

## **St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall**

[www.stmagnus.org](http://www.stmagnus.org)

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

[www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation](https://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.

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**SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup> June**

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/agUOYrhUrBI>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

[stmagnuszoom@gmail.com](mailto:stmagnuszoom@gmail.com)

Candle meditation

*When you open up your eyes, and take in the world around  
you,*

*Is it good or bad in everything you see? We can fill our  
minds with light.*

*We can turn away from darkness, and think about the  
wonder of all things.*

*There is beauty in this life. There is charity and  
honour.*

*And we don't even have to look that far.*

*It's in the faithfulness of friends,*

*Or the kindness of a stranger. All these seeds are  
planted in our hearts.*

Reading Mark 2; 23-27 Ian Cunningham

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the cornfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, 'Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?' And he said to them, 'Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.' Then he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath. '

For the words of God that challenge us,  
for the words of God we wrestle with or reject,  
for the word of God strong within us,  
We give thanks

Reflection

There is an old story of the cowboy who went to an up market church wearing jeans, ragged boots and a worn out old hat. As the cowboy took his seat, people moved away from him. No one welcomed him. As the cowboy was leaving the church, the minister approached him and asked the cowboy to do him a favour. "Before you come back in here again, have a talk with God and ask him what he thinks would be appropriate attire for worship." The old cowboy assured the preacher he would. The next Sunday, he showed back up for the services wearing the same ragged jeans, boots, and hat. Once again he was completely shunned and ignored.

The minister approached the man and said, "I thought I asked you to speak to God before you came back to our

church."

"I did," replied the old cowboy.

"If you spoke to God, what did he tell you the proper attire should be for worshipping in here?" asked the minister.

"Well, sir, God told me that He didn't have a clue what I should wear, seeing as He'd never been in this church."

I wonder if you have had the experience of being made to jump through hoops by the church. Maybe it was classes or some sort of membership system. Maybe you thought to yourself, "I'm a spiritual and moral person. I try to live as well as I can, and do the right thing by others. And yet in church I am made to feel like a second class citizen because I don't know the ritual or the lingo."

This new landscape of online church in all its variety of guises, shows us how obsolete a lot of the former practices now seem to be.

The whole purpose of religion is to bring together. That's what the word means. Religion that is healthy should be the opposite of exclusive and judgmental. Religion was made to serve humankind, not humankind to serve religion.

If you are one of those people who have been shunned by the church because you didn't measure up in some way or other, then this message is for you. If you are one of the people who have found the church to be irrelevant to your life, then this message is for you.

Religion is concerned with bringing together; head and heart, past and present, beliefs and values, people and neighbours, tribe and nation, spirituality and religion. All of life is part of a unity that is miraculously connected and beautifully meaningful. Maybe you don't have to choose between spirituality and religion after all.

It seems fair to say that Jesus was more spiritual than religious in his first century context. He preferred ordinary people over priests, compassion over rituals, and justice over judgment. To the extent that religion was a tool for greater human compassion then it was worth pursuing, To the extent that it got in the way of peace, then it was destructive.

Jesus travelled with a group of hippies who were critical of a religion controlled by yuppies. Jesus was nominally Jewish, knew nothing of the later Christian movement named after him, and was intolerant of the intolerance of the temple. In fact, Jesus is recorded only twice as attending church; once when he ran away from home and he was hiding, the other when he turned the tables on the money lenders.

If Jesus was alive today, he would be horrified by the way religions have been turned into bullyboy battles about whose God is bigger and whose pulpit is more grand.

In Mark chapter 2, there is a typical clash between spirituality and religion. Religious leaders of the day demanded that Jesus not pluck grain on the Sabbath. However Jesus had other priorities. Breaking bread with all sorts of people was an emphasis for Jesus. In particular, breaking bread with the urban poor of the first century was a symbol of radical acceptance. Bringing people together, directing resources to those in greatest need, celebrating the abundance of life- these were the spiritual concerns of Jesus, and took precedence over any religious ritual or tradition.

If we could keep the dogmatic religion that most of us have endured separate from Jesus desire to intimately experience the Source of Life and love, then Christianity could still offer something to those who see themselves as spiritual but not religious. Maybe Christianity can still offer you something meaningful.

#### prayer

We celebrate the honesty and freedom of living in this world and creating what is meaningful and real. Would that this community and this gathering be relevant, useful and inspiring.

We call to mind those who are tired of looking at screens.

May they remember that, just as with life outside their home, when their body, brain, and eyes are weary, they can take a break from the glare, the stress, the relentless push to be connected, they can say, "No, thank you," to invitations, they can limit a typically hour-long meeting to thirty minutes, they can be honest with themselves and with one another about the fact that

having tools to communicate can simultaneously be mightily amazing and mightily tiresome, and they can power down, reschedule, and pick it all back up another day.

Those who are keeping watch on the data.

May they absorb the voices of experts warning that what we know now only reflects what was happening weeks ago, making this information frustratingly out of date by the time it arrives, and may they continue to accept this truth humbly, no matter how bored they are, realizing that, although this reality remains very complicated, the individual response required remains very simple: wash hands, cover faces and keep a safe distance.

Those who are feeling down and don't know why:

May they take a long pause and a deep breath, may they stop thinking that they need to explain this inexplicable feeling to anyone, even themselves, may they remember that this place is not a permanent residence, that they have been here before and will leave again, return again, and leave again, and may the reminder that they know this daily balancing act well bring them a bit of inexplicable balance today.

We are called to be a community of faith that can transform the world; We are called to proclaim Christ, to proclaim love, to proclaim our story. May we do so confidently and may we be confident without stifling or snuffing out the confidence of others.

blessing

Go now and walk lightly upon the earth,  
for the places in which you stand, walk, play, work,  
love, sleep, are holy.  
May you stay safe in the Way of Christ, and may you be  
blessed by his Spirit this day and always.