

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: Thanks be to you O Christ,

All: For the many gifts you have bestowed on us.

Each day and night, each sea and land, each weather fair, each calm, each wild.

Leader: Each night may we remember your mercy given so gently and generously.

All: Each thing we have received, from you it came; Each thing for which we hope, from your love it will come; Each thing we enjoy, it is of your bounty; Each thing we ask, comes of your disposing.

Leader: O God, from whom each thing that is, freely flows,

All: Grant that no tie too strict, no tie too dear, may be between ourselves and this world. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (From the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.
Amen.

The Peace The Peace of this night and the love of God in Christ and the fellowship of this gathering be always with you.

A Celtic Evening Service

The Epiphany Church Labyrinth Garden

December 24, 2021



Tonight's Christmas Eve Service celebrated in the Epiphany Church Labyrinth Garden is drawn from the liturgical traditions from the Iona Community in Scotland. In the 6th Century, an Irish monk St. Columba founded the Celtic Abbey of the Isle of Iona, considered to be the birthplace of Christianity in Scotland. Today, the Iona Community is an ecumenical Christian community that is committed to seeking new ways of living the Gospel in today's world. Founded in 1938 it remains committed to rebuilding the common life through working for social and political change, serving for the renewal of the church with an ecumenical emphasis, and exploring new, more inclusive approaches to worship. The Community now has over 240 members and about 1500 Associate Members and 1500 Friends.

The Iona Community's priorities:

The promotion of justice and peace by

- Opposing nuclear weapons and seeking reduction in the arms race
- Supporting the cause of the poor and the exploited
- Political activity in combating racism
- Engagement with environmental and constitutional issues
- The exploration of human sexuality
- Commitment to strengthening understanding between church tradition and sharing communion
- Concern for young people
- The promotion of inter-faith dialogue
- The rediscovery an approach to spirituality appropriate to our times
- The development of the ministry of healing

ORDER OF SERVICE

Welcome We welcome you this night. As we gather, you are invited offer your yearnings and deepest prayers—both thanksgivings and concerns by placing a prayer ribbon on the Christmas tree in our midst.

Silence Listen to the Sacred deep within ourselves, with one another, and within the body of the earth for the beat of the Sacred Presence.

The Lighting of Candles

First Candle

Leader: Come to us this night, O God.

All: *Come to us with light.*

Second Candle

Leader: Speak to us this night, O God.

All: *Speak to us your truth.*

Third Candle

Leader: Dwell with us this night, O God.

All: *Dwell with us in love.*

(Handheld candles are then distributed.)

Invocation

Leader: Encircle me, O God, Encircle me with your presence.
Keep joy within, keep bitterness out;
Keep generosity within, Keep greed out;
Keep love within, Keep self-seeking out;
Keep truth within, Keep falsehood out;
Keep compassion within, Keep hard-heartedness out;
Keep light within, Keep darkness out.

In the Name of the Sacred Three,
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

All: *Repeat the Invocation together*

A Collect for Christmas Night

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God in glory everlasting. Amen.

A Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures *Isaiah 9: 2-7*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

A Reading from the Christian Scriptures *Titus 2: 11-14*

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and Godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Reflection A child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.