

# A CHRISTIAN CELTIC WORSHIP SERVICE

By Dale Harris

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## Summary:

This is a brief outline of a Christian Celtic worship service that happened at a Briercrest Seminary chapel in 2007.

Length: 8 pages

## A Christian Celtic Worship Service

**Prelude:** CD playing (“Kilavil,” Robin Mark, *Revival in Belfast II*, Track 1). 5 minutes before service.

**Call To Worship:** The Lord of Creation (*Celtic Christian Spirituality*, p. 30; 9th C. Old Irish). Corporate reading.

“Let us adore the Lord,  
Maker of marvelous works  
Bright heaven with its angels  
And on earth the white-waved sea”

**Gathering:** Invite congregation to rise for Scripture

**OT Reading:** Isaiah 25:6-9

“A Reading from the Book of Isaiah:

And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast  
of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,  
of fat things full of marrow,  
of wines on the lees well refined.

And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people,  
and the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death in victory;  
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces;  
and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth:  
for the LORD hath spoken it.

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God;  
we have waited for him, and he will save us:  
this is the LORD;  
we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

**Song:** Holy, Holy, Holy (key: D)

*Words: Reginald Heber, 1826; Music: John B. Dykes, 1861*

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity

Holy, holy, holy, all the saints adore thee  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea  
Cherubim and seraphim, falling down before thee

Which wert and art and evermore shall be

Holy, Holy, Holy, Though the darkness hide Thee  
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory man not see  
Only Thou art holy, there is none beside Thee  
Perfect in pow'r, in love and purity

**Reading:** "To the Trinity" (*Celtic Christian Spirituality*, p. 48; 12th C. Middle Welsh).  
Corporate reading.

To the Trinity I make my prayer  
O Lord, grant me the skill to sing your praise,  
For the way of this world is perilous,  
Our deeds and decisions a wild tumult.

Among the family of the saints, in their society,  
King of Heaven, may I be ready to praise you.  
Before my soul parts from my body,  
Grant me, for my sins, the means to worship you,  
To sing entreaty before your glory.

In heaven, on earth, at my end,  
In times of joy and sorrow, in tribulation,  
In my body, in my soul, in austerity,  
Long preparation before the approach of glory,  
I shall beseech you, Lord of the land of peace,  
That my soul may dwell  
For all eternity, in the highest place  
In the land of heaven.

In Christ, I will not be refused.

**Song:** From the Squalor (key: D)  
*Stuart Townend 1999 © Kingsway's Thankyou Music*

From the squalor of a borrowed stable, by the spirit and a virgin's faith;  
To the anguish and the shame of scandal came the Saviour of the human race!  
But the skies were filled with the praise of heav'n, Shepherds listen and the angels tell  
Of the gift of God come down to man, at the dawning of Immanuel.

King of heaven now the Friend of sinners, Humble servant in the Father's hands  
Filled with power and the Holy Spirit, Filled with mercy for the broken man  
Yes, he walked my road and he felt my pain. Joys and sorrows that I know so well;  
Yet his righteous steps give me hope again—I will follow my Immanuel!

Through the kisses of a friend's betrayal, He was lifted on a cruel cross

He was punished for a world's transgressions, He was suffering to save the lost  
He fights for breath, he fights for me. Loosing sinners from the claims of hell;  
And with a shout our souls are free—Death defeated by Immanuel!

Now he's standing in the place of honour, Crowned with glory on the highest throne  
Interceding for his own beloved, Till his Father calls to bring her home!  
Then the skies will part as the trumpet sounds, Hope of heaven or the fear of hell  
But the Bride will run to her Lover's arms; Giving glory to Immanuel

**Reading:** "Alexander's Breastplate" (*Celtic Christian Spirituality*, p. 44; 12th C. Middle Welsh).  
Responsive reading.

**Leader:** On the face of the world / There was not born / His equal

**All:** Three-person God, / Trinity's only Son / Gentle and strong.  
Son of the Godhead, / Son of humanity, / Only Son of wonder.

**Leader:** The Son of God is a refuge, / Mary's Son a blessed sanctuary

**All:** A noble child was seen. / Great his splendour / Great Lord and God,  
In the place of glory.

**Leader:** By his word he saved the blind and the deaf / From all suffering  
The ragged, / Foolish sinners, / And those of impure mind.

**All:** Let us rise up / To meet the Trinity / Following our salvation.  
Christ's cross is bright, / A shining breastplate against all harm  
Against all our enemies may it be strong:  
The place of our protection. (p. 46)

**Song:** When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (key: D)  
*Words: Isaac Watts, 1707. Music: Lowell Manson, 1824*

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

**Epistolary Reading:** 1 John 1: 5-10: This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Reading:** “On the Flightiness of Thoughts, a Penitential Reading” (*Celtic Christian Spirituality*, p. 36; 10th C. Old Irish).

**Leader:** On the Flightiness of Thoughts, a Penitential Reading:

Shame on my thoughts, how they stray from me! I fear great danger from this on the Day of  
Eternal Judgment

During worship they wander on a path that is not right: they run, they distract, they misbehave  
before the eyes of the great God.

Without a ferry or a false step they cross every sea: swiftly they leap in one bound from earth to  
heaven.

