

SERVICE OF
THANKSGIVING AND COMMITMENT
ON THE
75th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FOUNDING OF
THE IONA COMMUNITY



ST COLUMBA'S DAY
9 JUNE 2013
GOVAN OLD PARISH CHURCH

Welcome

Welcome to Govan and to this special anniversary service of thanksgiving for the work of the Iona Community. We extend a special welcome to guests who have joined us today from local churches, other communities, from the world of politics and from countries all over the world including the Netherlands, Germany, USA, Kenya and Switzerland.

Friends, we celebrate today the blessing of the Good News of Jesus Christ; the blessing of the Good News brought from Ireland by Columba and sent out from Iona to lands near and far; the blessing of the Good News shared by the Iona Community and by all the faithful women and men associated with the Community throughout the past 75 years.

Opening Responses

Jan Sutch Pickard

Leader: Creator God, ever present
like the steady fall of waves on the shore:

All: we hear your call.

Leader: Jesus, Companion, as close to us
as the beating of our hearts:

All: we hear your call.

Leader: Holy Spirit, on the wind,
in the heart stirring music of the wild geese:

All: we hear your call.

Song: O God, you are the Parent

Words - St Columba (521- 597),
Translated Duncan Macgregor (1854-1923), Adapted WGRG

The Call to Columba

by Jan Sutch Pickard adapted by Peter Macdonald

God called Columba from the privilege of a princely family, from the power-base of an Irish monastery, from the solace of well kent faces and familiar rituals, to the white martyrdom of exile, to a voyage into the unknown, in a frail *curragh* with a few followers, making a series of landfalls as he sought the place where God was calling him to begin all over again.

There may have been political currents as well as winds and waves that brought Columba to Iona. But it was still exile.

According to legend, the monks came ashore at the Bay of the Coracle, what is now called Columba's Bay, dragging their *curragh* ashore over the stones. Right then, they were turning their backs on Ireland as they followed God's call.

And so the Columban monks set to worship and to work building from earth and timber a settlement of piety and industry, a crucible for forging faith and fashioning metal, a sanctuary of healing and illumination, a mission station of building up and sending out.

The Columban monks carried little with them, perhaps a bell and a small bag with their few possessions, in their wanderings and voyages, their pilgrimages. In storm, *in* snow and in days of gentle sunshine, day after day and in the depths of the starry night, intricate and beautiful, powerful and mysterious, another book opened: the 'great book' of God's creation.

Within their small bags they carried the 'little book' – the Bible – not less important, but simply something that human hands could hold.

So that the word of Life would not be lost in Dark Ages, the daily work of the young monks would be the copying out of scripture, with quill pens and colourful illumination. The story goes that on the day Columba died he was copying these words:

Reading Psalm 34:1–10

The monks built their cluster of beehive cells, and their little church, they gathered for worship but they also honoured God in their daily work, farming on the fertile land of Iona and Tiree, caring for the sick, preaching to the people, copying out the scriptures and welcoming the many guests who made the journey to Iona – seeking advice, absolution, healing, and blessing. The person of Abbot Columba and the sanctuary of the monastic 'family' drew people from different walks of life to Iona. There they also experienced the presence of God – as many do today.

Ralph Morton, a founding member of the Iona Community, used to say:
'The Iona experience is meant to be exported.'

That was true from the beginning: Columba himself went out on mission from Iona as far as Inverness; he was involved in the politics of the Kingdom of Dalriada, in what is now Argyll. Monks from Iona voyaged among the islands, as hermits but also as missionaries and priests to local communities.

When people from all over Scotland came as pilgrims to the shrine of St Columba, in the days of the Celtic monks and later the Benedictine monastery, they found welcome and hospitality, and returned to their homes with renewed faith and purpose.

Prayer of Thanksgiving for Columba

Joy Mead, 2013

Columba of
the rocks and roots and rolling waves,
rain-drenched earth, changing skies and empty horizons,
coming home and moving on.

Columba of
the music of wind and seabird cries,
the poetry of wild geese and lowing cattle,
the vision of sharing bread and stories.

