

HOPE CHURCH

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICES IN LENT

March 11, 2020



EVENING PRAYERS

CREATION LITURGY



Evening Prayers based on the Creation Liturgy from The Iona Community Iona Abbey Worship Book.

“God calls humanity to care for Creation. Throughout the ages, the Christian church has not always paid due attention to this divine expectation. But in recent years, with the threat and experience of climate change, we cannot, in prayer or action, be neutral.”

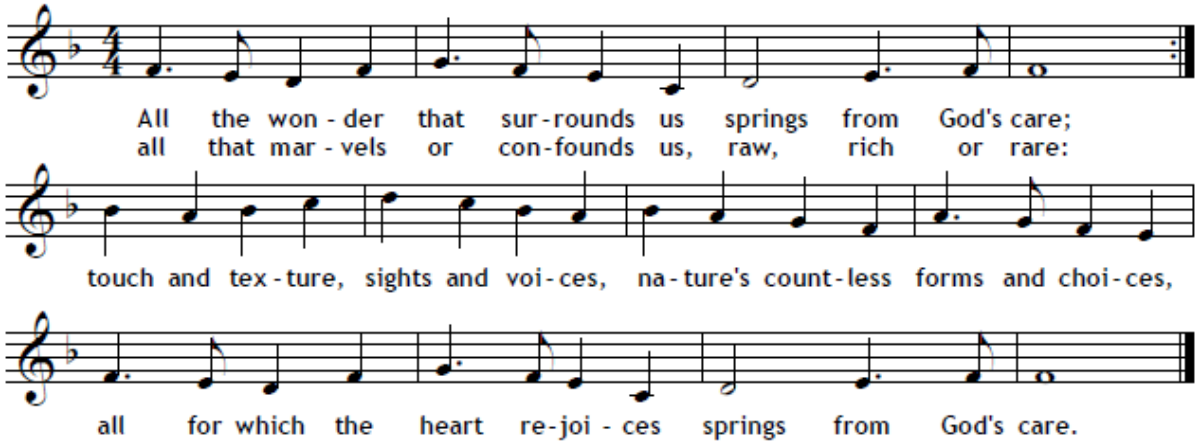
To learn more about the Iona Community, you can read their website: iona.org.uk



HOPE CHURCH
WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICES IN LENT
EVENING PRAYERS: CREATION LITURGY
March 11, 2020 ~ 7:00 p.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

CALL TO WORSHIP *All the Wonder that Surrounds Us*



All the won - der that sur - rounds us springs from God's care;
all that mar - vels or con - founds us, raw, rich or rare:
touch and tex - ture, sights and voi - ces, na - ture's count - less forms and choi - ces,
all for which the heart re - joi - ces springs from God's care.

OPENING RESPONSES

God above us – trees, birds, and sunshine, stars and moonlight –
God above us.

God beneath us – earth, rocks and rivers, roots and caverns –
God beneath us.

God around us – seas, winds and cities, animals and people –
God around us.

God within us – hope, tears and laughter, love and wonder –
God within us.

God above us,
God beneath us,
God around us,
God within us,
We celebrate that you made us,
that you love us,
and that you call us to work and rest with you.

*Congregation to rise in body or in spirit, **Bold** type indicates congregational response

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

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O Christ, Surround Me



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to
2 Bind to my-self the Name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light-ning,
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that



move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:



O Christ, sur-round me; O Christ, sur-round me.

This hymn is a 21st-century adaptation of the traditional Celtic prayer style known as a *lorica* (Latin for "armor" or "breastplate"). Many such petitions for God's presence and protection were never written down, but this one is based on an example attributed to St. Patrick.

PRAYER OF THANKS FOR CREATION

Let us pray.

Thank you, God,

Thanks for beauty:

the twinkle in an older person's eye,

a child's shout of laughter;

thanks for greening trees and frozen waterfalls,

stunning buildings and flowerbeds in summer.

Thanks for beauty.

Thank you, God,

thanks for creativity:

the skills of a tapestry weaver,

the imagination of a web designer,

thanks for bakers and dancers and crossword compilers,

for spiders' webs and city murals.

Thanks for creativity.

Thank you, God,

thanks for abundance:

for seeds and raindrops,

for grains of sand and infinite galaxies;

thanks for seagulls, plankton, and shoals of mackerel.

for wriggling worms and golden dandelions.

Thanks for abundance.

Thanks for your world, God,

and for our part in it.

Thanks that you are a maker,

and that you made us makers too.

**Help us to love creation as you love it,
to take risks to value it as Jesus did,
and draw us into the wildness and wonder
of your Holy Spirit
today and every day. Amen.**

READINGS FOR CHALLENGE AND REFLECTION: Psalm 104:1-9, 31-35

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty, wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a tent, you set the beams of your chambers on the waters, you make the clouds your chariot, you ride on the wings of the wind, you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers. You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken. You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they flee; at the sound of your thunder they take to flight. They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them. You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works— who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord. Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!

