What is Celtic Spirituality?

An Introduction to a Rich Tradition

By Christine Sine
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I arise today present with the Holy One,
In the embrace of love,
In the hope of renewal,
In the joy of belonging
to the great I AM.
I arise today in the life of the Creator,
In the image of the Eternal One,
Planter of gardens, bearer of burdens,
  Breath of the world.
I arise today, a child of the faithful One,
Lover of souls, reviver of Spirits,
  Blesser of all that is good
and true and praiseworthy.
I choose to live today,
In the name of the caring One,
Compassion in my heart,
Gratitude in my thoughts,
Generosity in my deeds,
  Justice as my passion.
I choose to live today
In the light of Christ.
Christine Sine http://godspace-msa.com
Celtic Spirituality - What Is The Attraction?

One of my favourite places in the world is the island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland. It seems so remote now, requiring a journey from Glasgow by train, ferry, bus and another ferry to get there. At one time, when most long distance travel was done by sea, it was a thriving centre of spirituality and education. It was here in the 6th century that the Celtic saint Columba settled after being exiled from Ireland. And it was also here that the famous Book of Kells was probably written.

My husband Tom took me to Iona on our honeymoon 22 years ago, sharing with me not just a place but a Christian tradition that was very special to him. My imagination was ignited by this ancient faith perspective which thrived from the 5th to 8th century and was responsible for the spread of the Christian faith from Ireland through Scotland and England and then through much of Western Europe. It offered so much of what I craved in my modern life—an intense sense of the presence of God, a spirituality that permeated every part of life and a love for creation as a reflection of the character of God. It is possible that St. Francis of Assisi was strongly influenced by the Irish monks who established a chapel near Assisi.

Scottish theologian, Prof John Macquarrie observed that “the Celt was very much a God-intoxicated person whose life was embraced on all sides by the divine Being.” I long for that same intoxication and intimacy with God.

Celtic Christianity thrived in the fifth to eleventh centuries. The primary site for worship, pastoral care and religious instruction was the monastery rather than the parish church. This strongly monastic character produced a model of ministry that was communitarian rather than individualistic.
“Ministry in all aspects—liturgical, pastoral, evangelistic, educational—was not the solitary individualistic task it so often is today. It was rather undertaken by teams of men and women, ordained and lay, who lived together in community and operated from a common central base from which they went out among the people preaching, teaching, baptizing, administering the sacraments, caring for the sick and burying the dead.”¹

A common misconception is that these early Celtic monks fled to the wilderness and devoted themselves to prayer, fasting and other extreme activities. However, usually, these settlements lay at the crossroads of major travel routes, whether by sea (as in the case of Iona) or land (like Clonmacnoise on the banks of the river Shannon, in Ireland). Here was a community founded by Ciaran, the first born of the Irish saints, that was intentional about living the God-filled life at the heart of contemporary culture and business.

These monastic communities were open to a constant stream of visitors, pilgrims and penitents. They were intimately involved in the affairs of the world and the lives of the people they served. The inhabitants, in some cases both women and men, were not just concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of the communities they served but also with their intellectual and physical wellbeing. They were also in many ways the keepers of culture and tradition, not just copying the Psalms and Gospels but also writing down stories, songs, and poems and preserving myths and legends for posterity.

The Celtic monasteries acted as a creative and noticeable influence for God, good and change! Whilst enjoying their own worship and prayer space for disciplined discipleship, at one and the same time offered hospitality and hope as a busy world traded and tried to make sense of life with all its subtle complexities. It was a lifeboat afloat in the choppy waters of a competitive world, offering succor to those who sought its safety.