Columba
Man of solitude and simplicity,
community and compassion,
Soul friend.

*We celebrate with gratitude and hope
your being and your openness
to the blessedness of all things.*

Columba who saw the blessing of beauty
and Iona as a light for all times:

with you
we weep
for depths of poverty
and pinnacles of wealth;
for hostility, impersonality,
suffering, indifference
and all that harms people
and all living things.

with you
we laugh
for humanity's raucous energy
and generosity of spirit
for angels, clowns, smiling faces
and all that heals people.

*We celebrate with gratitude and hope
your being and your openness
to the blessedness of all things.*

Because of imagination, legend and prayer
because of love and grace

no act is inconsequential
and no story without significance.
In our knowing and unknowing;
in the quiet space held within
that is Columba's vision and forever Iona,
we hold memories, remembrance,
and the whisperings
of a people's pride.
We hold out for others
the poet's bread
and the people's poetry.

*we celebrate with gratitude and hope
the holiness of being
and the blessedness of all things. Amen*

Song: - From Ireland's shores Columba came

Words © 1989 WGRG. Iona Community, Glasgow G2 3DH, Scotland
Published in Love From Below

Govan Calling

by Peter Macdonald

Our story of thanksgiving takes us to this place. Govan too is an ancient site of Christian worship dating back to the 6th century. This church, like those which stood here before, is dedicated to St Constantine, an illusive character who may have been a Columban monk or from the royal house of the Brytonic Kingdom of Strathclyde. The earliest written records reveal that Govan was caught up in the political and social upheavals of the 10th and 11th centuries as Pict and Briton, Scot and Viking struggled for dominance.

The fascinating carved stones preserved in this building date from that period: a stone sarcophagus to hold the relics of a saint or more likely a king; the distinctive Viking hogbacks evidence of royal or high status burials.

The graveyard around the church tells the story of the people who lived here through the centuries – farmers, weavers, mill workers and merchants.

At one time it was possible to cross the river at this point, the site of an ancient ford, to paddle from Govan to Partick.

The deepening of the Clyde and the great forces of industrialisation and mass immigration which resulted transformed this community within a generation. In the mid 19th century the thatched cottages were replaced by soaring tenements as the population swelled with people drawn from the Highlands and Ireland and many other lands to work in Govan's mills, factories and world renowned shipyards. So it is said that the Clyde made Govan and that Govan made the Clyde.

The speed and scale of these social forces challenged the Church and confused its teaching. Through this period the institutional Church said little about the social and economic problems facing working people but a lot about the decline of personal morality and traditional values. The institutional Church showed itself to be more interested in the status quo than in securing basic rights for common people, more concerned about social control than social justice.

George MacLeod was drawn to Govan by family links, by a concern for the disconnection between the Church and the working class and by the opportunity to conduct an experiment in parish focussed ministry and mission.

In every tenement close George saw practical Christianity being lived out in neighbourly care for the elderly and the sick, for the widow and the orphan.

George was moved and fired by the plight of the people in a time of poverty and hardship.

Shipyards and factories lay silent, men and women laid off, children starving. George had seen poverty before in parts of Edinburgh but never on the same scale as Govan. He believed that the Christian faith did have something to say about poverty and deprivation, something that was more life giving than communism or fascism. George passionately believed that the Good News **was** meant for the likes of them.

Reading Matthew 25: 34-40

Prayer of Thanksgiving for the People of Govan

John Harvey, 2013

Living God,
Creator, Son and Spirit,
you have shown yourself to us
as a community of love,
offered to your whole creation
as a model for fullness of life.

Today we give special thanks
for this community of Govan,
so central to the life of the Iona Community
over these many years.

We thank you
that through all the centuries
of change, of growth, of struggle, of success and failure,
there rang throughout this community
the hammer-sounds of solidarity,
of resilience, of strong civic pride -
sounds which have been heard
with renewed resonance
in these last days.

