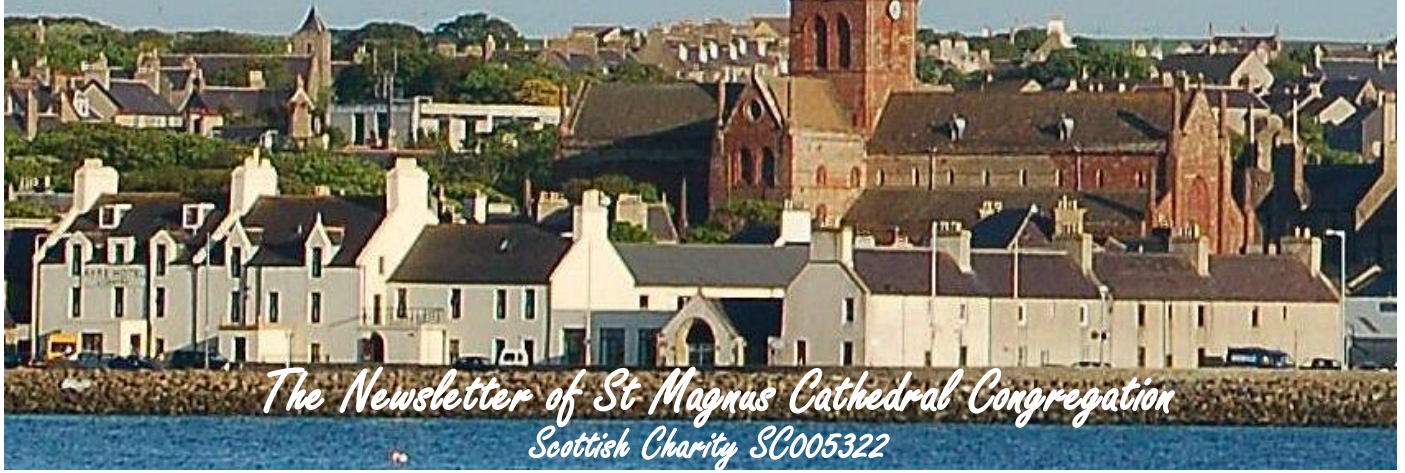


# The Grapevine



*The Newsletter of St Magnus Cathedral Congregation  
Scottish Charity SC005322*

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Scottish Charity SC 005322/CCL No 119086

## Services for Holy Week and Easter

<b>Sun 24<sup>th</sup> March</b>	11.15 am Palm Sunday	RNLI Bi-centenary Service
<b>Good Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March</b>	6.30pm	Good Friday Meditation Music, poetry and hymns Presented by the Choir of St Magnus Cathedral
<b>Easter Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	11.15am	The Sacrament of Holy Communion
<b>Sun 7<sup>th</sup> April</b>	11.15 am	Rev. Fraser Macnaughton's final service.

# From the Manse – [One last time]

I want to draw a picture of contrasts based on two different stories I heard recently. They are in fact old chestnuts.

Signs you are living in 2024.

You just tried to enter your password on the microwave.

You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three

You call your son's beeper to let him know it's time to eat. He emails you back from his bedroom 'what's for dinner?'

Cleaning up the dining room means getting the fast food bags out of the back seat of your car.

You wake up at 2:00 AM to go to the bathroom and check your e-mail on your way back to bed.



And the second old chestnut is this.

How many Christians does it take to change a light bulb?

Charismatics. Only one. Hands already in the air

Presbyterians. At least 15. Want to change the light bulb and three committees to approve the change.

Episcopalians. Eight. one to call the electrician and seven to see how much they like the old one better.

