

## **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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You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

[https://youtu.be/PviC020\\_cMw](https://youtu.be/PviC020_cMw)

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

Candle Lighting and opening meditation  
IN LIGHTING THIS CANDLE we declare our intention to live  
as if the greatest gift in the world  
were about to be placed into our hands  
and as if the Giver has understood  
our deepest needs, our most heartfelt prayers.

### **Gathering meditation and a time of Silence**

The year continues to dawn and unfold and it bids us out in the open....to live, to grow, to create balance, to learn, to laugh and to love with fewer

conditions. Blazing sun, bleak grey skies, cottony shrouds of snow, confounding slippery steps and sidewalks, runny noses and winter beauty greet us daily. Let us live this winter season with surprising appreciation, less complaining, fewer grudges, more decisions to make the best of the days – to enjoy and achieve the resolutions spanning before us in 2022. We hunker into January joy and challenge, knowing a full-brimmed Spring is brewing and preparing to emerge in a matter of weeks. Believe it or not!

### Reading **Luke 2 25-35**

Now there lived in Jerusalem a man named Simeon. He was devout and just, anticipating the consolation of Israel, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. She had revealed to Simeon that he wouldn't see death until he had seen the Messiah of God. Prompted by her, Simeon came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child to perform the customary rituals of the Law, he took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the peoples to see— a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel." As the child's mother and father stood there marvelling at the things that were being said, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the mother, "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is rejected, so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare. And a sword will pierce your heart as well."

### Reflection

The very old will hang on by a thread for some special event; maybe a family wedding, reunion of old army mates, a new grandchild's advent.

Simeon was old but not ready to die until hope found relief; waiting for truth revealed full of such faith and love that beggared old belief.

At last it came into his very arms, his heart beating joy-wild; with a sigh of great content, letting go now, in peace, he handed back the Child.

It's hard to imagine what patience Simeon must have had. He had been promised a sight of the Messiah and like many of the Jewish people over the centuries their patience seemed to be in vain. Until now...

Patience is probably at the top of everyone's list of most sought-after qualities. *Patience* is defined in the dictionary as 'quiet perseverance.' A good definition, but patience also contains a quality of calmness that marks its outer appearance. I am speaking of patience in general, whether we are dealing with a traffic jam, talking with someone who is having a bad day, or showing ourselves patience as we struggle our way through this pandemic. Yet why is patience so hard for us to achieve?

Patience is not often easy to demonstrate. Looking for the perfect job, waiting for a life partner, hoping to conceive children, being the victim of an injustice, long lines at the checkout counter, are just a few of the situations in which it is easy to be impatient. Often, we can even feel that our impatience is a righteous anger in the face of irritations and trials.

It might be easier to approach this question from the angle of impatience, because we all are more familiar with the feeling of being impatient. We notice when we are impatient because we experience negative emotions. When we are patient about something, life just seems fine. There is certainly no anxiety linked to being in a patient state. But when we find ourselves impatient about something, our experience is completely different.

Experiencing impatience is one of the first symptoms of not being in the present moment, not doing what we are doing, and not staying process-oriented. Staying in the present moment is one of the hardest lessons to learn. We are always dropping out of the 'now' and letting our minds lead us around by the nose to who knows where.

Often we call it 'talking to ourselves' observing our minds through listening to our internal dialogue. It goes from one totally unrelated discussion to another. It's reminding me to pay a bill, composing a prayer, solving a problem, thinking of a sharp-witted comeback I should have made yesterday when someone irritated me, and so forth. All this is going on while I am taking a shower in the morning. In that moment, my mind is everywhere but where I really am — in the shower. My mind is anticipating circumstances that haven't happened yet and trying to answer questions that haven't even been asked. We have a name for this: it's called worrying. If we force our mind to stay in the present moment and to stay in the process of what we are doing, many of our problems will melt away.

There is a saying: Most of what we worry about never comes to pass. Thinking about a situation before we are in it only scatters our energy. 'But,' one might say, 'I have a difficult meeting with someone tomorrow, and I want to have my thoughts together before I get into the situation.' Fine, then take half an hour to sit down in a chair and do nothing else but go through the meeting in your

mind and be there completely, doing only that. In the calmness of that detached moment, when you are not emotional, think of what you will say, and anticipate the different combinations of responses the person might make. Decide on your responses and see how they feel to you. Will these responses have the desired effect? Now you are doing nothing else but what you are doing. You are in the present and in the process. You aren't scattering your energy by trying to act out all this in your head while you are eating your lunch or driving to work. This constant inner dialogue, chattering away, brings with it a sense of urgency and impatience because you want to deal with something that hasn't occurred yet. You want to get it done.

As the example of Simeon shows us, patience, is the calm and uncomplaining endurance of misfortune, the expectant waiting for the realization of God's Kingdom, the handmaiden of justice, the sister of humility and gratitude, the basis for civil order, and the first work of love. Patience is the glue that makes attentiveness important and it is the force field in life that connects us to the universe and to all living things

#### Prayer

May we take our place amongst all things and see what the new year brings as we step, move, travel, journey into what is unfolding in our community and world.

So we pray by bringing our longings and matching them with The Way of Jesus.

As Hogmanay's dark reveals New year's light may we find in it something fresh and hopeful for our neighbours. May we see them more clearly and love them more dearly.

So we pray by affirming our longings match our yearnings for the kingdom.

As clocks have ticked over midnight hours and in the celebrations and sense of achievement may we know what we are still to achieve for the world, for the hungry, for those separated by the pandemic, for the homeless, for the war torn, for the powerful.

So we pray by shaping our prayers around Christ's vision for this world.

In this moment may we speak into it with our lives and faith and love for each other beyond station, colour, creed, culture.

For each other, families and friends, may our hopes for them this new year, for those ill and lonely and worried and anxious bring us together as we move

into this new year as people of faith and disciples of love, speaking truth into the powers of this world with a single word of love.

Blessing

**Today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness  
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.**

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