibition of Janet's work!**

*Embracing Hope - the Art of Janet McKenzie  
March 18 - April 29, 2018  
At the Mary C. Daly Gallery  
Mercy by the Sea, 167 Neck Road, Madison, Connecticut*

*Opening reception on March 18 from 1 pm to 3pm. Janet McKenzie will be present!*

*For more information, please visit Mercy by the Sea's website:*

<https://www.mercybythesea.org/campus/mary-c-daly-art-gallery/embracing-hope-the-art-of-janet-mckenzie/>

Today's cover art: "The Annunciation"

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**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: CELTIC SPIRITUALITY**

A new Celtic book discussion led by the Rev. Dr. Molly O'Neill Loudon! We will learn an ancient and relevant way to understand God and Jesus in this three-week course in Celtic Spirituality. The series will focus on a study and discussion of John Philip Newell's book, *Christ of the Celts*.

Meetings will be the next three Sundays, February 11, 18, and 25 at 4:30pm at St. James's Church in West Hartford. Please purchase the book and read chapters 1 and 2 before our first meeting on February 11. All are welcome!



*Image of Saint Brigid's cross, made from rushes from County Down  
Sony P-200 and Jasc Paint Shop Pro 9 Author= Culnacraenn Permission=GFDL, CC-BY 3.0*

# Schedule of Celtic Worship at St. John's Church

Please join us at 4:30 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month,  
October through June.

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| October 1, 2017   | Celtic Spirituality  |
| November 5, 2017: | Celtic Saints        |
| December 3, 2017: | Gratitude            |
| January 7, 2018:  | Pilgrimage           |
| February 4, 2018: | Divine Feminine      |
| March 4, 2018:    | Simplicity           |
| April 1, 2018:    | Rebirth (Easter Day) |
| May 6, 2018:      | Earth                |
| June 3, 2018:     | Light                |

## **Celtic Worship Guild**

Mary Davies Cole

John E. Hardy

Sarah Kieffer

Scott Lamlein

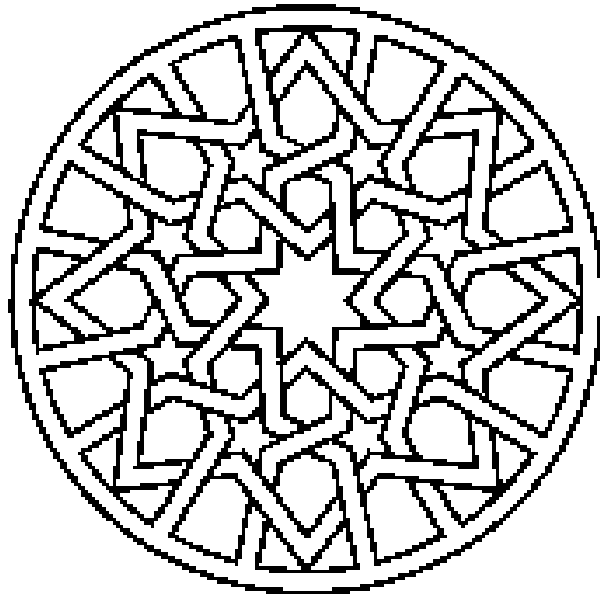
The Reverend Dr. Molly O'Neill Louden

Rita Neal

Tom Neal

The Reverend Susan Pinkerton

Norb Spencer



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