



# 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.*

### ♪ Song

### “O Lord, hear my prayer”

Taizé

1. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; when I call an - swer me.  
2. The Lord is my song; the Lord is my praise: all my hope comes from God.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; come and lis - ten to me.  
The Lord is my song; the Lord is my praise: God, the well-spring of life.

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**.



© 1956, Jerome Webster Meachen.

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

## 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.*

Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, Lord, send your Spir-it in this place;

Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

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.*



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, Lord, send your Spir-it in this place;



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

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.

## ♪ Song

### “Wait for the Lord”

Taizé

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord; be strong, take heart!

The image shows a musical score for the song "Wait for the Lord" by Taizé. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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.*

## ♪ Closing Song

## “All through the night”

1. "Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, nev - er a - lone.  
2. "Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.  
3. Deep the si - lence round us spread - ing, all through the night;  
4. "I the Lord will bless and keep you, and give you peace.

Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.  
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.  
dark the path that we are tread - ing, all through the night.  
I the Lord will smile up - on you, and give you peace.

In my love's bap - tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for - ev - er.  
Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here my ten - der com - fort stilled you.  
Still the com - ing day dis - cern - ing, by the hope with - in us burn - ing,  
I the Lord will be your Fa - ther, Sav - ior, Com - fort - er and Broth - er.

Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, you are my own."  
Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure."  
to the dawn our foot - steps turn - ing, all through the night.  
Go, my chil - dren, I will keep you, and give you peace."

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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Portions of this liturgy were adapted from the Iona Community.

## **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 tilhini (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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