

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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Wednesday Service

January 19, 2022

11:00 a.m. Service

Wednesday Service

January 19, 2022

11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Celebrant: Lord, open our lips,
All: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Celebrant: O God, make speed to save us.
All: O Lord, make haste to help us.

All: 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.

Alleluia!

Celebrant: The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: O come, let us worship.

THE PSALMS

PSALM 38

Celebrant: O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger; *
People: do not punish me in your wrath.

Celebrant: For your arrows have already pierced me, *
People: and your hand presses hard upon me.

Celebrant: There is no health in my flesh, because of your indignation; *
People: there is no soundness in my body, because of my sin.

Celebrant: For my iniquities overwhelm me; *
People: like a heavy burden they are too much for me to bear.

Celebrant: My wounds stink and fester *
People: by reason of my foolishness.

Celebrant: I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; *
People: I go about in mourning all the day long.

Celebrant: My loins are filled with searing pain; *
People: there is no health in my body.

Celebrant: I am utterly numb and crushed; *
People: I wail, because of the groaning of my heart.

Celebrant: O Lord, you know all my desires, *
People: and my sighing is not hidden from you.

Celebrant: My heart is pounding, my strength has failed me, *
People: and the brightness of my eyes is gone from me.

Celebrant: My friends and companions draw back from my affliction; *
People: my neighbours stand afar off.

Celebrant: Those who seek after my life lay snares for me; *
People: those who strive to hurt me speak of my ruin and plot treachery all the day long.

Celebrant: But I am like the deaf who do not hear, *
People: like those who are mute and do not open their mouth.

Celebrant: I have become like one who does not hear, *
People: and from whose mouth comes no defence.

Celebrant: For in you, O Lord, have I fixed my hope; *
People: you will answer me, O Lord my God.

Celebrant: For I said, "Do not let them rejoice at my expense, *
People: those who gloat over me when my foot slips."

Celebrant: Truly, I am on the verge of falling, *
People: and my pain is always with me.

Celebrant: I will confess my iniquity *
People: and be sorry for my sin.

Celebrant: Those who are my enemies without cause are mighty, *
People: and many in number are those who wrongfully hate me.

Celebrant: Those who repay evil for good slander me, *
People: because I follow the course that is right.

Celebrant: O Lord, do not forsake me; *
People: be not far from me, O my God.

Celebrant: Make haste to help me, *
People: O Lord of my salvation.

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

Reading: Hebrews 6:1-12

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Therefore, let us go on towards perfection, leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ, and not laying again the foundation: repentance from dead works and faith towards God, instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement. And we will do this if God permits. For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, since on their own they are crucifying again the Son of God and are holding him up to contempt. Ground that drinks up the rain falling on it repeatedly, and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and on the verge of being cursed; its end is to be burned over.

Even though we speak in this way, beloved, we are confident of better things in your case, things that belong to salvation. For God is not unjust; he will not overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. And we want each one of you to show the same diligence, so as to realize the full assurance of hope to the very end, so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 3:22-36

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO JOHN

People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized— John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison.

Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. They came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him.' John answered, 'No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, "I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him." He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.'

The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted his testimony has certified this, that God

is true. He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life but must endure God's wrath.

The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON: Rev. Canon Simon Bell

Encouragement in the midst of suffering

Hebrews is probably a sermon redrafted as a letter that was sent out to Christians in general. While it has been ascribed to Paul there were already questions about its authorship by the 3rd Century with suggestions about whether it was a sermon by Paul in Hebrew that was translated into Greek or a sermon by Apollos or Priscilla redrafted for distribution. What is clear is that it follows a particular logic that is reinforced throughout the text as it draws on images, symbols and metaphors from the Hebrew Scriptures and reinterprets them as being fulfilled in the person of Christ. In fact, the portion we read this morning fits into a whole section from Hebrews 4:14 to 10:31 that deals with Jesus as the eternal high priest against the backdrop of the Israelite priesthood. But, in doing so, it fits into the key pastoral issue addressed in the letter of those who fall away from faith due to suffering.

