

## **St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall**

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

[St Magnus Cathedral Facebook page](#)

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)

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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.

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You can find our Sunday worship

[here on Facebook](#)

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

or [on YouTube here](#)

<https://youtu.be/IzePkxQCpGQ>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

Let this light remind us of the sacred flame of life that blazes within  
Constant, yet ever-changing, burning, yet never consumed  
may the inner light of soul and spirit  
Lead our minds to greater understanding  
Lead our hearts to love more fully  
And lead our hands to create justice

Christ calls people to new hope in every generation, and lifts our eyes to see a new heaven and a new earth which one day will break through the old tired efforts and reach into justice beyond our imagining. Christ leads us on past crucifixions of defeat and failure, rejection and faithlessness, drawing a picture of a new world ready to blossom from the bud, delicate and fragile, vulnerable as a baby in Bethlehem. Christ brings to life the dead bodies of despair which lie entombed in our souls and in our churches, dancing ahead of us undefeated in the Spirit of truth and healing and love.

### Reading **Ecclesiastes 3;1-11**

L; May we be struck by the wisdom of these words  
and marked by hearing them.

**All For within story lies meaning, and  
within meaning, the wisdom for which we seek.**

There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest; a season to hurt and a season to heal; a season to tear down and a season to build up; a season to cry and a season to laugh; a season to mourn and a season to dance; a season to scatter stones and a season gather them; a season for holding close and a season for holding back; a season to seek and a season to lose; a season to keep and a season throw away; a season to tear and a season to mend; a season to be silent and a season to speak; a season to love and a season to hate; a season for hostilities and a season for peace. What do workers gain from their efforts? I have reflected on this while learning all the kinds of work God gives to humankind. What I do know is that what is best for us is to be happy and enjoy life as long as we live.

### Reflection

We looked last week at the metaphor used by Jesus of balance in life. We examined some of the ideas from scripture around the balancing of a yoke to carry water or some other load, and how to balance our spiritual lives. Today I thought we might look in a more contemporary way of how balance is so important in life.

Balance is often more recognizable when it's absent.

Our world is out of balance. We've multiplied our possessions, but lack the inner character to use them with integrity. Our homes are bigger and full of more gadgets, but the relationships inside them are broken. We have impressive, tall buildings, but short tempers. We have vast resources, but narrow viewpoints. We have more convenience, but less time to enjoy it. We have more medicine, but less wellness, more knowledge, but less judgment. We've learnt how to add years to life, but not how to fill those years with more life. We've conquered outer space, but our inner space is a black hole. The world is out of balance.

But it doesn't have to be this way. We can have both, if only we would find the balance of inner and outer worlds.

It didn't have to be this way. If the appetite for financial growth over the last twenty years had been balanced by a contented spirit and a little foresight, there would be no economic crisis. The very notion of credit indicates an imbalance; the desire for goods outpaces the ability to afford the goods. Credit may be necessary in our world, but if it's not balanced with sustainable foresight, it will continue to destroy lives.

I find it sad that we call it an economic crisis once hard times hit the City and the Middle Class, but we don't call rampant poverty an economic crisis. It's incredible that we can find billions of pounds to reignite the flow of credit, but we can't find the money to save the thousands of children who die every day from preventable diseases. Where are our priorities? Where is our balance?

It didn't have to be this way with the environment. If only we had balanced our ability to harness natural resources with a foresight for sustainability and a respect for the earth's own regenerative processes, we wouldn't be in the mess we are in now. The combined celebration of Harvest fest and Thanksgiving are a reminder to give thanks for the flow of nature. Some seasons yield an abundant harvest. Others are lean. That's life. Give thanks either way for nature's seasons. But somehow we have come to believe that we have a right to an abundant harvest every day of every year, expecting what we want, when we want it. Harvest and Thanksgiving lose their essence as a celebration of nature's balance when we think we can control nature.

Balance is challenge for every one of us, and no doubt we have our own unique challenges when it comes to balance.

Maybe for some, it's the balance between work and play.  
Maybe it's the balance between justice and forgiveness.  
Maybe it's the balance between self worth and humility.  
Maybe it's the balance of our own needs with the needs of others.  
Maybe it's the balance between changing what we can change, and accepting what we cannot.  
Maybe it's the balance between striving and just being.  
Maybe it's the balance between discernment and acceptance.

What then are the spiritual lessons for us from all of this ?

One might be know our base. When all else is changing and swinging from one extreme to another, what is constant? When our ideas about how we are, and our stories about our life are in constant flux, what is unchanging? The one who witnesses the changes. The one who sees the ever changing self image for what it is, and doesn't get caught up in the identity. This is the key to balance.

Another may be see the benefit in flailing- Sometimes, when we see ourself swinging like a pendulum from one extreme to another, from one self belief to another, one story to another, that's half the battle. Just notice it, and don't get too attached. We aren't likely to stay there forever, so don't give ourself a hard time for being there. It's the flailing that helps us to restore our balance by coming back to our centre of gravity.

Life doesn't have to be lived with an either/ or mentality. We can have both/and. Some problems are not meant to be solved, just managed. Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling a number of balls in the air; work, family, health, friends, and our own spirit - and we're keeping all of these in the air. We will soon realize that work is a rubber ball. If we drop it, it will bounce back. The economy is also a rubber ball. It will bounce back eventually. But the other balls - family, health, friends, and our own spirit are made of glass. If we drop one of these, they will be damaged, or even shattered. They may never be the same.

Strive for **balance** in life. Know what is most important. Hold the core of our life, the things that really matter, in balance as if we are juggling glass.

## Prayer

We would pray and meditate in all forms and styles, with all sentiments, fullness, emptiness and care. May we be mindful of the plights and passions this day, that we be united in new connections and intimacies - with those near and far. With friends, family....with neighbours local and global.

With colleagues, customers, adversaries - with those involved with crises, war, violence, conflicts. Even now, we dwell in awareness of our fellow journey-mates in hopes of bringing about a little more peace and goodwill upon the face of this earth, an ounce more of healing and reconciliation, a step closer to further gentling and greening of this planet.

Recognizing distinctions and diversity, we affirm a unity of all beings and all creation. How can we be separate except in our own illusion-filled minds? May our individual and collective intent, our communal energy and heart-felt prayers be as hope and healing for us all; may our thoughts and hopes be as food for anyone hungry, a song for anyone needing a new melody, encouragement to anyone who is down or lonely and all others facing the heights and depths of what it means to be human.

Our prayers are as finely crafted fibres forming a beautiful and pervasive web of care, connection and goodwill to all around the globe. May we never underestimate the power of intention and prayer in the daily - in our hopes, our sighs, our screams, laughter, tears, gratitude, our silence, stillness and meditation.

## Blessing

Let us continue our walk on the Jesus Way as we leave our time together. Whatever the burdens are that we carry, we know that Jesus shares our load.

May God's love, Jesus' compassion, and the Spirit's guidance  
be with us as we go about our daily living.

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

