

Online Service of the Word – 22nd November Christ the King



Gathering to worship God

Let us worship God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.
The Lord be with us all.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Lord God, we all belong to your kingdom and we bring our
different lives and experiences to worship you online today,
the true and living God. Amen.

Words of welcome

Good morning from Rev Mark. Today is the feast day of
Christ the King, a chance to come before God in celebration
that Jesus is our King and has won the victory. It is also a
reminder that as subjects of the kingdom and the people of
God we are called to live lives seeking for truth and justice,
and striving for the welfare of others. So let us come before
God in celebration and humility, knowing we have a king
who loves and cares for us, and calls us to live lives of
integrity and faithfulness

Collect, the prayer of the week is said.

God the Father,
help us to hear the call of Christ the King
and to follow in his service,
whose kingdom has no end;
for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, one glory. Amen

Saying sorry to God

Confession

God our Father,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins.
For turning away from you,
and ignoring your will for our lives;
Father, forgive us:
save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish,
without thinking of you;
Father, forgive us:
save us and help us

For failing you by what we do
and think and say;
Father, forgive us:
save us and help us.

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you
by temptations in the world about us;
Father, forgive us:
save us and help us.

For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son;
Father, forgive us:
save us and help us.

We say these words

Blessed is the Lord for he has heard the voice of our
prayer; therefore shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song we will praise our God.

Hearing and responding to the Word of God

Alleluia, alleluia.

Open our hearts Lord to accept the words of your son.

Alleluia.

Acts 16:14

Gospel Matthew 25.31-end

‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?”

And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.”

Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

Talk/Sermon

Today is the festival of Christ the King, where we celebrate Jesus coming in glory as king of all heaven and earth. It is also the last week of the church’s year. The church’s year starts with Advent Sunday – preparing for the coming of Jesus – his second coming in glory, but then as a tiny baby at Christmas. Then we have the Epiphany of the Wise Men, the baptism of Jesus, his temptation in the desert at Lent, his ministry, death and resurrection at Easter, ascension, and celebration of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church, and then a period of time called “ordinary time” when we focus on the miracles and teaching of Jesus. Finally, it culminates in a recognition of Jesus in judgement on the world, coming with great power and glory – before the cycle starts again and we get back to thinking of Jesus coming again as a tiny baby at Christmas. So Christ the King is a last recognition of the adult Jesus, and his current position as ruler and king in heaven, head of the church, reigning with truth and justice, that we get before thinking of the baby Jesus at Christmas once again.

This church year, we have been focussing on the gospel of Matthew, and in recent weeks, that block of teaching about Jesus concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God – with all the parables about cataclysmic events and parables about wedding feasts, staying alert and watching. Matthew ends this section with great fanfare – “the son of man coming with all his angels, on the throne of glory.” He has come to give rewards to his faithful (portrayed as the sheep, who have looked out for the poor, the sick, the naked and those in prison) and he gives punishment to the unfaithful (the goats, who have done none of this.)

Traditionally, in churches, scenes from the second coming of Jesus were painted onto the church walls, to persuade the congregation into obedience to the church and to seek to follow God. For these reason, Jesus became regarded as a daunting, scary figure, and the common people got into the habit of praying not to Jesus but to the saints instead because they seemed a bit more approachable. We know, however, that Jesus is approachable – he loves us, became human, lived among us, experienced our hardship and sorrows, and died for us. For this reason, perhaps more than any other God, for the Christian through Jesus we can relate to God as a brother as well as an authority figure in heaven. Nonetheless, although Jesus is our friend he is our king, and that means he is powerful. He has power to oppose evil, to stand for righteousness and truth, and to remind us that in the end, those who oppressed others, and opposed truth and the wellbeing of others for their own ends will be held to account.

As we end the church year today, we have opportunity to look back at our world in 2020. 2020 has not been a good year. The global pandemic swept away our normal lives and freedoms, many of us have lost loved ones this year, and many have lost livelihoods or been set back financially. Towards the end of the year, in the United States, we are seeing an attempt by a defeated president to undermine the election result in the most powerful country known for its democracy. And we have all become more aware of the sharp divisions in that nation and ours that still exist between races, and those of different backgrounds. Thinking of 2021 brings us hope, with the prospect of a vaccine, but there is much healing work to be done. But staying with 2020, we have been soberly reminded this year that our world is a broken world, where disease, injustice, and oppression of the poorer in our society are here with us.

