

Good morning, friends!

In 2013 I spent three months living on the Isle of Iona off the west coast of Scotland. During that time I volunteered with the Iona Community. Each morning we would gather for worship at 9am in the Abbey and I can still speak that service by heart. The vast majority of mornings I still speak the words of the service in my mind. Humility, grace, love, challenge and purpose are weaved throughout the liturgy.

During the service we would rise together, in the Abbey and affirm our faith using these words...

With the whole church...

We affirm that we are made in God's image, befriended by Christ, and empowered by the Spirit.

With people everywhere...

We affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity, planted more deeply than all that is wrong.

With all creation...

We affirm and celebrate the miracle and wonder of life and the unfolding purposes of God, forever at work in ourselves and the world.

I always loved that all our voices rang out together saying this modern creed. Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber says that the communal experience of professing our faith means that "in a room of people for each line of the Creed, somebody believes it." I remember one morning on Iona someone



saying to me, "I don't know if I can say that I'm feeling very befriended by Christ right now, but it helps to hear everyone say it."

There might be some days that profession of faith comes easily and you can shout words like "Christ is Risen!" from the rooftops. There may be other days when those words don't come so easily. This is the beauty of the Church as the Body of Christ: we carry one another. We carry one other in our belief and unbelief, we carry one another in days that feel certain and in days that feel uncertain, we carry one other, for we are family: we are children of God.

Let's pray together (another prayer from that morning service on Iona)...

O Christ, you are within each of us.

It is not just the interior of these walls:

it is our own inner being you have renewed. We are your temple not made with hands. We are your body.

If every wall should crumble, and every church decay, we are your habitation.

Nearer are you than breathing,  
closer than hands and feet.

Ours are the eyes with which you, in the mystery, look out with compassion on the world.

Yet we bless you for this place,

for your directing of us, your redeeming of us, and your indwelling.

Take us outside, O Christ, outside holiness, out to where soldiers curse and nations clash at the crossroads of the world.

So shall this building continue to be justified. We ask it for your own name's sake.

Amen