

## **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/vdEYK1Y8XWE>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

### Candle Lighting and opening meditation

In the light and beauty of day. We give thanks in awe and wonder. In the dark and stillness of night. We dream of healing and hope. And so we take this flame and light our candle for the world

The connection between what we hope for and our own self is a field of infinite power and potential that can open doors that seemed to be closed, or were invisible to start with. What we seek also seeks us. Christ's Spirit seeks us. While we seek strength instead we receive challenges that make us strong. While we seek wisdom instead we receive experience that makes

us wise. While we seek prosperity instead we receive grace and grit that keeps us moving forward. While we seek courage instead we receive challenges that make us resilient. While we seek love instead we receive people who teach us what love is. While we seek favours instead we receive opportunities that prove our resourcefulness.

What we seek also seeks us. Christ's Spirit seeks us.

### Reading 1 Corinthians 13

Even if I can speak in all the tongues of earth—and those of the angels too—but do not have love, I am just a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy such that I can comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge, or if I have faith great enough to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own to feed those poorer than I, then hand over my body to be burned, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, and it is not snobbish; it is never rude or self-seeking; it is not prone to anger, nor does it brood over injuries. Love doesn't rejoice in what is wrong, but rejoices in the truth. There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure. Love never fails. Prophecies will cease; tongues will be silent; knowledge will pass away. Our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect. When the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child. But when I became an adult, I put childish ways aside. Now we see indistinctly, as in a mirror; then we will see face to face. My knowledge is imperfect now; then I will know even as I am known. There are, in the end, three things that last: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

### Reflection

The Bible we have today is tidily arranged and held together as one text. But that is not how it began its life. Each book was a separate scroll, a single text in either Greek or Hebrew, and different communities would have had their own collections based on their prosperity, inheritance and particular interests. We now have it translated into various English versions to make our lives easier, and each of the books is broken down into chapters and verses.

This passage from 1 Corinthians began its life as a letter from Paul to the church he established in Corinth. They wouldn't have just selected these 13 or so sentences, they would have sat and listened to the whole thing, and then spent the rest of the day discussing it.

The point I want to make is that these 13 verses are part of a whole. They form part of a message Paul sent to a particular group of people, in a certain place, and at a certain time.

That is how they began, but it is testament to the beauty, mystery and primacy of the Bible that these 13 verses can speak powerfully just by themselves.

These words are a hymn to love; a poem that opens our hearts to the eternal, selfless, and enduring nature of love in its purest form.

It reminds us that whatever our gifts, whether we are talented speakers, can speak languages fluently, are able to discern the future, have amassed knowledge or insights, have complete trust in God, are completely selfless or are willing to risk our lives, that all counts for nothing if we do not have love. It counts for nothing if we do not live loving lives.

The attributes of love are patience, kindness, being trusting, modesty, humility, politeness, moderation, contentment, warmth, being forgiving, and truthfulness.

Love is tolerant, accepts things at face value whilst hoping for the good, and is steadfast.

Love is eternal. All of the gifts we celebrate and are thankful for are never permanent. They will fade or leave us. Our gifts are limited; only in love can we find completeness.

Over our lifetimes we change, we make choices, but love is a constant. We never totally know ourselves, let alone another person or the entirety of the universe; only love is all-encompassing.

Life is to be lived with three watch words: faith, hope, and love. And if you have to choose between the three, choose love.

This hymn to love sits within a letter, within a collection of letters that are attributed to Paul, and part of the New Testament - writings

exploring the new activity of God seen in the life of Jesus of Nazareth - which in turn sits alongside the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, continuing the story of seekers after God from Genesis to Revelation, and into the life of the Church.

This hymn to love sits within a letter where Paul declares his fellow Christians part of the body of Christ, all with their own talents and roles, and teaches them that to truly live as Christ's body they are called to love.

The preceding chapter, number 12, speaks of spiritual gifts and the unity and interdependence of Christ's body, and ends "But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way." And that more excellent way is love. The next chapter, number 14, begins: "Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts".

In these words from Paul, we are called to love. There is no greater calling.

Love is patient; love is kind; love never ends... faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. Amen

### Prayer

Come Spirit on us breathe,  
with life and strength anew;  
Find in us love, and hope, and trust and lift us up to you.

We pray for the Church: that we may be a light to our world so  
that all may experience the presence of God and recognize God's  
action around them, and  
For the grace of fidelity: that our lives may reflect Jesus in Spirit and in  
power even through our weaknesses

We pray for the grace of insight: that we may recognize ourselves as  
salt, light and a city upon the Hill and be instruments of healing and  
transformation for our society  
For all who strive to be salt for the human family: that they may heighten  
our awareness of the needs and sufferings that exist and awaken in us a  
zeal for justice and solidarity

For leaders of business: that they may bring forth the gifts and talents  
in those around them and help all to use their gifts to advance our society  
For all who reach out to the poor and those in need: that they may see  
the face of Christ in those whom they serve and never grow weary in  
offering love and compassion

### Blessing

May the Spirit of lightness and life be with all makers and dreamers  
all who make bread and long to share it; all who make music and long to  
dance; all who make words and long for poetry;  
all who are born in flesh and long to be human;  
all who make love and trust their longing for life.

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