

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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Wednesday Service

January 25, 2023

11:00 a.m. Service

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11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist & Blessing

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

THE GREETING: The Rev. Canon Simon Bell

Celebrant: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Almighty God,

All: **to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. 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 PSALMS

PSALM: 119:49-72

Remember thy word to thy servant, in which thou hast made me hope.
This is my comfort in my affliction that thy promise gives me life.
Godless men utterly deride me, but I do not turn away from thy law.
When I think of thy ordinances from of old, I take comfort, O LORD.
Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked, who forsake thy law.
Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.
I remember thy name in the night, O LORD, and keep thy law.
This blessing has fallen to me, that I have kept thy precepts.
The LORD is my portion; I promise to keep thy words.
I entreat thy favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to thy promise.
When I think of thy ways, I turn my feet to thy testimonies;
I hasten and do not delay to keep thy commandments.
Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me, I do not forget thy law.
At midnight I rise to praise thee, because of thy righteous ordinances.
I am a companion of all who fear thee, of those who keep thy precepts.
The earth, O LORD, is full of thy steadfast love; teach me thy statutes!
Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according to thy word.
Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in thy commandments.
Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I keep thy word.
Thou art good and doest good; teach me thy statutes.
The godless besmear me with lies, but with my whole heart I keep thy precepts; their heart is gross like

fat, but I delight in thy law.

It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.

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

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Reading: Galatians 2:11-21

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose.

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel: Mark 6:13-29

(All stand for the Gospel)

Reader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Reader: The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According To Mark

People: Glory to You Lord Jesus Christ

King Herod heard of it; for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Eli'jah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Hero'di-as, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Hero'di-as had a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. For when Hero'di-as' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." And she went out, and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the baptizer." And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and beheaded

him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON: Father Simon

Standing up for our convictions

Psalm 53; Galatians 2:11-21, Mark 6:13-29

There is something deeply eroding of confidence and trust when people – particularly leaders - are swayed in their choices by their need to seek approval.

In the Gospel reading for today we have that awful account of the beheading of John the Baptist all for the sake of a spineless Herod as he gives in to the wishes of his vengeful wife Herodias as she plays on his daughter's affections. The Bible is great in recording family disfunction and this is one of those prime examples that has tragic consequences for John the Baptist who is simply a pawn in their own internal family conflict. And, while Herod has this great fear and fascination for John and greaves the order he has to pronounce, he gives in to his wife's request through his daughter simply so as not to displease.

In the reading set for us from Galatians today we get a sense of Paul's frustration with Peter for doing a similar thing – going against his very conscience for the sake of not displeasing some. In essence, he is willing to throw the new Gentile converts under the bus of legalism for the sake of not offending a particular faction within the life of the church.

Church is like family and sometimes folk play like unhappy little children and leaders play they are parents trying to meet conflicting expectations in ways that will not offend. The early church behaved in this way over the requirements set on Gentiles who became followers of Jesus. There was one faction in the early church who were insistent that Gentiles followers were required to follow the Hebrew Law. They came to be known as the Judiasers. There were others who argued that the Law should never be a requirement for those wanting to live out their faith.

And, as in all things, there were leaders in each group. While Paul was strongly opposed to the application of the Law to Gentile converts, James was of the opinion that the Hebrew Law was intrinsic to Christian practice. But, as Paul points out to the church in Galatia where the faction known as the Judiasers had become a significant issue, Peter was the one who had the most profound experience of making the shift towards disregarding the Law for the sake of the Gospel of grace to the Gentiles. Yet, in contrast, he is the most willing to give up on his own convictions for the sake of not offending a faction in the life of the church.

The question for Paul is not whether people should keep the Law or not, but rather what was at the heart of the idea of being a faithful follower of Jesus. So, in writing to the church in Galatia, he pens that wonderful statement, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

In our baptism – the sacrament and sign of us dying and being resurrected in Christ - we live out that very reality each and every day. That it is solely through that work of grace that I live out the convictions of my faith. It is that conviction that anchors my faith and is the central hub around which all of the rest of my faith rotates. The rest – the living out of the Law for those early Christians, us celebrating our faith through our Christian calendar, the elements of our life of discipleship, our weekly practice of faith and the things we choose to give up or take on during certain times of year – all need to be seen through that lens. None of them makes us more of a follower of Jesus or puts us in a better position in relation to God – justifies us to use Paul's language – or adds to our standing before God. Pure and simple.

You see the early church suffered the same fate as us. They too tried to make good Baptists out and Anglicans or good Anglicans out of Roman Catholics or good Jews out of Gentiles by insisting that their version of faith was somehow more credible or godly or Biblical or faithful. But as Paul points out – if our

common life is to be found in the grace offered to each of us in Christ where we find ourselves - then the issue is one of us faithfully living out our convictions and letting others live out theirs. That we need to work out our own faith in our own context and in our own time and not be swayed or pressured into conforming for the sake of fear or not wanting to offend.

As we anticipate the week of Christian unity, pray that we might find a common recognition of our faith in Christ's grace for all of us and allow each other to live out our faith in manner appropriate to our calling and vocation.

