

# St Benedict's Episcopal Church

~ Tending Mind and Soul in Los Osos ~

#### **Blue Christmas**

December 18, 2024 7:00 pm

Our welcome knows no boundaries of age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic condition, or physical or mental ability—your presence here today is a blessing!

### **About Our Service**

Wherever you are on your faith journey, you are warmly welcome at St. Benedict's! If you are unfamiliar with the ritual customs of the Episcopal Church, simply rest into the liturgy and let the rest of the congregation carry you in worship.

### ~ Prelude ~

"Original Improvisation" by Paul Burkle

Officiant: We gather in your presence, O God,

People: in our need,

And bringing with us the needs of the world.

Officiant: We come to you, for you come to us in Jesus,

People: and you know by experience what human life is like.

Officiant: We come with our faith and with our doubts; People: we come with our hopes and with our fears.

Officiant: We come as we are because you have invited us,

People: and you promise to never turn us away.

# **J** Song

### "O Lord, hear my prayer"

Taizé



Officiant: Loving God,
you hold this space with us tonight,
where many have come before us
seeking your healing, strength and love.

You know us, O God: you understand who we are, you know what troubles and puzzles us, what makes us smile and what makes us sad. You listen to our questions and our prayers.

You know the people we love, and the people we struggle with. Sometimes we hurt others; sometimes we hurt ourselves.

So, we bring our own hurt, asking for your healing;

and we bring the hurt we have caused others asking for forgiveness.

Listen to these words of Jesus, words that we can trust:

"Don't be afraid."

"I love you."

"Your sins are forgiven."

"I will be with you always."

Write these words in our hearts, loving God, let them take root in our living, that we may know your peace. Amen.

**Psalm 121** S415

I lift up my eyes to the **hills**; \* from where is my help to **come**?

My help comes from the **LORD**, \* the maker of heaven and **earth**.

He will not let your foot be **moved** \* and he who watches over you will not fall a-sleep.

Behold, he who keeps watch over **Israel** \* shall neither slumber nor **sleep**;



© 1956, Jerome Webster Meachen.

The LORD himself watches **over you**; \* the LORD is your shade at your right **hand**,

So that the sun shall not strike you by **day**, \* nor the moon by **night**.

The LORD shall preserve you from all **evil**; \* it is he who shall keep you **safe**.



The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming **in**, \* from this time forth for ever-**more**.

© 1956, Jerome Webster Meachen.

### Matthew 11:28-30

Lector: A reading from Matthew's Gospel

Jesus said to the crowd, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.".

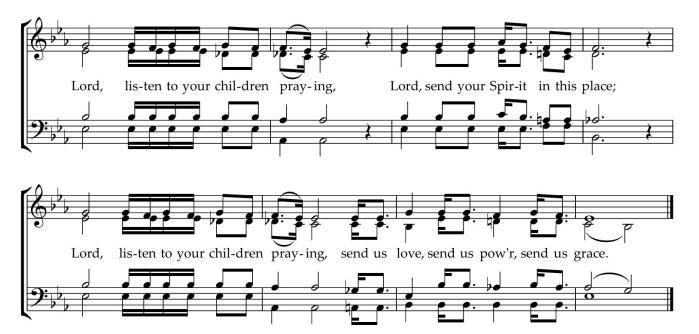
Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: Thanks be to God.

**Reflection**The Rev. Linzi Stahlecker

# **♪** Prayers for Others

The following song is sung as a refrain among the prayers.



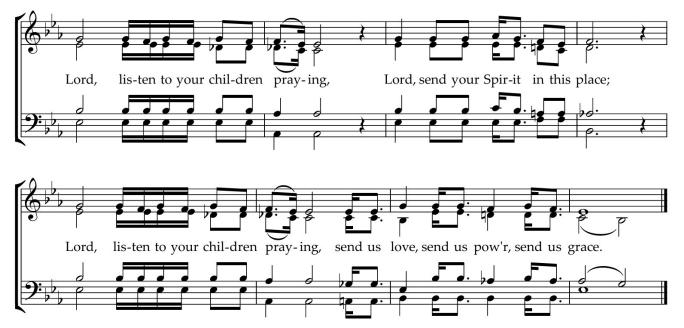
TEXT: Ken Medema (b. 1943); MUSIC: Children Prayer, Ken Medema; © 1973 Hope Publishing Co.

