We are a Celtic spiritual community grounded in sacred love, which is at the heart of the Christian message.

St. John’s Episcopal Church
679 Farmington Avenue
West Hartford, Connecticut
Celtic Worship

Welcome!

We are delighted that you have joined us today – we cherish your attendance.

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 you observe this silence immediately upon entering and turn off all electronic devices.

There are several stations of interest around the church that you may visit at any time before, during or after the service. You may wish to light a candle at the candle station, browse the Celtic station icons and information, or write a prayer request for yourself or others at the prayer station. Know that your written prayers will be prayed in the coming days by members of the Celtic Worship Guild.

During the period of extended silence later in our worship, healing ministers will be available to offer you the prayer or blessing you ask for.

Children are welcome at our worship.

At 4:50 p.m., a singing bowl tone will break our preparatory silence and today’s service will commence.
The theme for our worship this month is Welcome the Stranger.

Words of Welcome  The Reverend Dr. Molly O. Louden

Opening Prayer  Read by Mary Davies Cole

Small Kindnesses by Danusha Laméris

I’ve been thinking about the way, when you walk down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs to let you by. Or how strangers still say “bless you” when someone sneezes, a leftover from the Bubonic plague. “Don’t die,” we are saying. And sometimes, when you spill lemons from your grocery bag, someone else will help you pick them up. Mostly, we don’t want to harm each other. We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot, and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder, and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass. We have so little of each other, now. So far from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange. What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these fleeting temples we make together when we say, “Here, have my seat,” “Go ahead — you first,” “I like your hat.”
The Summons
Scottish traditional
Words by John L. Bell & Graham Maule

Please stand.

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don’t know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,

Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

2. Will you leave yourself behind
   if I but call your name?
   Will you care for cruel and kind
   and never be the same?
   Will you risk the hostile stare
   should your life attract or scare?
   Will you let me answer prayer in you
   and you in me?

3. Will you let the blinded see
   if I but call your name?
   Will you set the prisoners free
   and never be the same?
   Will you kiss the leper clean,
   and do such as this unseen,
   and admit to what I mean in you
   and you in me?

Please be seated.
Reflection
Sarah Kieffer

God of welcome,
God of the stranger.
We come as strangers.
We come as those who you welcome.
We come as those called to welcome.
Christ, who reached across all lines
Messiah, who looked the “other” in the eyes with love.
Challenge us with your radical example of love.
Stretch us to engage the way you engage.
Humble us to receive and be.
Spirit who challenges,
Spirit who connects,
Urge us to compassion,
Break down our resistance,
Strengthen our resolve,
Tear open our hearts,
Mobilize our minds,
Flow through our bodies,
As your vessels who will be conduits
Of welcome, compassion, justice, and love.
Amen

Chant
Sarah Kieffer

Stay with Me
Taizé Traditional

Please stand.

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\text{Dm} \quad \text{Gm6/D} \quad \text{Dm} \quad \text{Gm6/D} \quad \text{Dm} \quad \text{C} \\
\text{F} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{Dm} \quad \text{Gm/D} \quad \text{Asus} \quad \text{A}
\]

Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray,
No - ho pū no - ho mai me ia’u ki - a’i a

pray, watch and pray.
Silence

We enter now into an extended period of silence, which you are invited to use in whatever way you are called today. You are welcome to sit or move about the church in silent prayer, meditation, or reflection.

Feel free to visit all of the stations. Write a prayer request, light a candle, contemplate upon the Celtic saints, or pray with a healing minister near the baptismal font.

Intercessory Prayers

*Zimbabwean Prayer*

Led by John Hardy

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.

Open our eyes that they may see the deepest needs of men and women.

Move our hands that they may feed the hungry.

Touch our hearts that they may bring warmth to the despairing.

Teach us the generosity that welcomes strangers.

Let us share our possessions to clothe the naked.

Give us the care that strengthens the sick.

Make us share in the quest to set the prisoners free.

In sharing our anxiety and our love, our poverty and our prosperity, we partake of your divine presence. **Amen.**

Closing Prayer

*“Gate A-4” by Naomi Shihab Nye*

Read by Mary Davies Cole

from *Honeybee*, © 2008

Wandering around the Albuquerque Airport Terminal, after learning my flight had been delayed four hours, I heard an announcement:

“If anyone in the vicinity of Gate A-4 understands any Arabic, please come to the gate immediately.”

Well – one pauses these days. Gate A-4 was my own gate. I went there.

An older woman in full traditional Palestinian embroidered dress, just like my grandma wore, was crumpled to the floor, wailing. “Help,” said the flight agent. “Talk to her. What is her problem? We told her the flight was going to be late and she did this.”
I stooped to put my arm around the woman and spoke haltingly: “Shu-dow-a, Shu-bid-uck Habibti?
Stani schway, Min fadlick, Shu-bit-se-ween?”

The minute she heard any words she knew, however poorly used, she stopped crying. She thought the flight had been cancelled entirely. She needed to be in El Paso for major medical treatment the next day. I said, “No, we’re fine, you’ll get there just later, who is picking you up? Let’s call him.”

We called her son, I spoke with him in English. I told him I would stay with his mother till we got on the plane and ride next to her. She talked to him. Then we called her other sons just for the fun of it.

Then we called my dad and he and she spoke for a while in Arabic and found out of course they had ten shared friends. Then I thought just for the heck of it why not call some Palestinian poets I know and let them chat with her? This all took up two hours.

