

***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 23<sup>rd</sup> August

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/GkyZTpNICrs>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

Candle meditation

We are here because we have collected the hurts and bruises of living through another week.

We gather as the wounded people.

We are here because we have also seen joy and hope, creativity and new life in the week that is past.

We gather as the wondering people.

We are here because we believe that love is the power that brings life together and makes it whole.

We gather as the worshipping people.

Reading from Isaiah 40 Mark Causer

Yahweh, O Sovereign One, you come with power, and rule with a strong arm!

You bring your reward with you, and your reparation comes before you. Like a shepherd you feed your flock, gathering the lambs and holding them close, and leading mother ewes with gentleness. Who else measures the waters of the sea in a

hollowed hand, and by the breadth of a hand marks off the heavens? Who else holds the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighs mountains on a scale and hills on a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of Yahweh, or has instructed God like a counsellor? To whom does Yahweh go to for enlightenment? Who taught God the rules of life? Who taught Yahweh knowledge, and showed God the way of understanding? Surely, the nations are like a drop in a bucket to Yahweh, like dust on the scales; to God, entire islands weigh no more than a fleck of dust. To whom, then, will you compare God? What likeness will suffice?

**May we be struck by the wisdom of these words  
and marked by hearing them.  
For within story lies meaning, and  
within meaning, the wisdom for which we seek.**

#### Reflection

As a global community, it would be a bit of an understatement to say that we have lost our mojo somewhat. Our world is profoundly out of balance due to the global pandemic of Covid-19. But it is fair to say we were not in great shape even before that hit. We have greater freedom than ever, but we don't have the maturity to use this freedom well. We've multiplied our possessions, but lack the inner character to use them with integrity. Our homes are bigger and full of more gadgets, but the relationships inside them are broken. We have impressive, tall buildings, but short tempers. We have vast resources, but narrow viewpoints. We have more convenience, but less time to enjoy it. We have more medicine, but less wellness, more knowledge, but less judgment. We've learnt how to add years to life, but not how to fill those years with more life. We've conquered outer space, but our inner space lays undiscovered. The world is out of balance. The traditions and our inner wisdom know the way back.

Science has now revealed that the tiny hairs in the middle ear are the place where human balance is controlled. Information is passed from these hair follicles to the brain to stop us from losing balance. Nature is astonishing. It holds its own sacred wisdom. Consider this amazing connection. The Hebrew word for balance (Mozen) shares the same root as the word "ear". Thousands of years before science revealed that our inner ear is the control centre for human balance, the Hebrews used the same word for ear and balance. Is this coincidence or some sort of inherent wisdom?

Coincidence or not, balance is a universal law. And the human body is built to restore balance. I love the fact that our balance centre is in the inner ear because it suggests that we have inner wisdom if we are able to "hear" it. In other words,

we have within us the wisdom to know how to restore balance in our life, and we have the wisdom to find the middle way.

Balance is a juggling act. What is our current challenge with balance? Maybe it's the balance between work and play. Maybe it's the balance between justice and forgiveness. Maybe it's the balance between self worth and humility. Maybe it's the balance of our own needs and the needs of others. Maybe it's the balance between changing what we can change, and accepting what we cannot change for now. Maybe it's the balance between striving and just being.

The beautiful wisdom of balance is that it doesn't have to be one or the other, and we can change from one moment to the next. Some problems are not meant to be solved, just managed.

Imagine oneself juggling a number of balls; work, family, health, friends, economic crises, global suffering and our own needs- and we're keeping all of them in the air. Some of the balls, some of the time, are made of rubber. If we drop them, they just bounce back. The economy is an example of a rubber ball. It will bounce back eventually so keep this in perspective. But some of the other balls are more like glass. If we drop them, they may be damaged, or even shattered. They may never be the same. Take greater care with these.

We need to strive for balance in our life. Know what is most important and when action is important. At our core we have a balance that is neither rubber nor glass. It is not rubber because it doesn't bounce around with circumstances, and it's not glass because it can never be broken. It's more like water which can be both gentle and yielding and tough and corrosive depending on the circumstance. It knows what to do and when to act. It is the source of our deep seated wisdom.

May we hear our inner wisdom whispering to us about balance and inner capacity. When despair grows and we feel overwhelmed by the burdens of life, may we know the gift of deep balance. When confusion reigns may the earth and all of its people be restored to balance.

#### Prayer

We turn inward to the one who calls the people to new hope in every generation, who lifts our eyes to see a new heaven and a new earth which one day will break through the old tired efforts and reach into justice beyond our imagining.

A prayer for our future

May we respond to the invitation to be creators, seekers, and listeners, not merely clumsy predictors, and may we be

reminded that humbly and thoughtfully transforming into who we need to be, for ourselves and for one another, is far less daunting and far more achievable than magically thinking that we can foresee some predestined, perfect other side to all of this.

for those who see change on the horizon  
May they take in this vision and know that their next step is to move from witness to testifier, from admirer to co-creator, from absorber to enactor, a shift that requires a thoughtful balance of speaking up about things that matter, breathing through things that don't, questioning their own fragile assumptions, strengthening the muscles required to lift up the voices that challenge them, and actively becoming that change they see coming, instead of simply waiting for it to arrive.

a prayer for those who are listening  
May they realise that this is just the next step of a never-ending process, that this will always be about continuing hygiene, that current reforms to public policy, to cruel systems, to centuries of brutality are only the next wave of a necessary sea change, and may they know that they can weather this sea by continuing to listen, continuing to act, continuing to swim here in these uncomfortable waters, inviting more and more people deeper in, especially when the masses try to head back to the comfortable shore too early.

Our prayers are as finely crafted fibres forming a beautiful and pervasive web of care, connection and goodwill to all around the globe. May we never underestimate the power of intention and prayer in the daily - in our hopes, our sighs, our screams, laughter, tears, gratitude, our silence, stillness and meditation.

#### Blessing

through the example of Jesus may we live a life full of expectancy and hope. A life where we abandon our safe boundaries and live recklessly - where no idea is fixed and the journey is everything .

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