



Sunday Worship in the Clarendon Churches 22nd November 2020 Christ the King

This Service can be found with sound and video at
<https://ClarendonCofE.org/201122>

Welcome

By Michael Barratt

The 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.

New Testament Reading

Read by Revd Jane - Matthew 25.31-46

Jesus said to his disciples: "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

By Revd Simon

Today we celebrate Christ the King and it is a celebration that by itself can be quite a mysterious declaration. For what does it mean Christ as King? What does it mean for you to have Christ

as King of your life? Do you feel you are there yet? if not, what are you going to do about it? Because one thing is clear, it's that if it means anything to you, then your life, and your outlook on life, and what you think will happen when you die, will all be radically changed.

What image of a King conjures in your mind? I remember my grandmother, once told me that she had once met the king. "What was he like?" I asked her – Oh he was very nice, a real gentleman. To my grandmother, the King was a real person who you could get to know, and yet he did lots of important things, mysterious things, that only a King could do: things connected with Empire and state, which commanded respect.

And If you ask a reception school child they say things like "kings live in a big palace, they wear a crown and posh clothes, and they make laws and make sure that people follow them. A king is an authoritative figure who is powerful, and at a distance. And who every child would like to be (for that reason.)

So two differing views of a King, and in our democratic society where the individual is the all and we become decidedly self-referential, I think we have become a little confused to what a king, and kingship means. More than this, to talk about 'someone's kingdom' is almost an anathema to us, almost inappropriate in our global community of the 21st Century.

And here we're using the term 'United Kingdom' less and less, preferring to Split it into countries; England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. each with its own governing executive and legal system.

Of course, for most, we love and respect the English royalty. Absolutely wonderful, that the Queen is planning her Platinum Jubilee next year: 70 years of reigning on the throne. But we don't quite expect her to turn around and dictate how we should live from her throne or expect for her to dictate how we should behave. And we become fascinated through great programmes like The Crown just who are royalty, and how do they behave.

So 'King' and 'Kingship' are uneasy concepts, and to try to understand the significance of these terms for the church and for our faith, we need to try to understand how Kings were thought of in Biblical times: Both for the Old Testament, and for the Gospel writers. And we have to do a bit of detective work, simply because at different times in the bible, the concept of God-as-a-King would have significant overtones especially when it comes to faith.

And we have to see through this filter of context, in order to extract our own context for our own age... But it's not really that difficult:

In the Old Testament - God looks after his people, in a Kingly way and judges those who are worthy of his standards. And it's that image that is picked up in our Gospel reading today. Jesus: Jesus, the man who walked in Galilee with his disciples : Jesus, the friend to outcasts is now sat on the throne of Judgement with all his angels around him, all the people are gathered before him, and he judges them: those that are welcomed in, to eternal life, and those who are sent away: the sheep and the goats

And what does he judge them on? Well, not on how many times they have been to church! over the last year. Which is a good thing – with the pandemic this year. Not on how well they have paid their temple taxes. Which is a shame for our treasurers, team council and our diocese trying to balance our books. No,

he judges them on how they have shown love to him by directly demonstrating love to others.

And as their sentences are handed down, Those who are judged: the good who got it, and those who didn't make the mark, they both question the reasoning of the judgement and ask for proof: "When was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food? when was it that we saw you as outsider, and welcomed you in? naked and gave you clothing? there is a real sense that both groups say : "We didn't know that we would be judged for that !" But no-one could say they weren't warned about the nature of God: Any well-brought-up Jew listening to the parable of the sheep and goats would recognise the justice of the judgement handed out to the goats. but somewhere along the line, its as if they were deceived.

And if we are shocked at the judgement of the sheep and goats, we need to ask ourselves how did they - and how do we - manage to be deceived? How did we manage to persuade ourselves that there wouldn't be any real consequences for the way we think and live?

And so I think that's what makes the judgement of the Son of Man so shocking to us. Judgement is not something that is alien and distant, something that will happen later: (something for after when we die). No, Judgement is something that bears an immediate human face to us: in each other, in those we like to label different from us, and in the lonely, the needy, the difficult those who are still put down by others.

God is not far away, easy to deceive, and we cannot plead that we didn't know what he wants of us. This is why in Paul's letter to the Ephesians another reading set for today, he prays (as I do) that we may be given the spirit-of-wisdom to come to know the nature of God our Lord so that we may know what is the hope is - that he has called us to.

And it's in simple acts of love, sharing, caring, feeding others, serving others, that Jesus was raised to heavenly places to rule as King. And we, who want to be Christ-like as Christians, must do the same, if **we** want to do his will, if **we** want to be raised to heavenly places and eternally know him as King.

