

## **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/10y9OaSowb0>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

**All; Deep calls unto deep,  
joy calls unto joy,  
light calls unto light**

God invites us to be caught up in the mystery that is God...  
Instead, we spend our time trying to unravel that mystery.  
We tie ourselves in knots instead of enjoying the different kind of  
knowing that is offered by God

We distance ourselves rather than entering into relationship. We ponder how we can change the world when God's invitation is simply to dance.... In that dance we discover compassion that moves us to care for creation.

In that dance we discover anger that fuels us to root out injustice. And,  
in that dance

we discover freedom made up of Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, the elements of the dance that sustain the world.

God's laughter and delight and tears and compassion form the rhythm that draws us in and sends us out to love life and to dance.

### Reading

#### **from Deuteronomy 15**

At the end of every seven years you must forgive all debts. This is how it is to be done: Every creditor must cancel all loans made to another Israelite. Payment of the debt cannot be demanded, for Yahweh's time of the forgiveness of debts has been proclaimed. But there are to be no poor among you, for in the land that Yahweh, your God, is giving to you as your inheritance, Yahweh will bless you richly—

If there is anyone among you who is in need in any of the towns in the land that Yahweh, your God, is giving you, you must not be harsh or stingy toward your sisters and brothers who are in need. You must be generous, and ready to lend to those who need help of any kind. Have care that you do not harbour the base thought, "The seventh year, the year of the forgiveness of debts approaches," and so show ill will toward your needy sisters or brothers and give them nothing. They might appeal to Yahweh against you, and you would be found guilty. Be generous to them and not with a grudging heart; and in return, Yahweh will bless you in all things that you undertake and in all your endeavours. There will always be those among us in the world who are in need, so I require of you that you be always generous with the poor and needy in your land.

### Reflection

Poverty destroys the bodies, minds, and spirits of people. It savages and ravages their hopes and dreams and puts them in a prison of fear, danger, and despair.

The gap between the rich and the poor is growing in all societies, and there is also a gap between rich countries and poor countries. As spiritual people, we need to face what it means that this scourge is omnipresent in our times.

Try to imagine what it is like to lose your home, to be denied health care, to be hungry, or to be unable to pay your bills. You may experience this helplessness and powerlessness as a result of not being able to find work or through personal or financial misfortune. Any way you cut it, poverty is a debilitating condition that robs millions of men, women, and children of their dignity and self-respect.

It seems as if we are heading to a future where those with money and power will wall themselves off from the indigent and keep them out of sight and out of mind. The idea and the ideal of government taking care of those who are most vulnerable is no longer on the politicians' agenda. Witness the refusal to actively engage, beyond meaning less soundbites, about the epidemic of poverty in any recent of our recent elections.

Although we can focus on poverty in Orkney or Scotland, there are global aspects of this epidemic which are intertwined with decaying housing, unemployment, lack of health care, poor education, few job training programmes, hunger, homelessness, and widespread depression.

There is no quick-and-easy solution to poverty. It will take a concerted effort on the part of government and socially engaged institutions like churches to tackle the problem and change the structures and systems which fuel and perpetuate poverty in all its virulent forms. And it will also take the commitment of compassionate individuals willing to learn about this issue and do what they can to help their neighbours.

Once we wake up to global poverty, we see all kinds of connections. We see ourselves reflected in others half a world away. We see poverty around the world echoed in here in Orkney. We see how the threads of poverty, health, education, and the environment are tightly interwoven. We see the relationships among how children grow, how women are treated, and how families fare.

Poverty is more than just a lack of money — it is a lack of opportunity, rights, and resources. It is created by ill health and poor or no health care, inadequate housing and transportation, illiteracy, and racial and gender discrimination. It can be affected by things as personal as one's

actions and as uncontrollable as the weather. Poverty is caused by things as small as lacking a few pounds of credit and as large as war, national debt, and international trade policies. It is affected by things as immediate as access to clean water and as long range as the state of the environment. Poverty is influenced by things as pervasive as racism and sexism and as isolated as an accident or event in someone's life. As much as we might long for a simple explanation for poverty, or a single solution to end it, we must tackle it as the complex, interrelated challenge that it is.

But here's some good news: Just as the problems are interconnected, so too are the solutions. Solving one part of the problem can have a positive ripple effect.

Consider water, for instance. By providing clean, accessible water to a family or village in sub-Saharan Africa, the women and children no longer spend hours lugging water from a distant source and are spared from many waterborne illnesses. As a result, they now have time and good health, so adults can generate income and children can learn. With accessible water, crops can be irrigated, which together with fertilizer and better seeds dramatically increases crop production. With more food, family members are no longer malnourished, are strengthened to stave off or recover from illness, and are better able to earn a living and prepare for the future. That one action of providing clean water is more than just a drop in the bucket; from it flow all sorts of lifesaving, poverty-ending benefits to individuals, families, villages, and ultimately the world.

Our generation is the first to have the resources, technology, and knowledge to end poverty. But it won't be easy. Eradicating poverty calls for a comprehensive approach that ensures every person has the rights, opportunities, and resources to secure an income and the necessary food, health care, education, clean water, housing, and transportation to move or stay out of poverty. Eliminating poverty calls for partnerships large and small to transform our environment, trade policies, and international development. Ending poverty calls for direct actions to ease immediate suffering and systemic change to implement long-term solutions. We will shape the end of poverty by how we use our resources close at hand and how we increase the resources of those far away. All we need is the will to act.

### Prayer

May the wind of God blowing from the four corners of the earth, breathe on us. Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost. Breathe hope and sinew into our desperate spirits. In flooded village, in refugee camp, in hungry homes, may an arm be under the head of the helpless. May they rise up from the graveyard of despair and find new life through the power of love.

May the hurricane of God blowing across the universe stir the hearts of the compassionate, overturn the caution of the hesitant, that the resources of the world may be shared with the hungry. That tanks may be turned into tractors and the debt of millions cancelled.

May the breath of God gently whisper in our ears, remove the dust of apathy which clouds our vision. Energise us that we may be a source of comfort for the sick, a solace for the bereaved.

May the Holy Spirit of comfort and change send us out in confidence and joy to keep the faith and share it.

### Blessing

may we go on our journeys away from where we are,  
into the world,  
and with word of mouth, and in deed and in action, proclaim the gospel,  
as broad as it is,  
into, and for, the world.

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