

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.

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/nmdpPc2EVKM>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

As we kindle this symbol of light - our Christ Candle - let us think for a moment about why we've logged on here today, and what it is we hope this time of worship might bring.

When the light gathers in the universe and folds itself round new life
may we celebrate that chance, ..that possibility.

When word comes together and creates a story of life of hopes
of the dream of the longing

When community comes together and shapes a moment
of opportunity of connection of happening

there in the gathering the coming together the connecting
we meet the intent of the Spirit.

The calling of us, the reshaping of us, into prophets and dreamers
justice-makers and bread-bakers rainbow-stewards and creations-
disciples

May we live as the community of hope, the community of diversity, the
community of life woven together with all of creation

Reading

Isaiah 55: 1-13

All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money,
come, buy food and eat! Come, buy wine and milk, without money, without
price! Why spend your money for what is not bread, your wages for what
fails to satisfy?

Heed me, and you will eat well, you will delight in rich fare; bend your ear
and come to me, listen, that you may have life: I will make an everlasting
Covenant with you— in fulfilment of the blessings promised to David. See,

I have made of you to be a witness to the peoples, a leader and
commander of the nations. See, you will summon nations you never knew,
and nations that never knew you will come hurrying to you— for the sake
of Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, who will glorify you. Seek me, Yahweh,
while I may still be found, call upon me while I am near! Let the corrupt
abandon their ways, the evil their thoughts. Let them return to Yahweh,
and I will have mercy on them; return to God, for I will freely pardon. For
my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways, my ways," says
Yahweh. "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways
above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts. For just as from
the heavens

the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have
watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to the sower
and bread for food, so will my word be that goes forth from my mouth: it
will not return to me empty,

but will carry out my will, achieving the end for which I sent it. And you
will go out joyfully, and be led out in peace; the mountains and hills before
you will break into cries of joy, and all the trees in the countryside will
clap their hands.

Reflection

Perhaps the most crucial pillar of the COP26 conference on climate change in Glasgow this week is that of sustainable energy for all. Energy is a theme running through all of creation: the energy of the big bang; the energy of the sun that sustains life on earth and the spiritual energy that sustains human faith. Without the constant renewal of these sources of energy we perish. But energy goes far beyond the headlines of fossil fuels versus renewables. One of the main drivers of our increasingly unsustainable energy is our endless desire to consume things 24/7.

If we look at the wonderful old story in Genesis about creation we see that on each of the days of creation there is great activity and expending of energy. Then there is the seventh day; the day of rest. For some people the seventh day is a day of spiritual renewal through worship, for others a day of recreation in the garden or in the country; for others a day devoted to more shopping or consumption and for some it is just another day of work. The restless pace of work and consumption has put at risk the idea of a day of rest and renewal.

'Getting and spending we lay waste our powers' William Wordsworth reminds us. Yet this is the logic of an economy that demands ever more of our time and resources and is indifferent to both humanity and the rest of creation. The economy allocates wealth according to our strength in the market, rewarding the strong and leaving the weak on the margins; it demands ever more resources from the earth to feed further growth and puts ever more waste greenhouse gases into the air, driving climate change.

Thus we put at risk creation in all its glory; one of the well springs of our spiritual energy and nourishment and if we lose touch with creation, if we worship only the economy, then we lose touch with the divine.

We live in strange times. Shopping, we are told, will help to get the UK economy back on track. We are all consumers now - and the argument is that the more we consume, the healthier our economy will become.

On the face of it, it sounds simple. But scratch just a little deeper and murky layers begin to appear.

For a start, obviously, there's the issue of proportion. What most of us in the North world consume, is way out of proportion to what masses of our

neighbours in the South world can hardly even get their hands on most of the time. So while many of us struggle with obesity, many of them die of starvation.

Then there's the issue of content. Advertising urges us to consume luxury items "because we're worth it" and bombards us with pictures of fast cars zipping along empty country roads - with no apparent sense of the irony that we don't actually need most of these cosmetic preparations, and even if we were able to buy one of these fast cars, all we would do would be simply to contribute to yet more traffic jams and air pollution.

And what about the issue of morality? Sure, trading keeps the world going round - but how do we as individual Christians in the rich North help to keep things fair and just in a manifestly unfair world trading system?

That we are to enjoy the prosperity that we have? Certainly. That we are to be conscious of when "enough is enough", and not forget those for whom there is too little. Of Course. And if we look carefully at a couple of verses in this lovely chapter in Isaiah, are we not also to "Listen carefully" to the God who offers us this abundance and "incline our ear, and come" to that same God so that we may live?

But there is something else here as well.

Verses 6 and 7 issue a warning. "Seek me, Yahweh, while I may still be found, call upon me while I am near! Let the corrupt abandon their ways, the evil their thoughts."

Now here is a challenge to many in our society today.

I'm thinking particularly of the growing number of institutions which we are finding it increasingly difficult to trust. Politics; banking; trans national corporations; the media; even sport; so many of these institutions nowadays come at us with question-marks hanging over them. We have to live in as complex society, unlike the simpler, rural one out of which our Scriptures came; so it is surely really important for us to keep on holding these important institutions to account, for they have a huge influence on our daily lives. This too is a task for Christians and the church, as we seek to influence how the energy of our world is put to the best use for everyone in it.

Prayer

Might we pause for breath and breathe in the deep-down love
that has set this world this planet, this universe
spinning.

Might we wonder a little more and explain a little less; might we hear
poetry in the trees, and speak of marvellous things, loudly; might we stop
and ask questions
of moving deserts, melting tundras, rising oceans, rainforest denudation,
and live more creatively in this wonder, this living wonder, evolving,
transforming, ever shifting and bending towards justice.

Might we dominate less, and steward more; control less, enjoy more.

Might we hear the Spirit's breath rush within us, that we might know
whose we are.

might we have a little more of Spirit filled imagination, justice. The song
of the Spirit that creates universes, and live more imaginatively, more
justly, singing freedom's song more fully in this universe. Amen.

Blessing

As we leave this sacred time, we return to our world outside, which is also
sacred.

Go to share the good news with the world, as we build a new world that is
sacred and loving.

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