

## **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 9<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/9maai44yAIE>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

### Candle meditation

We are called as a community of faith,  
a supportive community, in which we love into being  
new possibilities for one another,  
calling out of each other the best we have to offer.

In so doing we follow the pattern of Jesus  
who constantly accepted people as they were,  
while drawing them on to realise what they could be.

In worship we build and nurture a community  
where such fostering of new possibilities can take  
birth and grow.

We celebrate life, past, present and future  
in the presence we name God.

Reading from Ecclesiastes 3 read by Helen Killeen

There is a time for everything under the sun...  
a season to be born and a season to die;  
a season to plant and a season to harvest;  
a season to hurt and a season to heal;  
a season to tear down and a season to build up  
a season to cry and a season to laugh;  
a season to mourn and a season to dance;  
a season to scatter stones and a season gather them;  
a season for holding close and a season for holding back;  
a season to seek and a season to lose;  
a season to keep and a season throw away;  
a season to tear and a season to mend;  
a season to be silent and a season to speak;  
a season to love and a season to hate;  
a season for hostilities and a season for peace.

I have reflected on this while learning all the kinds of work God gives to humankind. God has made everything in harmony with the divine...

May we open ourselves to the seeds of wisdom  
that lie dormant in this reading.  
And may our minds be fertile soil  
in which they may grow strong and true

### Reflection

It's said that jetlag lasts one day for every time zone you cross. Many years ago when we took our girls to Australia, I was asked the time on the flight home. I said, "Where? In Sydney, Singapore, Abu Dhabi or Kirkwall?" Jetlag is a strange, disorienting experience. You feel out of sorts, out of balance, for several days. I now understand that jetlag is caused by messing with the body's need for daily cycles of darkness and light. The body clock considers light and dark its alarm for when to rest and when to get going for the day. So when the body clock is confused, your body loses its balance. It's not just a travel problem. So many of us spend too many daylight hours under unnatural light, and then at night we sit with the glaring light of fluorescent bulbs, televisions and brightly shining alarm clocks. Most of us are lucky if we experience solid darkness for 5 or 6 hours out of 24. The human body is built to follow nature's patterns. It needs exercise and sunshine and it needs darkness and rest in order to heal and restore its balance.

Balance is my theme that I would like to unpack here for the next few weeks. Nature models balance. Spiritual traditions teach balance. We crave balance. We crave balance and yet balance is so profoundly lacking in our lives. We create our own jetlag of consciousness, out of sorts with who we are and out of balance with life's natural order. We live in multiple time zones, allowing the past to rule our current choices and letting the future drift onto the radar of our present experience far too often.

We tend to charge recklessly from one thing to its opposite, and the natural pendulum of life becomes more like a wrecking ball. Even as you listen to this you may be imagining that this is going to be an encouragement to slow down or spend more time resting. That thought is part of the problem, as we swing to an extreme. We go all of one way looking for the answers and when we don't find

them we think "what's the point" and swing right back the other way. We are misdiagnosing our unhappiness.

We imagine that work is the problem and if we could just retire all our problems would vanish, only to discover that we aren't comfortable with all the extra time alone with ourself. We imagine that a person or a place is the problem, only to see the same issues turn up in the new relationship, the new town, the new job. We imagine that the Tories are the problem only to discover that Labour aren't strong enough for our tastes.

The problem isn't work, and the problem isn't Tories. The problem is our inability to stay in the middle, sourcing our life from our inner core that isn't dependent on outer circumstances for contentment. This inner realization liberates us to live appropriately in any context without fixating on any one mode. There is a time to slow down, and there is a time to get a wiggle on. There is a time to change and there is a time to pull up a chair and learn from the current circumstance. Rather than looking for solutions in one extreme or another, the answer is found in what musicians call "Tempo Giusto".

Tempo Giusto is free will to a musician. It means "the right pace". The musician is free to discern the intent of the composer. Tempo Giusto suggests that you follow your instincts and create the performance that matches the context. It's much like the famous words from Ecclesiastes "there is a time for everything under the sun." Learn from nature. Everything has its time, and we have the inner capacity to adapt to whatever is needed to manage the moment. Please note that "right time" is not to be confused with Island time. Remember the man who asks God, "God, how long is a million years?"

God answers, "A million years is like a minute."

Then, the man asks, "God, how much is a million dollars?"

And God replies, "A million dollars is like a penny."

Finally, the man asks, "God, can you give me a penny?"

God says, "In a minute."

It's all about perspective. This notion of right balance or right time is not an excuse for laziness. It's a license for flexibility and intuitive wisdom.

Prayer

As we look out at our world today through the screens of our TV's, iPads and smartphones, we are saddened at those influences that choke the new good life for which many dream. We cannot always change the way people choose to live, but we can speak up and stand beside those who seek to bring changes for a better world.

For those who are glued to their screens and/or the streets -

May they make plans to regularly step away for several moments a day, knowing that the news is out there, that the fight is out there, that the sustaining of a movement is bigger than them, that it requires them to take care of their body and soul, which means breathing into the horrors they already know, taking a break from ingesting more, and trusting their communities to continually balance the work, staggering participation so that the collective spirit moves, even during the moments when they are at necessary rest.

For those who are still following the public safety rules:

May the simple gift of their thoughtful wisdom tendrill out and model unselfish humanity for all, and may everyone they encounter internalize how easy and necessary it is to de-centre one's own immediate comfort, re-centre one's own public promise to their neighbours, and re-enter a daily practice of visible, replicable, communal recommitment to sustaining the bare minimum: life and health for all.

For those who want to scream  
May they let it out, really, at full volume, for as long as they need and as often as they need, trusting that anyone who hears will know exactly why they're doing it and perhaps even give themselves allowance to do the same, simply because people witnessed the sound of their full-throated authenticity.

Where people are gathered together in love, whether virtually or really, God is always present in our hearts.

blessing

May we know the blessing of God, the loving kindness of  
Jesus,  
and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to be with us all;

women and men,  
friends and strangers,  
of all faiths and of no faith

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