

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

www.stmagnus.org

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

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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://www.youtube.com/channel/UC33Y1gSZIUBz5bIKrrx2rRQ>.

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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Candle Lighting and opening meditation

**In our tradition the time of rest begins with the lighting of a candle.
In this moment the stopping truly begins. To take a few breaths, to
allow the mind to quieten. This is the beginning of sacred time.**

As the fire of the Spirit gave life to the Early Church
So may the Life-Light symbolized in this candle flame give us a fiery
thirst for justice, and hope for the future.

The Breath of Divine Mystery fills the universe and makes it alive.;
Her love blows through all creation and makes it one;

Her presence fills every corner, her voice fills every silence, and her
heartbeat lives within every living thing;

But, we have failed to value the life of other people,
other creatures, and the world given to be our home.

We have failed to recognise the connectedness of all things and have
brought pain through division and exclusion.

We have denied that presence, ignored that voice
and forgotten that love for us and all that is made.

And so we ask for her to breathe new life into us, and ignite the fire of
love in our hearts again. For we believe in the Divine Life of all that lives;
the Love that binds all things together in one divine family.

Readings from ACTS 2

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they all met in one room. Suddenly they heard what sounded like a violent, rushing wind from heaven; the noise filled the entire house in which they were sitting. Something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each one. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as she enabled them. Now there were devout people living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled. But they were bewildered to hear their native languages being spoken. They were amazed and astonished: "Surely all of these people speaking are Galileans! How does it happen that each of us hears these words in our native tongue? We hear them preaching, each in our own language, about the marvels of God!" All were amazed and disturbed. They asked each other, "What does this mean?" But others said mockingly, "They've drunk too much new wine." Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd: "Women and men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem! Listen to what I have to say! These people are not drunk as you think—it's only nine o'clock in the morning!

No, it's what Joel the prophet spoke of:

'In the days to come—
it is our God who speaks—
I will pour out my Spirit

on all humankind.
Your daughters and sons will prophesy,
your young people will see visions,
and your elders will dream dreams. Even on the most insignificant of my
people,
both women and men,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

JOHN 20: 19-23

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were locked in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Temple authorities. Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Having said this, the saviour showed them the marks of crucifixion. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw Jesus, who said to them again, "Peace be with you. As Abba God sent me, so I'm sending you." After saying this, Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you retain anyone's sins, they are retained."

Reflection

The gift of the Holy Spirit is seen by historians and theologians as the birth of the church. The two texts from John and Acts are different in time and experience, yet they share central truths that help us understand how the Holy Spirit moves in our lives today. The breath of God which came to that upper room, also visits each of us. We are filled with that wind. Sometimes, we ignore it. Sometimes we allow it to move us. No matter what we do, the wind of God, the breath of God dwells in us.

The breath of God, the wind of God is powerful. We associate breath as a gentle warming action, the breath of God, the Spirit of God came to give power to the church so that it might proclaim the mighty acts of God through Christ. Again we have images of the wind that have caused chaos in recent times as hurricanes and tornados destroy vast areas of countryside. The wind of God came to earth not to destroy, but to build up. It came to earth so that Peter and the others were compelled to leave that upper room and go into the highways and preach. The breath of God moves us to go beyond the safe. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost tells of a power that is anything but safe. We see this power whenever people stand up for justice and equality whenever oppressive

and dehumanising systems and structures are brought down. It may be that if we believe in the power, we will have to allow the spirit to wreak some chaos - into our complacency, into our assumptions, and into our churches.

Pentecost is a day to be challenged and also to be changed. No longer were the disciples confused, now they understood the plan completely. No longer were they timid, now they were confident, speaking publicly. This is the same Peter who two months earlier was so afraid for his own life that he had denied that he even knew Jesus, never mind being one of his followers. Now he was speaking in public to the crowd with confidence and an understanding that he had never had before. Peter did not simply change his mind, he himself was changed. Along with the other disciples they boldly went to change the world.

There was another change that took place on Pentecost, and you could argue that this change was more spectacular than what happened to the disciples. After Peter preached his sermon on Pentecost, 3000 people came to faith and were baptised. We don't know much about these people.

We do know that Jerusalem was packed with people, because of the Festival of Pentecost. Jews from all over the Roman empire came. 3000 of them who were not Christians, who did not believe in Jesus Christ, were changed that day. Their whole way of looking at God, at themselves, at the world, at eternal life - everything had changed. Now they knew that they were at peace with God. Now they knew that Jesus was their teacher.

It goes without saying our world today needs change. We are asked to change from spectators to active disciples, from watching other people do things to be those leading the change.

On our own we cannot do it, following our own agenda we will fail. We need first to acknowledge and accept the power of the Holy Spirit and move by its prompting and guiding. Remember Jesus tells the disciples that they need the power of the Holy Spirit. Even spending three years in His presence was not enough to equip them for the work that lay ahead.

The gift of the Holy Spirit means action. It is not given to us so that we might feel good but so that we are equipped for a task. Not so that we can better spiritually but so that we can carry out that great commission and witness to the ends of the earth.

The power of the Spirit can invade the body, inflate the mind, swell the soul, lift our spirits and make us more than we ever imagined.

It'll make us young when we're old, and it'll make us live even when we die.

The power and presence of the Spirit will disturb, delight, deliver and lift.

The work of the Spirit, changes chaos into creation, the Red Sea opens up to a highway of freedom.

The work of the Spirit inspires a young woman to say "Yes". Jesus is born and life is never the same.

The work of the Spirit inspires amazing things to happen: barriers are broken, communities are formed, opposites are reconciled, unity is established, disease is cured, addiction is broken, cities are renewed, races are reconciled, hope is established, people are blessed, and the very creation is renewed.

Prayer

When our aspirations are high but our spirits are low,
when other's expect much of us but our spirit just cannot summon a response.

When the hope of faith speaks of light but our spirit is in the darkest of places, may the Spirit of the Living God come.

Like a dove to us, like a fire to us, like a wind to us.

May the dove of peace, settle upon our weary shoulders that carry the weight of the world, wing to us the peace of Christ that passes all understanding.

May the Wind of the Divine, gently breeze or wildy gust according to the messiness of our life's cobwebs, the threads that entangle our mixed emotions and need to be blown away, carried away by eternal love.

May tongues of sacred fire, spark in us new flames of passion for justice and hope and faith. Ignite that which can warm the human spirit in us, in all we meet, friend and foe, that kindness might warm our spirits, and light lead our way.

When our aspirations are high but our spirits are low, when others expect much of us, but our spirit just cannot summon a response - when the hope of faith speaks of light but our spirit is in the darkest of places, may the

Spirit of the Living God come

Like a dove to us, like a fire to us, like a wind to us.

Blessing

The Spirit comes and life will never be the same again. May the Holy Spirit come inspire and lead us on! Send us out, excited and enthused, joyful and jubilant, to share love wherever we go and with whomever we meet.

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