

## Report of the Board of the Iona Community

### Theme: Communities of Hope in Turbulent Times

Total: 15 minutes

Video footage – 6 minutes

Input – 9 minutes

SPEAKER	TEXT	
Anikó	<p>Moderator - 'You come to Iona looking for peace and quiet, and you leave looking for peace and justice.' This phrase has often been repeated in describing what makes the place so special.</p> <p>The Isle of Iona is a stimulating and peaceful place, and the work of the different Christian groups who receive guests there week after week is inspirational.</p> <p>The Iona Community welcomes guests at the Abbey each week, as well as at Camas on the Ross of Mull. The work of the Iona Community changes lives – that of its guests and participants, of the volunteers who spend weeks or months bringing the centres to life, of its resident staff and its members. The members continue to live an Iona-life, seeking for peace and justice, in their homes all across the UK and increasingly worldwide. They volunteer, they campaign, they meet in issue-based networks, they work in word and deed to make the world that bit better.</p> <p>18 years ago, on a cold March morning, I got off the ferry on Iona for the first time, as one of its international volunteers. I can truthfully state that the Iona Community has changed my life – without it, I most certainly wouldn't be a Church of Scotland minister today. For this past year, I have had the privilege of convening the Iona Community Board, which each year reports on the life and work of the Iona Community to</p>	337

	<p>our General Assembly. The Board includes Iona Community members and a number of us appointed by the General Assembly, and crucially has an equal number of ecumenical members, representing their own churches. The Iona Community has its origins and its roots in the Church of Scotland, and is firmly ecumenical in all aspects of its life.</p> <p>Moderator, it is the tradition of the Assembly that the Leader of the Iona Community presents the majority of the Board’s report, so may I respectfully request that you invite the Rev Ruth Harvey, current leader of the Iona Community, to address the Assembly.</p>	
<p>Ruth</p>	<p>Moderator, convener – my thanks for this opportunity to introduce the report of the Board of the Iona Community to the General Assembly.</p> <p>In a world where climate catastrophe is writ large, poverty gallops on apace, exclusion and marginalisation continue to blight the lives of millions, and the voice of young people continues to be squashed, the question for Christian communities, and people of good faith world wide remains: what is our to do?</p> <p>Communities of faith like ours live within a framework of hope. Hope in God’s time, a kairos time resonant more of emergence than of strategy; hope in the ‘not yet nestled in the now.’ Hope in the resurrection in the midst of chaos. Hope in the small, ordinary miracles of love and justice in the face of so much that is wrong. Hope that extends us beyond optimism to a faith that despite all that changes, we will not fall apart. In the words of Rowan Williams, “It’s because I don’t change, says God, that you don’t fall apart.”</p> <p>The Iona Community’s new members programme offers space for discernment, and solidarity for courage to take a stand for hope. Here are two of our newest members, William in Glasgow and SarahLee in Texas,</p>	<p>210</p>

	sharing why this matters.	
Video Clip 1	<b>New Members from our global programme</b>	2 min
Ruth	<p>The web of hope that binds us is broad and deep and long. Growing partnerships are an expression of our belief that while our story may be particular, we are not unique - we are all bound up in the web of God's oikumene. Partnerships with the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and with the Student Christian Movement expand our learning edge through the lens of students. Growing links with the Joint Public Issues Team, with the Community for Spiritual Formation, and with Oikosnet Europe expand our reflective practice and our political engagement.</p> <p>So too our web of belonging is augmented by close relationships with sister communities around the globe, such as the Corrymeela Community in Ireland or the Agape Community in Italy. In 2023 we extended our relationship with the Wellspring Community in Australia. A 7 week Creation Care pilgrimage meeting with over 30 indigenous Christian leaders focussing on themes of climate action has brought a renewed urgency and focus to our work as people of faith to reverse the catastrophic destruction of God's creation, and to learn from indigenous voices around the globe. Here's a short clip from the final stop on our pilgrimage:</p>	196
Video Clip 2	<b>Creation Care Pilgrimage</b>	2min
Ruth	<p>Amidst the emergent hope core to our faith we are also pragmatists. Our soon to be launched strategic plan, therefore, will outline how we will continue not only to grow but to deepen. It will illustrate how we aim to be a sustainable organisation not only to stay afloat, but to play our part in the survival and flourishing of all of life. Nestled within the heart of our strategy will be a renewed commitment to youth work. Core to our</p>	181

	<p>identity these last 9 decades, being led and nurtured by voices of young people remains a driving principle in all that we do. And so my last word is given, as in previous years, to young people this time from London and (?) who took part in our Youth Festival on Iona in 2023. They remind us of the hope that Joanna Macy and others have called The Great Turning – a hope that, with pragmatism in one hand, and vision in the other, digs deep and calls wide to a truth and a love greater than all that is wrong.</p>	
<p><b>Anikó</b></p>	<p>In a world where it is easy to worry, to despair, to surrender, it is good to have beacons of light, of hope, of courage, of community. The Iona Community offers such a beacon, so thank you, Ruth, for these insights into the life of the Community. We all are invited to join in: with the worship and songs; with learning from one another; with standing up to injustice; with being encouraged and encouraging, with being inspired and inspiring.</p> <p>Moderator, I am pleased to present the report of the Iona Community Board, and move the deliverance.</p>	<p>96</p>