The Celts approached God with awe, reverence and wonder but also saw God as an essentially human figure intimately involved in all creation and engaged in a dynamic relationship with it. This interweaving of intimacy and mystery embraced the Trinity as a family, and each human family unit (be it family, clan or tribe) was seen as an icon of the Trinity. The Trinity was a very real presence in all aspects of life and creation, and an almost tangible Comforter and Protector who could ward evil forces. We see this theological perspective reflected in this simple prayer.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Three folds of the cloth yet only one napkin is there,} \\
\text{Three joints in the finger, but still only one finger fair,} \\
\text{Three leaves of the shamrock, yet no more than one shamrock to wear,} \\
\text{Frost, snow-flakes and ice, all in water their origin share,} \\
\text{Three persons in God, to one God alone we make prayer.}
\end{align*}
\]

I love the Celtic belief that only a thin veil separates this world from the next. They took seriously Hebrews 12:1 ("Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses..."), and had an almost physical sense of the great company of heaven which surrounded God, a company which embraced not only saints and friends who had died but also the whole host of angels and other heavenly powers. When you raised your eyes to heaven, you raised them to a vast host. The Celtic Christian at prayer was consciously a member of the great company that stretched from the persons of the Trinity through the powerful angelic throngs to the risen saints. They were regarded very much as friends and companions in this world and addressed almost as one would neighbours or members of the family.

¹ Ian Bradley, Colonies of Heaven: Celtic Christian Communities, Live the Tradition, Northstone Publishing, Kelowna, BC, Canada 2000, p5-6
One of the most demanding and often costly tasks undertaken by the Celtic monasteries was that of hospitality. They believed hospitality was not only meant to be a custom in their homes, but also a key into the kingdom of God. The guest house, or *hospitium*, often occupied the best site within the monastic community, and though the monks might live on bread and water, visitors would often receive the best of food and drink. The monastery at Derry is said to have fed a thousand hungry people each day. Brigit, one of the best known women leaders of the Celtic church, who presided over the monastery at Kildare often made butter for visitors. Tradition has it that when churning the butter, Brigit would make thirteen portions—twelve in honour of the apostles and an extra one in honour of Christ, which was reserved for guests and the poor.

According to Christine Pohl in her inspirational book *Making Room*, the tradition of hospitality was once an important part of all Christian communities and revolved around the welcoming of strangers into one’s home:

"For most of the history of the church, hospitality was understood to encompass physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of human existence and relationships. It meant response to the physical needs of strangers for food, shelter and protection, but also a recognition of their worth and common humanity. In almost every case, hospitality involved sharing meals: historically table fellowship was an important way of recognizing the equal value and dignity of persons."²

One of my favourite Celtic prayers is this beautiful hospitality prayer attributed to Brigit.

*I should like a great lake of finest ale,*
*For the King of Kings*

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I should welcome the sick to my feast,  
For they are God's joy.  
Let the poor sit with Jesus at the highest place,  
And the sick dance with the angels  
God bless the poor, God bless the sick,  
And bless our human race.  
God bless our food,  
God bless our drink,  
All homes, O God, embrace.

Much of our knowledge of Celtic Christianity comes through their beautiful prayers, many of which were written over a thousand years ago, and then gathered in the Carmina Gadelica. The most famous Celtic prayer is Patrick's breastplate which I adapted a few years ago as a responsive litany. Patrick’s prayer is shot through with a deep sense of the presence of God and a confidence in God’s ability to protect from evil. It is one of my favourite Celtic prayers and expresses so much of what draws me to Celtic Christianity as this excerpt from the prayer shows.

We bind unto ourselves today the strong name of the Trinity,  
By invocation of the same, the Three in One, the One in Three,  
Of whom all nature hath creation, Eternal God, Spirit, Word;  
Praise to the God of our salvation, Salvation is of Christ the Lord.

As this prayers reveals, the presence of Christ was almost physically woven through the lives of the Celts. He encircled, upheld and encompassed them as a companion next to them, a guest in the house, a physical presence in their lives. I love the way that is expressed in yet another of my favourite Celtic prayers:

Christ as a light, illumine and guide us.  
Christ as a shield, overshadow and cover us,  
Christ be under us, Christ be over us,  
Christ be before us, Christ be behind us,  
Christ be within us, Christ be without us,  
Christ as a light illumine and guide us.

