

Inclusive Liturgy for LGBT History Month

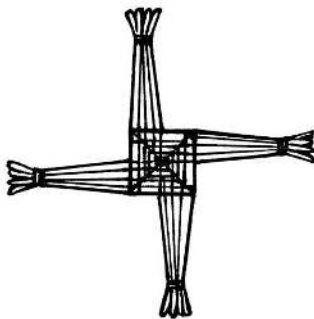


Brigid and Darlughdach

Welcome

We have gathered together here some resources to be used in worship services during LGBT History Month. Since February has been established as the month in the UK when we celebrate the contribution of LGBTQ+ people to our history and society, it is fitting that we reflect on the lives of St Brigid and Darlughdach whose feast day falls on 1st of that month. You will see that their lives together also have much to say to how we celebrate the wide range of human relationships present in our churches.

St Brigid's Cross is traditionally the sign of Spring in Ireland and is often hung over the doorways of houses and churches. You may wish to wear St Brigid's Cross as a sign of LGBT History month.



Please feel free to take and adapt this material for use in your local context. All we ask is that you acknowledge your sources and say a kind word or two about the work of *Dignity and Worth*.

For more information, please contact info@dignityandworth.org.uk

St. Brigid (Bridget, Bride, Efraid) is one of the patron saints of Ireland. She is best known for her charity, miracles, and lavish hospitality. She shares her name with a Celtic goddess and it may have been she was originally a high priestess before converting to Christianity. One of the symbols of the goddess and of St Brigid, is a perpetual fire.

Tradition has it that St. Mel, Bishop of Ardagh, ordained her a bishop. When questioned, Mel responded that she alone of the abbesses of Kildare would be a bishop; but her successors would continue to have a bishop's jurisdictional authority. Indeed they did. The other bishops sat at the feet of Brigid's successors, until the Synod of Kells ended it in 1152. Brigid's double monastery at Kildare was built at a location sacred to the goddess. It's perpetual fire, kept burning in Brigid's memory, was extinguished in 1540 with the monastery's desolution.

A younger nun named Darlughdach (pronounced: DAR-le-da) served as Brigid's ambassador and her "anam cara" or soul friend. The two women were so close that they slept in the same bed. Like many Celtic saints, Brigid believed that each person needs a soul friend to discover together that God speaks most powerfully in the seemingly mundane details of shared daily life.. When Brigid talked about her own death, Darlughdach begged that they might die together. Brigid responded that she would outlive her by one year and succeed her as abbess. After this they would be reunited in heaven. Brigid died in 525 on February 1st the date of Imbolic, the annual festival of goddess Brigid. Since Darlughdach died exactly one year later, they share the same feast.

The companionship and passion between Brigid and Darlughdach resonate powerfully with the love and companionship shared between LGBTQ+ couples and non-traditional relationships today. Each partnership, like theirs, is a symbol of God's eternal hospitality, extending the warmth and light of the perpetual fire of self-giving love.

Call to worship

Did I not feel for those whose day was hard?

Was not my soul grieved for the poor? *Cf. Job 30:25*

Collect

Merciful God, source of all loving kindness,
you called Saint Brigid and Saint Darlughdach
to teach the new commandment of love
through their life together of hospitality and care;
may their example inspire in us
a spirit of generosity and a passion for justice
that, in our hearts and lives,
all may witness your fearless love:
Through Jesus Christ, your Living Word,
in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Readings

Job 31:16-20, 24-25, 31-32 or Ephesians 3:14-21
Luke 6:32-38

Responsorial Psalm Ps 106:35-38, 41-42.

**R/. (v.1) Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
for his love has no end.**

He changes desert into streams,
thirsty ground into springs of water.

There he settles the hungry
and they build a city to dwell in.

**R/. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
for his love has no end.**

They sow fields and plants their vines;
these yield crops for the harvest.

He blesses them; they grow in numbers.
He does not let their herds decrease.

**R/. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
for his love has no end.**

He raises the needy from distress;
makes families numerous as a flock.

