

St Francis Episcopal Church, San Jose, CA
Morning Prayer, Thursday, August 11, 2022
Commemoration of Clare of Assisi
Nun, 1253

When 2 people are reading: READER 1: Plain Text *Reader 2: Italics* **Both: Bold**
If there are 2 lessons, a reading and subsequent canticle may be omitted.

You are invited to begin the service by lighting a candle.

We sing of God the Spirit,
 who from the beginning has swept over the face of creation,
 animating all energy and matter
 and moving in the human heart.

*We sing of God the Spirit,
 faithful and untameable,
 who is creatively and redemptively active in the world.*

The Spirit challenges us to celebrate the holy
 not only in what is familiar,
 but also in that which seems foreign.

*We sing of the Spirit,
 who speaks our prayers of deepest longing
 and enfolds our concerns and confessions,
 transforming us and the world.*

We offer our worship
 as an outpouring of gratitude and awe
 and a practice of opening ourselves
 to God's still, small voice of comfort,
 to God's rushing whirlwind of challenge.
Through word, music, art, and sacrament,
 in community and in solitude,
 God changes our lives, our relationships, and our world.¹

¹ excerpted from *Song of Faith* of the United Church of Canada
(2006). <http://www.united-church.ca/beliefs/statements/songfaith>

O Lord, open our lips

and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind. As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and forever. *Amen.*

Psalm 63

1 O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.

2 *Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place, that I might behold your power and your glory.*

3 For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; my lips shall give you praise.

4 *So will I bless you as long as I live and lift up my hands in your Name.*

5 My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

6 *When I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the night watches.*

7 For you have been my helper, and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice. 8 My soul clings to you; your right hand holds me fast.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

A reading from Ecclesiastes

5 *8 If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and right, do not be amazed at the matter; for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them. ⁹But all things considered, this is an advantage for a land: a king for a ploughed field.*

10 *The lover of money will not be satisfied with money; nor the lover of wealth, with gain. This also is vanity.*

11 *When goods increase, those who eat them increase; and what gain has their owner but to see them with his eyes?*

12 *Sweet is the sleep of labourers, whether they eat little or much; but the surfeit of the rich will not let them sleep.*

13 *There is a grievous ill that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owners to their hurt, ¹⁴and those riches were lost in a bad venture; though they are parents of children, they have nothing in their hands. ¹⁵As they came from their mother's womb, so they shall go again, naked as they came; they shall take nothing for their toil, which they may carry away with their hands.*

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Happy those who meditate on Wisdom, and fix their gaze on knowledge.

She will feed him with the bread of learning, and give him the water of understanding to drink.

He will lean upon her and not fall; he will trust in her and not be put to shame.

She will exalt him above his neighbors, and in the assembly she will make him eloquent.

Joy and gladness he will find, and an everlasting name he will inherit. *Sirach 14:20; 15:3-6*

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

12: 32 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

³³Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**I will take you away from among the nations,
gather you from all the foreign lands,
and bring you back to your own land.**

**I will sprinkle clean water upon you
to cleanse you from all your impurities,
and from all your idols I will cleanse you.**

**I will give you a new heart
and place a new spirit within you,
taking from your bodies your stony hearts
and giving you natural hearts.**

**I will put my spirit within you
and make you live by my statutes,
careful to observe my decrees.**

**You shall live in the land I gave your fathers;
you shall be my people,
and I will be your God.**

**I will take you away from among the nations,
gather you from all the foreign lands,
and bring you back to your own land.** *Ezekiel 36:24-28*

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.**

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth;**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit

and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy Name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen.

Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;
Govern and uphold them, now and always.
Day by day we bless you;
We praise your Name for ever.
Lord, keep us from all sin today;
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
Lord, show us your love and mercy;
For we put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope;
And we shall never hope in vain.

O God, whose blessed Son became poor that we, through his poverty, might become rich: Deliver us from an inordinate love of this world, that we, inspired by the devotion of your servant Clare, might serve you with singleness of heart and attain to the riches of the age to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. *Amen*²

O God, by Our God belongs to all people, and treasures each individual.
Let us pray for them.

Holy Friend, Healer and Liberator, we lift up before you those people who are at this very moment suffer from either accident, disease, their own folly, or the cruelty of others.

