
MORNING PRAYER

Christ the King

November 22nd, 2020 9:30 AM



*St. Philip's
Episcopal Church*

BUFFALO, NEW YORK



Join us by Phone or Zoom.

Sunday Mornings at 9:30 AM

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/116359399>

Dial in to join us by phone:
(646) 558-8656 Meeting ID: 116 359 399

Make Gifts and Pledges to Congregations Online

**WNY &
NWPA**
EPISCOPAL

Although church buildings are closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of congregations continues, and the need for pledge income and gifts is urgent. The bishop's office is maintaining an online giving platform that accepts [gifts and pledge payments for any congregation](#).

While in-person church services are suspended, the partnership dioceses will absorb payment processing fees so that your entire gift will go to your congregation for local mission.

[Support your congregation online.](#)



The Word of God

Celebrant: Blessed be God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

People: And blessed be God's Kingdom, now and forever. Amen

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY (BCP p. 357)

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Lessons (portions of these readings will be in the Zoom worship)

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far

and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

THE RESPONSE: Psalm 100

- 1 **B**e joyful in the LORD, all you lands; *
serve the LORD with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.
- 2 Know this: The LORD himself is God; *
he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
- 3 Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise; *
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.
- 4 For the LORD is good;
his mercy is everlasting; *
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 25:31-46

Jesus said, “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.”

Sermon

Pastor Steve will be delivering the sermon on zoom. This is a sermon from Sermons that work from the Episcopal Church



It would be more appropriate to call this gloriously named Sunday “Christ the Shepherd Sunday” rather than Christ the King. The Old Testament lesson certainly gives us that impression, staying with

the shepherd metaphor in vivid and dramatic language, focusing on God as the Great Shepherd, a description and promise eventually leading to a human shepherd, David. He became and then evolved into the best-known and loved king of ancient Israel. His name became a symbol of a great king, but he was not a saintly king – not with his many wives, dysfunctional children, and constant, unending wars.

The New Testament lesson, by contrast, paints a picture of a glorified Christ raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God “in the heavenly places.” The word “king” does not enter in this narrative, even though the language of the passage is filled with power beyond that of kings and emperors. Paul’s own epistles don’t use the appellation “king,” which is found only in 1 Timothy, but that was likely written much later than the time of Paul. Of course, the book of Revelation is filled with kingly images, as is to be expected from apocalyptic writing. It is nearly impossible for those of us steeped in the melodies and glorious sounds of Handel’s Messiah to think of Revelation without hearing the triumphant words from Psalm 24:

Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
“Who is this King of glory?”
“The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle.”

This rather militaristic triumphalism is missing from the gospels, however. So, how did this image of Christ the King come about?

We first encounter the title “king” in Matthew’s lovely story of the Magi’s visit to the infant Jesus. The wise visitors, accustomed to the great potentates of the East, come looking for a child born to be “king of the Jews,” but Herod, a once-great but troubled man, is already the king of the Jews by order of the occupying Romans. He did a great deal of good for Israel, but now he is old, having killed his wives and his own children in order to hold on to his throne. When he hears of the purpose of the Magi’s visit, he is terrified. Who is this child born to be king? The image he leaves to us of what a king ought to be is a rather miserable one.

In Matthew’s gospel, a child is called king of the Jews, and no one in his immediate family seems very surprised while the Magi recount ancient prophecies. The myth of David’s succession runs strong through the ages of Hebrew history and hope. Yet, that same title will be used thirty-three years later, written on a tablet with a vicious, ironic intention, a tablet nailed on top of the cross where the child, now a

gown man, is hanging between two thieves. In the starkest language, we have the story of the greatest tragedy, one not easily conceived by the human mind.

What did the grown Jesus, the wise teacher and most appealing prophet, do with the title “king”? He used it in his parables. In his stories, we don’t have triumphant kings glorious in battle; we are given examples of kings who make difficult decisions based on justice; kings who give banquets where everyone is invited; and finally we are presented with this magisterial image of a king who bestows apocalyptic justice in Matthew 25. This parable, called the Great Judgment, is so familiar to all those who understand what it means to serve others in the name of Jesus that it has become almost a cliché in our times. Here, the image of the king is one of unwavering justice. This is a tough parable, without sentimentality, without evasions. We hear no trumpet calls and no triumphalism. Here, humility reigns.