Celtic Christianity opened my eyes to the belief that creation is translucent, allowing us glimpses of the glory of God. The earth and its wonders provide the key not just to establishing the existence of God but also to learning about him. This is no pantheistic worship of the elements but rather a dynamic picture of God’s active presence in creation. God animates and charges all things with divine energy, and they in turn reflect and respond to God’s creative presence and sustaining love. God’s hands don’t simply encircle and protect the earth and all it contains; God also quickens, enlivens and inspires it so God’s existence can be confirmed through contemplation of the beauty and order of the natural world.

In this tradition, nothing is too trivial to be sanctified by prayer and blessing, whether it be dressing for the day’s work, milking the cow or damping down the fire at night. This sense of the importance of the little things parallels the Celts’ identification with the little people, the marginalized and the oppressed. All persons represented God and might be heavenly visitors in disguise. Extending hospitality opened a door to the kingdom of God and welcomed Jesus into their midst. It was an important expression of love both toward God and neighbour.

3 http://godspace-msa.com/2014/03/16/happy-st-patricks-day/

4 Adapted from Patrick’s Hymn by James C. Mangan 1803-1849
My own interest in the sanctity of ordinary everyday tasks and the importance of finding God within them, and my growing emphasis on the importance of hospitality as a doorway into God’s kingdom is one of the most important practical lessons I have learned from the Celts.

Celtic spirituality continues to enrich my faith, and I often write and use Celtic-style prayers like this circling prayer in my daily devotions.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{God all powerful and all knowing encircle us} \\
\text{Keep love within and fear without} \\
\text{Keep peace within and violence out} \\
\text{Circle us with your presence} \\
\text{God all mighty and all caring encircle us} \\
\text{Keep truth within and injustice out} \\
\text{Keep acceptance in and prejudice out} \\
\text{Circle us with your grace} \\
\text{God all loving and all embracing encircle us} \\
\text{Keep wholeness in and disease without} \\
\text{Keep care within and selfishness out} \\
\text{Circle us with your love.}
\end{align*}
\]

There is so much that we can learn from this ancient future tradition whose followers saw themselves as guests of the world, living lightly on this earth and not becoming attached to possessions or place. They believed all of life was a pilgrimage, a journey towards God in which every experience and every encounter provided opportunity to both represent and learn about God.

As followers of Jesus, like the early Celtic Christians, we are encouraged to find a regular Rule or rhythm that equips us both to journey ever deeper into the heart of God and to live kingdom life effortlessly and instinctively. These early monastics all practiced simple Rules, such as St. Columba’s commitment to eat only when hungry and reflect upon the sufficiency of God. At Gallarus on the Dingle Peninsula there is an Oratory, or prayer house, shaped as an upturned boat. Here individual monks would come to practice the discipline of prayer, always reminded as they gazed seaward that they were redeemed to serve the world and that God placed them as navigators to sail through life at the bidding of the wind of God’s spirit; their lives and destiny were not their own but God’s.

A distinctive tradition common across Britain and Ireland was the popularity of *peregrinatio pro Christo*, or “exile for Christ”. Most peregrini or exiles of this type were seeking personal spiritual fulfilment, but many became involved in missionary endeavours. Saint Patrick became the evangelist of Ireland during what he called his peregrinatio there, while the Irishmen Columba and Columbanus founded highly important religious communities after leaving their homes.

Probably the most famous peregrinatio was that undertaken by Brendan the voyager. Reputedly he set sail with fourteen or fifteen companions, in a small coracle of wood and oxhide from Ireland and ended up in Newfoundland. An amazing achievement back in the 6th century. I love this prayer that is attributed to him and speaks to the need of all of us to risk journeying beyond what is familiar.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Help me to journey beyond the familiar} \\
\text{and into the unknown.} \\
\text{Give me the faith to leave old ways} \\
\text{and break fresh ground with You.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Christ of the mysteries, I trust You} \\
\text{to be stronger than each storm within me.} \\
\text{I will trust in the darkness and know}
\end{align*}
\]
Recognizing ourselves as guests and pilgrims affects how we view everything that happens to us. Pilgrims and those who travel frequently do not take anything for granted. They learn to be grateful for comforts that those who never leave home take for granted. For a guest, each meal, especially a home cooked meal, is a gift of love from the host. Each bed provided for us to sleep in is a generous act of sharing and caring. Everything is now a gift of God.

