

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

161 Hanmer St. W., Barrie, On L4N 7S1 (705) 721-9528

www.stmargaretbarrie.ca Email: stmarg@rogers.com Fax: (705) 721-9455



Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Incumbent	The Rev. Simon Bell	(416) 570-6898
Honorary Associate	Alex Hewitt	(705) 333-6650
Rector's Warden	Grant Robinson	(705) 726-0147
People's Warden	Peter Beckett	(705) 733-1741
Deputy Rector's Warden	David Paradis	(705) 329-2129
Deputy Rector's Warden	Pauline Cook	(705) 737-0605
Deputy People's Warden	Doug Court	(705) 728-6659
Deputy People's Warden	Laura Johnston	(705) 322-2186
Office Administrator	Colleen Hamann	(705) 728-8761
Treasurer	Joy Packham	(705) 721-4482
Envelope Secretary	Pam Kernen	(705) 733-5286
Sunday School Superintendent	Eileen Cunningham	(705) 715-8468
Lay Associate, Missional	Beth Steffler	(705) 728-1543
Lay Associate, Pastoral	Amy Pauley	(613) 404-3349
Prayer Chain	Gail Jones	(705) 726-4221
Chancel Co-ordinator	Diane MacCormack	(705) 734-2957
Flower Chancel	Sharon Zacchigna	(705) 252-0731
Music Directors	Gayle Haley	(705) 728-3859
	Craig Snider	(705) 722-1117
Custodians	Chanda Farrell	(705) 828-7186
	Dave Flavelle	
Sidesperson Co-ord.	Kevin LeMoine	(705) 252-6528
Audio/Visual	David Paradis	

Fourth Easter Wednesday Service

April 28, 2021

11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People: **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Celebrant: Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

People: **He gave us new life and hope by raising Jesus from the dead.**

Celebrant: Rejoice, then, even in your distress.

People: **We shall be counted worthy when Christ appears.**

Celebrant: God has claimed us as his own.

People: **He called us from our darkness into the light of his day.**

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People: **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord: I know my own and my own know me. John 10.14

RESPONSORY

Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your sting? Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Death is swallowed up in victory. The trumpet will sound, and the dead shall be raised. Where, O death, is your sting? We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your sting?

THE PSALMS

PSALM 119:49-72

Remember your word to your servant, in which you have made me hope.

This is my comfort in my distress, that your promise gives me life.

The arrogant utterly deride me, but I do not turn away from your law.

When I think of your ordinances from of old, I take comfort, O LORD.

Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, those who forsake your law.

Your statutes have been my songs wherever I make my home.

I remember your name in the night, O LORD, and keep your law.

This blessing has fallen to me, for I have kept your precepts.

The LORD is my portion; I promise to keep your words.

I implore your favour with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise.

When I think of your ways, I turn my feet to your decrees; I hurry and do not delay to keep your commandments.

Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me, I do not forget your law.

At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous ordinances.

I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts.

The earth, O LORD, is full of your steadfast love; teach me your statutes.

You have dealt well with your servant, O LORD, according to your word.

Teach me good judgement and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments.

Before I was humbled I went astray, but now I keep your word.

You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.

The arrogant smear me with lies, but with my whole heart I keep your precepts.

Their hearts are fat and gross, but I delight in your law.

It is good for me that I was humbled, so that I might learn your statutes.

The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

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

THE READING

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS 1:24-2:7

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.

For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face. I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO LUKE (6:27-38)

People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

LOVE, DO GOOD, BLESS, PRAY FOR AND BE GENEROUS

Paul, in writing to the church in Colossia (2:6-7) reminds them, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

In this sense when we choose to become a disciple – a learning follower – of Jesus then that initial choice has implications that are life-long – that we will "continue to live your lives in him". A more literal translation of the Greek would be "in Him walk" (*en auton per pateite*). The word walk is a verb – a doing word – addressed to all of us/plural who chose to be followers of Jesus and it is expressed as an immediate command requiring action now. It is not something that is meant to be put off until things resolve themselves or when we are in a

better place in life. The point is that being a follower of Jesus means that we are always an active follower walking where he leads constantly.

Paul then uses two seemingly contradictory images – one organic and downward and the other structural and upwardly focused. To be rooted in something literally means to be imbedded in it as our life source that feeds our growth – like a plant in soil that is deeply rooted into the earth that feeds it. To be built up in something carries with it the sense of a contained upward and outward expansion. The two images combined give a picture of discipleship as something active and ongoing where we are constantly digging roots deeper and deeper into Christ, while at the same time expansively growing out to become something more than we are. The end result is where we become “established in the faith” in a way that means our trust in Christ is resilient and firm even in the midst of struggles and difficulties, suffering and sacrifice.

Nice people are good to those they agree with and get along with. Nice people are generous and giving with those who they see as their own. Nice people bless and pray for those who they see as belonging. But followers of Jesus are meant to be loving to those who call themselves enemies, are meant to be good and generous to those who hate them and take advantage of them, are meant to bless and pray for those who are abusive and treat them like an object. Why? Because they are learning followers of Jesus who ask the basic question, “How can I see this person as God sees them? How can I treat this person as God treats them?”