In fact Hebrews 4:1 sets the pastoral context for us, "Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest is still open, let us take care that none of you should seem to have failed to reach it" and is reinforced in Hebrews 6:1 "Therefore let us go on towards perfection, leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ, and not laying again the foundation: repentance from dead works and faith towards God, ² instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement."

The letter is intended as a source of encouragement not judgment and we need to take care in reading it in not assuming that there is some "perfect" standard of faith that is required of us. The whole point of the letter is to encourage us to seek faith and to know grace in order that we may be faithful and grow into the fullness that Christ has called us to. The end goal is that we may "enter the rest" promised to us in Christ and grow in perfection. That word "perfection" is *teleiotes* in the Greek is a noun that is in the active future tense to describe a singular individual. It could be translated as "maturity" to describe a state on being in the future.

Christian theology has that distinction within it of 'doing' and 'being'. The doing in these verses are captured in phrases like "dead works" to indicate that our salvation does not rest on our effort to please God, in contrast to "entering into rest" and "go on towards perfection/maturity" to indicate us entering into a particular state of being because of the grace of God worked through us. It is almost as if the writers want to reassure the readers that their faith is not up for grabs in vs.9-11, "⁹Even though we speak in this way, beloved, we are confident of better things in your case, things that belong to salvation. ¹⁰For God is not unjust; he will not overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. ¹¹And we want each one of you to show the same diligence, so as to realize the full assurance of hope to the very end, ¹²so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Those "better things in your case" are linked to those things that "belong to salvation" as it relates to a just God who does not overlook our effort and our love. The point is to encourage them – and therefore us - to remain diligent and to not become sluggish and to be imitators of those who have proved faithful. In the midst of suffering, it is all too easy for us to give up or to feel berated and belittled or guilty, when

in fact all we need is to be encouraged to keep going and to find ways our faith might grow into maturity in the midst of life's circumstances. Part of that encouragement is taken from the faith of others – those who can imitate – while we work out how to be diligent. My hope and prayer in this Epiphany is that while we struggle through yet another wave of Covid that we might find our faith strengthened and that we might continue to grow to maturity until we find our true rest in Christ. Amen

All: Amen

(Time allowed for Silent Reflection.)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Hear, O Israel

All: 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

Litany 18 A Responsive Intercession

Celebrant: In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

Celebrant: For all people in their daily life and work;

People: For our families, friends, and neighbours, and for all those who are alone.

Celebrant: For this community, our country, and the world;

People: For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

Celebrant: For the just and proper use of your creation;

People: For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

Celebrant: For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

People: For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

Celebrant: For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

People: For all who proclaim the gospel, and all who seek the truth.

Celebrant: For Andrew our bishop and Ryscilla our Area Bishop, and for all bishops and other ministers;

People: For all who serve God in his Church.

Celebrant: For our own needs and those of others. Hear us, Lord;

People: For your mercy is great.

Celebrant: We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.
We will exalt you, O God our king;

People: And praise your name for ever and ever.

Celebrant: We pray for all those who have died in the peace of Christ, and for those whose faith is known to you alone, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.
Lord, let your loving kindness be upon them;

People: Who put their trust in you.

Celebrant: We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.
Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;

People: in your compassion, forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone; and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honour and glory of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Celebrant: Gracious God, you have heard the prayers of your faithful people; you know our needs before we ask, and our ignorance in asking. Grant our requests as may be best for us. This we ask in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY (Prayer of the Day)

All: Almighty God, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world. May your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

All: 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.

All: Thanks be to God.

NOTICES: Notices

Daily Devotions – team of writers at Good Shepherd, St Margaret’s and Trinity – contact Norm Savill nsavill@bell.net to be included or check the parish websites. Presently sharing the services between St Margaret’s and Trinity until we go back to in-person worship.

Vestry – Trinity on the 13th of February @12:00 and St Margaret’s on the 28 Feb at 12:00.

Shrove Tuesday - 2nd of March

Ash Wednesday – 3rd of March

THE BLESSING:

Celebrant: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

THE DISMISSAL:

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

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Assisting today:

Celebrant (online): The Rev. Canon Simon Bell

Video: Fr. Simon/David Paradis

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

Ron and Karen; 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:

The Diocese of Juba – The Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

St. Peter, Scarborough