

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

www.stmagnus.org

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

www.facebook.com/StMagnusCathedralCongregation



Minister: Rev Fraser Macnaughton

Tel: 873312

FMacnaughton@churchofscotland.org.uk

Pastoral Minister: Rev. June Freeth

Tel: 721449

JFreeth@churchofscotland.org.uk

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 26th July

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/J7OLis07MrA>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle meditation

We pause now in the stream of life, perceiving all things and experiences as miraculous and mundane, humdrum and holy. Is there any difference at all? The parade of blossoming flowers continues in grand style of oranges, reds, yellows and purples; birds and insects alike gorge on nectar and pollen in abundance. The web of life hums with pervasive energy that goads us on, invites and inspires us to live - even in the midst of discouragement and uncertainty. We dwell in a spirit of encouragement and take on what is refreshing and life-giving. We celebrate God as love and God as experience. So too do we affirm God within as self-worth and our emerging, beautiful humanity and individuality - becoming more fully who we are.

Reading from Leviticus 25 by Anne Flint

At Mount Sinai, Yahweh instructed Moses to tell the Israelites these things:

"Keep my statutes, obey my laws, and you will live securely on the land. The land will yield its bounty, and you will eat your fill and dwell there in safety. You must not sell land in perpetuity, for the land belongs to me, and you are only foreigners and tenants. Throughout all the land that you hold, you will allow the right of redemption. If any of you are reduced to poverty and sell off some of your property, your next of kin, who holds the duty of redemption, must come and redeem what the relative sold. If you have no next of kin, but later do well and are able to afford the right of redemption, you must take into account the years since the sale and repay the purchaser the balance due up to the next Jubilee year. But if you cannot afford to redeem the property, it will remain in the hands of the purchaser until the Jubilee year. It will then revert to you, and you may return to your property."

For the truth made known in texts for the wisdom found
on different paths for the hope that leads us on
We give thanks.

Reflection

The Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - widely known as a symbol of American independence - was rung on July 8,

1776, to summon people to hear the Declaration of Independence.

The bell is cast with the lettering "Proclaim LIBERTY Throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants Thereof", a reference to the hallowed 50th year, known as the jubilee, mentioned in Leviticus 25.

Moses declared as God's will: every fifty years, the Jubilee year, you must give back to the people the land and property that is inevitably theirs that they have lost in the rough and tumble of the economy. You must give it back, even if you own it legally, and it is properly yours. You must give it back, because in the end it is theirs and not yours.

The start of the occasion for the return of property is signalled by a trumpet, in Hebrew yabal, from which we get Jubilee, Jubilation, a huge celebration of bringing things back to where they ought to be.

So imagine, when the yabal sounds, when the signal is given, everybody returns property, everybody cancels debts, everybody breaks off the mad scramble of accumulation and acquisition. It is a signal not unlike the great gavel that ends the fury of Wall Street every day, only it signifies something very different.

At the centre of biblical faith is a command from God that curbs economic transactions by an act of communal sanity that restores everyone to their proper place in the economy, because life in the community of faith does not consist in getting more but in sharing well. . . . It is ethical.

Moses observed the working of the market, the practice of accumulation and acquisitiveness and greed and monopoly.

He observed, as anyone can see, that in the long run the operations of accumulation and acquisitiveness tend to monopoly, so that some end up with a lot and some end up with a little or none, have and have nots, wealth and poverty. And what Moses figured out is that such a process is an impossible way to run a community.

And so he announces in that long speech in Leviticus 25, at the end of forty-nine years of accumulation, the property will be returned to its proper owners. The land cannot be sold to perpetuity, that is, irreversibly, because the land belongs to God and not to the accumulators.

God wants the little ones, who always lose in the market game, to have their stuff. When the signal is given, the vicious cycles of accumulation are broken, wealth is divested back to the ones who do not have it. It is an act of divestment. . . .

There has been much talk, post-Covid, of how the world needs to reset itself.

What possibilities are there for a modern-day jubilee:

The chance to recycle wealth by transferring liquid assets from large corporations to grassroots and local businesses that are worker-owned, consumer co-ops, family-operated, or neighbourhood-operated. If liquid assets aren't available, transfer a portion of the ownership rights to a community-ownership trust that can transfer assets to workers.

The chance to take a sabbatical from research and development every seven years to reflect on the environmental and social impact of production and technology.

The chance to empower neighbours to encourage economic renewal, cooperative business ventures, and celebrate their life together one day a month.

The idea that community celebrations could relate to a neighbourhood venture, like an energy co-op to reduce energy costs for neighbourhood homes and businesses.

This vision of God is not a vision of accumulation and monopoly so that those who have the most when they die win. This vision of God's future is not about angels who have gone to heaven floating around in the sky with their loved ones. This vision, rather, is about God's kingdom coming on earth as it already is in heaven. God's rule where the practices of justice and mercy and kindness and peacefulness are every day the order of the day.

It is a vision of the world as a peaceable neighbourliness in which no one is under threat, no one is at risk, no one is in danger, because all are safe, all are valued, all are honoured, all are cared for. And this community of peacefulness will come only when the vicious cycles of violent accumulation are broken.

Prayer

In our thoughts we pray;
For the thin skinned who wear every comment as a slight, and the tough-hided who are insensitive to the needs around them.

For the anxious who imagine unseen dangers around every corner,
and the over-confident who do not think before they leap.

For the peacemakers who risk themselves for the cause of
reconciliation, and for the belligerent who put others at risk
to attain their selfish ends.

For politicians who well understand their ignorance and
weakness, and those who are self-deluded enough to see
themselves as the wise and infallible.

For the sick and injured who long for healing, and for some who
become attached to the sympathy they receive as an invalid.

We pray in the name of the bread of life who feeds us now and
evermore

Blessing

We go into tomorrow as those who would see not only what
the world is but what we can make it be, and may our
hands, our heart, our voice be turned toward making it
so.

We go in peace.

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