All the teachings of Jesus find a culmination in this parable. The one who taught that “the last shall be first” presents the king as bringing to his right hand, a position of honor, those who have lived a life that honored others above their own selfish needs. “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” This king invites into the heavenly realm those who paid attention to the poor by giving them clothes to wear and food to eat. This king opens his kingdom to those who saw human injustice and took the time to visit the ones who were imprisoned unjustly; this king praises those who welcomed the stranger and the migrant by offering them hospitality and shelter. And they did it all, not knowing that in the process of feeding, clothing, and welcoming, they were responding to the Giver of all good things: “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.”

This is a radically different image of a king for those who were listening to Jesus in the first century – and for those of us who, while no longer living under kings, know what it is to live under the leadership of persons who promote greed and selfishness instead of compassion and humility. This Jesus ate with the poor and the outcasts and honored women while elevating the worth of little children. This Jesus, this king, does not appear holding a sword but instead hangs on a bloodied cross.

In many churches, Christ the King Sunday is filled with the sound of trumpets and with hymns of extravagant praise, accompanied by images of gold and precious jewels. The contrast with the life of Jesus jars and troubles us. It becomes easier to accept this disharmony when we realize that this Sunday is a very late addition to the church’s liturgical calendar; Pope Pius XI instituted it in 1925.

Almost twenty years later, the brilliant Anglican writer and theologian Dorothy L. Sayers examined the question of the kingship of Jesus in her marvelous series of radio plays called *The Man Born to Be King*. When the Magi visit Mary and Joseph and the baby to offer gifts of great value, Mary wonders about what it all means. One of them tells her: “I speak for a sorrowful people—for the ignorant and the poor. We rise up to labor and lie down to sleep and night is only a pause between one burden and another. Fear is our daily companion—the fear of want, the fear of war, the fear of cruel death and of still more cruel life. But all this we could bear if we knew that we did not suffer in vain; that God was beside us in the struggle, sharing the miseries of His own world.”

The Son of Man, as Jesus referred to himself, proved through his own death that he is beside us in the struggle, sharing our suffering and our miseries. At a time of a rampant virus, in a climate of fear and even hatred, this realization gives us comfort and hope, for Jesus, who rules with love, is the kind of king we can also love.

By Katerina Whitley, a native of Thessaloniki, Greece, is a long-term writer for these pages. She worked as diocesan editor in the Diocese of East Carolina and as the PR & Communication associate for the then Presiding Bishop’s Fund for World Relief during Bishop Edmond Browning’s tenure. She is the author of seven books in circulation and an active public speaker and performer. She lives in Boone, N.C. where she teaches at Appalachian State University.

Prayers

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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, and the power, and
the glory, forever.
Amen.



PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Jesus the Christ, you reign in glory as our King, and to you we lift our voices in prayer, saying, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

That we may serve God with gladness and generosity, discovering his likeness in those who hunger and thirst, in those who are threadbare and in prison, and in those who are sick, lonely, depressed, sorrowful, and rejected; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the forgiveness of our sins, the times when we were blind to the needs of others, and deaf to their shout for assistance, that we may move beyond our selfish greed and love with the measure that Jesus loves humanity; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That the leaders of our Church may receive the immeasurable greatness of God, seeking the holy way with every step they take, guiding the faithful and those who have strayed into the glorious dwelling place of divine love; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the sea and the dry land, molded by the Creator’s imagination, that we may cherish the gifts they bring forth, and be good stewards of their fragile ecosystems; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That the sin of division may be lifted from family life, and from wherever it fractures the bonds of affection or movements toward peace, that forgiving what is past and trusting in God’s future, we may work to reveal the kingdom in our time; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That the righteous dead may live into eternal life, and that those who have gone astray may receive the mercy of the Maker; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the reign of Christ over all creation, let us continue our prayers.

Your intercessions are invited either silently or aloud

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYERS

(birthdays, anniversaries, hospitalizations, traveling)



THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
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, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves 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 honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly Host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

BLESSING

May The Peace Of God, Which Surpasses All Understanding,
Bless You With Serenity;
May The Love Of Christ, Which Will Never End,
Envelop You in All Hope;
May The Spirit Of God Enliven You
To Do That Which You Can't Even Imagine;
The Blessing Of God---father, Son And Holy Spirit Be With You And Remain With You
This Day And Forevermore. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Deacon: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
People Thanks be to God!

