

# New Gaelic praise resource from Skye

Seinneamaid Còmhla (Let's Sing Praise Together)



**There has been a warm welcome to a new Gaelic hymn book. Entitled 'Seinneamaid Còmhla' (Let's sing praise together), this resource was introduced to the community from which it sprung in December 2014, and has been warmly welcomed. This exciting and useful development is the work of a group of native speakers who pooled their talents to produce this mixture of old and new hymns in their native language.**

The ladies, all members of the Church of Scotland parish of Kilmuir and Stenscholl at the north end of the Trotternish peninsula, have been working at producing the book which contains 100 hymns, many being translations of old and modern hymns originally composed in English, but also featuring a number of original Gaelic hymns. Encased in an attractive cover and interspersed by lovely colour and black and white photos of local scenes, the book is aimed at ensuring that Gaelic continues its strong and distinctive association with contemporary worship.

Kilmuir and Staffin is one of the few areas in the Highlands and Islands where Gaelic is still used in regular worship, and both the parish's primary schools contain a high percentage of children who receive their education in Gaelic. Local recent successes at the National Mods reflect the strong and vibrant talent of the upcoming generation which offers much hope for the future. With the steady growth of Gaelic medium education throughout Scotland, and a general resurgence of interest in the language, this new resource will be a great asset for use in schools and all worship settings.



*Amy Cruickshank,  
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The group are keen to acknowledge the help given by the funders of the project: the Novum Trust of the Church of Scotland and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. They are also much appreciative of the willingness with which other Gaelic hymn writers and their families have given their consent to include their hymns in the book. This greatly extends the character of the work giving the book a breadth of style and content which mirrors the variety of language and expression in the Gaelic tradition.

The Very Rev Lorna Hood, former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who attended a Gaelic service in the parish on her visit to the island in 2013, appreciates the value and possibilities of this new contribution. Supporting this exciting initiative she comments:

"We all know the Gaelic love of the psalms and the wonderful haunting sounds evocative of Gaelic life and culture. I am delighted that this new book of Gaelic hymns will speak to a younger generation in the Gaelic medium schools all across the country, in their assemblies and worship. It will also hopefully stir the hearts of an older generation as they too strive to relate their faith to modern day living. Even those of us who are non-Gaelic speakers can look forward to new inspiring words and music from the culture which derives from the heart of our nation."

Jonathan MacDonald, Session Clerk of the congregation, and himself an accomplished precentor (leader of praise in the Gaelic psalm singing tradition), spoke on the rich heritage of Gaelic praise in the community, from the days of Columba, through the Reformation, until the present time, and, in congratulating the group in persevering with the project, said that such work was so important in maintaining the place of the culture and language for this and the coming generations. He recalled sitting on his grandmother's lap as she sang the hymns composed by the Gaelic hymn writers of previous times such as Dugald Buchanan, John Morrison and Peter Grant.

The book, which costs £10, can be ordered by contacting any of the following:  
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And the group are not resting on their laurels. The next step will be the production of a CD of some of the hymns, using more of the musical talent in the area.