So as you go out into the world this week think of what you could learn from this ancient tradition. Look for God in the translucence of creation, in the faces of strangers. Think of yourself as a guest of the world and prepare yourself for the amazing gifts God wants to lavish on you today – gifts of friendship, and food, gifts of fellowship and love and caring. And let me know what new things open up for you as a result.
A Celtic House Blessing

House Blessing

God who is Three, God who is One,
give blessing to the house that is here.
Bless it from roof to floor,
from wall to wall, from end to end.
May your Spirit alone dwell within these walls,
To bring joy and laughter to all who enter here.

We call upon the Sacred Three
To save, to shield and surround this home.
The circle of God around it,
The peace of Christ within it,
The life of the Spirit above it,
this day, this night and every night.

May the Triune God be the guardian of this place.
Peace be here in the name of the God of love,
Welcome be here in the name of the Christ of peace,
Joy be here in the name of the Spirit of life.
God who is One, God who is Three,
Bring light for the day and rest for the night.

We call upon the Sacred Three
To welcome, guide and nurture all who enter here,
The circle of God around friend and stranger,
The peace of Christ within guest and host,
The life of the Spirit above all who stand at the door,
this day, this night and every night.
Amen.

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A Hospitality Liturgy

The following liturgy revolves around the practice of hospitality. I compiled it from a number of different prayers, some of which I have written myself. Others date back over a thousand years. You may like to get together with a group of friends over a meal and discuss how you could become God’s hospitality to your community. Use this liturgy to focus your minds and hearts on the call to be Christ’s hospitality to our world. Brigit’s prayer which is used as part of this liturgy, also makes a great grace before a meal. You might like to write out copies for each person and recite it together as you begin your meal.

Leader: The Celtic Christians believed that hospitality was not only meant to be a custom in their homes, they believed it was a key into the Kingdom of God. To offer hospitality was seen as receiving Christ into their midst and fulfilling the law of love. Let us sit in silent prayer for a moment to remind ourselves of the incredible hospitality of God who invites us into his presence and into his family.

Silent Prayer

All stand for lighting of the candle

Leader: The King is knocking. If thou would’st have thy share of heaven on earth, lift the latch and let in the king of Kings. (Hebridean welcome)

All: Christ as a light, illumine and guide us;
    Christ as a shield, overshadow us.
    Christ under me, Christ over us,
    Christ beside us, On our left and our right,
    This day be within and without us.
    Lowly and meek, yet all-powerful,
    Be in the heart of each to whom we speak,
    In the mouth of each who speaks to us,
    This day be within and without us.
    Lowly and meek, yet all-powerful,
    Christ as a light, Christ as a shield,
    Christ beside us, on our left and our right.

Leader: Brigit, the fifth-century Irish saint, was famed for her hospitality. The following prayer is attributed to her. As we recite it let us consider our own need to be God’s hospitality to others.

All: I should like a great lake of finest ale, for the King of Kings
    I should like a table of the choicest food, for the family of heaven.
    Let the ale be made from the fruits of faith, and the food be forgiving love.
    I should welcome the poor to my feast, for they are God’s children.
I should welcome the sick to my feast, for they are God’s joy.
Let the poor sit with Jesus at the highest place, and the sick dance with the angels
God bless the poor, God bless the sick, and bless our human race.
God bless our food, God bless our drink, all homes, O God, embrace.

Leader: I open my heart to Christ in the stranger,
People: To Christ in the face of colleague and friend,
Leader: I open my heart to the one who is wounded
People: To Christ in the hungry, the lonely, the homeless
Leader: I open my heart to the one who has hurt me
People: To Christ in the faces of sinner and foe
Leader: I open my heart to those who are outcast
People: To Christ in the broken, the prisoner, the poor
Leader: I open my heart to all who are searching
People: To Christ in the world God’s generous gift

Scripture Readings

Psalm 84
Hebrews 12:28 – 13:8
Mark 12: 28-34

Declaration of Faith

We believe and trust in God the Father Almighty.
We believe and trust in Jesus Christ the Son
We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit.
We believe and trust in the Three in One.

