

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

161 Hanmer St. W., Barrie, On L4N 7S1 (705) 721-9528

www.stmargaretbarrie.ca Email: stmarg@rogers.com

Email Rev. Simon: priest-stmargaretbarrie@toronto.anglican.ca Fax: (705) 721-9455



Sunday, February 21, 2021 Lent 1

Incumbent	The Rev. Simon Bell	(416) 570-6898
Honorary Associate	Alex Hewitt	(705) 333-6650
Rector's Warden	Grant Robinson	(705) 726-0147
People's Warden	Peter Beckett	(705) 733-1741
Deputy Rector's Warden	Pauline Cook	(705) 737-0605
Deputy People's Warden	Doug Court	(705) 728-6659
Deputy People's Warden	Laura Johnston	(705) 322-2186
Office Administrator	Colleen Hamann	(705) 728-8761
Treasurer	Joy Packham	(705) 721-4482
Envelope Sec'ty	Pam Kernan	(705) 733-5286
Sunday School Sup't	Eileen Cunningham	(705) 715-8468
Lay Associate, Missional	Beth Steffler	(705) 728-1543
Lay Associate, Pastoral	Amy Pauley	(613) 404-3349
Prayer Chain	Gail Jones	(705) 726-4221
Chancel Co-ordinator	Diane MacCormack	(705) 734-2957
Flower Chancel	Sharon Zacchigna	(705) 252-0731
Music Directors	Gayle Haley	(705) 728-3859
	Craig Snider	(705) 722-1117
Custodians	Chanda Farrell	(705) 828-7186
	Dave Flavelle	
Sidesperson Co-ord.	Kevin LeMoine	(705) 252-6528
Audio/Visual	David Paradis	

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2021

Lent 1 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.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us worship.

We shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Matthew 4.4

VENITE

PSALM 95.1-7

Come, let us sing to the Lord;

People: **let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.**

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving

People: **and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.**

For the Lord is a great God,

People: **and a great king above all gods.**

In his hand are the caverns of the earth,

People: **and the heights of the hills are his also.**

The sea is his for he made it,

People: **and his hands have moulded the dry land.**

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee,

People: **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.

People: **Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!**

THE PSALMS

PSALM 25:1-10

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.

Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore, he instructs sinners in the way.

He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way.

All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

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.

People: Amen

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

A READING FROM GENESIS 9:8-17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

A READING FROM 1 PETER 3:18-22

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you--not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MARK (1:9-15).

People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON

You are my child ... with you I am well pleased.

Approval is a funny thing - on some levels we almost crave it like a child showing a parent a new thing they can do and, at other times, we might shy away from any form of recognition. Our Christian culture sends us conflicting messages. At times we are encouraged into a false sense of humility that denies the need for affirmation or approval yet, at other times, there is a strong sense of self-promotion and over-recognition of those in leadership or those in the Christian faith who seem to have "made it" or "been a success". I think that many of these unhealthy responses come from a Christian culture that is struggling to appreciate the true worth of our humanity before God and to find in that valuing our true sense of vocation as followers of Jesus.

Isaiah, in contrast, paints a prophetic picture of the Messiah that is so vastly different to what a dominant church culture tells us. He writes in Isaiah 42, "He will not cry or lift up his voice or make it heard in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench." Here is a Messiah who does not draw attention to himself either through his own actions or by putting down those who are bruised or smothered by society. Rather than snapping or snuffing us in our need, Jesus affirms the bruised to find healing and values the smothered to find a renewed zeal for life.

As we respond to the Gospel story we need to recognize that it is an invitation to find our affirmation in Christ, irrespective of how bruised or smothered by the world we might feel. That God, in calling us into relationship, is not intent on compounding our sense of bruising by breaking us or snuffing the last vestige of life out of us. Rather, in contrast, God's intention is to bring healing into our lives and ignite in us a new passion for life.

While we affirm to understand that salvation is a free gift of grace found only in Christ, we affirm a Christian culture that is driven by a manic sense of urgency to show we were grateful to God through our work. As a result, we turned our entire lives, including worship and prayer, into forms of work! We fall victim to the notion that we need to prove we were worthy of God's affirmation by demonstrating that we were good Christians by what we do. Our sense of vocation and ministry as the people of God is thus measured by the amount of stuff we "do for God", almost like a child who is constantly trying to find approval from a parent. We are thus in gross danger of living the nightmare of the wonder-box Christian life as a way of seeking approval from God and the Christian community.

But both Isaiah and Mark tell us about a Christ who is approved by God, fully endorsed and valued by his Father in Heaven, before he has even started ministry. They both tell us that Jesus knew the full approval of his Father before he had even done any ministry! "You are my Son ... in you I am well pleased" and "Here is my servant ... in whom my soul delights."

In the same way, we need to recognize that as humans we stand as sons and daughters of God already approved and as baptized disciples as fully affirmed before we have done a thing! We stand as those fully endorsed, approved and affirmed children of God irrespective of what we have achieved or done for God. When we see ourselves from that perspective – as fully affirmed for being or existing – it liberates us to do things not for approval but simply because of our love for others and God. That is so liberating and frees us from the constant burden of the fear of rejection because we do not "match up" to what we think the church or God expects of us.

As we journey into this Lent, as Christ entered into the wilderness, we need to hear the voice of God, "You are my daughter/son ... in you I am well pleased." In doing so we recognize God's affirmation of us irrespective of how damaged, bruised, smothered or choked we might feel by life's circumstances and, in doing so, recognize a God who wants to heal, restore, enliven, affirm and call us into the vocation of love.

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 #14 LENT

(With confidence and trust let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy.")

For the one holy catholic and apostolic Church throughout the world, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For those preparing for baptism and for their teachers and sponsors, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For peace in the world, that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For all whom we have injured or offended, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, whose Son fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are but did not sin, give us grace to discipline ourselves in submission to your Spirit, that as you know our weakness, so we may know your power to save; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives 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.

NOTICES:

Vestry – Sunday the 28th of February at 12:00 via Zoom call or video

Lenten study – Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Church opening? Red zone and therefore will remain shut until further notice and the pandemic threat is reduced – but office is reopened.

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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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:

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

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:

Cecilia Mowat; 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 Church of the Province of Central Africa

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

Durham & Northumberland Deanery