She was laughing a lot by then. Telling of her life, patting my knee, answering questions. She had pulled a sack of homemade mamool cookies — little powdered sugar crumbly mounds stuffed with dates and nuts — from her bag — and was offering them to all the women at the gate.

To my amazement, not a single woman declined one. It was like a sacrament. The traveler from Argentina, the mom from California, the lovely woman from Laredo — we were all covered with the same powdered sugar. And smiling. There is no better cookie.

And then the airline broke out free apple juice from huge coolers and two little girls from our flight ran around serving it and they were covered with powdered sugar, too. And I noticed my new best friend — by now we were holding hands — had a potted plant poking out of her bag, some medicinal thing, with green furry leaves. Such an old country tradition. Always carry a plant. Always stay rooted to somewhere.
And I looked around that gate of late and weary ones and I thought, This is the world I want to live in. The shared world. Not a single person in that Gate — once the crying of confusion stopped — seemed apprehensive about any other person. They took the cookies. I wanted to hug all those other women, too.

This can still happen anywhere. Not everything is lost.

**Threshold Blessing**  
*J.P.Newell & K.Baard, heartbeatjourney.org*

*Led by Molly Louden*

We first hold our hands over the candle and then up to our eyes as a signal of our desire to see light in each other and all of creation. We then hold our hands over the candle to our heart as a signal of our desire to know light deep within ourselves.

A singing bell tone will signal the end of the service.

You are invited to join us for a reception in Hubbard Hall after the service.

You are also welcome to come participate in a discussion group on today's theme of “Welcoming the Stranger” in the Reception Room.

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*Greeter: David Hadden*  
*Healing ministers: Sarah Kieffer, Jane Cloutier and Molly Louden*  
*Reception Hosts: Jane Cloutier, Sarah Kieffer, Rita Neal*  
*Set-up Crew: Holly Fenn, John and Ann Walsh, Carey Downes, Florence Nicholas, Charmaine Harkins, and Eleanor Blake*

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

Sunday, November 24, 1:00 pm
Meet at 12:45 at Simsbury Land Trust Tanager Hill parking lot
off East Weatogue Street in Simsbury.

Led by David Hadden. For more info, email David at dhadden@rc.com.
Join us on this short pilgrimage connecting us to the earth. All are welcome.

Building on a wonderful experience in October, our next walk will once again be mostly in silence. We will pause occasionally for a brief reading or reflection, and to acknowledge our connection to sacred ground. November is an exquisite month to experience the subtle hues of the Great Outdoors. Afterwards, if you wish, please join David and Sara Hadden at their house (10 Talcott Mountain Road, Simsbury, less than a mile from the trailhead) for a glass of cider or wine, a warm fire and good company.

This will be a gentle hike through the Simsbury woods, taking about an hour or so. While we hope for a lovely fall day, we will be embracing whatever Nature offers, short of lightning or gale winds! So please bring rain gear as the forecast may indicate. We will be on well-maintained trails through the woods and well-mown paths across fields. Please bring appropriate footgear. You may also wish to bring water and insect repellent. There is a modest incline at the beginning of the walk. David and Sara will lead the group.

Many of us feel closest to the Divine when we are in the midst of Nature. Some sense in the outdoors an experience of ongoing creation. For many, the earth, sea and sky in any weather, and at any time of day or night, are transparencies of ineffable Spirit that remind us that we too are part of one universal beauty. This contemplative walk in the woods will be an invitation to listen deeply within to the music and poetry we share with our natural surroundings.

Coming from the East (Hartford/Bloomfield/West Hartford): Proceed West on Rte 185 (Simsbury Road). After entering into Simsbury at the top of Talcott Mountain, you come down the hill past Folly Farm (on your left). Bear right at the fork onto East Weatogue Street. After exactly 1.0 mile, Talcott Mountain Road will be on your right. Keep going an additional 0.2 mile on East Weatogue Street. The grass parking lot will be on your right. The entrance is flanked by stones on either side, but otherwise unmarked. One of our group will be standing by the road to wave you in!

Coming from the South (Avon, Farmington): Proceed North on Rt 10 to the intersection with Rt 185 in Simsbury. Turn right. After 0.3 mile, take your first left on to East Weatogue Street. After exactly 1.0 mile, Talcott Mountain Road will be on your right. Keep going an additional 0.2 mile on East Weatogue Street. The grass parking lot will be on your right. The entrance is flanked by stones on either side, but otherwise unmarked. One of our group will be standing by the road to wave you in!
Schedule of Celtic Worship
at St. John’s Episcopal Church

Thank you for spending time with us.
Please join us at 4:30 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month, October through June.

Sunday, October 6, 2019 - Rebirth
Sunday, November 3, 2019 - Welcome the Stranger
Sunday, December 1, 2019 - Shadow
Sunday, January 5, 2020 - Sacred Masculinity
Sunday, February 2, 2020 - Love
Sunday, March 1, 2020 - Betrayal
Sunday, April 5, 2020 - Forgiveness
Sunday, May 3, 2020 - Nature
Sunday, June 7, 2020 - Joy

Celtic Worship Guild
Jane Cloutier
Mary Davies Cole
John Hardy
Sarah Kieffer
Scott Lamlein
The Reverend Dr. Molly O’Neill Louden
Tom Neal
The Reverend Susan Pinkerton
Norb Spencer
Jeff Verney

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