

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

Please like and follow us at [St Magnus Cathedral Orkney](#) from now on.

or on YouTube here.

<https://youtu.be/1JidSKiP3s8>

Join our Wednesday ZOOM meditation by signing up here.

stmagnuszoom@gmail.com

Candle Lighting and opening meditation
**We light this candle to celebrate
the inherent worth and dignity of every person
and to share that love which is ultimately
beyond even our cherished reason,
that love which unites us.**

In the growing revelation of reality evolving around us, we look with gratitude at an ever larger and larger world.
Our personal life has its meaning, for we are connected to all things.

None of us can go it alone: each has innate energies needed by all. And so we pray, pause and meditate; we breathe deeply of these moments knowing full well the weightiness and beauty of the scene we share: Men, women, friends and family to our right and left, in front and back. Safely in a place where all are welcome. A place all can sit hand in hand, arm in arm no matter who we are and where we've been. We also know this place and time as a crucible for imagining, learning and acting - thinking globally, acting locally. Let us all be comforted, challenged, called out, set free to be all we can be - to be the change we wish to see in the world - to be the difference toward justice, inclusion, eco-sensitivity, hospitality and liberation on all fronts. Amen to spring, to rebirth, to colours; Amen to the beauty of the earth and the lessons to be learned and shared during this season of new life and resurrection.

Reading from John chapter 10

Jesus said to his disciples. "The truth of the matter is, I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd would die for the sheep. The hired hand, who is neither shepherd nor owner of the sheep, catches sight of the wolf coming and runs away, leaving the sheep to be scattered or snatched by the wolf. That's because the hired hand works only for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me, in the same way Abba God knows me and I know God— and for these sheep I will lay down my life. I have other sheep that don't belong to this fold— I must lead them too, and they will hear my voice. And then there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why Abba God loves me— because I lay down my life, only to take it up again. No one takes my life from me; I lay it down freely. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. This command I received from my Abba."

Reflection

There are plenty of books around about people who leave the church. I doubt whether I will make that comprehensive a break, but this is the

end of an era where I have been a minister in a parish. Specifically, in this instance, a minister in this parish and to this wonderful Cathedral.

Of course, like all good things you let go of, I probably won't realise exactly what I have done until a few months down the track - perhaps when I feel a strange urge to write something on a Tuesday afternoon, or when I wonder what to do on Sunday morning!

The ministry system is a strange one. You and I meet and engage - and it is better when we really, really engage with each other - you could say intensely, or intimately, certainly intentionally. Then, whatever the minister moves on to, there is the need to disengage on both sides.

The professional disengagement needs to be pretty complete. That gives you a chance to become a different version of yourselves, no longer the church with Fraser Macnaughton as the minister, but a new normal. And that gap, while it seems like a long time and hard to take, (I know, I have lived through interim times too), that gap means that when a new minister arrives, there is an open space for them to move into and where a new, different engagement can happen. It's a little like a marriage. In a new marriage it is good if the 'ex' isn't still hanging around! Even although Carole and I will still be living in Kirkwall and pottering about Orkney. Like Bill Cant and Ron Ferguson before me, we have found Orkney gets under your skin and into your bloodstream and so it was a short debate to decide to retire here.

Winne the Pooh has it right. If I hadn't liked being here so much, [well over half my ministry] I would not be sad to go. There are many good memories of people and events: Kirk Socials, The St Lucy Festival of Lights, the First Word War centenary commemorations, the recognition of John Rae in Westminster Abbey, the solemnity of Good Friday's meditations, the establishment of the St Magnus Way, the professionalism and sheer talent of the choir's Festival of lessons and carols, The Magnus 900 celebrations, long table communions and the labyrinths, the enduring beauty of the Cathedral itself, so soaked in spirituality. Working with great support staff, the willing help given by so many every Sunday as well as during the week, those who voluntarily work so hard on Session and committees, the special moments when someone trust you with their inner thoughts and feelings, the humbling moments when you can see the sacred affecting people's lives.

It has all been rich gift.

But as with everything you come to a point where you say that job's done.
My part in it, that's enough.

We have been through a great deal together over the past twenty two years half years. We have grown as a community and made a difference in the lives of one another and in the city in which we live. We have developed our beautiful cathedral, but more than that, we have made it a place of hospitality and welcome, a symbol of inclusiveness and justice.

Latterly too we have had to deal with and manage one of the greatest health crises and disruptions since 1945. But even from bad things blessings can spring. One of these has been the development of this online community, tuning in each week from all over the world, connecting with St Magnus Cathedral, being part of us, through your support, good wishes and encouragement, and continuing to be interested after we get back to some sort of normality.

There is no doubt that the church and the Cathedral, as part of the church, are going through times of change and these can often be painful and difficult, the way forward often unclear and confusing. The process of discerning God's will has never been an easy or quick one for the Church. One just has to look at the future of ministry and congregations in the Church of Scotland. Testing and challenging times certainly but also an opportunity to discover where the Holy Spirit wants to lead us. It is a great comfort to me to know that she is always ahead of us, leading us on.

Not a day goes past when I am not grateful for the opportunity I have had to be minister here. I say often to tourists and visitors that I am always acutely aware of being but the latest link in a very long chain of clergy from Bishop William the Old, under Norwegian rule, through the first Scottish bishop Andrew in 1486, the first Presbyterian minister James Wallace in 1672, and the combined charge from William Barclay in the modern era from 1921. Each of us, just passing through. The Cathedral and it's people, generation after generation, are the constant presence. And in due course the Spirit will move in mysterious ways and a new link in the chain will be forged.

In John chapter 10 Jesus said "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as Abba God knows me and I know Abba God.' If we look closely enough and keep our awareness sharp, we can see 'the good' everywhere. The good care.... good shepherds, good politicians, good

artists. The good partner. good bench warmers, good beekeepers, good prophets. The good expand good communities, good families, good hearts. The good volunteer. Good resources, good energy, good time. The good empower. The community of St Magnus Cathedral is bursting with good people. That is the most important thing to have come to know and experience in my time as your minister. Amidst all the upcoming changes, do not change that, which is why I am full of optimism for the future. I have a great faith in St Magnus Cathedral because you are a people with a strong sense of community and a strong sense of identity as an outward looking and progressive congregation. I know that you will look after each other and that you will keep being the light in the North that you are for these islands.

Prayer

We pray in the Spirit of God, whose creative glory we see in the rushing wind and the swirling waters, and whose love is revealed in the smile of a child, and who will remain with us.

The Spirit of God whom we have discovered in the scriptures, and who has discovered us, and who comes clear to us in Jesus and in the lives of the saints,
and who will remain with us.

The Spirit of God, whom we encounter in the worship and service of faith communities,
who is within the pastoral caring and the justice-seeking of this church,
and who will remain with us.

The Spirit of God, gracefully known in the hard places of our earthly life's journey,
and who laughs and celebrates joyfully with us here,
and who will remain with us.

The Spirit of God, who will be with us as this life ends,
who is with us in time and beyond time,
and who will remain with us.

Blessing

Encouragement and support are the gifts we exchange
in our places of rest, work and play, in our speaking of dreams and visions.

In our physical, emotional and spiritual relating -
being loved, empowers all women and men, to, in turn, minister in love

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