They run—not a course of great wisdom—near, far: following paths along paths of great  
foolishness they reach their home.

Neither the edge of a sword nor the strip of lash will subdue them; as slippery as an eel's tale  
they elude my grasp.

Neither lock nor well-constructed dungeon, nor any fetter on earth, neither stronghold nor sea  
nor bleak fastness restrains them from their course. O beloved truly chaste Christ, to whom  
every eye is clear, may the grace of the Holy Spirit come to keep them, to hold them in  
check!

Rule this heart of mine, O swift God of the elements, that You maybe my God and that I may do  
your will!

**Leader:** God's will would I do,

**All:** My own will bridle;

**Leader:** God's due would I give,  
**All:** My own due yield;

**Leader:** God's path would I travel,  
**All:** My own path refuse;

**Leader:** Christ's death would I ponder,  
**All:** My own death remember;

**Leader:** Christ's agony would I meditate,  
**All:** My love to God make warmer;

**Leader:** Christ's cross would I carry,  
**All:** My own cross forget;

**Leader:** Repentance of sin would I make,  
**All:** Early repentance choose;

**Leader:** A bridle to my tongue I would put,  
**All:** A bridle on my thoughts I would keep

**Leader:** God's judgment would I judge,  
**All:** My own judgment guard;

**Leader:** The love of Christ would I feel,  
**All:** My own love know.

[Silence]

**All:** O Lord God, destroy and root out whatever the Adversary plants in me,  
that with my sins destroyed you may sow understanding and good work  
in my mouth and heart;  
so that in act and in truth I may serve only you  
and know how to fulfill the commandments of Christ and to seek yourself.

Give me memory, give me love, give me chastity, give me faith,  
give me all things you know belong to the profit of my soul.

O Lord, work good in me, and provide me with what you know I need. (p. 46)

**Song:** "St Aidan's Prayer" (x4; key: D). Words: Adapted from a prayer attributed to St. Aidan of Lindisfarne (ca. 600-651 AD; See [http://www.prayerfoundation.org/aidans\\_prayer.htm](http://www.prayerfoundation.org/aidans_prayer.htm)).  
Music: Dale Harris, 2004.

Leave me alone with God as much as may be

As the tide draws the water close in from the sea  
Make me an island, set apart to you  
Alone with you only God, wholly, holy to you

Prepare my heart with the turning of the tide  
To bear your presence to the busy world outside  
It surges and rushes, in upon me  
Until you draw me to your heart again like the waters of the sea.

**Flow into:** Holy, Holy, Holy (D) verse 4

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty  
All Thy works shall praise Thy name In earth and sky and sea  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 8:5-13 The Centurion's Faith

Message on Matthew 8:5-13.

**Reading:** The Breastplate of St. Patrick

*Traditionally ascribed to St Patrick, 372 – 466  
tr. Cecil Frances Alexander 1818 – 1895*

**All:** I bind unto myself today  
The strong name of the Trinity,  
By invocation of the same,  
The Three in One, the One in Three.

I bind this day to me forever  
By power of faith Christ's incarnation,  
His baptism in the Jordan river,  
His death on the cross for my salvation;  
His bursting from the spiced tomb,  
His riding up the heavenly way,  
His coming at the day of doom  
I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself today the  
Power of God to hold and lead,  
His eye to watch, his might to stay,  
His ear to harken to my need,  
The wisdom of my God to teach,  
His hand to guide, his shield to ward,  
The Word of God to give me speech,  
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me;  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me;  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger

I bind unto myself the name,  
The strong name of the Trinity,  
By invocation of the same,  
The Three in One and One in Three  
Of whom all nature hath creation,  
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word;  
Praise be to the God of my salvation,  
Salvation is of Christ the Lord!

**Song:** Be My Guide (key: D)

*Brian Thiessen © 2001 Vineyard Songs (Canada)*

Be my guide God of Abraham  
Lead me by your hand You are strong and wise  
I want to trust in You and in all I do bring You honor and praise

How I love You  
Great and mighty King  
You are faithful  
Through the ages You never change

Be my guide in the dark of night  
Set all fear to flight You are hope and truth  
I want to trust in You and in all I do bring You honor and praise  
[chorus]

Be my guide for the road ahead  
And should I feel misled You are just and good  
I want to trust in You and in all I do bring You honor and praise  
[chorus]

**Song:** Be Thou My Vision (D)

**Sending:**

**Reading:** Encompassing (*Celtic Christian Spirituality*, p. 133). *From the Carmina Gadelica*

**Leader:** The compassing of God be on thee  
The compassing of the God of life.

The compassing of Christ be on thee  
The compassing of the Christ of love.

The compassing of the Spirit be on thee,  
The compassing of the Spirit of Grace

The compassing of the Three be on thee,  
The compassing of the Three preserve thee,  
The compassing of the Three-in-one preserve thee.

**All:** The compassing of God be on thee  
The compassing of the God of life.

The compassing of Christ be on thee  
The compassing of the Christ of love.

The compassing of the Spirit be on thee,  
The compassing of the Spirit of Grace

The compassing of the Three be on thee,  
The compassing of the Three preserve thee,  
The compassing of the Three-in-one preserve thee.

Amen.