

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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Wednesday, May 5, 2021

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Fifth Easter Wednesday Service

May 5, 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 vine, you are the branches, says the Lord. Those who abide in me, and I in them, bear much fruit.
John 15.5*

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 72

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son.

May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice.

May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

May his foes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust.

May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service.

For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight.

Long may he live! May gold of Sheba be given to him. May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all day long.

May there be abundance of grain in the land; may it wave on the tops of the mountains; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field.

May his name endure for ever, his fame continue as long as the sun. May all nations be blessed in him; may they pronounce him happy.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be his glorious name for ever; may his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen.

The prayers of David son of Jesse are ended.

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 READINGS

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also, those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO LUKE 8:16-25

People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

‘No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light. Then pay attention to how you listen; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away.’ Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, ‘Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.’ But he said to them, ‘My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.’

One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, ‘Let us go across to the other side of the lake.’ So, they put out and while they were sailing, he fell asleep. A gale swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. They went to him and woke him up, shouting, ‘Master, Master, we are perishing!’ And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’ They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?’

The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

Each of us will be accountable to God

At the heart of Romans 14 and 15 is a conversation around some key issues that had become points of conflict in the early church over the observance of the Hebrew Law or Torah – Sabbath observance and kosher food. They became key issues for those portions of the church where there were mixed congregations of Jewish and Gentile believers who tried to work out how to relate to each other appropriately in terms of expectations.

For Jews in the Roman Empire the Sabbath observance from sunset on Friday to sunset of Saturday and the kosher food were key social markers. One of the key-ways to get around the kosher requirements was to only eat vegetables, as had been true of Jews during the Captivity both under the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Gentiles, in contrast had a plethora of possibility for days for religious observance in their pantheistic and animistic world view and temple life was so imbedded in daily life that it was almost impossible not to eat something in the market, including animals, that had not passed through a local temple first. The added complexity was the “new tradition” in the early church of gathering for Eucharist on a Sunday, the day of the Lord’s resurrection, within the context of a shared meal. This all combined, gave the early Christian communities a broad range of options and loads of capacity to “win converts” to a particular point of view or to pick arguments with each other.

Paul, in responding to this context, gives us a basic framework for coexistence that has stood the test of time. In essence, in Pauline theology and ethics, there is not a single track or option that all followers of Jesus are meant to adhere to. Rather there is a broad range of possibility or a spectrum of options within a set of parameters.

While there are clearly things outside of those parameters, the scope within them is significant and seemingly contradictory. But they are guided by some basic principles.

The first is that the church is meant a place of welcome even for those of opposing views who we might think of as “weaker in the faith” because they do not make the same “mature” decisions we make. And the point is not to seem to be welcoming simply so we can convert them over to our view, but rather to let them live out their faith in their own way. It builds on the basic assumption of Hebrew thought that welcome or hospitality is a sign of God’s blessing and an extension of the principle that God is generously gracious to all irrespective and without an agenda.

The second is that we are not to stand as judge over others – if God welcomes and blesses them then who am I to question their credibility. The principle within the principle is that it is God who offers us salvation and brings that salvation to completion and therefore it is not for us to stand over somebody as a judge over whether their faith will “stand or fall” because of a choice they make. Within that is that great kernel of truth of personal conscience, “Let all be fully convinced in their own minds” (vs.5).

The third principle is that as disciples – learning followers of Jesus - we are never our own (vs.7-8). “We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” Therefore, whatever choice we make – and therefore allow others to make - starts from the assumption or premise that we want to faithfully follow Jesus as we each learn to live out this faith for ourselves. And whether we see that choice as life giving and liberating or dying to ourselves or restrictive, the point is that we live in such a way as to be faithful to Christ. Pure and simple.

Then finally Paul reminds us that we do not stand as judge over others – that is not our job description. That is us playing at being God. In vs. 10 he takes judgment that one extra step to despise – you pass judgment and then despise/look down upon or look at another with disdain/lower their value/dehumanise or objectify them. We cannot excuse our judgmental behaviour by saying, “I am just pointing out what is right. It’s not personal you know.” Actually, it is personal because it has implications for how you relate to, treat and value that person. There is always merit in getting off the pedestal of self-righteousness and recognising that we are not God (not that God would act like us) but that we stand equally before God.

Pray this Easter season that we would have the courage to live out our own faith convictions as faithful followers of Jesus and not be pressed into religious conformity for fear of others. Pray that when we do stand in judgment over others, we would recognise our sin and playing God and take the opportunity to find afresh the grace and hospitality of the Gospel in our own lives.

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.

People: Amen.

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another and walk in the way of his commandments, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever.

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:

Wally Raymond; Christine; 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 Bukedi (Uganda)

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

St. Paul-on-the-Hill, Pickering