God Welcomes All

Pershore Abbey Iona Service 5pm Sunday 27th February 2022 We have been loved by God from before the beginning. (Julian of Norwich)

WELCOME

GATHERING SONG:

☐ God welcomes all, strangers and friends.

God's love is strong and it never ends. (x3)

INTRODUCTION

OPENING RESPONSES: (from An Iona Prayer Book)

Leader: Lord, you have made your home on earth,

ALL: and dwell among us.

Leader: You, who are highest in all creation, journey with each and every one of us,

ALL: and welcome the weary.

Leader: You give to all, who thirst for the water of life,

ALL: and fill with good things, all who hunger.

Leader: You welcome us home with open arms;

ALL: every new day, you warm us in the fire of your amazing love.

SONG: Jesus calls us here to meet him,

as, through word and song and prayer, we affirm God's promised presence where his people live and care.

Praise the God who keeps his promise; praise the Son who calls us friends; praise the Spirit who, among us,

Jesus calls us to confess him
Word of Life and Lord of all,
sharer of our flesh and frailness
saving all who fail and fall.
Tell his holy human story;
tell his tales that all may hear;
tell the world that Christ in glory
came to earth to meet us here.

to our hopes and fears attends.

Jesus calls us to each other:
vastly different though we are;
race and colour, class and gender
neither limit nor debar.
Join the hand of friend and stranger;
join the hand of age and youth;
join the faithful and the doubter
in their common search for truth.

2

SONG:

Listen to the word which God has spoken;

listen to the One who is close at hand:

listen to the voice behind creation;

listen even if you don't understand. (sing twice)

BIBLE READING: Mark 2 v13 - 17

Reader: Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he

began to teach them. ¹⁴ As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me.' Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?'

¹⁷On hearing this, Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'

SONG:

Listen to the word which God has spoken;

listen to the One who is close at hand;

listen to the voice behind creation;

listen even if you don't understand. (sing twice)

<u>PEBBLES:</u> During the following piece of music, you are invited to choose a pebble. Each pebble is as unique as you, as unique as every person. Look at its colour. Feel its texture and shape. Imagine how it has been formed and marked by the forces of nature; feel the places where it has been scratched, broken, compressed or rounded.

MUSIC: ℷℷ

Leader: (Prayer from 'An Iona Prayer Book')

God invites us to open our hearts to him. To let his love into the most painful places of our lives, whether in body, mind or spirit. We then may begin to see our fragility and brokenness in a new light, not as aspects of ourselves of which we should be ashamed, but in fact as ways in which Christ will come closer to us. There is nothing that God considers too trivial or too shameful to help us with, as we turn to him in expectant prayer.

Spirit of the Living Christ, we thirst for your presence; the searchings in our mind, the longings in our heart, truly, our souls are restless. Yet you understand, and it is your healing acceptance which enfolds us, when our failures overwhelm, and our guilt imprisons, even our best intentions. Amen

(If you have any thoughts or concerns you would like to share, please do so. And please feel free to lay your pebble down, around the cross at any time in the following piece of music or prayers.)

MUSIC: 1

PRAYER: (A prayer from South Africa)

Leader: You asked for our hands that you might use them for your purpose,

ALL: We gave them for a moment then withdrew them, for the work was hard.

Leader: You asked for our mouth to speak out against injustice.

ALL: We gave you a whisper that we might not be accused.

Leader: You asked for our eyes, to see the pain of poverty.

ALL: We closed them for we did not want to see.

Leader: You asked for our life, that you might work through us.

ALL: We gave a small part that we might not be too involved.

Leader: Lord, forgive our calculated efforts to serve you, only when it is convenient for us to

do so, only in the places where it is safe to do so, and only with those who make it

easy to do so.

ALL: Father, forgive us. Amen

SONG:

■ Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me,

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me: break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. (sing 3 times)

INTERCESSORY SONG: ♬

All (chorus): Jesus Christ, Lord of all, stay with us now.

Cantor: 1. Day is almost ended.

All (chorus): Jesus Christ, Lord of all, stay with us now.

Cantor: 2. Find your way among us: All: (Chorus)

Cantor: 3. Listen to the anxious: All: (Chorus)

Cantor: 4. Sit beside the lonely: All: (Chorus)

Cantor: 5. Contradict the callous: All: (Chorus)

Cantor: 6. Comfort and disturb us: All: (Chorus)

Cantor: 7. Do not ever leave us: All: (Chorus)

Cantor: 8. Even when we doubt you: All: (Chorus)

Cantor: 9. Maker of tomorrow: All: (Chorus)

Cantor: 10. Keep us through the darkness: All: (Chorus)

SONG: ∫ (tune Loch Lomond)

Love is the welcome that comes from the heart and opens its door to the stranger which makes of its house, a resting-place for all, for the sake of the babe in the manger.

Love is the struggle for justice and peace that the cause of the weak may inherit, and the wretched of the earth, see a new day brought to birth, in the strength of the gentle of spirit.

Love is the touch that does not draw back from the maimed and the hurt and the broken, but embraces their pain, and calls them by their name, that the word of compassion be spoken.

Love is the journey whose reason is faith, though its step may be faint and hesitating, but though the march is long, and the courage be not strong, in its end its fulfilment is waiting.

Love is the life that responds to a call and chooses its truth as its treasures, and walks with the one who says, 'Come and follow me, for to show you the way is my pleasure.' **CLOSING RESPONSES:**

2

Leader: O Trinity of love, you have been with us at the world's beginning,

All: be with us till the world's end.

Leader: You have been with us at our life's shaping,

All: be with us at our life's end.

Leader: You have been with us at the sun's rising,
All: be with us till the day's end. Amen

BLESSING:

ALL: May the Lord keep you from all harm,

may the Lord watch over your life;

may the Lord watch over your coming and going,

both now and forever more.

Amen

SONG: (sing 3 times)

God to enfold you, Christ to uphold you, Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight;

so may God grace you, heal and embrace you,

lead you through darkness into the light.

© The Iona Community: 'The Iona Abbey Worship Book 2016; 'Common Ground 1998'; 'Iona Abbey Music Book'

- © Peter Millar 'An Iona Prayer Book'
- © Pershore Abbey Licence No. 44611

The next Iona service will be at 5pm on Sunday 27th March in Pershore Abbey