We thank you
that from the very beginning of this community of Govan,
the Gospel was heard here -
lived and proclaimed by Celtic monks,
Roman priests, Reformed ministers,
and countless numbers of men, women and children -
and is still lived and heard
even now, in these challenging times,
helping, as in all the years gone by,
to support, form and challenge the people,
the families, the society of this place.

Especially do we thank you today
for the gifts this community of Govan
has given to the Iona Community
over these 75 years:

through the life-changing ministry
of our founder, George MacLeod;
through the men and women of Govan
who have helped to form the Iona Community
over the decades;
through the worship of this parish church,
so influential in forming the worship on Iona
in so many ways:
through the Pearce Institute,
a resting-place and a power-house
for our work in Glasgow and far beyond.

In love and gratitude,
on this special day,
we commend this community of Govan
to your continuing care and guidance,
in its heart, its body and its soul,
in the name of the Trinity of Love,
God the Creator,
Christ the Redeemer,
Spirit the Enabler,
now and forever. Amen.

Song: - Christ the worker

Tom Colvin (1925-2000) © 1969 Hope Publishing Company
Published in various books

The Call to Community

Act of Recommitment for Members and Associate Members -

One weekday at about four o'clock, so the story goes, George was standing at Govan Cross speaking to a large crowd of unemployed men. George's oratory was interrupted by a heckle, 'Do you think all that religious stuff will save?' That question greatly disturbed George.

Sometime later he got a message to visit a man called Archie Gray in hospital. It turned out that this was the man who had heckled George at Govan Cross. Archie was dying of starvation and wanted to tell George why he was bitter about the Church. He was bitter not because he thought the Church was preaching falsehoods but because it was preaching the truth and did not mean what it said. George took this criticism to heart.

Another experiment was needed which would enable the Church to be true to its own convictions, to apply the Gospel to the everyday realities of life, to value the bonds of common humanity and social solidarity, bonds corroded by poverty, inequality and greed.

To find answers to the great questions facing Christians in his day, George looked back to

'where Scottish worship first began, to the Celtic Church of St Columba'.

So George left Govan and headed for Iona accompanied by craftsmen and ministers in training to work on the rebuilding of the abbey quarters and cloister – *'the place of the common life'*. The rebuilding was undertaken as a symbol of the Church *'building itself up again with modern material on an old foundation'* and to provide a common task which would allow *'the experiment in the technique of fellowship'* to have a real focus.

The Iona Community came into being around the rebuilding.

Summers for Community men were spent rebuilding on Iona and the rest of the year was spent in housing scheme and inner city parishes, in industrial mission, in youth work with the Christian Workers League, in work in developing countries.

Community House in Clyde Street served as the base for the Community's work from 1943 till the 1970s. *'A centre for meeting, sharing, studying and serving'* - it became an important base for young people touched by the 'Iona' experience providing space for discussion, film and drama groups, political education and campaigning, and social outreach. Community House enabled the Iona Community to put its ideas into action in the urban context.

George MacLeod's experiment inspired vocations, shaped ministries and changed lives.

Reading John 15: 1-17

Act of Recommitment

George thought he was founding a Presbyterian Brotherhood. Today we have matured into a true community of women and men. We have never been more ecumenical in our membership, never more diverse and never more dispersed – all held together by our Purpose and Rule.

Membership of our Community is not for life, whether as a member or an associate member, our commitment must be renewed each year.

Therefore, I now invite all members to stand and all associate members to stand and together to renew their vows. Saying together

In the presence of our sisters and brothers,
near and far, and in the name of God,
Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,

we commit ourselves to the purpose
and the rule of the Iona Community.
We, being many, are one in Christ.
We will celebrate the wholeness of our life together,
where it is fractured, we will work for reconciliation,
where it is diminished, we will strive for its fullness,
so God help us now and always. Amen.

Song: - Gathered for God

John L Bell, © 2013 GIA Publications, Inc.

