

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Sunday November 26<sup>th</sup> 2023



### 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 95.1-7a *We say the psalm aloud*

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 Ephesians 1.15-23

*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 Matthew 25.31-46

*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'.

When we think of Kings it is natural to think of authority and of power. The exercise of power is an important subject to us English. We have a unique idea that has permeated through the world; that power is given and can be taken away. This is an old English concept, but there have been blips and problems with it over the centuries. When England was formed in Saxon times those who ruled an area did so through the service they provided. It was up to the local king to protect and to serve the people by ensuring prosperity. The people, for their part, supported what brought these things and when they didn't fealty was withdrawn.

Things began to go wrong as the Norman age approached and kings began to demand from the people and throughout the feudal years of the middle ages there was tension and conflict. The peak of this, it could be argued came with the Stuarts and the civil wars after which kings and queens, by and large ruled once again for the people; I can't help but think that many a Politian needs to remember our history.

Today society seems a long way removed from the age of kings ruling, of local lords demanding, of servility. I suspect for many of us the concept of Christ as King, of the exercise of power and dominion over all things is a strange sounding idea.

St Paul declares the immense majesty of Jesus Christ and the complete power he holds, as revealed in his resurrection. And he could exercise dominion and stamp his authority and demand our worship and praise. But that is not the way of God, it never has been. Our God is one who woos like a lover, one who loves without favour as a father.

The Caesars, the emperors, the kings of the ages would come and impose their rule but God sent love. Jesus was born to love the world, to serve humanity, to bring healing, justice, to stand against political and religious systems that corrupted what it meant to be human. His stance cost him his life, but God raised him from that death into a rule of love, of grace, of justice, of peace that is eternal.

Jesus, having been born into this life could have said at any point no and walked away, he struggled with it in gethsemane but continued the walk. And so he reigns, our God reigns, not over us, but beside us, with us in his Spirit; Emmanuel, God with us, close to us!

And he calls to us, follow me! To join the work of loving the world, of brining freedom, peace, justice, healing, hope, of standing against corrupt systems of political and religious power. He calls us to pray, 'your kingdom come and will be done, here on earth as in heaven', and to pray this not in word expecting him to achieve things from afar but to be the very prayers we pray. To be people who are peaceable, to be healing, to be justice against injustice, to be protest against corruption, to be kingdom builders in the power of his Spirit in us and his love gifted to us.

## 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.* 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.* 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, those who support people forced into the sex industry to make ends meet, 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.