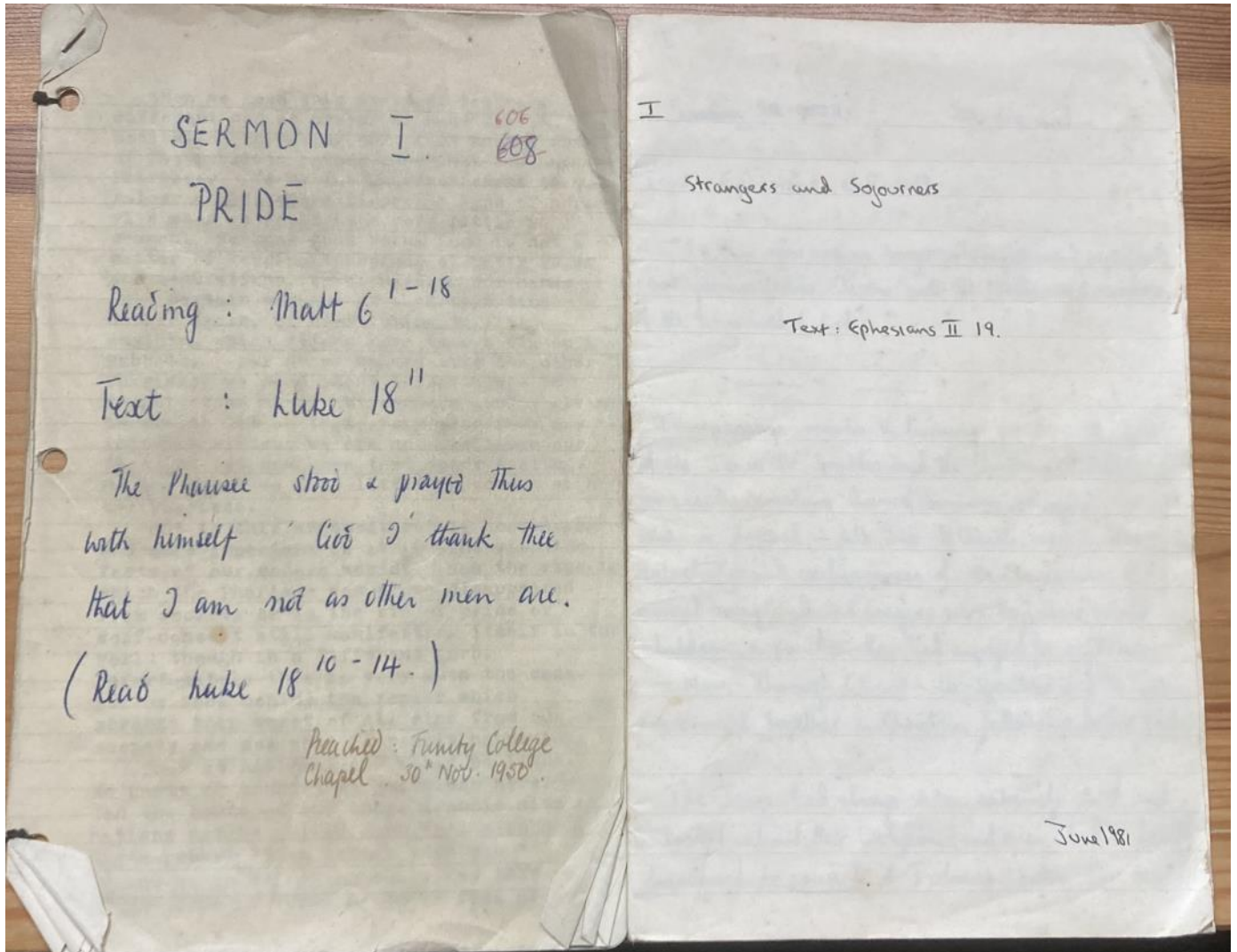
Roman Catholic. None. Candles only.

One can draw one's own conclusions from the nature of contrasting stories but it is difficult to miss the fact that the world goes apace while the church goes on.

It has always been a great mystery to me how it is that the people who sit in our chairs Sunday by Sunday interact and engage in the world are at one with the signs of living in 2024 and yet we are the same people who recognise ourselves too in the light bulb changing scenario.

As I get older however I am learning to live with mystery more and more. I am enjoying reflecting on God's mysteries more and more. I have less and less if I need to try and get answers all the time.

I would like to thank you, the endlessly patient people of Saint Magnus Cathedral for sharing that part of my journey with me. It would of course be unfair of me to pick out some people for special mention, but you know who you are. At times you may have been puzzled frustrated left breathless. At other times you have been inspiring imaginative creative and always hard working in your attempts to map out a route for the congregation and visitors to follow. If in some small way I have empowered the people of Saint Magnus Cathedral to shape your own way and to have a sense of owning your ministries under the Spirit's guiding influence, then I can ride off into the sunset a happy man.