Published in Gathered for God Anthem Collection, publication date Late July 2013

HALLOWING PRAYERS

Heaven is here, and earth, And the space is thin between them.
Distance may divide, but Christ's promise unites those bounded by time,
those blessed by eternity. Let heaven be glad, let the whole earth cry glory

Heaven is here, and earth, and we are encompassed all around in the communion
of saints; For all the saints who live beyond us, who challenge us to change the
world with them - we give thanks.

Christ be with them, Christ within them,
Christ behind them, Christ before them

Especially we give thanks and pray for those members of our Community far away;
encircle, embrace, encompass these we name now:
In the United States: Norma Barr, John and Louise Dillon, Ross and Flora
McKenzie, Leslie and Charlie Simonson, Ben and Annette Sparks and Scott Blythe
and Liz Blythe Johnson . In Singapore: Joyce and Ken Muir

Christ beside them, Christ to win them,
Christ to comfort and restore them,

Leader: May they not fail you
All: nor we fail them

For all the saints who live beside us whose weaknesses and strengths are woven
with our own - we give thanks

Christ beneath them, Christ above them,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,

Encircle, embrace, encompass all the members of our Community
unable to be here, and also members of staff on Iona and Mull who continue to offer
hospitality and share the common life with all come.

Christ in hearts of all that love them,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Leader: May they not fail you
All: Nor we fail them

For all the saints who went before us, who have spoken to our hearts and touched us with your fire - We give thanks.

For the great company, for Martin and Columba and Ninian, and Bridget and Hilda and all the unnamed ones who are not forgotten but held for all time in the memory of God, and our own most dearly beloved, in the mystery of your love, we are one with them now; and especially our friends:

William Fallon, James Dalgleish, Alastair McQueen, Robert Urquhart, Bill Amos, George McNeill, Charles Kirkpatrick, Bob Strathern, Lex Miller, Malcolm Duncan, Bobby Ross, Jim Littlejohn, George Anderson, John Milne, Alex Hislop, Lori Watson,

Mike Forsyth, John Summers, Ralph Morton, Hamish McIntyre, Calum McPherson, Brian Gallon, Roger Gray, George More, Cameron Wallace, Keith Edwards, Fiona McLennan, Gordon Burrows, George MacLeod, John Ross, Reg Comley, Margaret Wright,

Mary Rhind, Ian Reid, Tom Colvin, Adrian Rennie, Jack Orr, Kate McIlhagga, Robin Watt, Colin Day, Stanley Hope, Sue Morrison, Ronnie Samuel, Uist MacDonald, Elizabeth Patterson, Rosemary Reid, Dafydd Owen,

William Montgomery Watt, Bruce Kenrick, Alice Scrimgeour, Margaret Simpson, Margaret Legum, Jim Hughes, Donald Rennie, Keith Dowding, Tom Graham, Richard Baxter, Leith Fisher, Lindesay Robertson, Sam Varner, Maxwell Craig, Betty White, George Charlton,

Colin Morton, Fred Riddell, Bob Currie, David Leveson, Hugh Drummond, Ishbel Maclellan, John Williams and Tony Attwood.

Tell them we love them and miss them,
Even as we know our solidarity with them in the communion of saints.
And so we pray as Jesus taught...

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as in heaven
give us today our daily bread,
forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us,
save us in the time of trial
and deliver us from evil,

for the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Blessing of New Members

Leader: I invite you, as new members to be hallowed,
now to make your vows

New Members:

In the presence of our sisters and brothers,
near and far, and in the name of God,
Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
we commit ourselves to the purpose
and the rule of the Iona Community.
We, being many, are one in Christ.
We will celebrate the wholeness of our life together,
where it is fractured, we will work for reconciliation,
where it is diminished, we will strive for its fullness,
so God help us now and always. Amen.

HALLOWING PRAYERS

Bless God, all creation, who calls us to hunger and thirst for justice, who invites us
time and again into new faithfulness, who creates us as a community of women and
men in God's image, who has led our sisters and brothers to this moment, sign and
space,
And we give thanks for family and friends whose love and encouragement has
made possible this commitment. Bless God, all your people. And bless these now:

Su Bowman, Nick Bowry, Debbie Chaloner, Fiona Haworth, Mike Mineter, Kate
Potts, Heinz Toller, Margery Toller, and Stephen Wright.
And we remember Sarah Dinwoodie, a new member unable to be with us this morn-
ing. Encircle Sarah, and Kieran, and bless their work as doctors in Uganda.

