

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

www.stmagnus.org

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

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.

SUNDAY 7th March

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/qxfC15rtLZA>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.
stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Welcome

We come with open hearts to hear the voice of the sacred
singing through our songs
breathing the word into our silences
challenging us in our speaking and listening
and calling the people down the ages.

Opening meditation

This is the path of life, among the shadows of the world, finding the moments
of hope, amid the rising of the cross. May our hands cup the grain, our lives
bear the faith, our souls grip the truth, our hearts trust the promise. May the
love of Christ be our travelling companion

May we enjoy a lifetime seeking more awareness of God, closer to us than our
own breath. May we move out onto the way and, with big hearts and open
hands, celebrate our living in God, in every place around and within. May the
presence of God be our travelling companion.

Reading from Micah 6 read by Ellie Bichan

Now hear what the Lord says:

"Get up; plead your case in front of the mountains. Let the hills hear your
story.

Mountains, listen to the Lord's complaint.

Foundations of the earth, listen to the Lord.

The Lord has a complaint against his people.

He will prove that Israel is wrong."

The Lord says, "My people, did I do something wrong to you?

How did I make you tired of me?

Tell me.

I brought you from the land of Egypt.

I freed you from slavery.

I sent Moses, Aaron and Miriam to you.

You say, "What can I bring with me
when I come before the Lord?

What can I bring when I bow before God on high?

Will the Lord be pleased with 1,000 male sheep?

Will he be pleased with 10,000 rivers of oil?

The Lord has told you what is good.
He has told you what he wants from you:
Do what is right to other people.
Love being kind to others.
And live humbly, trusting your God.

**May the light of these words fall strong
upon each of us, that we can find the truth they reveal
in our own hearts this day**

Reflection

A few years ago now in our Cathedral Sunday services, each week I would share some old chestnut taken from orders of service or intimations sheets that went round the internet. The point was, apart from hopefully having a bit of a laugh, was to show how human we all are and that we need not take ourselves too seriously. Our humanity and our church life can be honest and open. It can contain all that is unseemly, all that is beautifully inspiring, all that is humorous, all that is difficult, all that is comforting.

So, you know the kinds of thing, Stuff like.

Tonight you are invited to explore the topic of "What is hell?" And Billy Smith adds, "Come early to listen to our choir practice."

Anne Jones, in an advanced notice indicated to all ladies of the congregation: don't forget the upcoming garage sale in June. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands."

And Barbara Kelly, our nursery coordinator writes: For those of you have children and don't know it, we have nursery downstairs.

We and the church have made understandings of spirituality very complicated and serious. It is an unwieldy area, but it need not be so. We need to affirm that we understand spirituality and spiritual practice in the here and now. Being open-eyed, amazed and at one with the moment. Remember the Zen Buddhist monk who asked the teacher how to attain enlightenment? The teacher asked the student if he had breakfast. The student said yes. The teacher then says, wash your breakfast bowls. And that was it. We have overlooked an obvious dynamic when it comes to living our lives with mindful

spirituality amidst the practical and ordinary: We overlook the fact that we need only to see everything we do, say and think with new eyes and sensitivities. Beauty and spirituality are all around, between and within. It is our orientation to what we do that matters. How we do it rather than what we do or when we do it.

I am frequently asked how to get closer to God, how to be more spiritual. Or how do I understand God's will. In the New Testament we read that one needs to explore the renewal of the mind - the waking up to the realities all around with new eyes and understanding. If you've got eyes, look. If you've got ears, listen, said Jesus. In the Hebrew Scriptures we only need to read in the prophet Micah chapter 6. What is required of us? What is pleasing to God? To do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly. That's it. What more do we need? What do those phrases mean to us? How would we live them out?

Cardinal Newman said, "That to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often." Our lives, our community, our spirituality, our humanity are about change and seeing things differently.

There was a man who was asked to tend to his grandmother. She is 97 years old, sharp of mind, but failing in body. The man picked her up and helped her into his 4x4, carefully helping her move her failing legs into the car and then fastening the seat belt around her. They proceeded to her favourite breakfast spot. While walking in the restaurant arm in arm the man could hear people say in murmured kinds of ways... isn't that Mrs So and So and who is she with? Later, the food was brought out and enjoyed. Soon, a man approached the table and recounted some memories from when he and one of her boys played as friends in the backyard -back in the 1940s. After the man left, the Grandmother recounted other memories from before the motor law and the highway code - and when horses and buggies ruled the streets. How her sister fell off a runaway horse scared from loud cars. The man took the grandmother back to her home and reflected.

For the man, what started as a mild obligation to tend to his grandmother, the experience turned into a beautiful sacrament and his eyes were opened. He found himself so fortunate to be the one grandchild who could have these experiences. He found himself proud to be with this matriarch of the family; he found himself warmed and softened to be in her presence and to listen to her encounter things long past. He saw her as an amazing gift to this world; he found himself dwelling in gratitude for all she had set into motion throughout the generations. He found that in eating with her, they were breaking bread and experiencing the hospitality of this old favourite restaurant of hers. Breaking bread in bacon and eggs and black pudding

smothered in HP sauce. His eyes were opened and a mildly obligatory task turned into a profoundly felt transformative experience.

All those years ago in Israel the small town boy known as the prophet Micah got it absolutely right. His words echo down to us today as relevant and contemporary as if they were written yesterday.

Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly, trusting your God.

Prayer

Perhaps we have experienced a place or time in nature or with other people - where our hearing and sensing grows and when this heightened awareness allows the mystery of ourselves to grow also!

So often we are too busy. We think that what we do is more important than who we are. We are the people Jesus calls .

We are so involved. We think our actions are more important than understanding our inner life as disciples of Jesus. We want to change the world. We think our own efforts are more important than understanding the gifts of God's Spirit and using them in the service of others.

Jesus experienced clarifications of awareness, which sustained Him during the coming darkness that was the mystery of His dying and rising to new life! May our awareness of such clarifications bring us newness and life as we answer Jesus's call.

We ask this in His name, now and always. amen

Blessing

God's living way is before us,
and we will move towards it.

God's place of justice is beside us,
and we will wait here with the forgotten.

God's call for renewal is within us,
and we will respond without counting the cost.

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