Leader: The Lord be with you
People: And also with you
Leader: Let us pray.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen

Leader: Let us pray that we may learn what it means to be God’s hospitality to our world.

Kneel or stand for the prayers
Leader: That the barriers that divide us may be broken down,
All: Lord have mercy.
Leader: That we may live by the law of love in unity, peace and concord
All: Lord have mercy.
Leader: That we may come to mutual understanding and care,
All: Lord have mercy.
Leader: That we may come to mutual understanding and care,
All: Christ have mercy.
Leader: Upon all who are torn apart by war and by violence
All: Christ have mercy.
Leader: Upon all who suffer from dissensions and quarrels,
All: Christ have mercy.
Leader: Upon all who are divided in their loyalty and love,
All: Christ have mercy.
Leader: That all who work for unity and in the spirit of hospitality may be blessed
All: Lord have mercy.
Leader: That all who seek to heal divisions between peoples may have hope
All: Lord have mercy.
Leader: That all who lead nations, may seek peace
All: Lord have mercy[3]

Leader: The following blessing is an ancient Celtic rune of hospitality.

We saw a stranger yesterday, we put food in the eating place,
Drink in the drinking place, music in the listening place,
And with the sacred name of the triune God
He blessed us and our house, our cattle and our dear ones.
As the lark says in her song: Often, often, often goes the Christ in the stranger's guise

All: I open my heart to be the hospitality of Christ, to all those who come to my door.
I open my heart to embrace the stranger, the friend, the rich, the poor.
I open my life to offer a generous heart towards all.

Leader: The blessings of God be upon this house, with plenty of food and plenty of drink,
With plenty of beds and plenty of ale, with much riches and much cheer
With many kin and length of life, ever upon it.

All: Amen
We bind unto ourselves today
the strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same,
the Three in One and One in three.

_We bind this day to us forever, by power of faith, Christ’s Incarnation;
His baptism in the Jordan River; his death on cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spiced tomb; His riding up the heavenly way;
his coming at the day of doom; We bind unto ourselves today._

We cast off the works of darkness today,
And put on the armour of light,
Light before us and behind,
Light within and light without,
Light to guide and to lead us,
Let us clothe ourselves with Christ.

_Christ behind us, Christ before us,
Christ beside us, Christ to win us,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath us, Christ above us,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love us,
Christ in mouth of friend & stranger_

Let us wrap ourselves around with the belt of truth,
And strap on the breastplate of righteousness,
Let us clad our feet with the gospel of peace,
place the helmet of salvation on our heads.
And take up the shield of faith.
Let us clothe ourselves with Christ.

_We bind unto ourselves today, the power of God to hold and lead,
God’s eye to watch, God’s might to stay, God’s ear to harken to our need,
The wisdom of our God to teach, God’s hand to guide, and shield to ward,
The Word of God to give us speech, God’s heavenly host to be our guard._

In the love of God who shelters us,
In the light of Christ who walks beside us,
In the power of the Spirit who dwells within us,
We place ourselves today.
Let us clothe ourselves with Christ.

We bind unto ourselves today the strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same, the Three in One, the One in Three.
Of whom all nature hath creation, Eternal God, Spirit, Word;
Praise to the God of our salvation, Salvation is of Christ the Lord.
Circles were significant to the Celts and it is not surprising that circling prayers or CAIM became an important part of their prayer life.

It was felt that a circle with no break was a complete whole affording no access to the devil. Monasteries were often built with a circle of crosses surrounding them declaring that the space with in was sacred and different – dedicated to God and claimed as a place where God met people who were offered sanctuary and hospitality.

The Celtic cross with its circle at the heart of the cross drew on significance of the sun as the source of heat and light, reminding people of the nimbus or halo that artists used to signify the white heat of pure holiness. (from The Celtic Resource Book – Martin Wallace)

Sometimes prayers would be said with the drawing of an imaginary circle around the people or place being prayed for. At other times an actual circle path was created around a room, a building or community and the circling prayer recited as people walked a mini pilgrimage around the area. This is a highly effective form of prayer to use for a house blessing, or as a prayer for protection, or as a prayer for spiritual strength.
Creating a Caim

Creating your own Caim, or prayer of protection, is one way to enter into the Celtic tradition. Using the Celtic circling prayer as a template this offers us the opportunity to involve our bodies and our spirits in our prayers. (This exercise is adapted from one written by Christine Valters Paintner.)

