# We Gather to Praise God

Worship Leader - normal type. **Congregational responses - bold type.**

GATHERING AND PRELUDE

From our homes you draw us to this sacred time and space, O Holy One.
We come to dwell in your presence, for you are the source of our being.

*(Silence)*

God calls us to renew ourselves and our life’s purpose, as we gather with others who are searching for meaning. Let us be in silence together.

 *(Silence)*

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Out of nothingness we came through birth into life:
**With the Spirit of God within us.**

From the life of God the universe unfolded into being
**With the Spirit of God within it.**

From the heart of God creation goes on till the end of time
**With the Spirit of God within it and with our spirit within it.**

Let us embrace the God who enfolds us

**We delight in God.**

\*SONG Just a Closer Walk with Thee – verse 1 #557

Four Meditations

1. The Breath of Life *(Psalm 46:10a)*

*Settle into your seat, close your eyes and imagine a place that brings you comfort and peace. Breathe in the goodness of that space. Breathe forth the goodness that is within you.*

Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am

Be still and know that I

Be still and know that

Be still and know

Be still and

Be still

Be

\*SONG Just a Closer Walk with Thee – verse 2 #557

1. I Am Giving You Me (a mediation from the Iona Community)

# I Am Giving You Me

From *Stages on the Way* pg. 20-22

© 1997 Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community.

GIA Publications, Inc., exclusive North American Distributor.

A: I

B: I

A: I am

B: I am

A: I am giving you

B: I am giving you

A: I am giving you me

B: I am giving you me

A: I am giving you me, Lord

B: I am giving you me, Lord

B: I am giving you me in the twinkle of my eye and the sadness of my sighing; in the laughter of my heart and the tears of my soul; in the rhythms of my feet and the silence of my listening. I am giving you me, Lord.

A: I am giving you me in the promises I keep and the insults that I pardon; in the good news that I share and the confidences I protect; in the remembering of gracious things and the forgetting of forgiven sins. I am giving you me, Lord.

B: I am giving you me in the young ones I kneel beside and the old ones I sit with; in the unborn ones I pray for and the dying ones I pray with; in the bright ones I wave to and the hurting ones I touch. I am giving you me, Lord.

A: I am giving you me in the meant song, in the quiet pause, in the special moment, in the nod of my life to your will and still, I am giving you me in the stuttered prayer and the lingering doubt and the dry days of the spirit and the contradicted hopes. I am giving you me, Lord.

C: I

 I am

 I am giving

 I am giving you

 I am giving you me

 I am giving you me, my brothers and sisters.

I am giving you me in the beauty of the earth and the ugliness of a wooden cross; in the fullness of four seasons and the emptiness of a garden tomb; and the warmth of the weak and the rejection of the mighty; in the company of God’s people and the solitude of a place apart;

And sometimes, when a stone wall confronts you, I am giving you me, praying on the other side: Father, may the love you have for me be in them, so that I may also be in them and they in us.

1. Letting Go (*Isaiah 58 1:-12*)

**1** Shout loudly; don't hold back; raise your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their crime, to the house of Jacob their sins. **2** They seek me day after day, desiring knowledge of my ways like a nation that acted righteously, that didn't abandon their God. They ask me for righteous judgments, wanting to be close to God. **3** "Why do we fast and you don't see; why afflict ourselves and you don't notice?" Yet on your fast day you do whatever you want, and oppress all your workers. **4** You quarrel and brawl, and then you fast; you hit each other violently with your fists. You shouldn't fast as you are doing today if you want to make your voice heard on high. **5** Is this the kind of fast I choose, a day of self-affliction, of bending one's head like a reed and of lying down in mourning clothing and ashes? Is this what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?**6** Isn't this the fast I choose: releasing wicked restraints, untying the ropes of a yoke, setting free the mistreated, and breaking every yoke? **7** Isn't it sharing your bread with the hungry and bringing the homeless poor into your house, covering the naked when you see them, and not hiding from your own family? **8** Then your light will break out like the dawn, and you will be healed quickly. Your own righteousness will walk before you, and the LORD's glory will be your rear guard. **9** Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and God will say, "I'm here." If you remove the yoke from among you, the finger-pointing, the wicked speech; **10** if you open your heart to the hungry, and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted, your light will shine in the darkness, and your gloom will be like the noon. **11** The LORD will guide you continually and provide for you, even in parched places. He will rescue your bones. You will be like a watered garden, like a spring of water that won't run dry. **12** They will rebuild ancient ruins on your account; the foundations of generations past you will restore. You will be called Mender of Broken Walls, Restorer of Livable Streets.

*You are invited to write a confession, a prayer or something which you would like to “let go” on the slip of paper in your worship bulletin and then to come up and place the paper in the glass bowl.*

Offering

*You are invited to bring your offering forward and place it in the wooden dish.*

Choral Anthem

Prayer of Dedication

We lay down what is past...
**We lay down what is past** **and look to the future. We take into our daily life signs of hope and healing. We reach beyond ourselves to share the lives of others and touch a wider world.**

\*SONG Just a Closer Walk with Thee – verse 3 #557

1. “Ash Wednesday”by Jim Burklo

On my forehead,
A sign of the cross,
Smudged in ash from the fire
That burned down the McMansion of my hubris,
And, with it,
The money I should have given away,
The television I used to numb my senses,
The carpet I should have been called on,
The doors I should have opened to others,
The envelopes I should have used
To send letters of love,
The wise books I shelved prominently
So that others would think I had read them,
The blank places in my photo albums
Where my darker moments should have been remembered,
The calendars where visits with the people who needed me most
Should have been scheduled,
The couch of my complacency,
The lounge-chair of my laziness,
The shirts I stuffed with my pride,
The moccasins I should have traded with others
So we could have walked miles in them.

On my forehead,
A sign of the crossroad
Where I can turn from the way of ruin
To the way of life. *(2012)*

Service of Ashes

INTRODUCTION

BLESSING THE ASHES

DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

*Those who wish to be marked or receive a blessing are invited to come forward*

PRAYER

We pray:
**We have made our honest confessions before the Sacred in our lives, and before one another. We are thankful for forgiveness and healing. We pray for continued forgiveness and healing in a hurting world. May nothing separate us from the Ground and Source of Life, as we follow Jesus during this Lenten journey.
Amen.**

\*SONG What a Friend We Have in Jesus #585

\*BENEDICTION

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.**