

Iona Evening Prayer, October 2020 – Theme - Homelessness

Welcome and Introduction

Opening Responses

Leader: This is the time when light fades and shadows lengthen and sounds are subdued – all as God intended. **Amen**

Leader: This is the time when bodies relax, minds unwind, and tiredness comes – all as God intended. **Amen**

Leader: This is the time when others greet the morning while we meet the night, and the world continues to sing, in all the accents of creation, a love song to its maker. **Amen**

Song: **Praise with joy the world's Creator (Praise my soul the King of Heaven)**
God of justice, love and peace,
source and end of human knowledge,
force of greatness without cease.
Celebrate the Makers glory –
power to rescue and release

Praise the Son who feeds the hungry,
clothes the naked, finds the lost,
heals the sick, upsets religion,
fearless of both fate and cost.
Celebrate Christ's constant presence –
friend and stranger, guest and host.

Praise the Spirit sent among us
liberating truth from pride,
forging bonds where race and gender,
age or nation dare divide,
Celebrate the Spirit's treasure –
foolishness none dare deride.

Praise the Maker, Son and Spirit,
one God in community,
calling Christians to embody
oneness and diversity.
Thus the world shall yet believe
when shown Christ's vibrant unity.

Prayer

Leader; Come, Brother Jesus, be our guest, stay with us for day is ending.
Bring to us your poverty,
for then we shall be rich.

Bring to us your pain,
that in sharing it, we may also share your joy.
Bring to us your understanding of us,
that we may be freed to learn more of you.
Bring to us your Holy Spirit,
that we and all things may be made new.

With friend, with stranger, with the unknown and the well-known ones
be among us tonight,
**for the doors of our homes are open,
and the doors of our hearts we leave ajar.**

Readings: Genesis 21 v 9-14

Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac". The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring will be named after you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a great nation of him also, because he is your offspring". So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-Sheba.

Pause: Think how this story resonates with things happening today?

Reading: Matthew 2: v13-15

Now after the Wise Men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his Mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him. Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod.

Pause – Think how this story relates to the present day refugees.

A Reading from 'The Salt Path' a true story written by Raynor Winn.

Just days after Raynor Winn learned that Moth, her husband of thirty two years, was terminally ill, they lost a court case which results in them losing everything, their home and their livelihood. With little time and very little money they decide, on a whim, to walk and wild camp the 630 miles of the South West coast Path. Hiding under the stairs as the bailiffs are banging on the door and windows, she writes the following.

'I'd met this man when I was eighteen; I was now fifty. We'd rebuilt this ruined farm together, restoring every wall, every stone, growing vegetables and chickens and two children, creating a barn for visitors to share our lives and help pay our bills. And now, when we walked out of that door, it would all be behind us, everything behind us, over, finished, done. We were about to leave the dimly lit, centuries old farmhouse that had held us cocooned for twenty years. When we walked through that door we could never, ever, come back.

Pause for thought – a modern day story of many people.

We now welcome Diane Bennett who will talk to us about and bring us up to date with the wonderful work that Caring Hands in the Vale are doing in this area. There will be a short time for questions afterwards.

Chant: God to enfold you, Christ to uphold you, Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight, so may God grace you, heal and embrace you, lead you through darkness into the light. X2

Prayers of concern.

Leader: Let us bring to our Father and Mother God all those who are in our thoughts this evening.

Those who are homeless due to the break- up of relationships, or through alcohol use, drug or other addictions. God be near them.

God be near them

Children who have run away from home because of abusive relationships. God be near them. **God be near them**

Those who are homeless due to the loss of their health and livelihood. God be near them. **God be near them**

Those who have lost their homes due to natural disasters such as fire, flood, drought and earthquake. God be near them. **God be near them**

Asylum seekers and refugees from war, aggression and prejudice trapped in no-mans- land camps and holding centres. God be near them.

God be near them.

All those who this night will feel cold, lonely and afraid and who without a home are unable to access work or benefits. God be near them.

God be near them

We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Song: **Brother, Sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you,
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.**

**We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road:
we are here to help each other, walk the mile and bear the load.**

**I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.**

**I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.**

**When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.**

**Brother, Sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.**

Closing Prayers:

Leader: For the day now done

All: **Thanks be to God.**

For the rest before us

Thanks be to God.

Because God never sleeps

Thanks be to God.

But before the day is done,

Let God's holy name be praised;

And let God's people say Amen.

Amen.