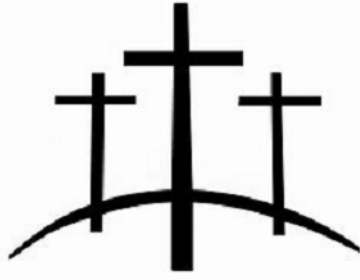
Pictured here are two sermons which I dug out as part of downsizing marathon. The 1st is my dad's very first sermon from 1950 and his subject was Pride. Which in some sense has a very different connotation nowadays. And the other is my very first sermon from 1981 and its subject is Inclusion. Perhaps these two sermons, which illustrate ministry over the past 70 years, show us the enduring relevance of the good news of Jesus teachings as these themes are as pertinent today as they were when they were first preached upon.

Every blessing,

Fraser







# Holy Week in Kirkwall

Monday 25 – Friday 29 March, 2024

## Lunchtime Reflections in St Magnus Cathedral

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 1.10pm

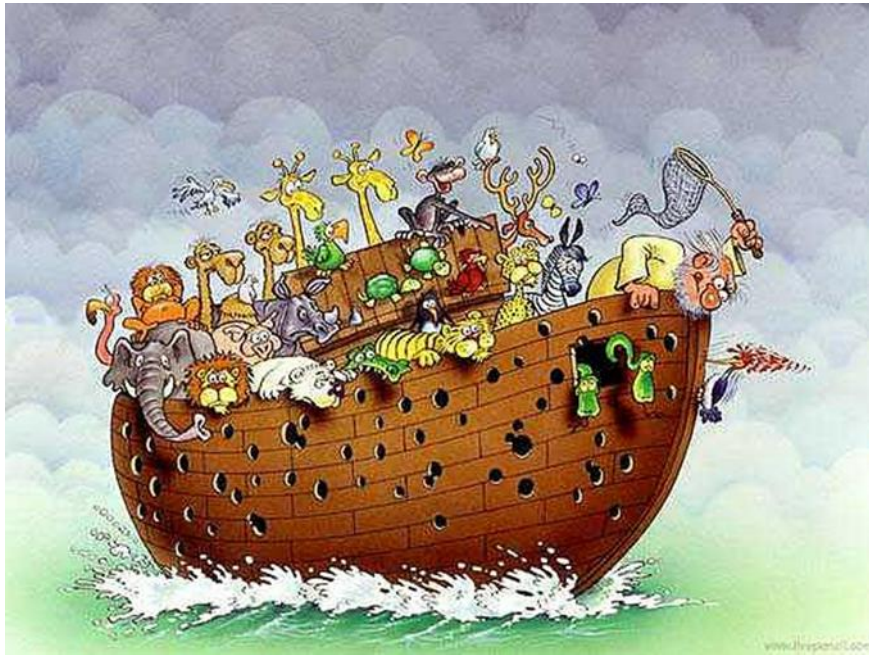
15-20 minutes of reflection as we focus on  
Jesus' journey to the cross.

## Good Friday Walk of Witness from 12pm

St Olaf's (12pm), East Church (12.25pm), Peedie Kirk (12.50pm),  
Baptist Church (1.15pm), Catholic Church (1.40pm),  
The Salvation Army (2.05pm), St Magnus Cathedral (2.30pm),  
followed by Café Church at the Life Church (3.15pm).

There will be a short service (10-15 minutes) at each church

**Organised by the Kirkwall Council of Churches**



### Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark:

One: Don't miss the boat.

Two: Remember that we are all in the same boat.

Three : Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah  
built the Ark.

Four : Stay fit When you're 600 years old, someone  
may ask you to do something really big.

Five: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job  
that needs to be done.

Six : Build your future on high ground.

Seven : For safety's sake, travel in pairs.

Eight: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails  
were on board with the cheetahs.

Nine : When you're stressed, float a while.

Ten : Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the  
Titanic by professionals.

Eleven: No matter the storm, when you are  
with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

## “How do you guard an idea?”

We know how to defend a place. Obviously, with security cameras. Fences. Armed sentries. Medieval rulers surrounded their castles with moats. Various countries build barriers along their border.

But you can't do those things with an idea.

2,000 years ago religious leaders wanted to squelch the idea that Jesus had risen from his tomb. It wasn't to protect the idea of resurrection; it was to protect against it.

So they posted soldiers at the tomb, to keep Jesus' followers away.

