

## ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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### Sunday, February 7, 2021 Epiphany Five

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**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2021  
Epiphany Five Morning Prayer**

10:00 a.m.

**THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY**

Officiant: Lord, open our lips,

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

Officiant: 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.**

**All: Alleluia!**

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

**Venite**

*Psalm 95.1-7*

Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods. In his hand are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are his also. The sea is his for he made it, and his hands have moulded the dry land. Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

**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 Psalms**

Psalm: 147:1-11, 20c

Praise the LORD! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

The LORD lifts up the downtrodden; he casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre.

He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills.

He gives to the animals their food, and to the young ravens when they cry.

His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner; but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Praise the LORD!

## **The Proclamation of the Word**

A READING FROM DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more or ever again see this great fire, I will die." Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak--that prophet shall die."

The word of the Lord.

**People:                    Thanks be to God.**

A READING FROM ISAIAH 40:21-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"?

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

The word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

A READING FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16-23

If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission.

What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. T

o those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

The word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
ACCORDING TO MARK (1:29-39)

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

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

The Gospel of Christ.

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

## SERMON

### The transcendent and imminent God

Isaiah (40:22-26), in speaking of God, asserts; “It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.”

In doing so Isaiah – in drawing comfort to the people of Israel as they anticipate the invasion by the Babylonians and their captivity as slaves – offers them a view of God as transcendent, above creation, powerful and sovereign. He invites them and us to “lift up our eyes on high and see” this awesome and transcendent God who is subject to no-one or anything and is powerful to save.

The Psalmist (Psalm 147: 1-11) creates that same sense of God’s transcendence when he writes, “He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure” (vs4-5). Then, “He covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass grow on the hills” (vs.8). Theologically we use words like omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing) and omnipresent (all present) to describe this God. There is nothing in all of creation that is beyond God’s power, God’s knowledge or God’s presence.

Simultaneously those same passage emphasize the idea of God’s immanence – God here amongst us and known by us on a profoundly personal and intimate level.

Isaiah (40:27-31) describes that God when he asks the question, “Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God’?” In response to the question Isaiah replies that God “gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Yes, this transcendent God who is eternal, creator of all things and who is limitless in capacity and knowledge intervenes in the details of our life to empower us when we have reached the end of ourselves.

The Psalmist (147) paints that God as the one who (vs.3) “heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds”, who (vs.6) “lifts up the downtrodden”, delights in us and takes pleasure in those who “fear him” and “hope in his steadfast love.”

In the incarnation, Jesus is the ultimate expression of the vulnerability of that immanent and intimate God who enters into our world in order to interact with us to show us love and bring us hope. That immanence is expressed in Jesus healing Simon’s mother-in-law by touching her by the hand and lifting her up, by sharing a meal in her home, by healing and restoring those who came to the door of her home in the night, who travels throughout Galilee and proclaims the message of the Kingdom of God within the intimacy of the home, the community and the synagogues.

In Paul’s letter to the church in Corinth it is the God who is embodied in the ministry of Paul as he shares the Gospel by “becoming all things to all people” and, in doing so, translates the love and hope of the Gospel in a myriad of ways that are appropriate to each and every context he enters. As he lives out the obligation he has to the Gospel he proclaims the Gospel to the weak and powerful, Jew and Gentile, those under the Hebrew Law and those free of the Hebrew Law, slave and free by living as them at no cost to them.

The Gospel makes no sense at all if all we have is a transcendent God who is removed from our daily lives and makes no real difference to our daily existence. If God has withdrawn from us then we are truly without hope and bereft of love. Simultaneously, the Gospel makes no sense at all if all we have is an immanent God who is so enmeshed in our lives as to be powerless to change them and incapable of drawing us out of the mess we are in. If God is so intimate with us as to lack any transcendence then we are offered hollow hope and shallow love.

There are times that God will feel so transcendent as to be profoundly removed from our existence. It is then that we – by faith – need to be reminded to seek intimacy with God with all our being and to recognize God’s presence in our daily life in so many ways. It is then that we need to see God in our neighbour and experience God within the community that God has entrusted us to in order to experience Christ incarnate in the life, ministry and worship with others.

There are also times when we will experience God so closely that we are in danger of reducing God to our “buddy” and – in the process – failing to appreciate God with appropriate reverence and awe. It is then that we need to be reminded that God has no equal and that God cannot be put in a box, contained in a hymn, constrained by a ritual or reduced by our myopic view. It is then that we need to see God in the vastness of nature, in the glory of liturgy handed down through history, embodied in the Biblical text of a people we struggle to imagine or understand, and relevant to those we do not even know.

It is our obligation to incarnate Christ to the breadth of humanity that they may know Christ so intimately as to feel they are loved and know they have hope. But at the same time we are to live lives that embody the truth that God is not contained by us or for us – that we are not the limit of the what the Gospel could mean.

To borrow the image of the eagle in Isaiah, as we live out our own vulnerability and weakness and rest on God to be as intimate as the breeze, may we find that in being lifted up with renewed strength from God we may rise above the circumstance of our lives and recognize the unending vista that is God.

**People:           Amen**

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

**All:                I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **INTERCESSIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS**

### **Litany 13 Incarnation**

**Officiant:        In joy and humility let us pray to the creator of the universe, saying, “Lord, grant us peace.” By the good news of our salvation brought to Mary by the angel, hear us, O Lord.**

**People:** Lord, grant us peace.

Officiant: By the mystery of the Word made flesh, hear us, O Lord.

**People:** Lord, grant us peace.

Officiant: By the birth in time of the timeless Son of God, hear us, O Lord.

**People:** Lord, grant us peace.

Officiant: By the manifestation of the King of glory to the shepherds and magi, hear us, O Lord.

**People:** Lord, grant us peace.

Officiant: By the submission of the maker of the world to Mary and Joseph of Nazareth, hear us, O Lord.

**People:** Lord, grant us peace.

Officiant: By the baptism of the Son of God in the river Jordan, hear us, O Lord.

**People:** Lord, grant us peace.

Officiant: Grant that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; hear us, O Lord.

**People:** Lord, grant us peace.

## THE COLLECT

Merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**People:** Amen

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Officiant: And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**People:** 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.

## DISMISSAL

Officiant: Let us bless the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

## NOTICES

## **Blessing**

Officiant: 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.**

**Assisting Father Simon Bell today:**

Officiant/Preacher: Fr. Simon  
Video: David Paradis

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

Locke and Ellement families; Brennan Family; Derek; Rachelle Belleghem and her family; Teresa & Pete; Jaxon Croft; Ron & Jane Lewis; Staff and Residence at Roberta Place; Michelle & Ian Sinclair; Sean; Brian W.; Kevin H.; Diane M.; Cecilia Mowat; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Sophia L; Marianne S.; Amanda Stewart; Kathryn; Kadeem Broomes; Anna Sellers; Marty; Brenda & Brian.

**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:**

Brenda Jessem; 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; Michelle & Ian Sinclair; 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 Anglican Church of Burundi

**In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:**

Holland Deanery