Where all are queens and kings

BY J. DAVEY GERHARD



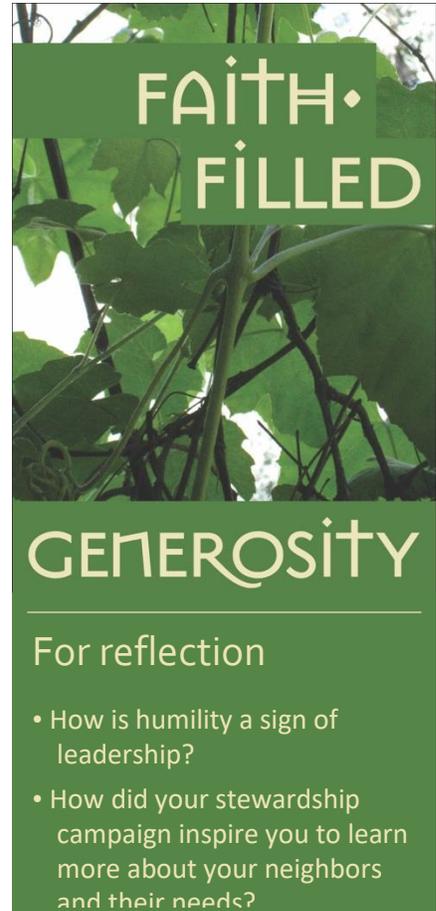
The Church designates the final Sunday of the Church year as the Feast of Christ the King, a day in which the united rule of Christ over all of the universe is celebrated. In many communities, it is a high feast, with altar guilds preparing white vestments, flower guilds celebrating God's glory in elaborate displays, and hymns filled with alleluias. What a way to end the year, to celebrate stewardship, and to prepare for Advent!

But before we get too carried away with the grandeur of it all, today's Gospel tells a different story about kingship and leadership: It tells of service. Typical of Jesus, he begins with what we expect – in this case power and triumph – and turns it upside down and in doing so, reminds us that it is through our ministry that we increase the role of the Church in our community. True power doesn't come through force or wealth or conquest, it is derived from generosity, charity, and love. We change the hearts and minds of our neighbors by loving them and serving them.

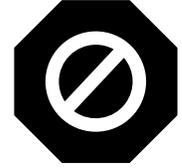
Throughout this stewardship season we have heard about the mission of our own churches. You have learned about the ways that your gifts impact the life of your church and your neighbors. Perhaps this year you met the challenges of a global pandemic by adapting your worship. Maybe you responded to the needs of your community by increasing your outreach or your ministry to serve your neighbors. What is certain is that you had the opportunity to express your love and your hope for the world through your annual gift to your church.

We seek and serve Christ in all people by serving our neighbors. This is the great commandment of Jesus to his followers and it is one of the promises we make at our Baptism. When we are asked by those we meet on the street or those to whom we minister in our communities if we will offer them drink when they thirst, or visit them when they are lonely, or give them food when they hunger, our answer will be yes! Through our generosity and our faith, we are called to that same royal line as Jesus, leaders in our communities. Now that is a feast worth celebrating!

J. Davey Gerhard is the Executive Director of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship, and lives and teaches his faith in San Francisco, California.



IN PERSON WORSHIP IS SUSPENDED THROUGH THE END OF THE YEAR

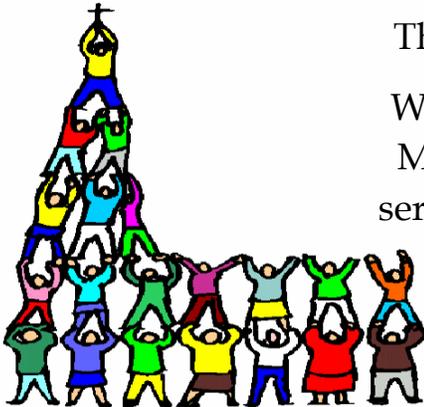


In a November 12 letter to the diocese, Bishop Sean suspends in-person worship and meetings effective immediately. He writes:

"Although we hope that 2021 will bring some relief, public health experts and epidemiologists warn that between now and then, cold weather and ill-advised holiday gatherings make it likely that this current surge of infection will not peak until January. **For those reasons, I am once again suspending in-person worship, meetings and other gatherings in our church buildings effective immediately.** We will reevaluate the situation in December, although I believe that we should prepare to worship, meet, and gather online through the end of 2020. The only exceptions to this suspension are lifesaving feeding and sobriety ministries.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The meeting will be on Zoom December 6th at 12:00 pm. We will be electing delegates to the diocesan convention, Members for vestry and warden. If you are interested in serving in any of these capacities, please contact Josephine Robbins at 838-3631.



PLEASE SEND IN YOUR PLEDGES

It is that time of year. Please, if you have not done so, send in your pledge. We are putting together the budget for 2021 and need to know what to expect.



The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, Bishop

Pastor Stephen Lane, Priest in Charge

Rev. Lillian Davis-Wilson, Deacon

Mr. Emmanuel Conteh, Warden

Mrs. Josephine Cross, Warden

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