**Directions**

1. Get a piece of paper or your journal and some coloured pens or pencils and draw a circle about 3” in diameter on the paper:

   **Pray:** *Circle me, Lord: Keep fear without.*
   Around the circle write your fears.

   **Pray:** *Keep joy within.*
   Write some joyful elements from your life inside the circle.

2. Draw another circle on the paper.

   **Pray:** *Circle me, Lord: Keep complaining without.*
   Write some of the things you complain about around the circle.

   **Pray:** *Keep peace within.*
   Write some peaceful images inside the circle.

3. Now create a third circle on the paper.

   **Pray:** *Circle me Lord: Keep despair without.*
   Write some of the things that make you feel depressed or desperate around the circle.

   **Pray:** *Keep beauty within.*

4. Add other circles to the page if there are other couplets that come to your mind.

   You might like to overlap the circles if you feel what they bring to mind is intertwined. You might also like to color or decorate the circles with Celtic braiding.

5. Finally draw a circle around the outer edge of the page that circles all your other circles.

   **Pray:** *Circle me Lord; keep hopelessness out.*

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5 For more information about Christine Valters Paintner [http://abbeyofthearts.com/](http://abbeyofthearts.com/)
Write some of the things that make you feel distant from God around the circle.

Pray: *Keep love within.*
This last circle is to remind us that nothing is outside the love of God, which encircles everything in our lives.
Resource List

This resource list is part of a larger Celtic bibliography compiled by Celtic expert and spiritual director, Tom Cashman.

Book Resources

Adam, David The Edge of Glory; Prayers in the Celtic Tradition; David Adam’s best known work provides prayer in lorica, litany, and free verse formats for personal and group usage.

Adam, David The Rhythm of Life; Celtic Daily Prayer; This book offers a seven-day cycle of prayer for individual or community use. There are segments for morning, mid-day, and evening comprised of scripture and prayers of his own origination. Tom and I have used this for years as part of our prayer rhythm.

Bradley, Ian The Celtic Way; Still the best basic overview of Celtic Christianity; often used as the text for initial classes on Celtic spirituality.

Bradley, Ian Celtic Christian Communities: Colonies of Heaven. This more recent book by Bradley takes us into practical application of the world view and spiritual practice of the Celtic Christian church. This is a "must read" for any student of the future, emerging church.

Carmicheal, Alexander The Carmina Gaedelica; This is the classic primary source book of oral tradition collected between 1855 and 1910 by Alexander Carmichael largely in the outer Hebrides. Included are many prayer forms that stretch our 20th century definition of prayer in the Christian tradition. Some of the "charms" and "spells" remind us of Psalms that call down God's wrath against our enemies. There is also great depth and beauty in many prayers that have been rescued from oblivion by Carmichael. Most of these prayers are available online here.

DeWaal, Esther Every Earthly Blessing; Rediscovering the Celtic Tradition, One of the best introductions of Celtic Spirituality, containing splendid examples from Celtic poetry and other writings.

The Celtic Way of Prayer. This is one of my favorites which provides not just an introduction to the different aspects of Celtic spirituality but also a rich array of prayers

Fitzgerald, William J. A Contemporary Celtic Prayer Book; Perhaps the best practical guide for community daily liturgy yet. Fitzgerald is a retired American priest who reframes the Carmina for today. An excellent 7-day cycle of prayer is the books' core. The second half provides prayer for special needs and extraordinary occasions.

Blessings for the Fast Paced & Cyberspaced; Fr. Fitzgerald provides this extension of prayers for the hectic world in which we live today. For example, there are blessings for "the computer as I sit down to it," for soccer moms, and for couples trying to conceive. He takes us through many routine life situations with an eye towards finding the sacred in all of them.

