

EARLY MORNING SERVICE

12 April 2009, the beach behind the church at A'Chleit

Easter Morning

leading & reading: the minister and members of the congregation

song: Iona Abbey Music Book (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2003)

(Outside the church, at the beach: a cross covered with daffodils, a fire, people standing in a circle.)

Response¹

The Lord is risen!

HE IS RISEN INDEED!

This is the day:

WHEN TEARS ARE WIPED AWAY,
SHATTERED HEARTS ARE MENDED,
FEARS ARE REPLACED WITH JOY.

This is the day:

WHEN THE LORD ROLLS AWAY THE STONE OF FEAR,
THROWS OFF DEATH'S CLOTHES,
GOES AHEAD OF US INTO GOD'S FUTURE.

This is the day:

WHEN DEATH HAS NO FEAR FOR US,
SIN HAS LOST ITS POWER OVER US,
GOD OPENS THE TOMBS OF OUR HEARTS
TO FILL US WITH LIFE.

This is the day – Easter Day!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

HALLELUJAH!

Reading : Mark 16:1-8 (with the shorter ending of Mark – *New Revised Standard Version*)

Song : 'Iona Gloria'

Prayer²

Living Lord, we greet you!

Your hands still have holes in them,
your feet are wet from the dew;
and with the memory of our names

¹ The Wild Goose Worship Group, *Stages On The Way*. Worship resources and Readings for Lent, Holy week and Easter (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1998).

² *Stages On The Way*, p188.

undimmed by three days of death,
you meet us,
risen from the grave.

We fail to understand how;
we puzzle at the reason why.

But you have come:
not to answer our questions,
but to show us your face.

You are alive
and the world can rejoice again.
Hallelujah!
Amen.

Peter's testimony³

[Peter says:]

There was nothing else to do,
so I went back to fishing.

We knew he was alive;
we had seen him
and then he went away
without leaving instructions.

So I said, 'Let's go back to the fishing,'
and the others agreed.
I mean, we had to feed ourselves somehow.
You can't just exist on fresh air and memories.

So we went back to the fishing –
and caught nothing.
I wondered if we had lost our touch
or if... and I hesitate to say this...
it was some kind of punishment from God.

And then, in the morning,
somebody shouted that our nets were on the wrong side.
'What does he know?' I grunted,
but to please the others, I hauled them in
and then cast them back out.

And when the net began to strain,
I had this funny feeling in the pit of my stomach.

³ *Stages On The Way*, p212f.

'What does he know?' I had grunted.
Now I knew who 'he' was,
and knew that he knew everything.

When we got back to the shore,
he didn't give me or any of us a row,
he just said,
'Would you like some breakfast?'
And then he fed us
so that...

I only realized why he had fed us
when, in a private moment,
he looked me straight in the face three times
and said,
'Do you love me, Peter?'

The first time I was embarrassed;
the second time I was annoyed;
the third time I was convinced.

'Yes, I love you... you know I do!'

Then feed my lambs
and feed my lambs
and feed my sheep.

And then I realized that he had fed us,
so that we could feed others;
and that he loved us,
so that we could love others the same way.

(1-2 mins silence)

Prayer of intercession

We come to you, O God,
because you have come to us,
in Jesus of Nazareth, our risen Lord.
On this special morning,
while the day is still fresh and young,
we do not come with our burdens.
We rejoice in the new life you give.
But we do know the burdens are there:
illness, unemployment, age,
loneliness, broken relationships,
pollution, war, disasters.
On this bright morning

we only ask you
to shine the Light of Easter
on all our burdens.
Then they may look less.
Through Jesus Christ,
who lives among us.
Amen.

Affirmation⁴

We believe in a bright and amazing God
who has been to the depths of despair on our behalf;
who has risen in splendour and majesty;
who decorates the universe with sparkling water,
clear white light,
twinkling stars and sharp colours,
over and over and over again.
We believe that Jesus is the light of the world;
that God believes in us,
even though we make the same mistakes
over and over and over again.
We commit ourselves to Jesus
to one another as brothers and sisters,
and to the Maker's business in the world.
God said: Let there be light!
AMEN.

Blessing

Go out with joy!
God has restored life,
Jesus lives among us –
for the Spirit tells us so.
The Three will guard you and guide you –
then be one, as God is One.
Amen.

(Afterwards people have breakfast together in the church hall.)

⁴ We borrowed this, but forgot the source...