The upright see it and rejoice
but all who do wrong are silenced.

**R/. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;
for his love has no end.**

Intercessions

Let us offer our prayers of intercessions to the God of radical inclusion and passionate justice:

For the life of the world, remembering especially those places where our LGBTQ kin live in fear of persecution and violence:

We pray for freedom

We pray for freedom

For those in authority: for teachers and administrators, for religious leaders, for politicians, and those responsible for public safety and changing attitudes:

We pray for wisdom

We pray for wisdom

For churches and places of worship, communities where the love of God is preached and LGBTQ people long for acceptance:

We pray for compassion

We pray for compassion

For gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, and especially for teenagers, those who seek the support of their friends and families and the strength to be who they are:

We pray for courage

We pray for courage

For those who preach and practice hate, and who commit acts of violence against our community:

We pray for transformation

We pray for transformation

We remember those who have ended their lives rather than face the taunts of their peers, or the rejection of the church:

We pray for peace

We pray for peace

Forgive us for our silence. Forgive us for the ways in which we contribute to a society and church in which too many live in fear. Grant us grace to stand with those who are persecuted, bullied or silenced, that we might bring about love in the world. We ask all our prayers through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

(adapted from <http://religiousinstitute.org/resources/lgbtqworship/>)

Prayer over the Offerings

As we present these gifts, O Lord,
In communion with Saint Brigid and Saint Darlughdach,
may we come to know you as the source of all true love.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

God is with us.

The Spirit is here.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Always and everywhere we offer our thanks:

for your wonderful love seen in Brigid and Darlughdach;

for opening their hearts and hands to the poor;

for their hospitality which sought the image of your Son
in every welcomed guest.

Through them you revealed the way of Mary,

the Mother of your Son,

in passionate service and holiness of life.

And so, with the Angels and Archangels,

and with the great multitude of the Saints,

we sing the hymn of your praise, as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory:

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who comes in the Name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

Gracious God,

we recall the death of your Son, Jesus Christ,

proclaim his resurrection and ascension,

and look for his coming again.

For on the night in which he was betrayed,
he took bread and blessed it,
and breaking it, gave it to his disciples, saying:
'Take and eat: this is my body given for you.
Do this to remember me.'
When supper was ended, he took the cup,
gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,
'This is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, to remember me.'

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Send your Spirit upon us, loving God,
and upon these gifts of bread and wine:
make them for us the body and blood of your Son,
make us for others the Body of Christ, your gift to the world.

Unite us with your Church in heaven and on earth,
as we offer our thanks and praise, our gifts and our lives,
all for your glory and honour.

In the name of Jesus, our brother, who prays with us:

Our Father ...

The Breaking of the Bread

The Bread of Life:

For the healing of the nations.

The elements are distributed according to local custom.

Prayer after Communion

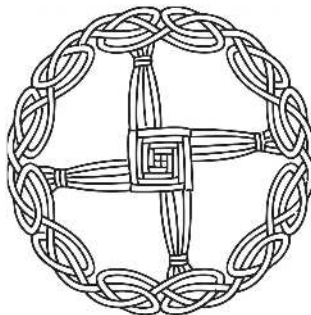
Gracious God,
you give us food from heaven,
to strengthen our love;
grant, we pray, that through our works of justice
and acts of loving kindness,
the perpetual light of your truth would shine:
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Solemn Blessing

May God, who in Brigid and Darlughdach, has provided
us the example of generosity, companionship and care:
keep your ears ever open
to the cry of the poor and excluded. **Amen.**

May God fill you with love and passion,
as you honour Brigid and Darlughdach,
whose hearts and minds were aflame
with the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**



Acknowledgements

Material taken from:

<http://www.liturgies.net/saints/brigid/mass.htm>

<https://qspirit.net/brigid-darlughdach-saint-soulmate/>

<http://religiousinstitute.org/resources/lgbtqworship/>

<http://www.hortusmagnificent.com/keeping/2015/11/07/saints-brigid-and-darlughdach-of-kildare/>