So, as today is also Stir up Sunday: Stir up your wills, that you may plenteously bring forth the fruits of good works, and, be plenteously rewarded. Amen.

Prayers

Led by Mike Marx in New Zealand

Let us pray for the Church and the World and thank God for his goodness. Bless the Church, the Body of Christ, and make her worthy to claim him as King. Guide your ministers to be good shepherds of their flocks, faithful in word and works.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the life of the Anglican Church. For our Bishops Nicholas, Karen & Andrew and for Simon, Jane, Debbie, Michael, David, Cynthia & all in the Clarendon Team who lead and care for us. And we thank you Lord for Beth's ministry in the Clarendon team and pray for her new ministry in the Whitton Team. May all of us proclaim Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords far above any earthly authority. Come and rule in our hearts. Claim us as part of your Kingdom.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the World. We look forward Lord to the time when the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of Christ the King. We remember all who suffer from tyranny or

despotic rule. And for Christian communities who are being persecuted or attacked.

We continue to pray for the world as it copes with the effects of Covid 19.

We pray for those sick with the disease or its aftermath; for the families of those who have died; for those who have lost their jobs or sense of worth; for those who live in fear, or are lonely, or unsettled by uncertainty; for children who do not understand why they cant see their friends & parents who must keep them safe & happy & also act as teachers , councillors & much more.

We thank you for guiding those who fight the disease in many ways. For doctors and nurses on the front line; for scientists and epidemiologists developing vaccines & medicines to help the sick; for those who risk their health to work in all walks of life so society can continue to cope .

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the villages in the Clarendon Team. We ask for your blessing on our homes, our families & friends. May your kingdom be revealed & your will be done in all that we do and say. Let us pray for any families in our community who, due to Covid or other reasons, struggle with poverty, illness or difficult relationships. May the Lord, our king and shepherd, bandage the hurt & strengthen the sick. & put the spirit of the Lord into neighbours, to rally round & help one another.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Lord, we place in your hands all who are sick or troubled, in mind, body or spirit. We pray for all known to us personally. In a moment of silence we pray for someone known to each of us: Be present with them through the support of family and friends. For all who are suffering: May the light of God surround them; may the presence of God enfold them; may the power of God heal them.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Finally we pray for those who have been called from this world to be with Christ. Christ is our king in life. We pray that his Kingship of the dead will grant them rest.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our Prayer**

We say together 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, the Power and the Glory. Forever and ever, Amen

In the Anglican Church of New Zealand, we sing or say the Lord's prayer in English or in Maori.

Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be your name
E to matou Matua i te rangi, Kia tapu tou ingoa

And the last line:
Forever and ever, Amen
Ake, ake, ake, Amine.

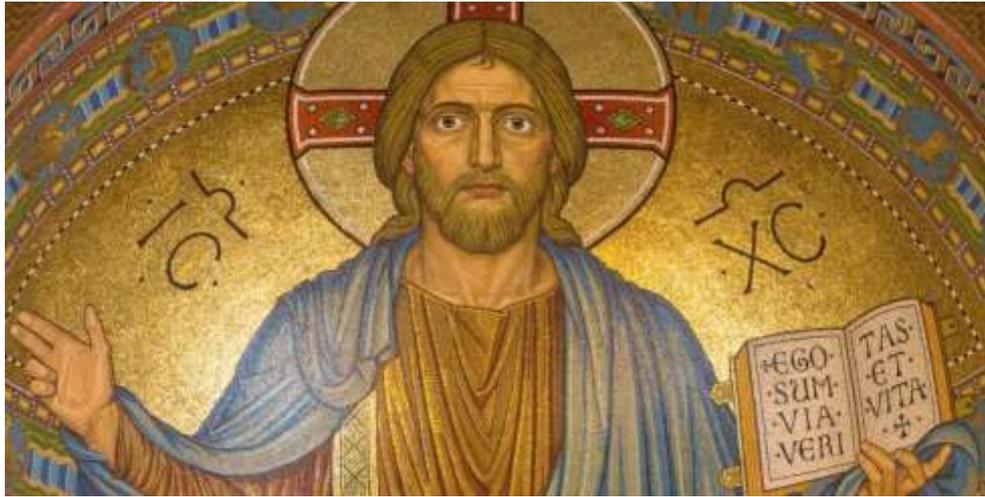
Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.**

The Grace

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the holy Spirit, be with us all today and always.

God Bless you all

Amen.



Post Communion Prayer for today

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.