

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.

You can find our Sunday worship here.

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

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/kzSbbTwkSG0>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

For gathering today in this sacred space,
we light the flame.

For the opportunity to be together as a community,
to remember the past,
to claim our future, to be alive in our present,
we light the flame

We believe in God whose goodness
is more than enough for all:
filling the universe with gifts of love

and resounding through our lives in praise.
We will take hold of all that God gives
with reverence and joy
The year has turned its circle,
The seasons come and go.
The harvest all is gathered in
And chilly north winds blow.
Our farms have shared their treasures,
The fields, their yellow grain,
So open wide the doorway
And gives thanks once again!
Birds sing. Leaves quake. Thunder claps.
Waters gurgle.
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Children hum. Elders smile. Teens tune in.
Worship with gladness; gather in God's presence with singing.
We rise and we eat.
We work and play and rest.
We talk and we listen.
All the while, God is with us.

Reading Psalm 8

Lord our God,
how majestic is your Name in all the earth! You have placed your glory
above the heavens! From the lips of infants and children
you bring forth words of power and praise,
to answer your adversaries
and to silence the hostile and vengeful. When I behold your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars which you set in place— I wonder... what is
humanity that you should be mindful of us?
Who are we that you should care for us? You have made us barely less
than God,
and crowned us with glory and honour. You have made us responsible
for the works of your hands,
putting all things at our feet— all sheep and oxen, yes, even the beasts of
the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea
and whatever swims the paths of the seas. Lord our God,
how majestic is your Name in all the earth!

Reflection

Wonder, like joy and interest, is characterized by its rare ability to elicit prolonged engagement with life. Experiences of wonder succeed in motivating creative and constructive approaches to life by imbuing the surrounding world with an alluring lustre. Experiences of wonder enable us to view the world independent of its relationships to our own immediate needs. They thereby foster empathy and compassion. It is true that wonder per se is likely to issue in contemplation rather than immediate action. Yet, as we saw and see in the lives of Peter Scott, Chris Packham and of course David Attenborough this is not to suggest that wonder leads to passivity or an evasion of moral responsibility.

Their lives provide ample evidence that experiences of wonder pull into our own circle of concerns objects that would otherwise be of remote interest. An experience of wonder can bring the world into relief and makes a person take life seriously. In wonder we realize that this is it. We have the opportunity to swim through the river of life rather than just float on it, to own our life rather than be owned by it.

Wonder alters perception in such a way that we are afforded a new chance to choose how to be — to become true individuals and true citizens of the universe. Assessed for their 'moral helpfulness,' then, experiences of wonder would seem uniquely capable of luring us into what Rachel Carson author of bestseller, *Silent Spring*, called a reverence for life.

Experiences of wonder would thus seem to comport well with reasonable criteria for healthy and responsible living. Such experiences, moreover, often give rise to an enduring sensibility for an unseen order of life — a sensibility that also fares well when assessed for its immediate luminousness, philosophical reasonableness, and moral helpfulness. Of course, wonder alone cannot sustain productive relationships with the

surrounding world over the long run. It is true that wonder doesn't mobilize perception or cognition in ways that conform to the requirements of physical survival. It is also true that we can efficiently go through life without delighting in experiences of wonder. Many people do. But it must also be emphasized that no other emotion so effectively induces us to pause, admire, and open our hearts and minds. No other emotion so readily kindles a reverence for life. And thus although you can surely go through life without a developed sense of wonder, it is equally true that a life shaped by wonder is attuned to the widest possible world of personal fulfilment.

Prayer

autumn days
of wet gold
hold a wonder
that turns
to thanksgiving
in this ending of the year
with exclusive hues
and irreplaceable shades
percolating through the world
on marmalade trees
and butterscotch carpets
of leaves that have given up their summertime
in a blaze of burnished glory
and in such a moment
in such a place
this surrender of bronze
is a loud hurrah
of both creation and creator
confirming in a secret vision
the renewing of the promise
that will bring new life
after the ever darkening season of winter
and with exhilaration
and delight

the autumn glows
with promise

Blessing

May we be the blessing:

*may we be the justice in the harvest,
the sharing in the community,
the hope in the neighbourhood.*

*May our gift of self
be a blessing to many.*

*May we be the change the world needs:
the light in the shadows,
the truth in the darkness,
the healing in the hurt.*

*May our gift of self
be a blessing to the world.*

*For we need to be no other
than ourselves.
It is enough.*

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