***The Fruit of Justice* A Liturgy for the Third Sunday in Lent Glenaven Methodist Church**

**Sunday 20th March 2022 Preacher: Rev David Poultney**

**Before we Begin** *In the moral sphere, every act of justice or charity involves putting ourselves in the other person's place and thus transcending our own competitive particularity.* C.S. Lewis

**CENTRING** *Patience* – A Poem for Late Summer Mary Oliver *What is the good life now? Why,
look here, consider
the moon’s white crescent*

*rounding, slowly, over
the half month to still another
perfect circle–*

*the shining eye
that lightens the hills,
that lays down the shadows*

*of the branches of the trees,
that summons the flowers
to open their sleepy faces and look up*

*into the heavens.
I used to hurry everywhere,
and leaped over the running creeks.*

*There wasn’t
time enough for all the wonderful things
I could think of to do*

*in a single day. Patience
comes to the bones
before it takes root in the heart*

*as another good idea.
I say this
as I stand in the woods*

*and study the patterns
of the moon shadows,
or stroll down into the waters*

*that now, late summer, have also
caught the fever, and hardly move
from one eternity to another.*

**WELCOME** Kia noho a Ihowa kia koutou God be with you **Kia koe anō hoki And with you also** Hold hands people of God in love **Bind our hearts together in God’s grace**

**NEWS AND NOTICES**

**CANDLE LIGHTING** We light this candle to remind us of the light of God’s love, The warmth of God’s welcome, And our faith in the ever presence of God, So together we say: **Welcome to our place, Welcome to worship, Welcome in the name of our living *God* Amen**

**WORDS FOR BEGINNING** From the Iona Community *Liturgy for Ukraine* O God we ask,

**What is the time?**

There is a time to be born and a time to die. There is a time to kill and a time to heal.

**What is the time?**

There is a time to weep

and a time to laugh.

There is a time for mourning and a time for dancing.

**What is the time?**

There is a time to tear

and a time to mend.

There is a time for silence and a time for speech. **What is the time?** There is a time to love and a time to hate. There is a time for war and a time for peace. **What is the time?**

**HYMN FFS 10(i)** Come and Find the Quiet Centre Shirley Murray

Come and find the quiet centre

in the crowded life we lead,

find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:

clear the chaos and the clutter,

clear our eyes, that we can see

all the things that really matter,

be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us,

cools the heat and slows the pace,

God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,

making space within our thinking,

lifting shades to show the sun,

raising courage when we're shrinking,

finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,

let our loves and fears unravel,

celebrate the space we gain:

there's a place for deepest dreaming,

there's a time for heart to care,

in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare!

**A MEDITATION** From *At the Edge of the Enclosure*  Suzanne Guthrie *Ruthlessness: the one uncompromising rule of gardening - pruning, chopping, weeding, deadheading, dividing, removing the weak and sick, throwing away the plants that inhibit or crowd the others. Out go the plants that don't produce fruit or function as a helpful neighbor to another plant. Out go plants that do not offer beauty or scent or pleasure or visual interest. I remember one of the interns on the farm remarking, “When I imagined that I'd spend my summer gardening, I never thought that so much of my day would involve killing” – not only plants, but harmful insects and rodents.*

*In Jesus' parable the owner of the garden observes a barren fig tree. Reasonably, he orders it yanked out. But the gardener suggests that the owner give the fig another year. In the meantime he'll break up the hard earth, aerating the ground around it so the roots can breathe and drink and take in nourishment. He'll put manure around it, that golden substance which is the very ground of life and fertility - changing the very soil nurturing the fig tree.

What blessed good news for my soul! Not only do I have a reprieve, but in that time I will be loved, nurtured, brought back to a life of creative regeneration. The mercy of God may not necessarily reflect good gardening practice, but proves a boon for us clueless procrastinators and late bloomers.*

*But in the parable, mercy has an expiration date. You can't let the garden languish full of weeds. Repent, says Jesus. You don't know when some tyrant or madman will take your life, or even when some building will fall on you as you walk by. (Luke 13:1-5) The land owner will come yank out that fig sooner or later. Repent. NOW.*

*Most people live lives so crammed with responsibility it's necessary to push repentance into the background, like many other beautiful and important things. I have all these emergencies to deal with immediately. They occupy my attention like demons screeching and jumping up and down on my desk. Our culture demands that most people live from emergency to emergency. Some day I'll get some time off and go to the desert for 40 days to repent.

