

## **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)

Minister: Rev Fraser Macnaughton Tel: 873312  
**[FMacnaughton@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:FMacnaughton@churchofscotland.org.uk)**  
Pastoral Minister: Rev. June Freeth Tel: 721449  
[JFreeth@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto: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/9MtTyIWQhIo>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

In this season of Light, we light this candle to remind us of God's light shining in the darkness. May we carry this light of hope, peace, and justice to the world around us every day.

The baby in a homeless shelter visited by shepherds and travellers and rushed into exile. A refugee estranged from his home seeking asylum in another land. Child in the manger, Infant and lowly, Incarnate deity, What child is this? Lamb of God

The child lost from mother and father and the road home returning to the temple courts

enjoying the wisdom he has forgetting his parents he has. He's not with the relatives. He's not with friends. My father's house. Where else would he be?  
Lamb of God

The rabbi calling all sorts to follow stealing disciples from John asking tax collectors and zealots women and sinners to make up the twelve and a new community. He dirties himself with these people. He breaks the purity laws. He's a drunkard and a glutton. Talking to foreigners. Lamb of God

### Reading John 1:29-42

The next day, catching sight of Jesus approaching, John exclaimed, "Look, there's God's sacrificial lamb, who takes away the world's sin! This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'The one who comes after me ranks ahead of me, for this One existed before I did.' I didn't recognize him, but it was so that he would be revealed to Israel that I came baptizing with water." John also gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and she came to rest on him. I didn't recognize him, but the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'When you see the Spirit descend and rest on someone, that is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen for myself and have testified that this is the Only Begotten of God." The next day, John was by the Jordan again with two of his disciples. Seeing Jesus walk by, John said, "Look! There's the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard what John said and followed Jesus. When Jesus turned around and noticed them following, he asked them, "What are you looking for?" They replied, "Rabbi,"—which means "Teacher"—"where are you staying?" "Come and see," Jesus answered. So they went to see where he was staying, and they spent the rest of the day with him.

It was about four in the afternoon. One of the two who had followed Jesus after hearing John was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. The first thing Andrew did was to find Simon Peter and say, "We've found the Messiah!"—which means "the Anointed One." Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, who looked hard at him and said, "You are Simon ben-Jonah; I will call you 'Rock' "—that is, "Peter."

### Reflection

Recently, I have met an increasing number of people who feel empty and find life meaningless. These stretch from young students who feel pressured by expectations of all kinds, to grandparents who feel that they have nothing to live for anymore. Their number seems to be greater as you climb the economic ladder. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that many people have lost the stories that gave a

framework and meaning to their lives and have not been able to replace them with better ones.

Until the second half of this century people lived very predictable lives. Most people did not move far from where they were born, the number of job opportunities were limited, and belief in the spirit and religious world was pretty clear and unchanging. There were definite expectations, there were explanations for why things went wrong and there were built-in ways for absorbing stress.

Today there is much more concern about material things. In a fast moving and expensive world both parents often have to hold a job. Children grow up without being fussed over in their early years and this leaves them wondering if they are important or loved by anybody. In university they often feel pressured by the plans of their parents and wonder if their schooling is just training them to become machines that earn money and prestige for the family. It is not a great wonder that many such people turn to drugs and other self-destructive behaviour to help them deaden the pain that is deep within.

Very often religion helps little. Many people see religion as a way of getting God to help them out of their problems. Pray and God will make you healthy and wealthy! They fall for the insidious Gospel of Success that is pedalled. Many see religion as a way of exemption, a way of escaping the pain of being human. When they do not escape they feel betrayed and cheated by God.

People often refer to all of this as 'being stuck in a rut.' So when we feel stuck in a rut of some kind, to what do we give our attention? As a rule, what we see in our mind's eye is the circumstance we think responsible for how we feel in that same moment. Although this pattern of placing blame on conditions outside of us seems wise, a closer look tells a completely different story. In fact, this way of looking at our situation is a part of the very rut we wish to escape! Remember: No condition outside ourselves can create a rut or trap us in it. It's impossible.

Ruts don't create the cattle that follow them; cattle create ruts by blindly following one another, slowly grinding down the ground upon which they walk. If life seems like a grind, it's only because we're following around the same level of thinking that makes it so. Blaming outside

circumstances for trapping us in a rut is like blaming the television for the boredom we feel while sitting watching nothing but reruns.

So maybe it's time to break our ties with anything in us that would rather complain about its situation than go to work to change it. And it doesn't matter where or how we feel stuck — whether we're living under what seems an impossible situation, making too many self-compromising choices, or feeling like a prisoner of what seems an inescapable past. Yes, our condition may feel real, but any reason our mind gives us about 'why' we're stuck there is a lie! Great nature herself proves the truth of this when we know where to look!

Nothing in life repeats itself in exactly the same way: not the seasons and not the path of the stars that drive those seasons, let alone the eternal genesis that sits behind all of creation. More simply stated, *life never travels the same road twice*. Like a bed of roses bathing in streams of sunlight, not a moment unfolds when some new impression isn't raining down upon us, even as it wells up from within. So anytime it feels as if we're a captive of some condition outside us, this sense of ourself has to be a lie, because nothing in real life remains the same! Living in the grip of this illusion is like sticking our finger into a bucket of ice water on a beautiful summer day, then not wanting to go outside because we're sure it will be too cold to play!

So, the first step to breaking out of any rut in life is to no longer enable the parts of us that keep walking in them while wishing they weren't so deep! Learning to watch our own thoughts and feelings — to be quietly attentive to what the mind is attending to in each moment — ensures that we won't fall into these ditches, because our heightened level of attention keeps them from being dug!

#### Prayer

We now open our hearts and minds and try to recognize the needs of others around us.

And we hope that by our love we may be able to reach out to our neighbour. May the words that we have listened to this morning enable us to see Christ more clearly.

For with understanding comes love and with love comes compassion. Jesus showed the world such compassion as he touched the sick and calmed the distressed.

Let us reach out and meet people just where they are in life,

For with acceptance and love then we can make a difference.  
May we embrace those for whom society has no time or patience?  
We may never know the sadness behind a smile but we can be the face of Christ  
to that person.

Jesus healed by a simple touch, a kind word.  
We pray that those who have been hurt by insincere actions and damning  
comments will hear the healing voice of Jesus through our words.  
May our love wrap all those who weep and mourn,  
all those who feel abandoned and unloved.

When someone stumbles may our hands be the hands of Christ to lift them up.  
We ponder, in the silence of our hearts, the needs of our friends and families  
and maybe a forgotten neighbour or older person.....  
May we be the way that others hear the call to 'come and see' and find the love  
that transcends all others.

#### Blessing

May we go into the world and live the invitation:  
we have found the One.  
And then may we invite the world,  
the whole world, to "come and see"

May you stay safe in the Way of Christ, and may you be bless4ed by his Spirit  
this day and always.