It didn't work, according to the Bible – one of the few things all four gospels agree on.

Rome usually dealt with threats by killing the leader. But how could they kill a leader they had already killed?

Subversive ideas

And now there was a new idea circulating, the idea that a real live human had been put to death, but wasn't dead. The temple authorities posted a conspiracy theory on the social media of the time, to counter the excitement.

But the story wouldn't go away. More than a dozen people had seen him. Talked with him. Walked with him. Eaten with him.

So how do you guard that idea? To keep it from getting distorted? Diluted?

It seems that there are several obvious ways.

One would be to close the doors. Keep it secret, known only to a chosen few, who could be trusted to retrain the idea's purity, word for word.

That would be the approach of secret societies. Where new recruits pledge not to reveal to the world the rules and rituals that bind them together.

Another way to guard the idea might be to write it down. And then declare the text holy, sacred, untouchable.

That has been the Christian tactic for 20 centuries. Monks copied the Bible, word for word, even including mistakes made by previous copiers, because this was the WORD OF GOD. Except that it was no longer the original Word of God. The original Aramaic had been translated into Greek. And Greek into Latin. And eventually, Latin into English.

Each new translation introduced the translator's own interpretations into the text.

Which is why Islam requires reading the Qur'an in its original Arabic.

A third – and almost unthinkable – option would throw the idea open. To anyone. Public domain. It's about as radical as posting your passwords and account numbers on the internet.

But that's how the early church grew. It gave away the story.

You didn't have to memorize it, You didn't have to pass exams on it. You didn't have to get it right before you could be trusted with it.

Yes, there's a huge risk. Some people will misunderstand. Will bend the story to suit their own purposes. Will get it wrong. Or won't get it at all.

And they did.

Yet the story is still around, twenty centuries later. The unguarded story has had far more effect than all the attempts to control it.

## Poem: "Slow Me Down, Lord" by Wilfred Arlan Peterson

Slow me down, Lord.  
Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind.  
Steady my hurried pace.  
Give me, amidst the day's confusion  
the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tension of my nerves and muscles  
with the soothing music of singing streams  
that live in my memory.

Help me to know the magical, restoring power of sleep.  
Teach me the art  
of taking minute vacations....  
slowing down to look at a flower,  
to chat with a friend,  
to read a few lines from a good book.

Remind me  
of the fable of the hare and the tortoise;  
that the race is not always to the swift;  
that there is more to life than measuring its speed.

Let me look up at the branches of the towering oak  
and know that ... it grew slowly ... and well.

Inspire me  
to send my own roots down deep...  
into the soil of life's endearing values...

That I may grow toward the stars of my greater destiny.

Slow me down, Lord.

# 'FROM THE LIPS OF CHILDREN.....'

It was Easter Sunday morning and the children's Sunday School teacher, tired of the commercialism surrounding Christian celebrations, the bunnies, and eggs and so on, was very anxious to make sure that her class knew the "true" meaning of Easter. She began by asking her class if anyone knew what day it was.

A chorus of voices responded, "Easter!"

Now for the harder question, "What do we celebrate on Easter?"

One little girl was waving her arm frantically, so the teacher called on her.

"Easter was when Jesus was born and we give each other presents."

In disappointment the teacher said, "No, dear, that's Christmas."

With a sigh, she tried again, "Does anyone know what Easter is about?" Now there was a little boy on the other side of the room waving his arm.

"Bobby, do you know what Easter is?"

"Yes, teacher, I sure do," Bobby responded. "Easter is when we all dress up in costumes and go to people's houses and they give us sweets."

The teacher was deflated.

Deciding to give it one last shot, she asked again, "Can anyone tell me what Easter is?"

Little Susie, who always knew the right answers, finally said, "It's O.K. teacher I know what Easter is," Once again hoping that perhaps there was one child who knew the true meaning of Easter, the teacher asked Susie to tell the whole class.

"Well, Easter is when Jesus died and he was put in the tomb."

Teacher was getting excited now: "And what happened then, Susie?"

"Well, after three days the angel came and rolled the stone away from the tomb, and, and,..."

"Yes, Susie, that's right, tell us what next!"

"And Jesus came out of the tomb, and if he sees his shadow there's only six more weeks of winter!"





# PARISH REGISTER

The Parish Register has been held over until a future edition