Leader: In all the things of their lives
may these new members not fail you...

All: Nor we fail them

Encompassing Blessing:- God's eye be within you,
Words © 1998 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G2 3DH, Scotland
Published in There is one among us

Prayer for the Iona Community

Let us all join together in the prayer for the Iona Community

O God, who gave to your servant Columba
the gifts of courage, faith and cheerfulness,
and sent people forth from Iona

to carry the word of your gospel to every creature,
grant, we pray, a like spirit to your church,
even at this present time.

Further in all things the purpose of our community,
that hidden things may be revealed to us,
and new ways found to touch the hearts of all.

May we preserve with each other
sincere charity and peace,
and if it be your holy will,
grant that a place of your abiding be continued still
to be a sanctuary and a light.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Called to Hope

by Peter Macdonald

‘The Iona experience is meant to be exported.’
And it is.

The work of the Community is where members and associates are active in local communities and churches, in schools and universities, clinics and hospitals, political parties and campaign groups, offices and industries.

Today we give thanks for that continuing work listening to those living in poverty; offering support and hospitality to asylum seekers; serving as Ecumenical Accompaniers on the Separation Barrier between Israel and Palestine; campaigning for fair-trade, tax justice, gender equality and about climate change; peacefully protesting against nuclear weapons and war-mongering.

The Iona Community has changed and developed over the past 75 years. Yet we remain faithful to our founding vision convinced that the Good News is relevant for both people and planet, and we are saddened to witness in our day the stigmatisation of those in receipt of benefits, the indifference shown towards those living in poverty, the lack of opportunity for our young people, the growing inequality in our own country and around the world, and the blasphemy of the possession of nuclear weapons.

Our experiment continues- because it must.

Hope in a Box

This weekend our young people have been following a parallel programme learning the story of Govan and the Iona Community but also thinking about the challenges and hopes for the future. This is expressed in the artwork you see in the chancel.

You are invited to turn to your neighbour and to share your hopes and concerns for the future. Our time of sharing will end with the singing of a chant.

Chant

This we shall do

Paraphrase © 2005, 2008 WGRG, Iona Community, G2 3DH Glasgow, Scotland
Published in We Walk His Way

Prayer

Leader: O God in whose heart is love and justice,
show us this day whom we must love
and what we should challenge or encourage
in order that your will for earth might be manifest.

All: Diminish our despair,
increase our hope,
inform our imagination,
deepen our commitment
that we may become the signs of your kingdom
for which we and others pray. Amen.

Song

Sing for God's glory that colours the dawn of creation,

Words © Kathy Galloway
Published in Iona Abbey Music Book

Closing Responses

Leader: May God's goodness be yours,
And well and seven times well may you spend your lives

All: May you be an isle in the sea,
May you be a hill on the shore,
May you be a star in the darkness,
May you be a staff to the weak;

Leader: May the love Christ Jesus gave fill every heart for you;
May the love Christ Jesus gave fill you for every one,

All: Amen.

© The Iona Community taken from
The Iona Abbey Worship Book
Wild Goose Publications: Glasgow

Recessional Themba Amen

Published in We Walk His Way

The Iona Community is an ecumenical movement of men and women from different walks of life and Christian traditions. Members share a commitment to living out the gospel in ways that are progressive, ecumenical and inclusive. We seek as part of Christ's body to share in Christ's mission of justice and love, for the peace of the world and to the glory of God. In community, we share a common discipline of daily prayer and reflective reading including the Bible, sharing and accounting to one another for our use of time and money, meeting together, and action for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

This morning we welcome into full membership:

Debbie Chaloner
Fiona Haworth
Heinz Toller
Kathryn Potts
Margery Toller
Mike Mineter
Nicholas Bowry
Stephen Wright
Su Bowman

