

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

www.stmagnus.org

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation/



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Welcome to St Magnus Cathedral this morning. It was founded in 1137 by St Rognvald, in honour of Magnus, his uncle. The Cathedral belongs to the people of Orkney and its doors are open to all. If you are a visitor, we hope this order of service will help you feel part of our worship together.

SUNDAY 24th May

You can find our Sunday worship here.

<https://www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation/>

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/PQtvAYtSjks>

Candle lit meditation

At the end of this Easter Season of new life and new hope,
may the light of this candle continue to remind us that light and life have
the victory over death and darkness.

We come to this time

To reaffirm the way of the open mind and full heart
To renew our faith in the holiness, goodness and beauty of life
To rekindle the flame of memory and hope, and the vision of an
earth made fair,
with all her people one.

Reading read by Mark Causer

Psalm 121

I lift my eyes to the mountains—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from God,
who made heaven and earth!
God Won't let our footsteps slip:
our Guardian never sleeps.
the Guardian of Israel
will never slumber, never sleep!
God is our Guardian;
God is our shade:
with God by our side,
The sun cannot overpower us by day,
nor the moon at night.
God guards us from harm,
guards our lives.
God guards our leaving
and our coming back,
now and forever.

For the word of God in scripture, For the word of God among us. For the
word of God within us, we give thanks

Reflection

Uncertainty Abounds

One day a pig farmer came to see the local wise woman. He was complaining about business. 'Oh hen, this year it's really too much! The price of feed is up. The price of pork is down. I'm losing my shirt!'

The wise woman listened to his laments, then she said, 'Don't feel too sorry for yourself, sir. If you were a pig, then you'd have good reason to

feel sorry for yourself. When the price of pork is high, the pigs are slaughtered. When the price of pork is low, the pigs are still slaughtered. The pigs really have something to complain about. The people shouldn't be complaining. Think about this seriously, please.'

You are only worried about the prices you are getting. The pigs have a lot more to worry about, but we don't consider that. We're not being killed, so we can still try to find a way to get by.

Whatever states of mind, happy or unhappy, occur, never mind — we should constantly be reminding ourselves, "This is uncertain." Perhaps more than anything else this is what will define 'the new normal'.

We all crave certainty above all else. We have all been encultured into a deep yearning for unalloyed certainty and in many ways this has played in our political, cultural, spiritual lives.

The reality [which we all pretend isn't a reality] is something people don't consider very much, that "this, everything, is uncertain"

This understanding of things is always timely and relevant. At all times, it is impermanence that rules.

Impermanence is generally understood in a simple, natural way as meaning that all things are constantly subject to change; the physical world is disintegrating moment by moment, and our mental state is in constant flux.

By accepting the fact that nothing we feel and see remains constant, we remind ourselves of the futility of clinging to strong emotions towards that which we possess physically, such as treasured objects, or even to our feelings of love, anger, hurt, and other conflicted emotions towards friend, family, or foe.

Whenever there are disappointments — an unfulfilled wish, a broken promise, an expectation gone wrong — impermanence reminds us that while they cannot be undone, they are not permanent, and that their intensity diminishes with the passage of time.

Just as the lesson of impermanence helps us to deal with our disappointments, it also helps us to temper the highs of successes we achieve or the euphoria of dreams fulfilled. Impermanence reminds us

that they too do not last indefinitely, and that we should not be carried away by our great joys because if we are, there will be no cushion to land on when we come down.

The Psalmist wrote in a time when understandings of a tribal God were the order of the day. So while we might feel some what adrift reading the words of Psalm 121 and the "God of Israel not slumbering'. Etc, the essence of what the writer is saying still resonates if we expand our understanding of the word "God" and see it more as describing 'being itself' and that everything is part of God. And so too uncertainty and impermanence are also part of being itself, part of God.

Impermanence reminds us that everything we experience is subject to change, both positive and negative, and that this realization can temper our emotions and help us find greater stability and peace within ourselves.

Acknowledging this is the vital factor that will bring about wisdom. In order to cease our coming and going and find rest, we only need to say, "this is uncertain." Sometimes we may be distraught over something to the point that tears are flowing; that is something not certain. When moods of desire or aversion come to us, we should just remind ourselves of this one thing. Whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, whatever appears is uncertain.

Can't we do this? Keep it up no matter what happens. Are we willing to give it a try. We don't need a lot but this is something that brings wisdom.

Prayer

As the Church of God, let us be still and pray together. May Christ's light shine in our community as we work and pray for each other always blessed with his presence so we may we live with his life in us.

Today we call to mind...

All those essential workers. May they feel our deep gratitude, though our smiles are hidden beneath our masks, though our greetings come from several feet away, and though, when we've been told that we're safest inside, each day beckons them back outside.

Those who are navigating their mental health May they be kind to themselves, acknowledging the weight that this current fear adds to their plate, trusting the power of their past resilience, even when it's currently out of sight, and reaching out to those who will simply accompany them while not trying to fix anything.

Those who are far from those they love. May they have ample bandwidth, both for their technological devices and for their heart, and may they offer gratitude for the ways we have to connect, even when apart, but may they also be unafraid to call this distance what it is: absolutely painful.

May our thoughts be filled with transformation, and may our words reflect the yearnings of our hearts.

Blessing

May our feet rest firmly on the ground,

May we see clearly

May we have the capacity to listen, may our words be true

May our hearts and minds be open so that we may return that which has been given

May you stay safe in the Way of Christ, and may you be blessed by his Spirit this day and always