

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK

Welcome to Morning Worship

22nd November 2020

Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet.

If you are able light a candle as you start the service and if others are in the house encourage them to reading some of the service with you.

Introduction

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and 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.

Prayer of Penitence

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So, let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Together we pray:

**Lord God, we have sinned against you.
we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hymn: [When I needed a neighbour](#)

The Word of God – [Click Here](#)

First Reading: Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24 read by Ann Johnson

Second Reading: Matthew 25:31-end read by Doreen Davis

Reflection prepared by Rev Stephen Hannam

Today we celebrate the festival of Christ the King and we turn our thoughts to what kind of King Jesus is! And perhaps we could be bold enough to ask ourselves what his kingship means for us! So let's explore what kingship is all about:-

Before Jesus was born, the Jewish people were waiting for their Saviour - God's Chosen One - who would be their king. In a way it's as if they had a crown all ready for him. But that wasn't the way God had planned. Remember when Mary was visited by the angel she was told that her baby was God's Son and he was going to be the King of the Jews.

So it seems the title of King never left Jesus. All his life people looked to him as King of the Jews. But that brought its own dangers! Because Jesus was credited with the title "King" the Romans saw him as a rival to the Emperor so that was reason enough to kill him. Remember too that when the Roman soldiers arrested Jesus, they laughed about having a king in their power. They bullied and mocked him by forcing him to wear a crown made out of thorns and remember how they put a sign on his cross so everyone could see it. "Jesus King of the Jews."

The soldiers nailed him to the cross and laughed at him. They said:- "If you are the King of the Jews save yourself!" One of the two criminals crucified with Jesus shouted. "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" But the other one said:- "Aren't you afraid of talking to God like that? We're guilty and we are being punished for what we did, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he turned to Jesus and said:- "Jesus remember me when you come in to your kingdom." Jesus replied:- "Believe me when I say that today, you'll be with me in heaven."

So what kind of King is Jesus? (not was but what!) First there was the title "King of the Jews," a title that was in existence long before he was born. This title was where the trouble started. Remember in the nativity story how Herod the King didn't like the idea of having a rival king. So he tried to kill the baby Jesus by murdering all the baby boys in Bethlehem. But Mary and Joseph escaped with Jesus.

Then we heard how the title "King of the Jews" gave the Romans a reason to kill Jesus. Their Emperor didn't want any competition. So they killed him under that sign that said:- "King of the Jews." But being "King of the Jews" was only the beginning of Jesus' power. His resurrection showed that he was stronger than even death and that he has the power to give us eternal life with God. (Has not had)

The Bible gives us a very detailed description of Jesus' power. First the Bible says that Jesus is:- "the image of the invisible God." In other words, he shows us what God is like. So because of Jesus, we know what God is like. Because of Jesus we can say we know God.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was with God before our world came into existence. It says:- *"All things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible,*

whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

It seems no matter what forces there are in the universe, and no matter how powerful people become on earth, they can never be as powerful as Jesus. Jesus is the head of the body, the church – that’s you and me so Jesus is in charge of us too. Jesus is in a unique position of power - that is because he rose from the dead:- He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he will have first place in everything. That’s why at Easter we roll away the stone to find an empty tomb.

The Bible tells us that because of Jesus we too can have life after death. The Bible also tells us that:- *“In Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”* So God made himself completely human when Jesus was born. That means that Jesus is entirely human and entirely God. And lastly through Jesus:- *“God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. “*

So it seems Jesus’ death means that we can join God in eternity. If you like the cross is like a bridge between earth and heaven. Jesus wasn’t just “King of the Jews;” he is King of us, King of our church, King of everything in heaven and on earth. Put that another way He is our God and King.

We have been thinking about some very big things today. Heaven and earth, Time and space, So we might be left thinking:- So what does all this mean for me?

Well, the Bible spells it out:- God simply says – *“Be still, and know that I am God.”* So let’s just sit and think, and pray and know for ourselves that Jesus is our God and King. He is in charge of everything and nothing is more powerful than him. Amen.

Hymn: [The Servant King](#)

The Creed

**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 of intercession prepared by Cherry Fancourt – [Click Here](#)

A Prayer for Church Growth

God of Mission

**Who along brings growth to your church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning
Wisdom to our actions
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Collect for today

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**

Hymn: [Christ triumphant](#)

Final Prayer

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**

The peace of God
Which passes all understanding
Keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and Love of God
And of His son our Lord Jesus Christ Amen

Our service ends with the Grace,
The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the Love of God,
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.

[Buxtehude- Fugue in C maj](#)

Played on our organ by Gordon for the congregation during Lockdown