

## **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)



### **ADVENT SUNDAY**

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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 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/XNtdJDxQbWA>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

**From places deeply rooted,  
we gather to light our advent candles.**

**From places yet undiscovered,  
we gather to sing our advent songs.  
From places still hidden in plain sight,  
we gather to read our advent texts.  
From places tangled with disappointment,  
we gather to share our advent prayers.**

Hope

Hope is not blind optimism – it is where expectation and commitment meet. We celebrate hope: – that good will conquer evil – that unconditional love is the most powerful force in the world which can truly change the world – that forgiveness is available to each of us, to free us from the guilt of the past – that each of us is loved and valued – that we will achieve hope in our own lives, by bringing hope to others

**Choir sing vs 1 of Christ be our light**

Reading read by Rosemary Moon

**Mark 13:24-37**

Jesus said

In those days, right after that time of suffering,

"The sun will become dark, and the moon will no longer shine.

The stars will fall, and the powers in the sky will be shaken.

Then the Son of Man will be seen coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

He will send his angels to gather his chosen ones from all over the earth.

Learn a lesson from a fig tree. When its branches sprout and start putting out leaves, you know summer is near. So when you see all these things happening, you will know that the time has almost come. You can be sure that some of the people of this generation will still be alive when all this happens. The sky and the earth will not last forever, but my words will.

No one knows the day or the time. The angels in heaven don't know, and the Son himself doesn't know. Only the Father knows. So watch out and be ready! You don't know when the time will come. It is like what happens when a man goes away for a while and places his servants in charge of everything. He tells each of them what to do, and he orders the guard to keep alert. So be alert! You don't know when the master of the house will come back. It could be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or in the morning. But if he comes suddenly, don't let him find you asleep. I tell everyone just what I have told you. Be alert!

**Every time we read and listen**

**The Word is born in us again.**

## Reflection

One of the things I have long challenged myself each year with is an expanded understanding of the traditional holy days, while maintaining a sense of reverence, even sentimentality to a small degree.

One of the great paradoxes of navigating the landscape of religious holidays, ceremonies and traditions is dancing with reverence AND relevance at the same time.

How do we honour what has been, hold fast to what is sacred for our community, while also being relevant, asking ourselves what this holiday or faith tradition has to do with our world right now? How is it germane?

And not in the obvious kind of way, where an answer immediately comes to mind, and I think "That's it," but in a way that invites me to pause, reflect, and go a little deeper.

So here we are again, before we even realize it, Advent is upon us... before we are even ready for it. Ironically, that's the whole point of Advent – something NEW right on our doorstep, even though we're not ready it.

How many times have we said to ourselves on the onset of something new, "Wait, I'm not prepared for this!" Honestly though, are we ever REALLY ready?

We've always talked about Advent as preparing for the new, waiting for the light that comes during the darkest time of the year.

Advent always been about the myth of Christmas – yet we know the meaning Christmas is so much more than the birth of a baby 2,000 years ago.

And this year, it has never been more uncomfortable. If you are like me, we're feeling pushed out of whatever comfort zone we thought we may have been in, which frankly wasn't much of one.

Our world, individually and collectively, is marked with violence, hate, deconstruction, death, hopelessness and helplessness, all wrapped up in a pretty holiday bow of darkness and uncertainty.

Advent can be a time for giving voice to our weariness, our frustrations and anxieties.

It is also a time for giving voice to the possibilities opening in our future. But to give voice to one thing, comes with a price – great self-reflection, discomfort and the work of transformation.

Giving voice leads us to wonder how in the world we can talk about Advent, a season that historically is one filled with hope, peace, life and good cheer, while at the same time talking about all the discomfort and dark?

Often we get stuck in what "newness" means. I'm referring to a new reality. That is, after all, the symbol of the birth of Jesus, the birth of a new paradigm, a new world – and it is through this lens that we MUST talk about the messiness of the journey of newness.

Advent is our time for getting ready for this new world. Looking around us, if we don't see a new world emerging, then we've missed something.

As the evolutionary theologian Walter Brueggemann says, "Getting ready time is mainly abrasive ... asking, thinking, pondering, and redeciding."

What is the relevant thing to do to bring forth the newness? Will it mean sacrificing what we hold dear?"

On this first Sunday of Advent, can we consider the new that is coming?

Perhaps taking some time to discover what we are most missing in our life – and then give that thing away.

For example, where we long for a friend to support us, instead be the friend who calls another to find out if they are well.

When we long to know peace, instead be the non-anxious presence during times of tension.

Where we long for community and connection, be the heartbeat of whatever group you are with.

When we long to feel less afraid, be the hand that reaches out with generosity.

When we long to know our presence here matters, be the gift of welcoming.

If we ever have a moment of doubt a new world is coming, that's OK. Sometimes it can look overwhelming, surprises happen every time we turn on the news, or open our Facebook feed.

At the very least, a new possibility is at hand simply because we are at hand, because we are alive, we are the image of the prospect of new life, a new world.

Each day is our invitation to tell the truth, affirm that cycles can only be broken because we each choose to ponder and re-decide, moving toward daily disciplines born out of the life-giving love inherent in us and in all life.

We must break into the settled and asleep parts of our lives, know the abrasive nature of this journey and be the restoration of our original goodness, this is the newness that awaits us.

prayer

We wait in the silence of a new season  
moving from autumn to winter  
from Pentecost to Advent  
from busyness to quiet.

We crouch with Mary on the straw of our messy lives  
letting go of everything but this moment.

We breathe in organic and homely smells  
we breathe out the impulse to push, to rush  
to stock up, to plan, to get things done  
—and we wait. We wait.

We listen.

It is not yet time for labour.  
This is the hour of rest.  
This is the time for silence, breathing,  
gestation  
of a nascent, quickening Christ.

We wait for the Advent of the Incarnation

Blessing

Go in peace  
into this Advent season.

Follow a star that's twinkling with courage,  
blazing with possibility  
to the space, the essence that is God.

And may the celestial brightness—source, spirit, sun—  
be with you  
enlighten, heal and empower you  
and those you love

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