

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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3rd Sunday of Epiphany

January 23, 2022

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10:00 a.m. Online Service

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

THE GREETING:

Celebrant: Lord, open our lips,

People: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Celebrant: O God, make speed to save us.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

PSALM: 19

REFRAIN: The words of the Lord are spirit and life.

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. **R**

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. **R**

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. **R**

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. **R**

Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat. **R**

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. **R**

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb. **R**

Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. **R**

But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults. **R**

Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. **R**

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. **R**

People: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

First Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

So, they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF CORINTHIANS

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this.

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues.

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

The Holy Gospel: Luke 4:14-21

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO LUKE

People: Glory to You Lord Jesus Christ

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

SERMON: The Rev. Canon Simon Bell

How we treat each other matters

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; I Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

Paul, in writing to the church in Corinth, is dealing with central pastoral issue – divisiveness or a lack of unity. Paul had originally planted the church in Corinth and had watched it flourish under various pastors. But, over time, it began to split into a series of home churches who were individually pastored by various leaders, who were in conflict with one another, over a range of issues: from the place of circumcision as a rite to being part of the church to food offered to idols to which days were to be treated as the Sabbath to pastoral affinity through baptism and the importance of certain spiritual gifts, namely tongues and prophesy. It meant that by the time Paul wrote to them they had become fractured and ridden with conflict. Leaders played their political hand and tried to persuade folk to be on their side by manipulating the doctrines of the church in their favour.

The central theme of the letter is unity and works from the assumption that God in the Trinity is unified and that baptism, the equal rite of access to the church, is the outward sign of the inward transformation that makes us joint members of the church in spite of our diversity. As Paul writes (vs.12-13), “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

That, in essence, the outward working of the grace of God known in baptism is organic unity. That we, through the work of Christ within us and the presence of the Holy Spirit through us, are drawn to a common life that is lived out by us as the body of Christ at a particular point of time and in a particular place. Now this is not like belonging to a social club of like-minded individuals where we have paid our dues. Rather this is a diverse community of folk who have been brought together by their common faith in Jesus and formed by the work of the Holy Spirit into an organic and dynamic community of folk with a common purpose of living out their kingdom values of gracious and compassionate service. Paul, in using the image of a body, wants to communicate to us how organic and dynamic that common life is and outlines some key principles by which it can function.

Firstly, no individual follower of Jesus is representative of the entire body in all its entirety or has precedence because of their role or function. The point that Paul is making in I Corinthians 12:15-20 is that just because an individual does not have a particular function – say a hand or an eye - does not mean that they do not belong. Rather that our individual diversity of function or social identity is intrinsic to our shared identity as a part of the whole. A body needs a diverse variety of parts to function as a body and that not being a particular part never means we are not a part of the body ... “there are many members, but one body”.

All too often in parish ministry certain functions get elevated as “normative” for all. Sometimes we might refer to the charism of the parish as if all of us should be feeding the poor or singing in the choir or teaching Sunday School or serving as an usher. While we want to live out our vocation as a community and each church has a sense of character to it, we need to recognise that this does not mean that we do so in uniformity. Same is not the game and serving Jesus does not make us clones of each other. We have to have the capacity to embrace diversity in gifting and function and social identity so that we can actually work as a body and not as an organ on life support or a slice of possibility or a faction of social diversity.

Secondly, none of us can do without each other. We cannot simply dismiss people because they do not look, feel, believe or function like us. Again, Paul (I Corinthians 12:21) puts that in terms of the functions of a body, “The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” But, in contrast says Paul, the “weaker” members are indispensable, those without “honour” need to be honoured and the “less respectable” need to be treated with respect. That goes right against what is so often the dominant culture of the church where we elevate folk as “indispensable”, honorable and respectable. And, in contrast, we treat some folk as if they are disposable, lacking in honor and disrespectable or inferior because they don’t “belong to the club”.

Finally, the obvious sign of our unity is to be found in the fact that we “have the same care for one another” irrespective of our gifting or vocation or function or status. As Paul (I Corinthians 12:26) writes “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” In this sense none are given pastoral preference or greater influence or partisan power because of their gifting or ability or social status or any other social differentiator. Rather we are equally supported and cared for by the community and equally invited to explore our vocation and discover our giftedness as part of the local body of Christ.

In Anglican theology that is most obviously expressed in the understanding that we are a “broad church” that holds conflicting views on a range of issues in tension. The point is that we are each encouraged to express our own Biblically and theologically informed conscience and live out our faith by our own informed convictions within the everchanging theological breadth that is Anglicanism. We are not encouraged to split and divide over theological issues, but rather encouraged to find ways to find a common life together even in our diversity.

