

# Pershore Abbey Iona Service - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 5pm

## Theme: Shining the Light of Christ into a world of conflict

### Welcome

**Song:** 🎵 Be still and know that I am God. (X3)  
I am the Lord, who's healing you. (X3)  
In you, O God, I put my trust. (X3)

### Opening responses: (From Micah 4:2-4)

**Leader:** Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
**All:** that God may teach us his ways and we may walk in God's paths.  
**Leader:** Our God shall arbitrate for many peoples; between strong nations far away,  
**All:** and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks.  
**Leader:** Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
**All:** neither shall they learn war any more.  
**Leader:** They shall all sit under their own vines and fruit trees;  
**All:** and no one shall make them afraid. Amen

### Introduction:

#### Song: 🎵

1. If the war goes on, and the young ones die of hunger,  
and the old men weep, for their children are no more,  
and farms lie idle, sad, abandoned and polluted,  
who will end this war?
2. If the war goes on, and the truth is taken hostage,  
and new terrors lead, to the need to euphemise,  
when the calls for peace, are declared unpatriotic,  
who'll expose the lies?
3. If the war goes on, and the daily bread is terror,  
and the voiceless poor, take the road as refugees;  
when a nation's pride, destines millions to be homeless,  
who will heed their pleas?
4. If the war goes on, and the rich increase their fortunes,  
and the arms sales soar, as new weapons are displayed;  
when a fertile field, turns to no-man's land tomorrow,  
who'll approve such trade?
5. If the war goes on, will we close the door to heaven?  
If the war goes on, will we breach the gates of hell?  
If the war goes on, will we ever be forgiven?  
If the war goes on .....

### Prayers:

**Leader:** We gather at this solemn time, loving God, aware of the costliness of human history.

In the face of hostility between nations and neighbours, you have come to us in Jesus Christ,

offering us the gift of peace, calling us to serve as peacemakers.

In this time of worship, renew in us the hope that you will turn our swords into ploughshares, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, lead the world you love, away from the study of war to the promise of peace with justice for all your peoples.

**All:**           **God of mercy, we confess that the world around us is in a mess.**  
**Countries turn disputes over territory into acts of terror.**  
**Old enemies stir up conflict within their tribes and nations.**  
**The threat of violence keeps us all on edge.**  
**Forgive us for not learning from past conflicts,**  
**not recognising the paths to peace with justice;**  
**forgive us when we harbour a desire to settle our own old scores, and keep conflict alive.**  
**Amen**

**Song:** 🎵 *(Ukrainian Kyrie – Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy)*

**Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.**

**Christe eleison**

**Kyrie eleison**

**Leader:**       *(based on Micah 6:8)*

The prophet Micah declared that God requires of us three things:

to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

To all who turn away from hostility and seek reconciliation with

God and neighbour in kindness and humility, God offers forgiveness and peace.

**All:**           **The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.**

**Prayers:**                       *(Strike the hammer.)*

**Reader A:**   We remember and lament the lies told to justify war and fuel hatred of ‘enemies’. We know with regret that ‘in war, truth is the first casualty’.

**All:**           **God, have mercy.**

**Reader B:**   *(A candle is lit.)* Christ, be with those who work with compassion and integrity in warzones, facing danger and witnessing daily horrors, whether soldiers or citizens, political negotiators, health workers, reporters or peacemakers.

*(Pause. Strike the hammer.)*

**Reader A:**   We remember and lament the arrogance that has driven the desire to settle old scores, to acquire more land, resources and power, igniting battles to claim them.

**All:**           **God, have mercy.**

**Reader B:**   *(A candle is lit.)* Lord, may we learn to forgive ourselves and others, and to let others forgive us. Help us to be honest about our own motives, to be counter-cultural and promote your kingdom values.

*(Pause. Strike the hammer.)*

**Reader A:**   We remember and lament the profiteering on weaponry and the diabolical schemes which created poisons and plans to annihilate others.

**All: God, have mercy.**

**Reader B:** *(A candle is lit.)* Christ, encourage and protect those who raise awareness about the UK's involvement in arms sales and campaign against the arms industry.

*(Pause. Strike the hammer.)*

**Reader A:** We remember and lament the costs of wartime spending, diverting essential economic and human resources from tending to the common good and the needs of the most vulnerable.

**All: God, have mercy.**

**Reader B:** *(A candle is lit.)* Lord, open the eyes of our leaders to the true cost of warfare, that the most vulnerable pay that cost, and all suffer in the end.

*(Pause. Strike the hammer.)*

**Reader A:** We remember and lament the war crimes which exert cruelty on opponents and break international agreements on the conduct of combat and the defence of human rights. We grieve the damage to animals, land, sea and air, all innocent bystanders in human conflict.

**All: God, have mercy.**

**Reader B:** *(A candle is lit.)* Christ, shine your light so that all will know that their deeds will be visible to you and to the world. May perpetrators and victims be able to tell their stories making healing and reconciliation possible.

*(Pause. Strike the hammer.)*

**Reader A:** We remember and lament the vested interests and manipulation that goes on when war is planned or peace treaties negotiated, where the agendas of the strongest are more influential than the interests of justice and peace for all God's creation.

**All: God, have mercy.**

**Reader B:** *(A candle is lit.)* Lord, bless all those involved in communication, negotiations and peace making, the healing of broken lives, communities and infrastructure. May they work motivated by kingdom values, not self interest.

*(Pause. Strike the hammer.)*

**Reader A:** We remember and lament with all those who are injured, grieving and traumatised. We pray for those whose deep wounds from previous conflicts and ongoing oppression, have erupted with hatred and ignited renewed conflict.

**All: God, have mercy.**

**Reader B:** *(A candle is lit.)* Christ, shine your healing light on all those affected by war and conflict. Be with those who have campaigned for the resolution of conflict in Palestine and Israel, and are now broken hearted, feeling they have failed. May they continue to walk in your light, trusting that goodness could prevail.

*(Two minutes silence)*

**Reader C:** *(John 1: 1–5)* In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

*(Light the Christ Candle.)*

For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us, for the word of God within us,

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Time for Sharing**

**Song:** 🎵 *(Common Ground 21)*

1. **Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.  
*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.***
2. **Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice.  
*Christ, be our light!***
3. **Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.  
Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed.  
*Christ, be our light!***
4. **Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone.  
*Christ, be our light!***
5. **Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.  
*Christ, be our light!***

**Blessing:** *(Blessing for Peace, from Benedictus by John O'Donohue)*

As the fever of day calms towards twilight may all that is strained in us come to ease.  
We pray for all who suffered violence today, may an unexpected serenity surprise them.  
For those who risk their lives each day for peace,  
may their hearts glimpse providence at the heart of history.  
That those who make riches from violence and war might hear in their dreams the cries of the lost.  
That we might see through our fear of each other  
A new vision to heal our fatal attraction to aggression.  
That those who enjoy the privilege of peace might not forget their tormented brothers and sisters.  
That the wolf might lie down with the lamb, that our swords be beaten into ploughshares  
And no hurt or harm be done anywhere along the holy mountain.     **Amen**

**The Grace:**

**All:            May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God  
                  and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all,  
                  this night and always.            Amen**

.....  
*Shining the Light of Christ into a world of conflict © Nancy Cocks    If the war goes on © John Bell & Graham Maule  
Common Ground © The Iona Community    Benedictus © John O'Donohue    Pershore Abbey Licence No.44611*

**NEXT IONA SERVICE IS AT 5pm on SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER**

*(There is no Iona service in December!)*