

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER, 2020

THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING



Introduction

Our God reigns, our God serves; through worship we reach out both to praise God's majesty and to receive God's wisdom, insight and strength, so that our lives might be offered in open, honest, loving service.

Confession

Wherever and whenever we have become lost, God seeks us out to draw us back into the divine presence. Howsoever we have strayed, God calls us back to the path, forgiven and redeemed.

For all the times when we have placed self-interest over the care of others.
Lord, have mercy.

Recalling and repenting of each occasion when we have abused our position, our power or our influence.
Christ, have mercy.

For everything we do that depletes our environment and weakens biodiversity.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

Eternal Father,

whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven

that he might rule over all things as Lord and King:

keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit

and in the bond of peace,

and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen

First Reading

Ezekiel 34:11-16. 20-24

God the Good Shepherd preferentially cares for the flock's weakest members while condemning those who trample down their companions to further their own self-interest.

¹¹ “For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. ¹² As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. ¹⁴ I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord.

²⁰ “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹ Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, ²² I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. ²³ I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.

Psalm 95 1 – 7

- 1 O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us heartily rejoice in the rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving
and be glad in him with psalms.
- 3 For the Lord is a great God
and a great king above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth
and the heights of the mountains are his also.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands have moulded the dry land.
- 6 Come, let us worship and bow down
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
- 7 For he is our God;
we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:15-23

Whatever good we do, whatever power we wield, ultimate authority over Church and creation is God's alone, dispensed through Christ.

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit¹⁷ of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Gospel

Matthew 25:31-46

Compassion is the keystone of Christ's rule: constant alertness and responsiveness to the needs of others are required of all who are committed to building his kingdom.

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Prayers

We bring before God the Church around the world; praying that each Christian community might serve with integrity, truth, wisdom, compassion and a Gospel-focused vision.

Christ our King is a light to the nations. May all leaders follow his way of selflessness, prioritising the needs of the poorest in society.

Appointed stewards of Christ's kingdom, we pray that we might tread lightly on this earth, sacrificially acting to halt the plunder of its resources.

Many pressures afflict many lives; may God bring hope, healing and comfort to all who struggle with any kind of mental, physical, spiritual, emotional or economic disease.

Holy and eternal God, as a shepherd hears the call of the flock, may you answer the cries of your people, as we bring our petitions before you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Concluding Prayer

May God, ruler of the universe, fill us with a thirst for holy justice,
May Christ, the servant king, enlighten us with his overflowing love,
May the Spirit of wisdom reveal in us God's saving work.
Amen.

