

**Darkness
into
Light**



12/22/24

When the Christmas Spirit Eludes You

trinity

@7

12.22.2024

Where the font is ***bold italic***, you are welcome to read aloud.

Prayer is from the Corymeela Community of Northern Ireland.

Jan Richardson is an artist, writer, and ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. Rev Richardson resides in Florida and serves as director of The Wellspring Studio, LLC. She has traveled widely as a retreat leader and conference speaker.

Welcome

Opening prayer

Set aside the noise.
Allow quiet prayer to enter
my soul.
Silence creates a space for my:
Heartache to be felt
Anger to be heard
Tears to fall
Laughter to comfort
Gratefulness to flow
Joy to hold
Wonder to exist
Faithfulness to grow

Hear my intentions God:

***Forgive my failings. See my intention to live in Your light.
To love as you love.***

Help me feel the flow of your loving Spirit, I pray. Amen

Interlude

Blessing for the Broken-Hearted

by Jan Richardson

There is no remedy for love but to love more.
– Henry David Thoreau

Let us agree
for now
that we will not say
the breaking
makes us stronger
or that it is better
to have this pain
than to have done
without this love.

Let us promise
we will not
tell ourselves
time will heal
the wound,
when every day
our waking
opens it anew.

Perhaps for now
it can be enough
to simply marvel
at the mystery
of how a heart
so broken
can go on beating,
as if it were made
for precisely this—

as if it knows
the only cure for love
is more of it,

as if it sees
the heart's sole remedy
for breaking
is to love still,

as if it trusts
that its own
persistent pulse
is the rhythm
of a blessing

we cannot
begin to fathom
but will save us
nonetheless.

Interlude

Readings from Scripture

The people walking in darkness are seeing a brilliant light—upon those who dwell in a land of deep shadows light is shining!

Isaiah 9:2

Interlude

In the Word was life, and that life was humanity's light—a Light that shines in the darkness, a Light that the darkness has never overtaken.

John 1:4-5

Interlude

If I say, "The darkness will hide me, and night will be my only light," even darkness won't be dark to you; the night will shine like the day—darkness and light are the same to you.

Psalms 139:10-11

Interlude

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. You don't build a city on a hill, then try to hide it, do you? You don't light a lamp, then put it under a bushel basket, do you? No, you set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house."

Matthew 5:14-15

Interlude

Send forth your light and your truth—let them guide me, let them bring me to your holy mountain, to your dwelling place.

Psalms 43:3

Interlude

The Bible readings are taken from *The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation* by Priests for Equality.

It's Like This

by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

The odds of you being alive are basically zero.

—Dina Spector reporting the work of Dr. Ali Binazir, Business Insider, June 11, 2012

It's like this. The sun itself
is constantly moving through space,
and yet it never leaves us.
Add this to the list of marvels—
like how a glass of water
was once a cloud,
like how love can grow in us
despite sorrow, fear.
Given such gifts,
one must wonder how it is
our arms aren't constantly raised
in spontaneous praise for life.
I know and you know
why sometimes our hands stay down.
But now, standing still together,
even as we're spinning
and racing through space,
even if it's only a whisper,
when faced with the truth
that great forces hold
our lives in place,
it feels right to say
thank you, thank you,
eyes lifting, heart trembling,
the improbable earth
so solid beneath our feet.

Interlude

Guided Meditation

Music during candle lighting



Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer is a published Colorado poet and acappella singer. She wrote a poem a day from 2006 until the death of her son in August 2021. After taking a break from writing, she resumed her practice of a poem a day. Visit her at www.wordwoman.com

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Mystery of winter skies, we thank you in the darkening hour for opening our eyes to see your starlit beauty; for parting the wide heavens to send your gentle light; for offering your word to take our mortal flesh.

He was promised by those who shared your dream of peace; John the Baptist cleared his way with words of desert fire; Mary and Joseph accepted his coming with tenderness and faith; we know that he draws near again to show us who we really are with honesty and love.

Now we take up the song of hope that we might awaken to his coming among us and the world be touched by the footfall of his glory:

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.***

Hosannah in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosannah in the highest.

We ask that your Holy Spirit will fall upon us and upon these gifts that they may be to us the body and blood of our lord and brother, Jesus Christ; who, on the night that he was betrayed, gathered with his faltering friends for a meal that tasted of freedom.

