

## **St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall**

Scottish Charity SCO 05322/CCL No 119086

[St Magnus Cathedral Facebook page](#)

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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](#)

or [on YouTube here](#)

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

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

Candle Lighting and opening meditation

The spirit of imagination is a gift to all people. The spirit of faithfulness  
is the gift of the earth.

The spirit of love is a gift to the church in every age. We see the flame  
of the Spirit of God.

August ends, September begins. And so the long and lovely days of summer draw to a close in the northern hemisphere. The air cools, the skies change, the days begin to shorten as Earth readies for her fabulous autumn fashion show. It is time. It is time to ready as well. To reconnect with friends long neglected during family summer events. To put the autumn schedule in order. To ready our gardens for their winter sleep. To

preserve the summer's bounty for delicious winter feasts. To plan the winter get-aways.

And to recheck the questions of the soul. It is time to look deep within. Were we compassionate? Did we make someone's day better? Did we make the world a better place? It is time to continue our walk with Christ.

#### Reading Genesis 1; 26-30

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be stewards of the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, the wild animals, and everything that crawls on the ground." Humankind was created as God's reflection: in the divine image God created them; female and male, God made them. God blessed them and said, "Bear fruit, increase your numbers, and fill the earth—and be responsible for it! Watch over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things on the earth!" God then told them, "Look! I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth, and every tree whose fruit carries its seed inside itself: they will be your food; and to all the animals of the earth and the birds of the air and things that crawl on the ground—everything that has a living soul in it—I give all the green plants for food." So it was. God looked at all of this creation, and proclaimed that this was good—very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.

#### Reflection

Our planet is not well. That's an understatement. The Earth is in a state of crisis. Human aggravated global warming and climate change is a real and present danger. The frequency and severity of storms, flooding, and wildfires around the world is increasing. *We Are to Blame*. Human activities have caused the world's wildlife populations to plummet to more than 2/3 in the last 50 years, according to a report from the World Wildlife Fund. Globally between September 2020 and February 2021, 12.5 million people were displaced by adverse impacts of climate change, the annual average exceeding 20 million. Such displacement leads to increased human conflict including war.

Indeed, a case can be made that Climate Change is the single most important moral matter of our day as all of the vital matters of social injustice can only be addressed if there is a sustainable planet upon which we can address them.

Creation care - as being essential to Christian discipleship, has become one of the most important things we can be. This is the Jesus Way.

Preaching about the environment and caring for God's good green earth wasn't exactly a top priority or emphasis for Jesus. I don't think there's any passages in the "red letters" attributed to Jesus where he is telling people to become environmentalists.

Yet, if we look at the full constellation of his teachings we can find several very good reasons to believe that Jesus would bless and want us to step up our efforts to take care of this planet.

It is clear that Jesus was highly familiar with the agrarian culture he resided in. Many of the stories he told and analogies he used demonstrate someone who was highly aware of botany, farming, animal husbandry, and even meteorology.

Jesus referred to the 10 commandments, but it's fair to assume that he also meant to assume following God's very first commandment to humanity - taking care of God's creation found in the creation myth we read at the beginning of the Book of Genesis was also a given

Jesus actively called for people to repent from their loyalties and addictions to the way of worldly empire, and to instead shift to living simply in relational communitarian community. This way of living, sharing of wealth, resources, and property, tends toward having a low carbon footprint.

If nothing else, Jesus was someone who was a radical of love. He called people to expand their sense of who to consider as being "their neighbour" - e.g., persons left for dead on the side of roads, Samaritans, tax collectors, and Roman soldiers. Jesus called us to even love our enemies - including those actively harming us. Jesus called for increasing our circle of care - realizing that everyone on the planet is our brother, sister, and sibling, and seeing that everyone is our neighbour. It is thus entirely consistent for us to work with and expand that teaching to include the rest of Creation in our circle of care - to start seeing the otters, deer, cow, ducks, bats, bugs, ponds, rivers, oceans, land, aquifers, and sky as being our siblings and neighbours too. This is valid, relevant, and appropriate interpreting of our scriptures for our current context.

Considering the planet that we live upon to not merely be "a stage" for us to temporarily use and abuse - but rather, embrace as a being for us to actively love - is a game-changer.

Many of us embrace theologian Paul Tillich's view that God is "the ground of all being" and this jibes well with the mystic view of the Apostle Paul - that God is "the One in Whom we live, and move, and have our being." If those are our beliefs and understandings, then let's behave accordingly. If we view the Earth as imbued with, and indeed part of, God - as being sacred and Divine - then we should practice what we preach and truly take care of the Earth and its environment as a priority.

Jesus may not have called for us to care about having long lifespans, but he did call us to live faithfully. Living faithfully in 2023 means not just giving lip-service to Creation care. It is more than just switching to LED light-bulbs. It means getting all hands on deck to shut down as many coal and natural gas burning power plants as quickly possible, and replace them with as many solar, wind, hydro, and even nuclear power plants as quickly as possible. It means reducing our consumption of red meat. It means reducing our driving and switching over to electric vehicles. It means shifting away from global consumerism and adopting a more region economy. It means these things and much more.

May God bless us as we become, yes, evangelical in spreading the good news of Creation Care, Green Church and calling for people to repent from our addictions to behaviours that harm the planet.

#### Prayer

We pray for peace in our hearts,  
for peace in our communities,  
for peace in the world,

that as much as is possible we may live at peace with all people.

We pray for peace-keeping forces, for the United Nations.

We give thanks for all peacemakers.

We pray for all who offer peace to this world.

May our homes be places of peace and love,  
homes of holiness and hospitality,  
homes of harmony and of unity.

May we learn acceptance, and forgiveness, through our loved ones.

Let us not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

We pray for all who are not at peace,  
for people of broken homes and broken relationships.  
We pray for the broken-hearted and the broken in spirit,  
for places where there is a breakdown of peace or wellbeing,  
for all who are being destroyed by hatred or revenge,

remembering all who have suffered from the violence of others.

Blessing

As we leave our time together, let us together commit ourselves:  
to give thanks each day for the abundant gift and beauty of life to show  
love and compassion for others  
to listen to the stories of others  
to challenge injustice when we see it and to try to follow Jesus in  
everything we do

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