

# ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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*Wednesday Online Service*

*July 27th, 2022*

## MORNING PRAYER – PENTECOST

Wednesday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Leader: Lord, open our lips,

**People: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Leader: 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.**

**Alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord renews the face of the earth: O come, let us worship.**

### 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.

**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.**

### THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

#### The Readings

A reading from Acts 1:1-14

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the

time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

The word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel: Matthew 27:45-54**

**Reader:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew [27:45-54]

**People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

The Gospel of Christ.

**People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## **SERMON** **Rev. Canon Simon**

### **Pray for those in authority**

Paul, in writing to the young pastor Timothy (1 Timothy 2:1-4), reminds him that we need to pray for those in authority. "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone,<sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.<sup>3</sup> This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,<sup>4</sup> who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Paul, as a Jew living under the rule and sometime brutal reign of Caesar and Rome, reminds Timothy, and therefore us, that we pray for those in authority so that we can "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity". In other words, that our prayers for those in authority need to take into consideration our own universal need to live life in a way that is not chaotic and disruptive and that does not rob us of the capacity to live by our convictions before God and without dignity.

You see the Hebrew understanding of one who reigns or has authority is that they do so knowing they are accountable to God. To use the language of Psalm 72 – to rule with God’s justice and righteousness. Justice and righteousness (right or reconciled relationship) are the hallmarks of the reign of God and therefore the kingdom of God. They serve as the foundation for all of the other elements of governance – defending the cause of the poor and offering deliverance to the needy, taking pity on the weak and redeeming them from oppression and violence – that are so peculiar to good governance.

In this sense the Psalm captures the essence of what good governance looks like and articulates it as a yardstick by which those in power are measured. The point of those being in power is not for the sake of being in power, but rather that they may use their capacity to ensure justice is done and the reconciliation is sought. In the Hebrew Scriptures, and particularly in the prophetic books, the kings are held up to that high standard because they have the capacity to make justice and reconciliation possible.

It is funny how we think of justice as retribution. Justice, in our minds, is where somebody gets what they deserve – if you do me wrong you will be punished. In contrast, when the Hebrews thought of the reign of their kings they thought of justice as a companion to reconciliation. True justice is when the one who does harm and the one who is harmed are reconciled (live in right relationship to each other). Just as much that true reconciliation is only possible when justice is achieved, for without justice reconciliation is incomplete. Something we keep struggling with when we talk of the Holocaust or apartheid in South Africa or racial justice or aboriginal rights just about anywhere in the world. Repeatedly, one truth and reconciliation commission after another bites the dust when it fails to seek both justice and reconciliation as companions of each other.

It is assumed from the text that this prayer is for the third king of Israel, Solomon. It contains references to Sheba and Seba that are familiar to us in reference to his reign. But during the period of the exile the Psalm took on a different emphasis in interpretation and it was seen as anticipating the Messianic hope of the king who would restore the ideal kingdom. Typically, Christians have read back into the Psalm their theology of Jesus and the kingdom of Heaven in Matthew’s Gospel or the Kingdom of God in Luke’s Gospel. But what is common to all these understandings is that while it’s true fulfillment is to be found in God, it does serve as a yard stick by which we ought to measure those in power and authority over us. That we pray these things might be true of them as they exercise the authority invested in them and in light of their accountability to God.

It is in this sense, irrespective of the political stripe or party affiliation of any politicians, when we see the cause of the poor neglected, inadequate or no deliverance for the needy, the weak being walked over by the powerful, when oppression and violence reign, where the blood of the people is shed with no value because life is cheap and disposable, and the image of God in each and every one of us is not recognised and where folk are treated without dignity then we will know that we live in a society where those in power have failed to seek justice and righteousness/reconciliation. Then we will know that they have failed in their duty.

Let us pray to God for those in power and authority that they may fully comprehend their duty of care and by God’s grace fulfill it. Let us offer up our own “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings ... for kings and all who are in high positions’ that we might “lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity”. And may we, like the prophets of old, not neglect our duty of care to speak out when the poor neglected, the weak are walked all over, when oppression and violence reign, when the blood of the people is shed with no value because life is cheap and disposable, when the image of God in each and every one of us is not recognised and when folk are treated without dignity. Then may we, with those in power and authority in our society, seek justice and righteousness/reconciliation. **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**

**Litany**

In peace, let us pray to Jesus our Lord, who ever lives to make intercession for us.

Saviour of the world, be present in all places of suffering, violence and pain, and bring hope even in the darkest night. Inspire us to continue your work of reconciliation today.

Lord of the Church, empower by your Spirit all Christian people, especially Bishop Andrew and Bishop Riscylla, and the work of your Church in every land. Give us grace to proclaim the gospel joyfully in word and deed.

Shepherd and Guardian of our souls, guide and enable all who lead and serve this community and those on whom we depend for our daily needs. Grant that we may seek the peace and welfare of this place.

Great Physician, stretch out your hand to bring comfort, wholeness and peace to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Fill us with compassion, that we may be channels of your healing love.

Conqueror of death, remember for good those whom we love but see no longer. Help us to live this day in the sure and certain hope of your eternal victory.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.

## **THE COLLECT**

**All: O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, increase and multiply upon us your mercy, that with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Leader: 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**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**NOTICES**

**BLESSING**

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

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