PRAYER OF REGRET

In the light of your word
and your call to care for creation.
we come to say sorry, God.
We're sorry for the times we've messed up,
sorry for bad decisions we've made,
sorry for people we've hurt,
sorry for damaging your world.

In the silence, we seek your forgiveness for ourselves
and healing for you're the world.

prayer continues in silence

Listen to what God says to us:
'I made the heavens and the earth.
I call you to be good servants and responsible stewards.
Come and work with me.
I will always be with you.'

Amen.

Reflection by Gene Ryan

I am consistently reconverted when I am cleansed by God's creation. I grew up in the shadow of the Adirondack Mountains of Upstate New York. Six million square miles of wilderness considered to be "settled wild," because of its mixture of municipalities and backcountry bush. Over the course of my 23 years on this earth I have hiked somewhere around 500 of the 2,000 miles of Adirondack marked trails, and canoed more than 300 of the 30,000 miles of navigable waterways.

Whenever I travel to the Adirondacks it becomes something of a homecoming. This neck of the woods have taken their shape long before I walked this earth, and they will continue to be molded and changed, God willing, long after I am gone. There is something ingenious about the wilderness. It just keeps evolving and sustaining without me.

God's hand is the primary mover, through east winds and soft rain. Every year I get to witness God breaking up the lake ice, and melting the snow on the High Peaks. I get to be soothed by the call of Loons in the evening, and the singing robins in the morning. I stand humbled by the old growth trees, which have grown undisturbed for a hundred years. I walk on mossy stepping-stones and bounce on a sphagnum bog, and I am reminded of the Providence of our Good God.

One evening, while I was working at Camp Fowler (which is in the Adirondacks) as summer staff, we had just sent the campers to bed. The sun was setting, and when we had younger campers during the week we liked to get them back to bed before nightfall. This was a particularly hot day, about 85 degrees. And, most of us on staff were feeling the weariness of a day spent hiking and paddling and playing in the sun. So, some of us decided to swim out into the lake to cool off.

The lake is called Sacandaga, which is an Algonquin word meaning "many rocks." And, indeed, there are many rocks in the lake, some as big as buildings. One rock in particular, about a hundred feet from the beach, is flat and about ten feet in diameter. It peaks out just above the surface of the water, unseen to most people who do not know where to look. We swam out to the rock, and sat on it to watch the sun set over the mountains.

None of us spoke, for there was nothing to say; we just sat there, looking into the various distances. We listened to the calls of the night birds, and the soft break of the ripples on the beach, and against the rocks. As the sun fell further below the horizon small lights appeared in the sky. It was a new moon, and it was as if the stars knew it was their turn to put on a show. First, Polaris to the north. Then Vega, then Beatlejuse. Then constellations began to tell the stories of the ancients.

Signus the Swan always destined to fly into the center of the galaxy. Ursa Major being chased by the three hunters. And, finally, the soft brush of the Milky Way appeared as a river through the night sky. All right before our eyes. A testament to God's creativity and beauty. And, when it was time to rest, we returned to our lodges to sleep, while God prepared a sunrise for the day ahead of us.

You see, while we are deciding which hymns to sing, and what text to preach on, the trees are lifting their branches in praise of their creator. The black bear is showing God's love by nurturing her cubs. The deer leaps near streams of cool water, dancing in the presence of the Lord. When I step into creation, I join in a chorus of praise, and hope to contribute a verse. I always feel a bit out of place in the city. And, sometimes, when my eyes become heavy and my heart becomes hard, I hear the still small voice of God, beckoning me to come home to the forest, and dwell in the presence of the Lord. I will end with words from Tom Chapin.

This pretty planet spinning through space,
You're a garden, you're a harbor,
You're a holy place.

Thanks be to God.

SILENT MEDITATION

*SONG *Sacred Creation*
congregation sings three times

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song 'Sacred Creation'. The first staff contains the lyrics: 'Sa-cred the land, sa - cred the wa - ter, sa - cred the sky, ho - ly and true,'. The second staff contains the lyrics: 'Sa-cred all life, sa - cred each o - ther; all re - flect God who is good.' The music is written in a simple, melodic style with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo and meter are not explicitly stated, but the notation suggests a slow, contemplative pace.

***BLESSING AND DISMISSAL**

May the heavens bless you.
May the sun shine on you.
May the rain dance on your boots.
May the stars make you wonder and smile.
May the earth bless you,
And may you bless the earth
in planting and protest,
and sharing food.

Amen.

Go now.
Go and revel in God's world.
Go and be creative.
Go and work for justice.
Go and love your neighbors.
Go and walk with God.

Amen.

And as you go, the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

People depart sharing a sign of peace with one another.

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Participating in worship: Pastor Beth Carroll, liturgist;
Witness to Christian Practice: Gene Ryan; Perry Landes and
Rhonda Edgington, musicians.

