

NOVEMBER 22 CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY Service of Holy Communion

Preparing for worship:

We will have Holy Communion together - separately this worship time.

You will need either wine or grape juice and bread of some kind.

You may use what cups & plates you have – do not go out & purchase.

Here is a list: a white cloth, large cup or individual ones, a large paten(plate) for bread or small – depending on the size of your family.

A cross and a candle.

Good morning – welcome to worship,

The Liturgy is from the Lutheran Book of Worship beginning on p.78, and the modified prayers this morning are based on those from Sundays & Seasons. The healing prayer is from the LBW occasional services book, p 94.

GATHERING TOGETHER

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Hymn: ELW 880 - O God Beyond all Praising

The Lord be with you – and also with you

Let us pray:

O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right. Provide us with strength to serve the world you have made, through your Son, Jesus Christ our sovereign and our Savior. Amen.

THE WORD

The Old Testament lesson is from Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Psalm 95 is found on page 260

The New Testament lesson is from Ephesians 1:15-23

Please rise for the gospel lesson.

Alleluia, Lord whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Sermon ~ Rev. Norine Gullons

Christ the King Sermon Nov 22 2020 Matthew 25:31-46d/ Ezekiel 34:11-16:20-24

The festival of Christ the King also called the Reign of Christ is the last Sunday of the church year. It brings the yearly cycle that began with the preparations of the birth of Jesus Christ to a conclusion. Next Sunday we begin a new church year with the First Sunday of Advent. We also change to a new gospel. This year we have been reading mainly from Matthew and we will turn to Mark and John next week.

The prophet Ezekiel, in the first reading states; “I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out. I will rescue them.” We have read in the past that Jesus speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd, identifying himself with God’s shepherding role. And I believe that he/Jesus is the shepherd for all time, for all of us. He cares about our well being, and is with us on through good days and bad days, through all the joys and cares of life.

The reading from Matthew, depicts a royal figure- a King -as identifying with “the least of these” and thereby undermines our tendency to look for God in places of power. Where do we typically look for God’s presence? In our own sacred spaces, our churches, but also in nature, during meditation and prayer times, in music, and in children. Seeking for God’s presence orients us to discover and experience God’s presence in our lives more fully than ever before.

Jesus promises to be always with and for those who are in greatest need. Which means that if we want to experience God’s presence fully, deeply, and truly, we will look for God in the need of those around us and, indeed, in our own need as well. Just as we think about getting ready for Advent and Christmas in our homes,

we are preparing to help others in the Arnprior/Renfrew communities, through our local food banks, and other agencies. Our support helps local families that need a helping hand not just at Christmas time, but through out the whole year.

Ezekiel tells the people that God will seek out the lost sheep and will feed them and strengthen them. Unlike the shepherds they have had in the past, previous kings, rulers or even presidents who were only interested in their own gain; God is concerned for them and their well being, as he is for us today. The Lord actively seeks them out.

Most of us have found ourselves scattered, amid the clouds and thick darkness, at some point in our lives. We have been hungry, wounded and weakened. Every one of us could tell a story of our own. Even this week with the good news of a vaccine coming - the heightened news around Covid cases, produces hesitancy, anxiety, and even fear.

God didn't come to conquer the world with military or political might, but instead – *surprise!* – in the scandal, shame, and pain of the cross. So also God continues to come where we least expect God to be: in the plight of the homeless, on the side of the poor, in the face of the needy, and in the company of the imprisoned. The God we know in Jesus is revealed, that is, not in power but in vulnerability, not in might but brokenness, and not in judgment but in mercy. After all, God didn't come to reign over humanity at Athens or Rome or any of the other major cities where one would expect God to arrive, but rather – *surprise!* – God came to identify *with* us by being born in lowly Bethlehem in the form of a vulnerable infant.

This to me is good news: that God is with us, here and now, revealed in the fellowship of broken people we call church, made manifest in the ordinary elements of Holy Communion, and available to us in the seemingly small gestures

of mercy we offer and are offered each and every day. It may not be where we expect God to show up, but it is just where we need God to be. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 865 LBW 549 - Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Our Response

The Apostles' Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 of the People led by Joanne Bretzlaff

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence.*

Sovereign of all, train our ears to hear your cry in the needs of those around us. Bless all social ministries of the church through which we seek to serve others as we ourselves have been served. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You cause rain to fall on the just and unjust alike. Direct our use of creation to provide for the needs of all people in ways that are sustainable for the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Bring peace to every place where conflict rages. Grant opportunities for ending divisions among us and usher in your reign of unity and reconciliation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heal any divisions we place between ourselves and others. Release us from systems of oppression and prejudice. Restore our capacity to see your image in those whose dignity we have stripped away. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Pour out the gifts of your Spirit on children and youth throughout the church. Sustain those who work in educating children, in youth ministry, and campus ministry as they nurture the gifts of young people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Thank you for saints now departed who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and tended to the sick. Inspire us by their example, that we may see your presence in those in need around us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

A Prayer for healing: Father in heaven, for Jesus sake, send your Holy Spirit upon all who are ill. Drive away all sickness of body and spirit; make whole that which is broken; deliver them from the power of evil; and preserve them in true faith, to share in the power of Christ's resurrection and to serve you with all the saints now and forever. *We pray for: Chris & Kathy, Ed & Rosemary, Lucas and family, Joe & Shelley, Fred, and Gladys. We also pray for Annie, Joan, Leslie, Ron K., Tere B., Lorraine, Barb L., Jodie, and Diane & family. Amen*

THE PEACE OF CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALWAYS.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

We confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through ✙ Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DIALOGUE P88

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who will be fed with this heavenly food, the body of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please take this time now at home to share with each other our Lord's Supper.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of the welcome table, in this meal we have feasted on your goodness and have been united by your presence among us. Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts so that we may share your neighborly love with all, through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. **Amen.**

HYMN: ELW 855 LBW 170 - Crown Him with many Crowns

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, ✠ Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.