

SAINT  
FRANKS  
OF THE  
WOODS

spiritual renewal center



SUNDAY BEFORE THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE  
PRECIOUS AND LIFE-CREATING CROSS

# A Liturgy of READINGS & MEDITATION

## TRISAGION PRAYERS

*Bell is rung for a moment of silence.*

*Officiant begins and the people respond.*

+ Blessed is the Universe of the Source, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

**Amen.**

**Glory to You, O Creator, glory to You.**

O Heavenly Grace, the Comforter, Spirit of Truth, You are in all places  
and fill all things; Treasury of Good Things and Giver of Life: come and  
dwell in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save us, O Gracious  
One.

**+ Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (x3)**

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Release us from our illusions of  
separation. Pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our  
infirmities for Your Name's sake.

**Lord, have mercy. (x3)**

**+ Glory to the Source, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

# GATHERING SONG

*The following or another suitable hymn may be sung.*

## Sing of the Raven

*Gaelic melody*



Sing of the Ra - ven, bird of cre - a - tion, birth-ing the world, un

Sing of the stor - ies told by the el - ders, tales of the prair - ie,

Sing of I - o - na, Isle of the o - cean, gull wing and eag - le

Sing of Co - lum - ba, Patrick and Hil - da, Bri - gid and Ai - dan



fold - ing her wings.\_\_\_\_\_ Call - ing her chil - dren, form - ing a na -

songs of the sea.\_\_\_\_\_ Sing of the Ho - pi, Black-feet and Mo-

soar in the sky.\_\_\_\_\_ Stones of high cross - es, tell - ing their sto -

some with-out name. \_\_\_ Sing of high pla - ces, sac - red the oak

soar - ing a - bove.\_\_\_\_\_ Yet the Great Spir - it form-ing cre - a -



tion, cry - ing, "To - mor - row! hear what it brings."

hawk, Chey-enne, A - pach - e, Nav - a - ho, Cree.

ry, Christ in his glo - ry dies but to rise.

tree, deep ho - ly wells and bright Eas - ter flame.

tion, calls us to - geth - er, one in God's love.

*facing east* – Great Spirit of Light, come to us out of the East with the power of the rising sun. Let there be light in our words, let there be light on our path that we walk. Let us remember always that You give the gift of a new day. And never let us be burdened with sorrow by not starting over again.

**Be among us, Great Spirit of Light.**

*facing north* – Great Spirit of Love, come to us with the power of the North. Make us courageous when the cold wind falls upon us. Give us strength and endurance for everything that is harsh, everything that hurts, everything that makes us squint. Let us move through life ready to take what comes from the North.

**Be among us, Great Spirit of Love.**

*facing west* – Great Life-Giving Spirit, we face the West, the direction of sundown. Let us remember every day that the moment will come when our sun will go down. Never let us forget that we must fade into You. Give us a beautiful color, give us a great sky for setting, so that when it is our time to meet You, we can come with glory.

**Be among us, Great Life-Giving Spirit.**

*facing south* – Great Spirit of Creation, send us the warm and soothing winds from the South. Comfort and caress us when we are tired and cold. Unfold us like the gentle breezes that unfold the leaves on the trees. As You give to all the earth Your warm, moving wind, give to us, so that we may grow close to You in warmth. We did not create the web of life, we are but strands in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

**Be among us, Great Spirit of Creation.**

*facing the center* – Creator of all, we give You thanks for all that You are and all that You bring to us within your creation. You are the Center of the Sacred Circle through which all creation is related. Lift our minds and our hearts above this earth so that we may see it as one place, one land, one home for all. Give us grace to live together with respect and love as we grow in Your spirit, for You are the Lover of All, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

**Amen.**

READING (Sister Katherine)

*Anandamayi Ma, a reading from Wild Mercy by Mirabai Starr (pg 71)*

READING (open)

*A Reading from the Hindu tradition by Sri Anandamayi Ma*

Your sorrow, your pain, your agony is indeed my sorrow. This body understands everything. You may want to leave this body. But this body won't leave you for a single day - it does not and never will leave you. One, who has once been attracted to this body, even though he may make a thousand attempts, will not be able to efface or blot out the memory of this body. It will remain and persist in his memory for all time.