Repent, NOW, says Jesus. You do not know the day or hour. (Matthew 25:13)The sense of immanent Death can shake priorities. Suddenly those daily emergencies shrink in fear and slide off the desk when the Great Emergency enters the room with cloak and sickle. Welcome the apparition, say the saints. Day by Day remind yourself that you are going to die, said St. Benedict in the Rule. Anchorites dug a trowel full of dirt from their grave each day, or hemmed their shrouds or slept in their coffins, not for some morbid exercise, but to**emphasize life! Breathe now. Look at beauty now. Let the holy in you rise and be fruitful now. Now.*

**PRAYER** We are fed and nourished deeply,by the One who is,the model of a whole and flourishing humanitythe very image of the compassion and justice that are of God’s own nature.We are like the well watered valley,watered by a life giving spring,the Spirit, the Energythat is God. We rejoice in the One who is life to us, **Who is our nurturing and the promise of our wholeness, We pray that in our turn Our lives in their sharing be life giving and how we love and act be like water in a dry land.** Holy Wisdom, lead us deeper into the possibilities of lives made sacred,In turn may we give life and nurture hope. **This is our resolve, this is our prayer Amen**

**A MEDITATION TO HELP US REFECT UPON OUR CONSCIENCES** *The Way of Repentance* Irma Zaleski ***Repentance - conversion of the heart - does not mean being filled and tormented by guilt. Instead, it means being ready to admit our responsibility for our actions and our need for forgiveness, and having a firm desire to change our life: to turn away from ourselves in prayer and in love. Repentance means, above all, a constant, patient, growing in love. It means our willingness to open ourselves to the work of the Spirit in us and to embrace fully the gift of our salvation.***

**PRAYER** Let us pause, acknowledging the partiality, the incompleteness of our loveand the way our hearts are hardened

*Silence*

We resolve to live with the bravery of openness, to question and challenge our assumptions, to be more generous in our assessment and appreciation of others. **This is our intention, this is our prayer.** May it come to be, may it come to a fullness and completion in you. **Amen**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

**A PRAYER FOR TODAY** The sun shines, the rain falls on the just and the unjust, let us remember this and be generous and merciful in our understanding. May our compassion be readier than our judgement **Amen**

**FROM THE SCRIPTURES Isaiah 55:1-9, Luke 13:1-9**

**A REFLECTION**

**OVER TO YOU**

**HYMN WOV 636 He came singing love Colin Gibson**

He came singing Love

and he lived singing love;

he died, singing love

He arose in silence.

For the love to go on

we must make it our song;

you and I be the singers.

He came singing faith

and he lived singing faith;

he died, singing faith.

He arose in silence.

For the faith to go on

we must make it our song;

you and I be the singers.

He came singing hope

and he lived singing hope;

he died, singing hope.

He arose in silence.

For the hope to go on

we must make it our song;

you and I be the singers.

He came singing peace

and he lived singing peace;

he died, singing peace.

He arose is silence.

For the peace to go on

we must make it our song;

you and I be the singers

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND CARE FOR OTHERS**

**THE OFFERTORY** Francis Macnab God, the source of all goodness, help us to bring some gladness to others; God the source of the best harmony, help us build harmony in the face of division, **God the source of the expansive spirit,** **so expand and enlarge our spirits** **to be carriers of goodness and harmony and generosity** **Amen**

**A FINAL THOUGHT *Wild Geese* Mary Oliver**

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| *You do not have to be good.* |
| *You do not have to walk on your knees* |
| *for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.* |
| *You only have to let the soft animal of your body* |
| *love what it loves.* |
| *Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.* |
| *Meanwhile the world goes on.* |
| *Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain* |
| *are moving across the landscapes,* |
| *over the prairies and the deep trees,* |
| *the mountains and the rivers.* |
| *Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,* |
| *are heading home again.* |
| *Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,* |
| *the world offers itself to your imagination,* |
| *calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -* |
| *over and over announcing your place* |
| *in the family of things.***HYMN HiOS 7** As the wind blows through the trees Shirley Erena MurrayAs the wind song through the trees,as the stirring of the breeze,so it is with the Spirit of God,as the heart made strangely warm,as the voice within the storm,so it is with the Spirit of God. Never seen, ever knownwhere this wind has blownbringing life, bringing power to the world,as the dancing tongues of fire,as the soul’s most deep desire,so it is with the Spirit of God.As the rainbow after rain,as the hope that’s born again,so it is with the Spirit of God,as the green in the spring,as a kite on a string,so it is with the Spirit of God, making worlds that are new,making peace come true,bringing gifts, bringing love to the world,as the rising of the yeast,as the wine at the feast,so it is with the Spirit of God.**COMMISSIONING** We now extinguish this candle but let us say together: **We now embody this light and promise To reflect the light of God’s love In all that we say and do Amen****CLOSING LITANY AND BLESSING WORDS** Iona Community Where Christ walks, **we will follow.**Where Christ stumbles, **we will stop.**Where Christ cries, **we will listen.**Where Christ suffers, **we will hurt.**When Christ dies, **we will bow our heads in sorrow.**When Christ rises again in glory, **We will share his endless joy.**And the blessing of God be with you always,The Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the World **Amen****THE GRACE Kia tau ki a tatou katoa, te atawhai o to tatou Ariki o Ihu Karaiti, Me te aroha o te Atua, me te whiwhinga tahitanga ki te Wairua Tapu. Ake, ake, ake Amine****The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all Amen**  |