

Aidan and Hilda. The principal writer for the community is Ray Simpson.

Keith Duke is the principal musician, and Mary Fleeson the main artist.

On the mainland just south of Lindisfarne is also the Northumbria Community with its distinctive worship and music.

David Adam, priest for many years on Lindisfarne has written books about Celtic Spirituality and prayer. He has not only recorded old Celtic prayers but has written many modern prayers in the Celtic style.

If you would like to read a more academic approach to this period, works by Ian Bradley are particularly helpful.

Read any of the above authors and you will be well on the way to understanding the Celtic style.

The Celtic way of prayer is essentially a way of life. A rhythm of prayer and action – the journey inward and the journey outward. It is inclusive of all life, work, play, relationships, pilgrimage, giving a wholeness of being centred on Christ the King and the Blessed Trinity.



A prayer in the Celtic style

by David Adam

Lord,
I wait for the tide to turn
Until the distant becomes close,
Until the far off becomes near,
Until the outside is within,
Until the ebb flows.

Lord,
I wait for the tide to turn
Until weakness is made strong,
Until blindness turns to sight,
Until the fractured is made whole,
Until the ebb flows.

Lord,
I wait until the tide turns,
Until the ordinary becomes strange,
Until the empty is Presence full,
Until the two become one.
Until the ebb flows.

Taken from Tides and Seasons

Resources:

Colonies of Heaven – *Ian Bradley*
Prayer Rythms – *Ray Simpson*
Waymarks for the Journey – *Ray Simpson*
The Celtic Quest – *Rosemary Power*
Celtic Way – *Esther de Waal*

Community of Aidan and Hilda
www.aidanandhilda.org

Northumbria Community:
Nether Springs, Chatton, Northumbria.

THE
DIOCESE
OF
BLACKBURN
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE



Praying in the
Celtic Tradition



Praying in the Celtic Tradition



CELTIC PRAYER and Spirituality are very popular today. Associated with simple life style, rural and coastal settings, care of the environment and the building of community. This

sort of prayer resonates with today's seeker, who longs for something other than materialism and hurry.

However, we need to remember that originally Celtic Society was agrarian, dependant for its health on weather, tides, seasons and overlords. This was no easy time to be alive; life was hard and although their spirituality draws us today, we must not over romanticise their times.

But the Celts and their love of God, especially the Trinity have much to teach us. Theirs was a missionary faith, taught by such leaders as Columba, Aidan, Cuthbert, Patrick, Bridget and Hilda. These men and women of faith and deep prayer stood up to the pagan religions of the day, bringing light and hope into the lives of the people to whom they ministered.

There are few authentic documents from the time of the Celts, the Lindisfarne Gospels, Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, St. Patrick's Breastplate, to quote the best known. In the late 1800's Alexander Carmichael brought together many

ancient prayers from the Outer Hebrides under the title, "*Carmena Gadelica*". Although these come from a long oral tradition it is likely that they reflect the prayers of the ancient Celtic People.

These prayers show us that prayer for the Celts was integrated as part and parcel of their daily lives. Special invocations were made to Christ as King, and to the threefold God, the Holy Trinity.

There were prayers for rising from and going to bed, daily work, be it sowing and reaping, milking cows; travelling, both going out and thanksgiving for safe arrivals home; household duties like laying and lighting a fire, washing and cleaning. There were circling prayers, welcoming prayers, prayers for deliverance, prayers for birth and for death. Whatever was going on there were set prayers which had been learned and invoked day by day.

As they had been conscious of the evil spirits invoked by the Druids, so they were now conscious of the powerful love of the Trinity.

*Be the peace of the Spirit mine this night,
Be the peace of the Son mine this night
Be the peace of the Father mine this night,
The peace of all peace be mine this night
Each morning and evening of my life.*

In such a society community was of great importance. Indeed without others the individual could not survive. The population was small, and one could walk for many miles without seeing another living soul. The development of monastic communities like that of Iona and Lindisfarne brought together both people and learning. Monasteries had libraries and people who could read – quite a different phenomena from the rest of society. Monastic communities had set times of prayer, and visitors would use these prayers as a model for their own spiritual life and discipline. Such communities also were centres for art and music. These too, were a form of Celtic prayer. We only have to look at the Lindisfarne Gospels to understand how every brush stroke was a prayer of love to our Saviour.

Today there are many developing communities based on the Celtic way of life. The Isle of Iona has such a community where the emphasis is on prayer, justice and peace. It is open to all visitors; simply being on the island and taking part in services and other activities brings a new sense of spiritual life. The principal musician for this community is John Bell, and writer, JP Newell.

On Lindisfarne there is the Community of the Open Gate, embracing particularly the teachings of