READING (Sister Chloe)

*Kali, a reading from Wild Mercy by Mirabai Starr (pg 69)*

READING (Brother Paul)

*A Reading from the Hindu tradition by Sri Chinmoy*

Mother Kali, Mother Kali,  
Mother of the world-transforming  
and world-illuminating Fiery Dance,  
O Mother, You are at once the destruction-flood  
Of Concern-Light and Compassion-Ocean  
For our heart's aspiration-flame

READING (Sister Mary)

*Poetry of Emptiness, a reading from Wild Mercy by Mirabai Starr (pg 73)*

POEM (Brother Adam)

*A poem from the Sufi tradition by Rabia Al Basri*

Ironic, but one of the most intimate acts  
of our body is  
death.

So beautiful appeared my death - knowing who then I would kiss,  
I died a thousand times before I died.  
'Die before you die,' said the Prophet  
Muhammad.

Have wings that feared ever  
touched the Sun?  
I was born when all I once  
feared - I could  
love.

## READING *(Brother Trenton)*

### ***A Reading by Kahlil Gibran from the Prophet, On Death***

You would know the secret of death.

But how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life?

The owl whose night-bound eyes are blind unto the day cannot unveil the mystery of light.

If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life.

For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one.

In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond;

And like seeds dreaming beneath the snow your heart dreams of spring.

Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.

Your fear of death is but the trembling of the shepherd when he stands before the king whose hand is to be laid upon him in honour.

Is the shepherd not joyful beneath his trembling, that he shall wear the mark of the king?

Yet is he not more mindful of his trembling?

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun?

And what is it to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.

And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.

And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

## POEM *(Sister Katie)*

### ***A poem from the Sufi tradition by Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī***

A stone I died and rose again a plant;

A plant I died and rose an animal;

I died an animal and was born a man.

Why should I fear? What have I lost by death?

## READING *(Sister Anastasia)*

### ***The Way of the Little Flower, a reading from Wild Mercy by Mirabai Starr***

*(pg 67)*

## POEM *(open)*

### ***A poem from the Christian tradition by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux***

My heaven within the Host safe hid and peaceful, lies,

Where Jesus Christ abides, divinest, fairest Fair.

From that great fount of love doth endless life arise;

There, day and night, my Lord doth hearken to my prayer.  
When, in Thy perfect love (O moment blest and bright!)  
Thou comest, Spouse most pure, me to transform in Thee,  
That union of our hearts, that rapture of delight,-  
Oh, this is heaven for me!

My heaven is God alone, the Trinity Divine,  
Who dwells within my heart, the Prisoner of my love.  
There, contemplating Thee, I tell Thee Thou art mine;  
Thee will I love and serve until we meet above.  
My heaven it is to smile on Thee whom I adore,  
E'en when, to try my faith, from me Thou hidest Thee;  
Calmly on Thee to smile, until Thou smil'st once more,-  
Oh, this is heaven to me!

## THE GOSPEL *(Brother +Aidan)*

*The Holy Gospel according to St. John 3:13-17*

### **Glory to You, O Christ, glory to You!**

No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

The Gospel of Christ.

### **Glory to You, O Christ, glory to You!**

## LECTIO DIVINA

*You are invited to meditate on one of the readings.*

## SONG

### **Give Yourself to Love**

*Kate Wolf*

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 and loneliness can't hide.

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

I've walked these mountains in the rain: I've 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 you stand before me now.

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

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.

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

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Burdens, hopes, and prayers are shared. Candles or incense may be offered.*

In peace, we pray to You, O God.

### *Silence*

For all people in their daily life and work;

**For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.**

For this community, the nation, and the world;

**For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

For the just and proper use of Your creation;

**For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.**

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

**For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.**

For the peace and unity of the children of God;

**For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.**

For our Bishop Aidan; and for all who minister to the people of God;

**For all who serve God's children.**

For the special needs and concerns of this community, those mentioned  
and those kept in our hearts, Hear us, O Creator;

**For Your mercy is great.**

We thank You, Creator, for all the blessings of this life.

