

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/A2IkwLSCTbo>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

Let there be light.

Wherever darkness is to be put to flight,

"Let there be light

We follow Jesus, today as we worship; In words of love and devotion sung and spoken, In service and kindness, in the shared life of this worshipping community

And all we need do to follow him as we leave this place is to continue saying and doing
- to others - what we bring in this hour.

And so we pray for praise and affirmation to empower our families and communities;
For confession and forgiveness to reconcile personal and national enemies and lead us into integrity and goodness; For thanksgiving and generosity to curb our greed, and overcome poverty; For intercession and compassion to heal the broken, defend the weak, and guide the powerful.

As we are fed by his Spirit in our worship, may we become, again, the body of Christ
which nourishes the world and embraces all people with kindness.

Reading

Luke 14: 1, 7-14

One Sabbath, when Jesus came to eat a meal in the house of one of the leading Pharisees, the guests watched him closely. Jesus addressed a parable to the guests, noticing how they were trying to get a place of honour at the table. "When you're invited to a wedding party, don't sit in the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished has been invited. Otherwise the hosts might come and say to you, 'Make room for this person,' and you would have to proceed shamefacedly to the lowest place. What you should do is go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your hosts approach you they'll say, 'My friend, come up higher.' This will win you the esteem of the other guests. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." Then Jesus said to the host, "Whenever you give a lunch or dinner, don't invite your friends or colleagues or relatives or wealthy neighbours. They might invite you in return and thus repay you. No, when you have a reception, invite those who are poor or have physical infirmities or are blind. You should be pleased that they can't repay you, for you'll be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

Reflection

At its most profound level, the ecological crisis, whether it is manifested as climate change, species lost habitat destruction, is a spiritual crisis. It comes as a result of our alienation from nature, our estrangement from

the very ground from which human life, indeed all of life, has emerged. Our civilization has built so many barriers against an attachment to the rest of nature: to the soil, to the incredible diversity of plants and animals, to the rocks, to the seas, and to the geological formations that comprise our landscapes. Most of us no longer have a sense of belonging to the earth, an experience of solidarity with plants and animals, such that we deeply desire for all forms of life to thrive along with us. In human timespan terms this is a very recent thing. For millennia our forebears existed as part of nature, living in harmony with it.

The purpose of this sermon is to make us wonder how we humans, children and adults alike, might live humbly and justly with all of God's creation. If you think it is all a bit childish, remember those words of Jesus "The truth is, unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

"For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" says Jesus in Luke 14.

"Very early one morning, when the summer sun was just coming up, Jesus got out of bed and walked to the zoo. The animals were waking up, too. The peacocks were fluffing their blue and green and purple feathers. 'Hi, peacocks!' said Jesus. 'How are you?'

" 'Hi, Jesus!' said the peacocks. 'We're fine.' Their beautiful tails opened wide.

"Jesus smiled a wide smile and said, 'Let's walk together.'

"So they walked and talked, and soon they came to beautiful rolling stripes of black and white lying on the grass. 'Who is looking so good?' called the peacocks.

"The zebras opened their eyes and laughed. 'We heard you coming, peacocks. Hi, Jesus!'

"Jesus said, 'Hi, zebras! How are you this morning?'

" 'Frisky!' said the zebras. 'May we come along?'

" 'Sure!' replied Jesus and the peacocks. The zebras started a flowing, bouncing black and white dance right ahead of them.

" 'We can do that,' said the peacocks. They joined the zebra dance. Jesus did, too.

"Soon they came to the huge rocks where the lions lived. 'O lions, would you dance with us?' called the zebras.

" 'Great invitation!' roared the lions. 'Hi, Jesus!'

"Jesus said, 'Hi, lions! How are you this morning?'

" 'Flexible and full,' said the lions. They strode to join the zebras and peacocks and Jesus in the flowing, bouncing dance.

"The boa constrictor heard them, yawned, and crawled out onto a big tree branch to watch them dance along. 'Hi, big boa!' roared the lions. 'Would you like to ride along in our dance?'

" 'An expansive idea,' said the boa. 'Hi, Jesus!'

"Jesus said, 'Hi, boa! How are you this morning?'

" 'Fluid,' said the boa and smiled happily as it crawled down the tree and up on the lion's back. The boa and the lions and the zebras and the peacocks and Jesus danced along in a flowing, bouncing dance.

"Soon they came to the gorillas' trees and rocks. 'Uh oh,' said the boa, looking from high on the lion's head. The gorillas were talking together in a very serious way.

"Jesus called to them. 'Hi, gorillas! How are you this morning?'

"The gorillas looked up. 'Hi, Jesus. We are fervent this morning!'

" 'Hmm,' said Jesus slowly. 'Do fervent gorillas dance?'

" 'Of course gorillas dance, Jesus,' said the gorillas, 'but not this morning.'

" 'Why not?' asked the boa.

" 'The dancing is flowing, bouncing pleasure,' called the lions.

" 'We are glad you are enjoying it,' said the gorillas. 'But we are not in the mood.'

" 'Did you have a bad night's sleep?' asked the zebras.

" 'Was it full of crickets' loud clicking?' asked the peacocks.

" 'No,' said the gorillas. 'We had a deep sleep and are full of energy this morning. That is why we are talking today.'

" 'Talking about what?' the peacocks cried, getting a bit impatient.

" 'Leaving!' called the gorillas, and they pounded their fists on their chests.

" 'Leaving your cage?' the boa asked.

" 'Leaving the whole zoo!' said the gorillas, very, very seriously. 'That is what we have always planned to do. And today is the day.'

" 'That's like flying over the farthest, highest fence,' a peacock whispered dreamily.

"The zebras and lions started stretching their leg muscles. Jesus looked into the eyes of all the animals. Then he said, 'Behind some bushes and trees the metal fence has a large hole.'

" 'Let's go!' cried the gorillas.

" 'Yes!' the dancers all said, except for one peacock.

" 'What about the children?' the peacock asked. 'They will come to visit, and we won't be here.' Everyone grew still and thoughtful.

"Then Jesus said, 'I will write a note in the smooth sand at the playground.' And he did. When the animals read the note they smiled and followed Jesus. They danced a flowing, bouncing, joyful dance to the hole in the fence and out of the zoo.

"When the zoo opened that day, some children ran to the playground first. They saw the note Jesus had written in the smooth sand. What do you think happened then?"

Prayer

At times these, when the triumph of death seems inevitable and the suffering around us makes us want to turn away, we commit to resurrection:

In the secret chambers where power-brokers meet,
we commit to making the voice of life and justice heard;
In the crisis moments when quick decisions must be made
that hold human lives in the balance
we commit to making peace and co-existence the challenge we raise;
In the forgotten corners where the powerless and poor
daily walk the valley of the shadow of death,
we commit to equity, compassion and giving;
In the dying places on our planet where human carelessness and over
consumption
have threatened the survival of all
we commit to simplicity and sustainability

May we know, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the power of life;
May we turn away from death;
And may we become agents of resurrection,
where ever we find ourselves.

Blessing

Let us go and be alive.
Let us go and open the door to life.
Let us go and open our ears to the Word.
And bring that word into life in Jesus' name.

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