### Officiant:

From deep within our being we call upon you, O God, for through you all can be made whole. Hear us as we voice our concerns for the people of earth.

We pray for those who cry out in physical pain or who suffer silently and long for healing. We pray for those with mental anguish, or who are anxious or fear the future, who at night cry, "I wish to God it were morning," and in the morning cry, "I wish to God it were night."

A brief silence is kept for all to offer names, silently or aloud, followed by the Refrain.



TEXT: Ken Medema (b. 1943); MUSIC: Children Prayer, Ken Medema; © 1973 Hope Publishing Co.

We pray for communities in which people deal with disaster, hunger or poverty, or who are victimized because of race, history, gender or sexuality,

A brief silence is kept for all to offer names, silently or aloud, followed by the Refrain.

We pray for those who mourn, who grieve the loss of love or a loved one, or who grieve the loss of their own resilience, freedom or hope,

A brief silence is kept for all to offer names, silently or aloud, followed by the Refrain.

We pray for those who are near death or who fear death, and for those who have made the last journey from life to greater life,

A brief silence is kept for all to offer names, silently or aloud, followed by the Refrain.

And remembering others in our hearts, whose deepest needs may be known to you alone, we commend them and ourselves to your affirming and restoring grace.

A brief silence is kept for all to offer names, silently or aloud, followed by the Refrain.

### Invocation

Officiant: Come, Holy Spirit,

you have placed yearning in our hearts, now bring healing to body, mind and spirit.

Bless the heads that bow,

the hands that touch,

the hearts that hope.

Bring healing;

bring peace.

# **Candle Lighting**

At this time, all are invited to come forward to light a candle as a sign of our turning toward the love of God.



MUSIC: Jacques Berthier (1924–1994); WORDS: cf. Psalm 27:14; © Ateliers et Presses de Taizé.

(we pause for a time of silence and stillness)

# **Closing Prayer**

Dorothy McRae McMahon, adapt.

Officiant: Watch now, dear Lord,

with those who wake or watch or weep tonight and give your angels charge over those who sleep.

All: Tend the sick, O Christ,
give rest to the weary,
bless the dying,
soothe the suffering,
shield the joyous,
and all for your love's sake. Amen.



WORDS: Stanzas 1, 2, & 4, Jaroslav J. Vajda (1919-2008), 
© Concordia Publishing House, alt.; stanza 3, anonymous, public domain MUSIC: Ar Hyd y Nos, trad. Welsh, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958); 
© Oxford University Press, alt.

### **♪** Postlude

"Original Improvisation"

by Paul Burkle

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# **Ministers of the Service**

Officiant: The Rev. Linzi Stahlecker

Lector: Lisa Gonzalez Music: Paul Burkle

Ushers: Barbara Schippers

Altar Guild: Lisa Gonzalez & Diana Hammerlund

Technical: Hannah-Jaye Matthews

### **Land Acknowledgment**

We acknowledge with gratitude the yak tityu tityu yak tiłhini (ytt) / the Northern Chumash People, and the Salinan Tribe / the T'epot'aha'l, "People of the Oaks," on whose ancestral homelands we gather, and whose vibrant culture continues today. May we always remember that the Earth does not belong to us, that we belong to the Earth, and that we are all relatives in life. Help us to be instruments of justice and peace for all people in today's world.

### **Our Mission Statement**

St. Benedict's is an inclusive Christian community that celebrates the divine in all beings, and inspires spiritual growth through joyful sacramental worship, loving service, creative expression, thoughtful inquiry, and commitment to social justice.

# **Our Inclusivity Statement**

The people of St Benedict's are called to share God's love as we minister with and to all persons in Los Osos and beyond, providing worship, nurture, fellowship, and service.

Our welcome knows no boundaries of age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic condition, or physical or mental ability.

We embrace and seek to preserve the beautiful, amazing diversity of God's creation. We cooperate in ministry with other local churches and groups of God's people as we participate in the worldwide mission of Christ.



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