All: Amen

(Time allowed for Silent Reflection.)

INTERCESSIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS

Leader: With faith and confidence, we come in prayer, before God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Creator God, today we live with the consequences of actions that have made life unsustainable for some and overabundant for others. Teach us to know how to use responsibly the resources you have given to us for the benefit of all and the respect of your creation. The groaning creation cries out to you.

People: Teach us and show us the way.

Leader: Compassionate God, help us repair the harm that we have inflicted upon each other and the divisions we have created among your people. Just as Christ Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit onto the disciples to birth the community of the new creation, send your grace to heal our divisions and gift us with the unity for which Jesus prayed.

People: Teach us and show us the way.

Leader: Christ, the way, the truth and the life, you embodied justice in your ministry on earth by the good that you did, breaking down the walls that divide and the prejudices that imprison. Open our hearts and minds to recognize that though we are many, we are one in you.

People: Teach us and show us the way.

Leader: Holy Spirit, you create anew the face of the earth. The summit of the mountains, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the lakes speak to us –

People: Because we are connected.

Leader: The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dewdrops on the flower speak to us –

People: Because we are connected.

Leader: The voices of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized speak to us –

People: Because we are connected.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Celebrant: Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy; he welcomes sinners and invites them to his table. Let us confess our sins, confident in God's forgiveness.

(Silence is kept.)

People: Most merciful God, We confess the times we fail to involve ourselves in planting any seeds of faith in the lives of others; the times when our personal agendas become more important than yours; the times when we have denied others the opportunity to expand their faith through our lack of interest or involvement; the times when our lives become so entangled with the values of the world that we forget what you have said and done and promised.

Lord Jesus Christ, we know that when we become disconnected from you, our lives becomes parched and unfruitful and our faith becomes stunted and dry.

Forgive us, pour your grace into our lives, we pray, so that we remain connected to you at all times and in all places, strengthening our faith to expand and, growing strongly and vigorously, to bear the fruit of your mercy, your love, your undying life.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

All: Loving God, before the world began you called us. Make holy all we offer you this day and strengthen us in that calling. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER: #3

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Celebrant: Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; we give you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, who in the mystery of his incarnation was made perfect man of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; in him we have seen a new and radiant vision of your glory. There with all the angels of heaven, we lift our voices and sing our joyful hymn of praise to proclaim the glory of your name.

All: Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Celebrant: We give thanks to you, Lord our God, for the goodness and love you have made known to us in creation; in calling Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son. For in these last days, you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, a death he freely accepted, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples and said, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, Father, according to his command,

**All: We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory.**

Celebrant: and we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.
We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts, that they may be the sacrament of the body of Christ and his blood of the new covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we, made acceptable I him, may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.
In the fullness of time, reconcile all things in Christ, and make them new, and bring us to that city of light where you dwell with all your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

People: 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.

BREAKING OF BREAD: (#6)

Celebrant: We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world.
All: God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us to light and life.

AGNES DEI – Lamb of God

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world. Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world. Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world. Grant us peace.**

THE COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

All: Gracious God, our hands have taken holy things; our lives have been nourished by the body of your Son. May we who have eaten at this holy table be strengthened for service in your world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

THE DOXOLOGY

All: Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING:

Celebrant: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

People: Amen.

NOTICES: Evening service - we will be starting a contemporary evening service at 7:00 p.m. on the last Sunday of each month at St Margaret's. The first one will be on the 29th of January.
- Trinity's next spaghetti dinner will take place on Saturday January 28th at 5:00 p.m. the cost is \$10 and all are welcome.

THE DISMISSAL:

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

People: **Thanks be to God.**

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Assisting today:

Celebrant/Preacher: The Rev. Canon Simon Bell

Anointing: Maggie Prentice

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Diocese of Panyana (South Sudan)

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Chapel of Christ Church, Lakefield

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

Rev. Janet Mitchell; José & family; Sharon Zacchigna & Family; Doug McDermid; Chris & partner; Kevin Willis; Sharon Murchie; Kevin & Marie Lemoine; Cathy Gray and Family; Chris Bornais; Lynn Rose; Mae Snedden; Dawn Sidenberg; Kim Middaugh; Marianne Salis; The Hubbard Family; Jaxon Croft; Alice, Jan, Eric & Family; Rosemary; Rose Court; Helena Goodyer; Sophie; Theresa & Pete; Katlin; Toby; Livia & Neil Purcell; Shirley Hatch; Braedy; Karyn; Nova Kennedy; Dan Pelgo, David Corless.

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:

Maggie Prentice; Gladys Pecholcs; Stephanie; Dave & Diane Lawrence; Simon Bell; June Hinkson; Kathryn; Lorraine Whitwell; Cecilia Mowat; Bob Hill; Kevin McDonald; Anthony Stone; Lequita Adkins; Garn Mennell; Barb Tomkins; Donna & Ray Wilson; Darlene Jessem; Barb Semsch; Sharon Z; Carrie Snow; Audrey Moody; Lynda Raye; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Michelle Sinclair and mom; Jane & Ron Lewis; Bill Snow; Arlene; Joan Gough; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Wendy Goodyer; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.