

11112 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/-q7MaitOLks>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

We light this flame to affirm that new light
is ever waiting to break through to enlighten our ways bringing
rich possibilities in the now

We are one with the trees, one with the earth, the sky and the seas; we
are branches of God, rooted deep in life.

Let us celebrate life on earth, in the presence of the source of life.

In the name of the Creator, the fountain of life,
the name of Christ, the pulse of life,
and the name of the Spirit, the breath of life.

Earth is filled with God's presence.
We come into the presence of the sacred today
to celebrate in this sanctuary called Earth,
A planet filled with divine presence,
quivering in the forests,
vibrating in the land,
pulsating in the wilderness,
shimmering in the rivers.
Together this day, let us sense the face of God in all creation
Earth is filled with God's presence.

Reading Galatians 5; 22-6:5

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against these sorts of things there is no law! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their ego, with its passions and desires. So since we live by the Spirit, let us follow her lead. We must stop being conceited, contentious and envious.

Sisters and brothers, if one of you is caught in any sin, the more spiritual among you should correct the offender in a spirit of gentleness—remembering that you may be tempted yourselves. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfil the law of Christ. But if you think you are important when you are not, you are deceiving yourself. Examine your own work, each of you. If you find something to boast about, at least it's something of your own and not just empty comparison with your neighbour. Carry your own load!

Reflection Fruits of the Spirit

Jesus once said we are known by our fruit, so what are the good fruits we should aspire to? The Apostle Paul mentions the "fruits of the Spirit" that Christians should work to cultivate in their heart and mind. In the book of Galatians, Paul lists nine specific behaviours - love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - that result from the work of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life.

I wish to pick out one today. Kindness.

Whether we are conscious of it or not, it's in our power to increase other people's joy, satisfaction and safety through simple acts of kindness. A thoughtful word, a smile or acknowledgment, giving something that's needed, listening with care, extending our patience, expressing our concern appreciatively, ordinary courtesies, refraining from criticism or outbursts, acknowledging someone else's point of view or legitimate needs, making time for someone who is struggling, assuming the best: that power is worth everything. It's the basis of our confidence in ourself. It lets us know that regardless of what is happening outside our control, *our life is vital, sustaining and absolutely worth living.*

Kindness drives connection and engagement, empathy and comfort. It is thoughtfulness in action. It is self-respect and concern for others in action.

Kindness lets us live life to the full. It expresses our gratitude for *who we are and what we can contribute.*

We can't become kinder to others without also benefiting ourself.

We can't be more genuinely self-supportive without also asking and needing less of others — and benefiting them also.

Kindness doesn't mean surrendering our boundaries or meeting every demand that comes our way. It doesn't mean becoming a doormat that others can walk over. It can mean being much clearer about saying no as well as yes. Nonetheless, kindness pushes us to take other people into account constantly, even while it also saves us from harming, demeaning or sacrificing ourself.

Kindness helps us physically as much as it does emotionally and spiritually. It keeps us connected. It relaxes us. It radically reduces tension and stress. It doesn't depend upon status, education or wealth. It doesn't depend upon brilliance or age. And it certainly can't depend only on things always going well for us. (Easy to be kind when everything is going our way. Far more vital to be kind when life is *not* going our way.)

Kindness, as a way of life and living, depends on choices made and remade on a daily basis. Sometimes it will be self-evident and easy. Sometimes it will be an effort. Sometimes it will seem intuitive. Sometimes we will have to silence those self-righteous reasons why we should *not* be kind.

Perhaps we learn most about kindness when we have to think about it, when we are forced by circumstances to leave our comfort zone, question our emotional habits and think hard about the effect of what we are doing or saying. It is particularly powerful when we can be kind for kindness's sake and because we are free to be kind, rather than because it will make us a hero in other people's eyes or win us favours.

Many regard kindness as something sweet. It *can* sweeten life, sometimes immeasurably. But in practice and as an ideal, it is far tougher than sweet.

Whoever we are, and however much self-awareness we have, to behave and live with kindness challenges our egocentricity and the delusion that we are the centre of the universe with needs that should always take precedence over others.

Kindness is learned moment by moment. But it will always carry most weight when we take it up as a fundamental attitude rather than as a series of individual acts: when we see it as cause *and* as effect.

Prayer

May we have the eyes of Christ to see beyond the media coverage that so often informs our judgement.

May we have the eyes of Christ to see the people behind the stories, the lives behind the words.

May we have the eyes of Christ to see beyond the violence of war, to the families torn apart; those victims of war ripped from their homes, forced to become refugees; those military personnel, ripped from their families, forced to fight for freedom.

May we have the eyes of Christ to see beyond the incomprehensible numbers of casualties to see individuals hurting and frightened. To see beyond the abuse of power and to glimpse sad and lonely people grasping for security that continues to slip away.

May we have the eyes of Christ to see beyond terrorism the years of frustration and despair that has caused hearts to be hardened, building up uncompromising resolve.

May we practice Christ's laws of love and compassion with gentleness and respect, always looking for that spark of the divine that has been placed in each of God's children. And, when we find it, may we help each

other to seek, to nurture and honour the heart of God that beats in all
of creation. Amen

Blessing

May each of us know we are loved.

That each of us is one of God's children.

May each of us know that we belong.

As God's people each and every day of the week, each month, each year,
and throughout our whole lifetime

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