

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Sunday November 21<sup>st</sup> 2021



### An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David!

### Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body  
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,  
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

### Our Confession

*God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.*

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.  
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.  
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.  
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

*Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ*

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord.

**Amen.**

## The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Silence is kept.*

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

## The Psalmody Psalm 93 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord is king and has put on glorious apparel;  
the Lord has put on his glory and girded himself with strength.  
He has made the whole world so sure that it cannot be moved.  
Your throne has been established from of old; you are from everlasting.  
The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their pounding waves.  
Mightier than the thunder of many waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea, the Lord on high is mightier.  
Your testimonies are very sure; holiness adorns your house, O Lord, for ever.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen

## Scripture Reading Revelation 1.4b-8

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, <sup>5</sup>and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, <sup>6</sup>and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.  
<sup>7</sup>Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen.

<sup>8</sup>'I am the Alpha and the Omega', says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

*At the end of the reading we say:*

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

## Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## The Gospel John 18.33-37

<sup>33</sup>Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' <sup>35</sup>Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' <sup>36</sup>Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' <sup>37</sup>Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

*At the end of the reading we say:*

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

## A Reflection for the day

The festival of Christ the King is new having been invented in 1925 by the then Pope, Pius XI. Only in 1970 was it moved in the liturgical calendar from October to the last Sunday before Advent. It slid into Anglicanism very recently and, some would argue, dislodges from our minds Ascension as the true feast of the Kingship of Christ and also suggests that Christ's rule is something future rather than a 'now' thing needing to be realised in our lives and the world – this is why we pray 'your Kingdom come and will be done, here in earth as in heaven'.

The last Sunday before Advent used to be known as 'stir up Sunday'; the day when Christmas cakes were made. The post communion prayer for today still talks of 'stirring', but instead of cakes it talks of our hearts – "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."

The festival of Christ the King, whenever it is celebrated, should stir us up in both heart, mind and in action. John, in Revelation, is certainly stirred by what he sees of God in Christ – the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the end. This is no small vision of God, but then God is no small matter! We may rather God were small, family sized, flat packed even, a god who did not interfere too much with *our* plans or ask too many questions about *our* lifestyle; but this is not God!

Here is God – the beginning and end of all things. Here is the Christ, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Pilate can't comprehend this as Jesus stands before him accused of being blasphemous is stating he is the Christ.

'My Kingdom is not of this world'; this statement confuses Pilate who wants to know where Jesus is from. The point of Jesus' statement is not a matter of geography; in this sense where the kingdom is located is irrelevant. What matters is the *character* of the kingdom and those who would be its citizens. In contrast to the kingdoms of the earth His is a kingdom of peace; 'peace be with you' is its national motto and proclamation. For Pilate, kingdom work, kingdom forging comes through violence rather than peace.

This Kingdom's ruler is different, and he shows us so as he lives, not to be served, but to serve. As he seeks to establish a reign of peace, grace, mercy, healing, justice, love. Jesus stirs things in Roman Judea and those in power would wish he went away and things could calm down again. But this is not the way of the God of Judah. As C.S Lewis reminds us this lion of Judah is not a pet lion, however friendly he may seem. There is a wildness always in God, a vastness, a wonder to behold, a terrifying beauty, a heart stopping vastness of an uncontainable mystery we call God. This is stirring stuff!

If this is the King, what of the citizens of this 'kingdom from above'? We are called, called to be stirred by visions of God in all majesty, might and mystery. I wonder what capturing such visions might make to our Sunday worship. And more, we are called to be stirred by his love and to follow his ways in stirring up the kingdoms of the earth. What things of peace, love, grace, and justice might we then bring each day of the week as we live and work to establish the kingdom of the Lord to the glory of His name?

## The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, 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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

**Prayers**            *We make our intercessions*

Let us with confidence present our prayers and supplications to the throne of grace.

We pray for the church, the body of Christ throughout all the world. Help us to live in the light of your coming and give us a longing for your kingdom.

*Come to your world as King of the nations.* At this time, maybe more than others the leaders of our nation Lord bear the hefty weight of office. So many voices speak to steer the course of travel yet there are many considerations. Enable our Leaders to stay on the course you have set for them. Be their wisdom and good counsel. Help them to distil the voices. Shine the light of your presence upon our Prime Minister, our Government and all who advise them.

*Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

*Come to your world as King of the nations.* We bring to God all those who suffer in body, mind, spirit or with grief. We ask that in God's great loving kindness they might know God's sustaining presence amidst their pain. We pray for those who are stretched beyond their own capacity to cope and remain hopeful – that in the roar of these waterfalls God would bring a sense of coherence, comfort and strength.

*Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

*Come to your world as King of the nations.* It is so important for our children to socialize, to make friends and be friends; to play. To be curious, to have their imagination teased; to learn; to be safe.

Yet from one day to the next we do not know how this will look; how it will work out; or what the long-term effects are going to be. We are worried for our children.

*Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

*Come to your world as King of the nations.* At this time, we pray for the isolated and the lonely, for those suffering at home from domestic abuse and especially those admitted to hospital because of abuse. We give thanks for all seeking to minister to the least of these', for those working in the NHS, for social workers, for food bank helpers, night shelter workers, for children who miss school to care for others.

*Lord in your mercy hear our prayers*

*Come to your world as King of the nations.* Lift us up to meet you, that with all your saints and angels we may live and reign with you in your new creation.

*Lord in your mercy hear our prayers; Amen!*

## The Collect

All: 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.

*Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us*

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.

## The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.  
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.  
Christ under me, Christ over me;  
Christ beside me on my left and my right.  
This day be within and without me.  
Amen.