

God, walk with us through this day.

How often do we think of God, of our Christian identity, throughout the week?
Is our faith a Sunday-focused activity, or is it woven through our lives?

For the ancient Celtic Christians we are exploring this month,
it was very much an all-the-time endeavor.

They were very conscious of praying through the day,
sometimes formally, sometimes not.

In this, as in so many other aspects of Celtic spirituality we have explored –
the awareness of God in nature, in journeying, in spiritual friendship –
they picked up right where Jesus laid off.

For Jesus did not speak of God as the leaders of his tradition had –
as far away, lofty, unknowable, often angry,
a capricious deity to be worshipped, feared and appeased.

Jesus spoke of God as Abba, Daddy;

he invited people to become aware of the love and power of God
right where they were, where they lived, where they worked.

To convey the nature of God and God’s kingdom, he told little stories set in
homes and gardens, businesses and pastures, vineyards and fishing boats.

So we have two little one-liners today – likening the realm of God to
a woman who works yeast into a dough to make a bread
that is much more than what it starts out being; likening the joy of God
when we repent to a woman who sweeps her house seeking a precious coin
that has been lost and the relief and exuberance she feels when she finds it.

The story we heard from the Hebrew Bible also shows us God showing up
in a widow’s kitchen, bringing unexpected, inexplicable provision.

God is not only “up there” removed from us, holy and transcendent;

God is also right here, with us, in us, around us, holy and immanent.

Transcendence and immanence are the theological terms

for these two ends of the spectrum of how we understand God.

I think Jesus weighed in at the immanent, immediate, here and now,

intimately with us end of that scale, and that feels most real to me.

That is why I try to craft worship that is experiential, vivid, playful.

Because God is here to play with us! Worship is serious play,
in which we act out our core stories and learn from them.
Have you ever watched a child engaged in deep play, immersed in a story,
perhaps one they have been told or have told before, and each time the
details are slightly different, going deeper...
That's what we do here, play out the story at the heart of our faith,
The story of a God who did not remain "there and later,"
but came to be with us here and now.

The Celtic Christians seemed to have an innate understanding of that.
Their prayers show their sense of play, as serious as they are.
Christianity was not a "church thing" to them –
it was an everywhere, all the time thing. It was very much an at-home thing.
They prayed constantly, and wrote prayers to cover every part of the day,
from rising to laying the fire, to blessing the house,
to getting dressed prayers, cooking prayers, blessings of each aspect of food.
Here's a prayer for farmers and herders:

*Be the sacred Three of Glory aye at peace with me,
With my horses, with my cattle, with my woolly sheep in flocks.
With the crops growing in the field or ripening in the sheaf,
On the machair, on the moor, in cole, in heap or stack.
blessing the cooking, and each aspect of food*

They prayed at the end of the day, when the fire was "smooored" or put out
for the night. They prayed at bedtime:

*I lie down this night with God and God will lie down with me;
I lie down this night with Christ, and Christ will lie down with me;
I lie down this night with the Spirit and the Spirit will lie down with me.
God and Christ and the Spirit be lying down with me.*

What would it look like for us to weave our life in God so thickly through our days?
For me, a prayer when I start my *New York Times* puzzles in the morning.
A prayer for firing up the computer; a prayer when riding the tractor mower;
a prayer while commuting or before shopping.
Prayers at meals, sure – but maybe more intentional ones.
Setting alerts on our devices to remind us to stop, stretch, stand,
and talk to God about how our day is going.

How vivid might our faith become if our walk with Jesus became an everywhere, all the time thing, not a church thing?

Jesus never invited anyone into a church building.

He did invite us to gather to share our sacred story, and stories; to praise God; to remember him in the breaking of the bread.

And then to be sent forth again, to know him in the kitchen and bathroom, the garden and office, the dining room and the bedroom; to feel his joy when we accomplish a task or find a lost thing; to feel his comfort when we have an argument with a loved one or are frustrated with ourselves; to feel his peace in all circumstances, as he promised us we would have it?

Then our gathering here will be not the main event for experiencing God but the celebration of all the places and ways we'd experienced God from noon on Sundays to 9/11 am the following week.

Then our faith will have the kind of vitality that draws others in, that catalyzes a reaction that makes something great out of small things, like yeast, that a woman took and mixed in with flour and worked through the dough until ALL of it rose.

We are in the business of rising.

Amen.

Luke 13:20-21

And again he said, 'To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

Luke 15:8-10

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."