Please have mercy on us, O God.
Forgive our human iniquities and heal our many diseases.

At this moment many fellow humans beings are crying out against the cruelty of captivity: Hostages and abducted children, prisoners of war and political detainees, and many mistakenly convicted.

Please have mercy on us, O God
Forgive our human iniquities and heal our many diseases.

At this moment many of our fellows are suffering physical and mental abuse: Battered wives and children, others beaten up by robbers, tortured for information, verbally abused and denigrated, left with untended wounds, threatened with the injury of loved ones, sexually molested or slowly killed.

Please have mercy on us, O God
Forgive our human iniquities and heal our many diseases.

² Archbishop Justin Welby and Archbishop Stephen Cottrell <https://www.archbishopofyork.org/prayer-ukraine>

At this moment there are people who are traumatized by sudden injury: Victims of industry or the highways, soldiers wounded in battle, civilians bombed or terrorized, those maimed by the carelessness of others, and some who for personal thrills have taken big risks and lost.

Please have mercy on us, O God
Forgive our human iniquities and heal our many diseases.

At this moment there are thousands who are in terror or despair because of natural disasters: Flood and house fire, cyclone and earthquake, avalanche or bushfire, drought or lightning strike, storm waves or volcanic eruption.

Please have mercy on us, O God
Forgive our human iniquities and heal our many diseases.

Holy Friend, help your church to do whatever we can to lessen the multiple sufferings of humanity. Encourage each of us to rest our own pain and grief in your infinite mercy, and to not cease from righteous anger, prayer and appropriate action while injustice and neglect exist anywhere on this planet.

Please have mercy on us, O God.
*Through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen!*³

Most generous God:
with thankful hearts we rejoice in your goodness towards us
and in the many blessings that we receive each day.
In love you provide for your people's needs
and you accompany us along the way.

We give you our thanks
for the physical gifts that sustain us
and for the added blessings which make life more joyful and full.
We rejoice that you freely pour out the perfume of your love,
even though we are not worthy to receive it.

We are thankful for those who have been bountiful towards us,
giving of their time, their skills and their love.
As a token of our gladness, may we also bless others,
being generous with all that you have bestowed.⁴

³ <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/02/intercession-for-those-who-suffer.html> ~
written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on **Bruce Prewer's Home Page**. <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>

⁴ <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

Go out from here as workers in God's upside-down kingdom, where the last are first and the first are last, where needs are met in miraculous ways, and there is grace enough for all!

And may the blessing of God, the love of Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit surround and sustain us in the coming days. **Amen.**⁵

Clare Offreduccio, born in 1194, was the daughter of a wealthy family in Assisi. When she was eighteen years old, she heard a sermon by Francis of Assisi, and was moved by it to follow the example of the Franciscan brothers and vow herself to a life of poverty. Her family was horrified, and brought her back home by force; but one night, in a gesture both tactical and symbolic, she slipped out of her house through "the door of the dead" (a small side door that was traditionally opened only to carry out a corpse) and returned to the house of the Franciscans. Francis cut off her hair, and placed her in a nearby convent. Later a house was found for her, and she was eventually joined by two of her sisters, her widowed mother, and several members of the wealthy Ubaldini family of Florence. Clare's best friend, Pacifica, could not resist, and joined them, too.

The sisters of her order came to be known informally as Minoresses (Franciscan brothers are Friars Minor = "lesser brothers") or as [Poor Clares](#). When the order was formed, Francis suggested Clare for the Superior. But she refused the position until she turned twenty-one. They devoted themselves to prayer, nursing the sick, and works of mercy for the poor and neglected.

They adopted a rule of life of extreme austerity (more so than of any other order of women up to that time) and of absolute poverty, both individually and collectively. They had no beds. They slept on twigs with patched hemp for blankets. Wind and rain seeped through cracks in the ceilings. They ate very little, with no meat at all. Whatever they ate was food they begged for. Clare made sure she fasted more than anyone else. Despite this way of life, or perhaps because of it, the followers of Clare were the most beautiful young girls from the best families of Assisi.

The community of Poor Clares continues to this day, both in the Roman and in the Anglican communions.

- by *James Kiefer*

⁵ based on Exodus 16:2-15, Matthew 20:1-16
<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/09/benediction-upside-down-kingdom.html>