*The People may add their own thanksgivings aloud.*

We will exalt You, O God;

**And praise Your Name forever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died, that they may rest in a place of brightness, a place of refreshment, a place of repose; where all suffering, sorrow, and sighing have fled away.

*The People may add their own petitions aloud.*

O God, let Your loving-kindness be upon them;

**Who put their trust in You.**

We pray to You also for forgiveness of sin.

*Silence may be kept.*

**Have mercy upon us, most merciful Creator,  
in Your great compassion, forgive all our sin,  
the hurts we absorb from one another,  
and the hurts we have caused others,  
and so uphold us by Your life-giving Spirit  
that we may live and serve You  
and each other in newness of life. Amen.**

*The Bishop announces the absolution*

+ The All-Merciful Creator has mercy on us all, forgives us all our sin through the love of Christ, strengthens us in all goodness, releases us from our illusions of separation, and by the power of the Holy Spirit raises us to new and abundant life. **Amen.**

*Bell is rung for a moment of silence.*

## PRAYER TO THE THEOTOKOS

Rejoice O Theotokos, Full of Grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have given birth to the Healer of souls. **Amen.**

It is right, in truth, to call you Blessed, O Theotokos, Ever-Blessed, Most Pure and the Mother of our God. More honourable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify you. **Amen.**

Most Holy Theotokos, Mother of Life, ever vigilant in intercession and protection, deliver our souls from fear by your intercessions, and watch over us your children as we journey onward in faith and love. **Amen.**

# HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

*Theotokos is Greek for "God-Bearer," or "Birthgiver-of-God" the Orthodox title for Saint Mary, the Mother of God. It reminds us that we are all called to be God-bearers. This hymn, written by St. John of Damascus (676 - 746), is used in the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil.*

*All of creation rejoices in you, O full of grace, the ranks of Angels and the human race; hallowed Temple and spiritual Paradise, glory of women, from whom God was incarnate, As God of the ages became a little child, He made your body a throne, and your womb as vast as the universe. All of creation rejoices in you, O full of grace; glory to you!*

*Sung to the tune You Are My Sunshine*

**All of creation rejoices in you,  
Theotokos, full of grace,  
Hallowed Temple, Holy Mother  
Ranks of Angels sing your praise.**

**God of the ages became incarnate,  
and made your womb as vast as space.  
Now all creation rejoices in you,  
Theotokos, full of grace.**

## THE PEACE

Christ is in our midst.

**He is and ever shall be.**

Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

*The people greet one another with a sign of peace.*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER *New Zealand Prayer Book*

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer,**

**Life-giver, source of all that is and that shall be,**

**Father and Mother of us all. Loving God, in whom is heaven.**

**The hallowing of Your name echoes through the universe!**

**The way of Your justice be followed by the peoples of the earth!**

**Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!**

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom**

**sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

**In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.**

**In times of temptation and test, spare us.**

**From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For You reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

## **Lord of the Dance**

*Sydney Carter (1963)*

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,  
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,  
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth:  
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.*

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,  
But they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me;  
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;  
They came with me and the dance went on:

*Chorus*

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame:  
The holy people said it was a shame.  
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me on high,  
And they left me there on a cross to die:

*Chorus*

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;  
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back.  
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone;  
But I am the dance, and I still go on:

*Chorus*

They cut me down and I leapt up high;  
I am the life that'll never, never die.  
I'll live in you if you'll live in me:  
I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

# THE BLESSING

*The bishop gives a benediction then the people say the blessing together.*

*St. Clare's Blessing (cir. 1220 CE)*

**Live without fear: our Creator has made us holy,  
has always protected us, and loves us as a mother.  
Let us go in peace to follow the good road  
and may God's blessing be with us always. Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve.  
**Thanks be to God.**