

SALT, LIGHT, AND CELTIC CONNECTIONS

Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 13:46-49 // A Service for St. Patrick's Day

This worship service borrows elements from Celtic Christianity and is inspired by the missional ministry of St. Patrick. It centers on Jesus' call for us to be "salt and light," as embodied in the missionary work of St. Paul. Here are some materials to get you started creating your own worship service.

MAIN THEME: "You are salt and light" Encourage worshipers to follow the lead of St. Paul and St. Patrick who reflected God's flavor and light in their missional ministries and lives.

CHOOSING MUSIC // FOR SINGING

•♪ **Once And For All** [Key of A]

Text and Music: Lauren Daigle, Paul Duncan, and Paul Mabury
© 2015 Centricity Music

•♪ **Bring Forth the Kingdom** [Key of D]

Text and Music: Marty Haugen
© 1986 GIA Publications, Inc.

•♪ **Be Thou My Vision** [Key of D]

Text and Music: Eleanor Henrietta Hull and Mary Elizabeth Byrne
Public Domain

•♪ **How Can I Keep from Singing** [Key of G]

Text and Music: Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Matt Redman
© 2006 sixsteps Music (Admin. Capitol CMG Publishing)

•♪ **People of God** [Key of A]

Text and Music: Brandon Gillies, Israel Houghton, Michael Gungor
© 2009 SHOUT! Music Publishing (Admin. Capitol CMG Publishing)

•♪ **Salt and Light** [Key of G]

Text and Music: Jan L'Eucuyer and John L'Eucuyer
© 2002 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. Capitol CMG Publishing)

CREATING DRAMA // FOR HEARING

Purchase and use "Salt and Light" // The Work of the People [www.theworkofthepeople.com]

FINDING ART // FOR SEEING

Perhaps talking about "saints" is uncommon in your congregation. What's more, when people hear of "St. Patrick," they likely think of Leprechauns and clovers. Purchase and "The History of St. Patrick" to learn

about St. Patrick and his devoted ministry among the Irish. // Worship House Media [www.worshiphousemedia.com]

Purchase and use “Your Light” as a response to the worship gathering’s message, encouraging worshipers to reflect on our call to be a light that reflects God’s light. // Worship House Media [www.worshiphousemedia.com]

LIVING WORSHIP // FOR DOING

As worshipers leave the gathering, give each one a salt packet to remind them of Christ’s call to be salt and light in our world.

Start a “Salt and Light” blog. Create a webpage or blog where members of your congregation can record and share examples of where God has worked through them, instances of where they have seen God’s people become “salt and light” in our world. Some of us may think it’s impolite to “brag” on ourselves; others of us may rarely practice the skill of looking for God at work in our world. Either way, celebrating God’s work in us is good and helps us come to believe that we are truly salt and light, vessels God has ordained to accomplish God’s mission. By naming and sharing examples of Christ-followers being salt and light, we can all be inspired to grow into that identity more fully.

MAKING SPACE // FOR WORSHIPPING

Celtic Christianity is known for its deeply Trinitarian and prayer-centered roots. Display prominently a large Celtic cross in your worship space, a cross with a circle around the center. The circle serves as a symbol of eternity, emphasizing the endlessness of God’s love for us, as shown supremely through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. If no one is able to construct a Celtic cross, consider displaying one on a screen during worship. A video loop entitled “St Patricks Day Background” featuring the celtic cross is available for purchase. // Worship House Media [www.worshiphousemedia.com]



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Consider using prominent candles throughout the worship space to remind us that we, like St. Paul and St. Patrick, are called to reflect Christ’s light among all people.

Does your church display a floral arrangement? Include shamrocks! While shamrocks have become central to popular celebrations, remind worshippers that St. Patrick used the three leaves of a shamrock to remind God’s people of the Trinity, God-Three-in-One.

THE LORD’S TABLE // FOR CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT

The Iona Community is the group now responsible for managing the restored medieval abbey on the island of Iona in Scotland. Their *Iona Abbey Worship Book* (Wild Goose Publications, 2001) contains many Celtic worship materials, prayers, and resources. If your faith community is celebrating the Lord’s Supper today, considering using their liturgical resources.

