



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Port Townsend, Washington

About Centering Prayer at St. Paul's, Port Townsend

Monday-Wednesday-Friday 9-9:30 am

*Zoom links can be found on the
St. Paul's website www.stpaulspt.org*

All are Welcome!

Centering Prayer at St. Paul's, via Zoom, began in the spring of 2020. Participants join via a Zoom link that is accessed on St. Paul's web site. A simple formula is used:

- Chant music as attendees gather
- Physical preparation – body and breath
- A reading
- Chimes to lead into 20 minutes of silence
- Chimes to signal the end of the silence
- A second reading
- The Lord's Prayer
- Sending Forth

Five minutes before the start of the session (8:55 am) audio of chant music is available to begin the prayer preparation process. The music of Hildegard works well:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahqq3dH1Q14>

At 9:00 am the host/facilitator begins with a brief welcome and participants greet one another.

After microphones are muted, the facilitator leads the group through a relaxation process, inviting participants to pay attention to their bodies through small movements. Attention is paid to areas in the body that seem tense, ache, or are in need of some healing prayer, love and light, remembering that the body will serve to support the time of prayer. Keeping a straight spine is encouraged with recognition that all bodies are different and that the best positioning of the body is discerned by the individual.

The group then focuses on taking three slow deep cleansing breaths, inhaling through the nose, pausing, then exhaling through the mouth, and pausing at the end of the exhalation.

The facilitator then offers a brief prayer or poem to lead into the silence.

Following the reading, the facilitator rings a chime slowly, three times. When the sound dissipates, the facilitator mutes the microphone as 20 minutes of silence begins.

At the end of 20 minutes of silence, the facilitator unmutes and rings the chime, slowly, three times.

A second brief reading is offered.

The group is then invited to share in the Lord's Prayer, in whatever version they prefer.

At the end of the Lord's Prayer, participants are invited to unmute for a brief time of conversation and mutual blessings for the day ahead.

NOTES: As Centering Prayer at St. Paul's progressed, participants began sharing facilitation opportunities. Facilitators have differing styles and differing preferences for types of readings and prayers. Our group has encouraged new facilitators as they develop their facilitation skills.

The benefits of Centering Prayer are best gleaned through regular practice. A set time for Centering Prayer, with a group, offers support in this spiritual practice. Zoom makes gathering for Centering Prayer easy.

We recognize that Centering Prayer can include a "sacred word." Some participants do use a sacred word in the silence. Because we have a group who meets together regularly, we don't repeat instructions about Centering Prayer basics. Just before the pandemic, a quite morning focusing on information about, and the experience of, Centering Prayer was offered. The primary focus of St. Paul's Centering Prayer is to provide a regular time and supportive structure for the practice.

If you have questions, please contact Dianne Andrews: rev.dandrews@hotmail.com

Example of a First Reading

*The sun has risen, a new day has dawned.
We respond in gratitude
by seeking communion with the one who has
blessed us with the morning's light.*

*God invites us to come near
to attend to the gentle stirring of love within,
to know presence in the silence.
Nothing more,
Nothing less.*

*Luminous, peaceful, still, and full...
We offer our assent...
We say "yes" to the invitation to come near...
In the beauty of stillness...
In the peace of sacred silence...*

*Gracious God,
lead us into the silence
To the place where our yearning meets
Your desire for us.
Draw us inward
That we may rest in the mystery
That is your embrace
Unburdened
Released
Resting
In
You...*

Example of a Second Reading

*Loving God, as we prepare to move
into the activities of this day,
we thank you for the gifts of silence and rest.*

*On this new day, helps us to journey
beyond the familiar
and into the unknown.*

*Give us the faith and strength to meet
the challenges ahead,
and to break fresh ground in You.*

*Christ of the mysteries, we trust You
to be stronger than each storm, each challenge.*

Continue to fill our hearts that we may abide in your love.

*Christ, as a light, illumine and guide us.
Christ, as a shield overshadow us.
Christ under us;
Christ over us;
Christ beside us on our left and on our right.*

God of life, help us, this day, to walk in the light of your love.