

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.

You can find our Sunday worship

[here on Facebook](#)

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

or [on YouTube here](#)

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Lighting of the Advent candle and opening meditation

Peace

As this season of "sparkle and bright" unfolds around us, the silent prayers of peace lie like stars hidden in a clouded night, May we inspire the world with peace. May we touch it to our lives that in every place of stress, frustration, or fear, we might feel the presence of peace easing our hearts and transforming our lives. And may we share its healing power with our children, that they might become the inspiration through which peace makes its way to a new yet-dreamt-of world. May Peace light the world this Christmas.

Don't be quiet, make a noise, a lot of it.

Advent is not a whisper,
God's return is not murmur,
the prophets do not mutter the news.

Mountains shift, valleys fill,
roadways straighten.

All creation moves
and we join that journey with songs of praise.

This is advent's invitation to clear our throats
with holy songs.

Incarnation is on its way.

Reading Galatians 3:29-4:7

Furthermore, if you belong to Christ, you are the off-spring of Abraham, which means you inherit all that was promised. What I am saying is that as long as the heir remains a child, it's no different from being a slave—even if the child owns everything—since the child is under the supervision of guardians and trustees until the time set by the parents. In the same way, before we came of age, we were enslaved to the elemental principles of the world. When the designated time had come, God sent forth the Christ—born of a woman, born under the Law—to deliver from the Law those who were subjected to it, so that we might receive our status as adopted heirs. The proof that you are children of God is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of the Child who calls out "Abba!" You are no longer slaves, but daughters and sons! And if you are daughters and sons, you are also heirs, by God's design.

Reflection BY ROSEMARY MOON

Advent, the season of waiting. Patiently. Something that I am Hopeless at! Yet, against the Want It Now culture of today we are coming, more

and seemingly, at many of our seven stages of life, to yearn for a more reflective and generally slower way of living. A way of life which embraces waiting.

It will be no surprise at all when, for my first reflection, I lean heavily into my professional world of food and writing about it. For her book ***The Missing Ingredient***, Jenny Linford talked to many food producers, chefs and food writers, as well as those in laboratories testing prepared foods for safety and storage times. She admitted to researching 'a book about the craft of food, what makes good food' but the ingredient that she was actually writing about was Time. Whether it is seconds, hours or years, time makes such a difference to texture, flavour and satisfaction.

During the Festive Season last year I read Delia Smith's remarkable book ***You Matter***. Many of you, I am sure, will have your battered and splattered copies of her Christmas cookbook out by now but maybe this year this very different book should take its place? Delia is a great advocate for meditation, contemplation, silent prayer. Call it what you will, she does it. Every single day. For up to 2 hours. I still find it hard to empty my mind, to be still and contemplative but I know that, practiced daily, it is becoming more natural, achievable and rewarding. You might light a candle as we do here in the Cathedral, and use the flame as a point of focus. Take your order of service home with you and use the words suggested on the inside page, each week, to start your quiet time. 5, 10 or 15 minutes - any amount of time is fine and it won't be the same every day. Of course minds wander, but when that happens gently bring it back and carry on. It's OK.

Why does regular time for reflection and stillness matter? It brings great peace and calm which often leads to a clarity of thinking and purpose. It brings self-knowledge and, Delia suggests, the *'self belief to take charge of how we use our precious time; mindful perhaps of the wise words of Shakespeare: 'I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.'* It matters to take charge of our own time and what we want to do with it. Christ needed time to himself and withdrew from the crowds. We need to refresh ourselves, our thinking and purpose, too.

You might not find it possible or practical to enter into reflection in this way. But could you perhaps read a few verses of the Bible each day for the rest of Advent? Perhaps comparing the telling of the Christmas story in each gospel - if indeed it appears at all. That is indeed something to ponder. Or sit and look out of your window while having a coffee - loose yourself in the spirit of outside as others try to loose themselves in the spirit within.

Few of us will ever make and then mature a cheese for 2 years. Or distill a whisky special enough to stay in cask for 30 years before bottling. But many will have waited for the birth of a baby, perhaps one of the few experiences that we still have pretty much a set waiting time for. In the church the waiting time for our annual celebration of the birth of Christ is just four weeks, not nine months. Even so, few of us make the time to prepare during Advent, the season of waiting, for the impact that the festival of Christ's coming should make in re-birthing our faith, year by year. If only, amongst the mince pies, shopping and parties, we made the time to prepare more reflectively. Would our celebrations then be filled with a deeper and richer flavour of Christmas?

Prayer

We give thanks for the words of hope and comfort that echo down the centuries from Isaiah to John the Baptist, from Jesus of Nazareth through Mark the evangelist, through translators, and publishers and printers to us here today.

May we be open to hear the word, and daring enough to look in unlikely places for signs of the Christ presence.

As John spoke from a barren, desert place to people on the margins, far from the centres of power, so we pray for those who live on the margins now, their births uncelebrated; their deaths not publicly grieved.

We pray for refugees and asylum-seekers; for clients of food banks in this country, and for others who lack even that safety net. We pray for those without secure jobs or money in the bank; those for whom home is not a place of safety; students without loving parents to go back to; old people without children to look out for them.

We pray for those in positions of power, the best of whom feel powerless, and admit it; troubled by the huge responsibility that they bear. May this be an opportunity for all of us to reassess what really matters, and what sort of world we want to live in.

In just such times as these, prophets have risen to challenge the powerful and comfort the oppressed. In just such times as these has the Spirit slipped in alongside people to let them know that they are not alone.

May we be among those who help to prepare the way for her coming,

Blessing

As we go into this week, may we prepare the way of the Lord,

making straight the paths that lead to *God*, in our hearts and souls,
through our words and actions,
by our choices and decisions.

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