In the face of this, Christ the King reminds us that there will be a reckoning – and that the kingdom of God does not brush injustice and oppression under the carpet. If in this world it seems that those who seek to exploit others for their own ends and wealth get away with it, the parable of the sheep and the goats reminds us starkly that this will not be the case in eternity. For each of us, we have choices and responsibilities. In every one of our decisions, we can choose to go the way of the goats – ignoring the needs of others and seeking our own interests – or the way of the sheep – looking out for the interests of others and actively trying to challenge systems which are not acting in the interests of others. That might be helping the poor and needy, or seeking to protect our world by combatting climate change, or thinking about how we invest and spend our money to be more ethical. None of us will be perfect or make the right decisions all the time. God has sent his Spirit to help us in our daily living, with our choices and decisions, and forgives us when we go astray. But the reading today is a warning to those who brazenly seek to put our own wishes and desires first, when those desires might exploit or harm others, that God notices this.

Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

This is the faith of the Church.
We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession – Mary Jones

Christ our Lord and King, as we come to you in prayer,
make each of us conscious of your nearness.

Open our ears that we may hear your voice, enter our
hearts that we may know more of you.

Hear us now Lord, as we bring our prayers to you.

Christ our Lord and King, we lift to you our world. It's really
your world Lord, for you have created it, but we're the ones
who are making a mess of everything. So many of us are
confused and – yes Lord, frightened by what is happening
to our world, and the feeling of being so helpless to do
anything about it. We ask for your help to give to all the
knowledge and understanding of how to put right the
dreadful things that are happening, the wrongs done to
neighbour's, nations to nation, and even parents to their
children. We also thank you for guiding those who have
gone the extra mile to help their friends and neighbours,
and those working hard on the front line and behind the
scenes during this Covid emergency

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Christ our Lord and King, all wise, all merciful, hear us as
we pray for those who bear the responsibility of leadership
among the nations of the world. Give them, in all their
deliberations, regard for your laws, wisdom to know your
will, respect for human rights and the grace of humility that
they may be ready to see a point of view which differs from
their own. Grant that they may seek to lead in the paths of
truth, freedom and peace, for the glory of your Name.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Christ our Lord and King we thank you for the witness of
your Church throughout the world.

Be with your people in those countries where your church
still faces oppression and persecution and give them
strength and courage to stand for what is right.

Guide the church leaders in our country as they face the
problems of the present day. Direct their thoughts and give
them wisdom, as they guide us forward in your Name.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Christ our Lord and King, we thank you for our homes and families, Make us aware of your loving care day by day, and make us thankful for all the blessing we receive but which we often take for granted. Help us all to be good neighbours, not only to those near us, but to anyone in trouble who needs someone just to come close and to listen. We pray for all those living in our local community especially today for those living in Lyndon Close and Cedar Avenue

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Christ our Lord and King we bring before you all who are suffering in mind, body or spirit, Surround the frightened with your tenderness, give strength to those in pain, hold the weak in your arms of love and give hope and patience to those who are recovering.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have been bereaved
Grant them comfort in their pain and sorrowing.
We remember those who have died recently or in the past.
Christ our Lord and King be near us when we are distressed;
strengthen us when we are weak; hold us when we are afraid;
guide us when we are lost. Laugh with us and share our joy;
sing with us and stir our hearts; fill us up that we may be
renewed at each day's end and each day's dawning.

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of
your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

We say the Lord's prayer

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.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

An act of Spiritual Communion

You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place.

Reflect on the day and on your relationships.

- What good things have come from God today?
- Where have I fallen short?
- What might I do tomorrow?

Give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with you now.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'. Be with me today, as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care. Amen.

O God, help me to trust you, help me to know that you are with me, help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Lord, in these days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful;
in these days of challenge, make us stronger in you;
in these days of emptiness, take possession of us;
in these days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of your cross.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you most humble and hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth your praise, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn King of Kings, Majesty

King of kings, majesty,
God of Heaven living in me,
gentle Saviour, closest friend,
strong deliverer, beginning and end,
all within me falls at your throne.

Your majesty, I can but bow,
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty.

Earth and Heaven worship you,
love eternal, faithful and true,
who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
brought this sinner near to your throne;
all within me cries out in praise.

Your majesty, I can but bow,
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty.

Your majesty, I can but bow,
I lay my all before you now.
Your royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty.
I live to serve your majesty

Jarrood Cooper

Continue to serve God during this difficult time

Stir up, O Lord,
the wills of your faithful people;
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good
works, may by you be plenteously rewarded;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Let us bless the Lord:
Blessing, honour and glory be yours,
here and everywhere, now and for ever. Amen

Filled with the Spirit's power,
We go in the light and peace of Christ. Amen.

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Exit Music by Martin Bates for Christ the King Sunday

Un sonnet d'amour
Here is the third movement of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's
Petit Suite de Concert. It means literally "Love Sonnet" or
"Love Poem". It is a charmingly cheerful piece which is
certainly needed at this time. Martin

<https://fb.watch/1TGqnZT3Nf/>