That is also expressed in our pastoral theology and our theology of mission that recognises culture is not the Gospel, but rather that the Gospel or Good News is communicated through culture. We all need to work out how the Gospel speaks into our own cultural context and to work out what implications the Gospel has for those things we think of as culturally normative or a “given”.

It is also expressed in our theology of baptism that encourages each of us to find our vocation or calling in the life of the church and to participate in ministry in a meaning way that contributes to the fullness of the church. There is no baptised individual who has no gifting or nothing to contribute or no capacity for ministry. The work of grace that brings each and every one of us into the church is sustained by the work of the Holy Spirit in the calling and equipping of each and every one of us for ministry.

Our role, as the church, is to seek unity through fostering the ministry and vocation of all. And, while some of us are called to particular positions of leadership and greater responsibility, the ministry of the church as an organic-being that engages itself in the lives of those both within and outside of our community is ours to share. And in doing so we are required to take particular note of those who we

think of as “disposable”, “lacking in honor” and “disrespectable” or “inferior”. And, in doing so, we challenge ourselves not to think of ourselves as indispensable, honourable or respectable. Amen

People: Amen

(Time allowed for Silent Reflection.)

THE APOSTLE’S CREED

Celebrant: Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS

#13 Incarnation

(In joy and humility let us pray to the creator of the universe, saying, “Lord, grant us peace.”)

Celebrant: By the good news of our salvation brought to Mary by the angel, hear us, O Lord.

People: Lord, grant us peace.

Celebrant: By the mystery of the Word made flesh, hear us, O Lord.

People: Lord, grant us peace.

Celebrant: By the birth in time of the timeless Son of God, hear us, O Lord.

People: Lord, grant us peace.

Celebrant: By the manifestation of the King of glory to the shepherds and magi, hear us, O Lord.

People: Lord, grant us peace.

Celebrant: By the submission of the maker of the world to Mary and Joseph of Nazareth, hear us, O Lord.

People: Lord, grant us peace.

Celebrant: By the baptism of the Son of God in the river Jordan, hear us, O Lord.

People: Lord, grant us peace.

Celebrant: Grant that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; hear us, O Lord.

People: Lord, grant us peace.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY (Prayer of the Day)

All: Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant: And now, as our Saviour has taught us, we are bold to say,

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE DISMISSAL:

Celebrant: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

NOTICES

BLESSING:

Celebrant: The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour and grant us peace.

People: Amen.

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Today's Online Service Recorded by:

Celebrant The Rev. Canon Simon Bell
Audio/Visual David Paradis

This morning in our worship we remember in our prayers those of our family and friends who have immediate needs and concerns:

Marco Romita & Rose; Stephen Bertelsen; Sally; Daniel Leibovich; Steve & Jade; Sharon Z; Cecil Nelson's Family; Braedy; Gabrielle & Dom & family; Brandon & Rineke Semsch; Samantha Wright; Karyn; Shane & Shelly Finnigan & Families; Donna & Ray Wilson; Bill & Cathy Gray; Rev. Janet Mitchell; Rose McIntyre; Dave & Winnie Fulcher; Laura Johnston; Phil & Kathy C.; Cecil Nelson's Family; Cole; Stephen Bertelsen; Martin Bertelsen; Lorraine W.; Sharron Snider; Peter Hubbard; Mark Ralston; Kim Middaugh; Jackson; Sally Smith; Marilyn Lloyd; Theresa & Pete; Valerie; Darlene Jessem; Doreen; Brenda Jessem; Brenda & Brian; Derek; Jaxon Croft; Sean.

The names below are people in need of ongoing prayers for various reasons so we ask you to please continue to pray for them and their continuing need of God's healing touch and grace:

Adesh; Lisa Marie; Sophia L.; Joyce Antony; Pam Rees; Alvin Maynard; Dave Lawrence; Livia & Neil Purcell; Jim Tomkins; Sheila Green; Carrie Snow; Sheri Scott; Carl; Mark & Erin; Wally Raymond; Christine; Audrey Moody; Lynda Raye; Garn Mennell; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Michelle Sinclair and mom; Jane & Ron Lewis; Cecilia Mowat; Marilyn Foley; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Jen Galicinski; Arlene; Joan Gough; Lorraine W; Fr. Murray; Margie Mills; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Wendy Goodyer; Gordon Kennedy; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui.

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

Canadian Council of Churches