The Iona Community Iona Abbey Worship Book; The forward of this wonderful offers insight into the uses of these prayers, liturgies and litanies within the Iona Community and the thinking that underlies their composition and utilization. Suggestions are made for use in our communities
world-wide as well. The use of these prayers offers insight into the essential theology and ethos of the Iona Community.

Newell, J. Philip, *The Book of Creation: An Introduction to Celtic Spirituality* This series of meditations on the seven days of creation explores aspects of God infused in the Celtic Christian ethos. Seldom does our tradition consider the wildness, the fecundity, and the creatureliness of God. But Newell does in a manner that enchants and inspires and enlarges our awareness of God in creation. Must read!

Northumbrian Community *Celtic Daily Prayer*; In addition to providing a daily cycle with lectionary, it also includes Complines in the tradition of various Celtic Saints, meditations, and a Holy Communion service. The latter portion offers themed and situational prayers and blessings. Two series of daily readings after the tradition of Aidan and Finian comprise the final section. This is a substantial resource.

Simpson, Ray *Exploring Celtic Spirituality* Founder of St. Aidan Trust, Ray Simpson offers a vision of the future as well as an exploration of our Celtic roots. Like Newell, he sees the Gospel of John as representative of the Celtic & Eastern Churches, balancing the Petrine & Pauline legs of the Christian tripod.

Sellner, Edward *Wisdom of the Celtic Saints* This is an excellent collection of stories and legends of various saints, including some of the more obscure. Particularly useful is the introduction identifying hallmarks of the Celtic Christian worldview.

Sellner, Edward *Stories of the Celtic Soul Friends: Their Meaning for Today* Tracking the anamchara concept of the Celtic Christians, Dr. Sellner explores the spiritual practice of the soul-friend relationship in the Celtic church. He also follows it as an overall icon of the value of relationship in the Celtic Christian culture.

Van de Weyer, Robert *Celtic Fire: The Passionate Religious Vision of Ancient Britain and Ireland* A great whimsical collection of prayers and good as an introduction for those that know nothing about Celtic spirituality. I love this book, which was the first gift Tom ever gave me.

**Online Resources**

My favourite writer of Celtic prayers today is John Birch at [Faith and Worship](http://www.faithandworship.co.uk).

For some wonderful photos, prayers and links, check out [The Celtic Christian Tradition](http://www.celticchristiantradition.org) on Facebook.

Rev Brenda Warren has an excellent resource [Celts to the Creche](http://www.celts-to-the-creche.co.uk), that she put together several years ago for Advent. I highly recommend walking through the season (or any other season) with her help.

I have also posted a number of Celtic liturgies and blessings on Godspace. You might like to check out some of these too:

- A Celtic Hospitality Liturgy
- *Let Us Go Forth – A Celtic Sending Out Prayer*
- Brigid’s Feast
- A Celtic Blessing
- An Irish Blessing by John O’Donohue
• Irish Blessings for St Patrick’s Day
• St Patrick’s Breastplate – a responsive liturgy
• Celtic House Blessing
• Celtic Rune of Hospitality
Christine Sine Christine Sine is the founder and facilitator for the popular blog Godspace, which is found at godspacelight.com, and grew out of her passion for creative spirituality, gardening and sustainability. Together with her husband, Tom, she is also co-Founder of Mustard Seed Associates but recently retired to make time available for writing and speaking. She describes herself as a contemplative activist, passionate gardener, author, and liturgist. She loves messing with church traditions and inspiring followers of Jesus to develop creative approaches to spirituality that intertwine the sacred through all of life. She facilitates workshops on spirituality and gardening, simplicity and sustainability and how to develop a more spiritual rhythm for our lives.

Christine is inspired by Celtic Christian spirituality, which has opened her eyes to the God who is present in every moment, every experience and every place. She is open to learning from everyone and everything around.

She is an avid gardener with a growing passion to enable followers of Christ to connect their faith to their everyday lives. She speaks on issues relating to how to change our time styles and lifestyles to develop a more spiritual rhythm that interweaves throughout every aspect of life. Her latest books are To Garden With God and Return to Our Senses: Reimagining How We Pray.