WRITING POETRY// FOR PRAYING

Consider a Celtic prayer for use in your worship gathering. This one, from St. Patrick, can serve as a way for worshipers to affirm their faith together. Use it in worship, or allow its themes to inspire your own prayer.

**ALL: I bind unto myself today
the strong name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three.**

Voice 1: 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.

Voice 2: I bind unto myself today
the virtues of the star-lit heaven,
the glorious sun's life-giving ray,
the whiteness of the moon at even,
the flashing of the lightning free,
the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,
the stable earth, the deep salt sea
around the old eternal rocks.

Voice 3: I bind unto myself today
the power of God to hold and lead,
God's eye to watch, God's might to stay,
God's ear to hearken to my need,
the wisdom of my God to teach,
God's hand to guide, God's shield to ward,
the word of God to give me speech,
God's heavenly host to be my guard.

**ALL: Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
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, the One in Three. AMEN.**

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SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE

Salt, Light, and Celtic Connections // Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 13:46-49 // A Service for St. Patrick's Day

[Place a Celtic cross prominently in the worship space before the worship gathering begins.]

GREETING

Leader: In the name of the Father,
in the name of the Son,
in the name of the Spirit Holy,
Three in One:

All: **God make us holy,**
Christ make us holy,
Spirit make us holy,
Three all-holy.

from *The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland*, © 1994, Panel
on Worship of the Church of Scotland. Used by permission.

*[Light candles placed prominently all around
worship space to remind us that we are to reflect
the light of Christ.]*

SONG OF ASPIRATION

Christ Beside Me

WELCOME

Say hi to other worshipers and welcome one another in the name of Christ.

SONGS OF WORSHIP, HOPE, AND DEDICATION

*How Can I Keep from Singing?
Bring Forth the Kingdom
Be Thou My Vision*

AFFIRMING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

ALL WORSHIPERS: I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity, by invocation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three.

VOICE 1: 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.

VOICE 2: I bind unto myself today the virtues of the star-lit heaven, the glorious sun's life-giving ray, the whiteness of the moon at even, the flashing of the lightning free, the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks, the stable earth, the deep salt sea around the old eternal rocks.

VOICE 3: I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold and lead, God's eye to watch, God's might to stay, God's ear to hearken to my need, the wisdom of my God to teach, God's hand to guide, God's shield to ward, the word of God to give me speech, God's heavenly host to be my guard.

ALL WORSHIPERS: Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, 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, the One in Three. AMEN.

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 5:13-16
Christ-Followers in the World
Purchase and use this video as the scripture reading from The Work of the People.

SHARING OUR STORIES

People of God
A week before worship, invite one or two worshipers to prepare brief testimonies answering this question: "When have you been salt and light in our world?" By naming and sharing examples of being salt and light, we can all be inspired to grow into that identity

more fully. In the message, connect this testimony with the upcoming “Salt and Light” blog. Have the band sing People of God before the testimonies, inspiring worshipers to “Rise up and shine God’s love/We are the light of the world.”

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 13:46-49

Paul’s Ministry Among the Gentiles

MESSAGE

Salt, Light, and Celtic Connections

VISUAL MEDITATION

Purchase and use this video, providing space for worshipers to reflect on our call to be Christ’s light from Worship House Media.

CLOSING SONG

Once and For All

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Life and Ministry of Our Church

BENEDICTION

[from The Iona Community Worship Book, © 1988, WGRG the Iona Community (Admin. Gia Publications)]

Leader: May the everlasting God shield you,
east and west and wherever you go.
And the blessing of God be upon us.
The blessing of the God of life.
The blessing of Christ be upon us,
the blessing of the Christ of love.
The blessing of the Spirit be upon
us, the blessing of the Spirit of grace.
The blessing of the Trinity be upon
us. Now and forevermore. Amen.

SENT OUT TO SERVE

As worshipers leave the gathering, give each one a salt pack, reminding them of Christ’s call to be salt and light.

AFTER WORSHIP

Start a “Salt and Light” blog. Ask worshipers to contribute their stories of God’s people serving as salt and light in our world.