

Pentecost 25, November 22, 2020, Order of Worship

Greeting In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Introduction to Readings for November 22, 2020, Christ the King Sunday

The universal rule of God, expressed in Christ the Shepherd-King, is a dominant theme in all the readings this week. The two Old Testament texts reveal the nurturing, protecting role of the Shepherd-King, whose people we are. Psalm 95 praises “the Lord, the great God, the great King above all gods” for being the Lord of “the flock under his care.” Ezekiel 34 shows the political nature of the shepherd’s guiding and defending role by condemning the succession of shepherd-kings who have neglected and exploited the flock.

Both of the New Testament passages celebrate the victory of Christ. In Matthew 25 the enthroned Son of Man separates the flock. The risen Christ in Ephesians 1 is seated by God “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.” Christ guarantees that God’s kingdom has come, is coming, and will come in its fullness.

Call to Worship, Psalm 95:1-7a *Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.*

Confession and Forgiveness P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God:

C: Holy One, we confess that we are not awake to your presence, not faithful in using your gifts. We forget the least of our siblings and do not see your image in one another. We are infected by sin that divides your beloved community. Open our hearts to your coming, open our eyes to see you in our neighbor, open our hands to serve your creation. **Amen.**

P: God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them so that, as we accept the wonder of your gifts of abundance, we may give thanks for your rich bounty and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant. **Amen.** (from *Sundays & Seasons*, 2019 Augsburg Fortress)

Opening Hymn *Oh, Worship the King* (public domain) LBW 548, ELW 842

*Oh, worship the King, all glorious above,
Oh, gratefully sing his pow’r and his love;
Our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.*

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*Your bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.*

*O measureless Might, unspeakable love,
While angels delight to praise you above.
The humble creation, though feeble their praise,
With true adoration their songs to you raise.*

The Kyrie In peace, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. For all these things we pray: Lord, have mercy. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day 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 and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

A reading from Ezekiel, the 34th chapter (34:11-16, 20-24) *This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. 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. 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. 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. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice. This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the shepherds of Israel who care only for themselves: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.*

Word of God, word of life.

A reading from Ephesians, the 1st chapter 1:15-23 Paul writes to the church at Ephesus:

Ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all his people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that can be invoked, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Word of God, word of life.

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

The holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 25th chapter (25:14-30), Sermon (page 6)

Hymn of the Day

O Christ the Same (CCLI 706169)

With One Voice, 778

The tune is the Irish song *Danny Boy*

*O Christ the same, through all our story's pages, our loves and hope, our failures and our fears,
Eternal Lord, the king of all the ages, unchanging still amid the passing years:
O living Word, the source of all creation, who spread the skies and set the stars ablaze;
O Christ the same, who wrought our whole salvation, we bring our thanks for all our yesterdays.*

*O Christ the same, the friend of sinners, sharing our inmost thoughts, the secrets none can hide;
Still as of old upon your body bearing the marks of love in triumph glorified:
O Son of Man, who stooped for us from heaven, O Prince of life, in all your saving power;
O Christ the same, to whom our hearts are given: we bring our thanks for this the present hour.*

*O Christ the same, secure within whose keeping our lives and loves, our days and years remain;
Our work and rest, our waking and our sleeping, our calm and storm, our pleasure and our pain:
O Lord of love, for all our joys and sorrows, for all our hopes when earth shall fade and flee;
O Christ the same, beyond our brief tomorrows, we bring our thanks for all that is to be.*

The Apostle's Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 (from *Sundays and Seasons*, ELCA worship guide)

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.

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 make rain fall on both the just and unjust. Help us use 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, especially our own United States. 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 the sinful divisions we have put up between us, and 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. In this time of distancing, sustain all those we miss, and let them know the gifts of your blessing even while we cannot worship together. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord of the living and of the dead, we give you thanks for all the saints at rest from their labors. Rouse us to live by their example, so that saints yet to come may also know your love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray, **Our Father**

Closing Hymn

Crown Him with Many Crowns (public domain)

LBW 170, ELW 855

***Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne;
Hark, how the heav'nly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless king through all eternity.***

***Crown him the Lord of love—behold his hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.
No angels in the sky can fully bear that sight,
But downward bend their burning eyes at mysteries so bright.***

***Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave
And rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died and rose on high,
Who died, eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.***

***Crown him the Lord of peace, whose pow'r a scepter sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease, absorbed in prayer and praise.
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For thou hast died for me;
Thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.***

Benediction: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord look upon you with favor, and give you peace. Amen.

Today is the last Sunday of the “liturgical” (“church”) year. Our “new year” begins next week with the First Sunday of Advent. Jesus is coming soon!