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A Call to Peace with Justice

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The Iona Community Members and Council seek justice and peace for all everywhere, believing that the community we seek must be mirrored in the community we practice. At this time of war, as we make requests of those in power so also we rededicate ourselves to using our own power, alone and together, to bring peace with justice.

In the face of violence, and in the knowledge that words alone are never enough, we remind ourselves that Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger, tend the sick, provide shelter for the persecuted (Luke 10: 25 – 37) and speak truth to power (Luke 1: 46 – 55). Jesus calls us to be reconcilers and peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). We believe this means that we are called to:

Be Islands of Sanctuary: War unleashes trauma, suffering, terror and poverty on households, cycles of debt on nations and desecration of both natural and built landscapes. We call on the UK government to declare the UK to be 'islands of sanctuary' and a) to take immediate action to open all pathways to sanctuary (housing, work, health care, safety, education) for any fleeing war or persecution including those from Ukraine and b) to lift immediately the restrictions on asylum seekers currently in detention in the UK. We call on our Members to support the work of the Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees and the Scottish Refugee Council or equivalent national/local refugee networks.

Sustain Life on Earth: The fossil fuel cost of modern warfare accelerates carbon emission rates at a time when our window of opportunity is closing for hopeful climate action. We weave our lives as stewards of creation with our work as peacemakers. We invite you to join our Wild Week on Iona in June. We support our Members to rededicate ourselves to living as close to a carbon neutral life as possible. We encourage all to live out the recommendations of Scotland's Climate Assembly wherever we are in the world.

Eradicate Weapons of War: The threatened use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons is a threat to the whole of creation. We continue our decades-long stance against the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons and call on the UK government to remove all such weapons from British soil. We will continue to protest the presence of such weapons of mass destruction until they are removed.

Practice Reconciliation: We seek reconciliation knowing that it only comes after peace and through justice as part of an intentional process. We call for calm and urgent diplomacy and mediation to bring the war in Ukraine to an immediate end. We encourage our Members to continue learning the art of faith-based conflict transformation through signing up to a Growing through Change and Conflict programme or equivalent as we are able, to inform and equip ourselves anew for the work of reconciliation for the long haul.

Pray for Peace: We reach out in prayer and solidarity to the people of the churches of Ukraine and Russia. We ask the leaders of the Russian churches, and church leaders everywhere, to use their power and influence to call for peace and an end to violence. At this time of Lent, we rededicate ourselves to action rooted in deep reflection. We share here worship material supporting private and public prayer for peace in Ukraine.

Gather in Community: At times like these we need one another. And so we invite all to 'global gatherings for peace' for 30 minutes on the **7th, 21st and 28th of April at 18:00 GMT**. We will spend time in conversation and prayer, galvanizing, supporting, listening to one another as we respond to violence through prayer and actions for justice and peace. Join here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89612290037?pwd=UkkvQzZGbkRlVHQycHY0MTA0WjZ1dz09>

With love, solidarity and peace,

Ruth Harvey
Leader

Martin Scott
Convener, Council

The Iona Community is an ecumenical Christian movement seeking new ways of living the gospel in today's world through working for peace and social justice rebuilding community and in the renewal of worship.

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