In the sermon on the plain in Luke’s Gospel (6:36) Jesus reminds the crowd that God is “kind to the ungrateful and the wicked” and that children of God we are required to be as merciful. Is this easy? No. Is this automatic? Hardly. Is it a choice? Yes. Is it possible? Yes.

As followers of Jesus, we do not get a choice about who we love, who we do good to, who we lend or pray for, who we lend to or who we show mercy to. We are compelled, as followers of Jesus to love, to do good towards, to pray for and to bless, to lend to and be merciful towards even those who don’t deserve it and – in fact – mean us harm.

Why? Because in our baptism we choose to follow Jesus both in his passion and his resurrection, both in his suffering and in his glory, both in his response to conflict and in his response valuing, affirmation and praise. That is tangibly what it means to be “rooted and built up” in him. That is what it means to “walk in him” in that active, continues sense.

The key is to recognize that while there are days where we will pray with the Psalmist that God would destroy the wicked and make them pay for the wrong they have done, we need to remind ourselves that God makes the sun shine and the rain fall on the wicked and unjust as much as it does on the good and the just. Because God is merciful to who God will be merciful. And that being loving, showing goodness, praying for and blessing, and being generous to those who call themselves enemy is a choice – and it is a choice about following. And yes, it takes time and the work of God within us – and that is the point.

A disciple is not somebody who does these things because they are easy but does them because they are hard. A disciple is not somebody who does these things because they are automatic but because in the struggle to do these things, we find that they are only possible because we have become rooted, built up and established in Christ. A disciple is not somebody who does these things because they are a breeze and a leisurely stroll, but because they require walking in somebody else’s footsteps who has gone ahead of us and modeled what this means and lives through us in a way that makes this possible. Pray God that during this Easter season we may live the resurrected life of love as followers of Jesus even in the midst of our own death, passion and suffering.

People: Amen

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Hear, O Israel

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first and the great commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

INTERCESSIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS

Celebrant: Let us offer our intercessions, petitions and thanksgivings, saying,

People: **'Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.'**

Celebrant: May we live as those who believe in the triumph of the cross.

People: **Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Celebrant: May all people receive the good news of Christ's victory.

People: **Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Celebrant: May those born to new life in the waters of baptism know the power of Christ's resurrection.

People: **Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Celebrant: May those who suffer pain and anguish find healing and peace in the compassion of Christ.

People: **Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Celebrant: May we be united in Christ's undying love with all who have passed through the gates of death.

People: **Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the life of Joe Bishop and we pray for his family and friends as they mourn his passing. We give thanks for the life of Margaret Kennedy and we pray for Beth Steffler and her family as they mourn her mother's passing.

People: **Amen.**

THE COLLECT

O God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do your will, and work in us that which is well-pleasing in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant: Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us,

People: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those**

who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

DISMISSAL:

Celebrant: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

NOTICES

BLESSING:

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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Morning and Evening Prayer for the Seasons of the Church Year Prepared by the Ven. Dr. Richard Leggett for the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee of the Anglican Church of Canada Authorized by The General Synod of The Anglican Church of Canada, 2019

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Assisting Rev. Simon today:

Celebrant/Preacher: The Rev. Simon Bell

Video: Simon Bell/David Paradis

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

Beth Steffler & Family; Kevin & Danielle Sullivan; Kim; Laura Johnston & Family; Jeremiah Sullivan; AJ; Dorothy & Chuck; People of St. Vincent; Carl; Mark & Erin; Amy Pauley & Family; Wendy; Adara; Jean Glionna; Sarah & Dee; Kaus; Brenda Jessem; Shirley; Bobby Paradis & Family; Marg Thomas & Family; Lyon's Family; Lynda Raye; Frank Kilravey; Rhonda; Sherrie O.; Jane Tutty; Edison's Family & his Teacher who has Covid; Bill and Ann Canning; Tanya North; Brenda & Brian; Derek; Theresa & Pete; Jaxon Croft; Ron & Jane Lewis; Michelle & Ian Sinclair; Sean; Kevin H.; Sophia L; Amanda Stewart; Kathryn

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:

Marilyn Foley; Kadeem Broomes; Diane M.; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Mark & Winnie; Staff and Residence at Roberta Place; Brian W.; Cecilia Mowat; Jen Galicinski; Sheri Scott; Arlene; Joan Gough; Lorraine W; Stephanie; Fr. Murray; Amy P. & Family; Marg Abbott; Livia & Neil Purcell; Jordan; Margie Mills; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Bill & Cathy Gray; Wendy

Goodyer; Donna Wilson; Garn Mennell; Margaret & Gordon Kennedy; Paul & Rose McIntyre; Jim Tomkins; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Martin & Stephen Bertelsen; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Diocese of Brechin (Scotland)

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

Christ Memorial Church, Oshawa