Calling them to his table, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said: ***"This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me."***

In the same way after supper, he took the cup, saying: ***"This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, to remember me."***

Therefore we proclaim him as creation's host, transforming poverty into plenty in the reckless generosity of love.

Inspire us with the hope that one day death and greed will be no more and people without number will come from east and west, north and south to share the kingdom meal. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom

and with whom and in whom in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory are yours, Author of blessings, for ever and ever. ***Amen.***

This version of the Lord's Prayer was written by Monica Furlong (1930-2003), a British author, journalist, and activist.

Now, as Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,
***God, who cares for us,
The wonder of whose presence fills us with awe.
Let kindness, justice and love shine in our world.
Let your secrets be known here as they are in heaven.
Give us the food and the hope we need for today.
Forgive us our wrongdoing
as we forgive the wrongs done to us.
Protect us from pride and from despair
and from the fear and hate which can swallow us up.
In you is truth, meaning, glory and power,
while worlds come and go.
Amen.***

Communion

The priest breaks the bread and says,

The disciples knew the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

Were not our hearts burning within us as we walked along the road?

Receiving Communion

For those of you online, you are invited to have a morsel of bread and a sip of wine (or any substitutes you choose) during the time that communion is being shared.

For those in the chapel, you are invited to come forward where Matt will offer you a morsel of bread dipped in wine. Please let the ministers of communion know if you prefer not to have your bread dipped in the wine. Also, let them know if you need a gluten-free wafer instead of wheat bread.

After Communion

Let us pray.

God of new beginnings, the veil between us thins as we draw near around your wisdom and table. Strengthen and renew us, kindle in us the fire of your Spirit; and may your light so shine through us that all may welcome you.

Amen.

Closing blessing

I cannot tell you
how the light comes.
What I know
is that it is more ancient
than imagining.
That it travels

across an astounding expanse
to reach us.
That it loves
searching out
what is hidden
what is lost

At Trinity,
everyone is
welcome to receive
communion.

Blessing written
by Jan Richardson,
writer, artist,
conference speaker,
and minister in the
United Methodist
Church. She resides
in Florida.

what is forgotten
or in peril
or in pain.
That it has a fondness
for the body
for finding its way
toward flesh
for tracing the edges
of form
for shining forth
through the eye,
the hand,
the heart.
I cannot tell you
how the light comes,
but that it does.
That it will.
That it works its way
into the deepest dark

that enfolds you,
though it may seem
long ages in coming
or arrive in a shape
you did not foresee.
And so
may we this day
turn ourselves toward it.
May we lift our faces
to let it find us.
May we bend our bodies
to follow the arc it makes.
May we open
and open more
and open still
to the blessed light
that comes.

amen

Dismissal

Go forth into this December night, knowing you are a child of God who is loved completely.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Please stay for a reception after the service.

Trinity @7 meets again on January 5, 2025

announcements - see insert



Trinity is an Episcopal Church in the Diocesan Partnership of Western New York and Northwest Pennsylvania.

Much gratitude to our musicians, **Krista Seddon** on piano and **Matt Harris** on saxophone.

Thank you to Matt Lincoln for bringing us together in every way he can imagine and then for being with us and reflecting from his heart.

Thank you to our host and readers.

Gratitude to our tech volunteers, Karen and June.

Thank you to all the poets and musicians in the world who reflect life back to us in the most beautiful ways.

And of course, thank you.



Sign up [here](#) to get Trinity's eNews to stay in touch!

If you'd like to visit Trinity Church in person for some quiet contemplation or to view the stunning stained glass windows, you can schedule an appointment with the parish administrator Colleen O'Neill, coneill@trinitybuffalo.org.



Your donation can be an expression of your gratitude for Trinity and all the blessings in your life and your hope for health in the world. You can [donate online here](#), initiate an online donation by texting TRINITYBUFFALO to 73256, scan the QR code, or as you exit, you can make a contribution in the Big Blue Urn.



Thank you for your participation and contribution. Peace.

All services are in person AND online:

Sunday @10:30am Includes communion at an open table

Sunday @7:00pm An encounter with God through poetry, jazz, and meditation.

Wednesday @Noon Prayer and holy conversation

Thursday @7pm 12steps@Trinity, based on 12-step spirituality

Facebook: [@Trinitybuffalo](#)

YouTube: [Trinity Church Buffalo](#)

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