



Order of Service
21st November 2021

INTROIT TiS 769 Now to the King of heaven

CALL TO WORSHIP (*inspired by Revelation 1: 4-8*)

Grace and peace to you from the One who is,
who always was,
and who is still to come -
the Alpha and Omega -the beginning and the end.

***This is our God -
the One who loves us, and who gave himself for us;
who gathers us together in this place,
and bids us seek his face.***

Let us worship God together!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*“We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today
and pay respect to their elder’s past, present and emerging.”*

HYMN TiS 142 Glory be to God the Father

PRAYER OF PRAISE AND ADORATION

O God, we praise and adore you. You are truly without beginning or ending –
your reign is eternal and your being all-powerful, and yet you chose to reveal your power
in the most powerless and vulnerable manner - as a baby.
As you shared our humanity in Jesus, you gave the world a new understanding of power.
We know now that power is not to be used to dominate, but to serve others as Christ did.
He transformed the love of power by the power of love.
We gather today to celebrate your rule of love in our hearts as we experience it in Jesus
and through the enabling gift of your Spirit.
We offer this prayer of gratitude for these blessings in the name of Jesus, our Servant King. Amen

PSALM 132:1-12

O Lord, remember your faithful with kindness;
enduring hardships of all sorts for your sake.
Vowing to establish a place to your glory;
and a house for your worship.
Let us enter the LORD’s holy place,
and humbly come before our God.
Come, Lord God, and fill this place,
with your loyal-love, and your everlasting covenant!
Your priests are clothed in your triumph;
and your saints sing for joy.
For the sake of those who serve you do not turn from your anointed one.
to whom you swore a firm oath, one which you will not withdraw:
“I will set one of your descendants upon your throne.



*If your sons keep my covenant and my terms that I teach them,
then their sons too, for all time, shall sit upon your throne.”*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jesus, servant king, we confess our failure to grasp that your reign is found whenever domination is overcome, whenever justice is experienced, and whenever people are released from prejudice and exploitation.

*Forgive us any involvement in the pursuit of power which exploits
or demeans others.*

We confess our lack of commitment in seeking to transform systems which leave people powerless. Too often we prefer to leave the difficult tasks to others so that we can get on with our own safe agendas.

Forgive us when we forget that doing your will is our greatest priority.

Remind us, O God, that the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to witness to the values of your kingdom in and through all we do and say, and that thankfully this power far exceeds any apathy or fear on our part.

*Renew us with your Spirit, O God, so that our lives testify to the truth of
your kingdom revealed so fully in Jesus, servant king, in whose name we pray. Amen*

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS:

The good news is this: our sins are forgiven through “Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sinsto him be glory and dominion forever and ever.” Rev 1:5,6

Hallelujah! Amen!

AN EARLY WORD

HYMN TiS 659 The Lord is my shepherd

BIBLE READINGS:

John 18:33-37

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” ³⁵ Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” ³⁷ Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

Revelation 1:4-8

⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed^[a] us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Look! He is coming with the clouds;

every eye will see him,

even those who pierced him;

and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.



REFLECTION

Today marks the end of our liturgical Church Year. Next Sunday the new church year begins with the first Sunday of Advent, the time of preparing for the birth of Jesus. So will begin again the cycle of the Church Year as we make our way towards Bethlehem during Advent; celebrate the Birth of the Jesus at Christmas; remember the stories of how he grows from a baby into a man throughout the season of Epiphany. During Lent we will turn again to preparing, but this time not for his Jesus' birth but for his death, and then, thankfully there is Easter to celebrate, which continues until the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Easter. That's when we remember that Jesus did not leave us here high and dry but sent the Holy Spirit amongst us. And that takes us into the long season of Pentecost when we hear stories inviting us to grow into a deeper understanding of the Kingdom of God.

And then our cycle returns to Christ the King, which is where we are today.

Today our readings offer a diverse understanding of kingship.

The psalm portrays an earthly king, dressed in splendid clothing, wearing a resplendent crown and sitting on a throne.

The Revelation reading has Jesus appearing in the clouds - our Alpha and Omega who is and was and who is to come. These scriptures portray a king of strength, power, dominion and glory.

When we come to the Gospel reading, however, and hear Jesus talking, the picture changes. Here in the Gospel we find Jesus in front of Pilate. He's already been arrested, already committed to what he knows will take place all too soon.

"Are you the King of the Jews?" Pilate asks him. Jesus replies: "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." I am sure Pilate has not the faintest idea what Jesus is talking about. What land, what people is Jesus proclaiming to be king over? "So you are a king?" asks Pilate. Jesus answer: "You say that I am a king."

What kind of King is Jesus and what exactly does his kingdom look like? The Gospels are full of parables about the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is like... they begin. The kingdom of God is like the mustard seed, so small and yet it grows so big. The Kingdom of God is like the merchant who gives up everything for the pearl of great price. The kingdom of God is like the father who embraces his prodigal son. There are so many wonderful parables about what the Kingdom of God is like.

What about the king? What does the king look like?. In the middle of John's gospel we are given a clue. In chapter 10 Jesus talks of himself not as a king but as a shepherd, a good shepherd – one who lays down his life for others.

"I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

In these words we see clearly a Shepherd king - one whose power does not come from amassing troops or money or land. Rather he is a king whose dominion comes from his willingness to lay it all down, to lay his life down for others, for us, his sheep. And then to pick it up again for us all.

Jesus lived out the truth of God's kingdom by showing us how different that kingdom is from the kingdoms of the world. The truth that Pilate could not recognise is that the kingdom of God is an environment where God's rule is acknowledged - where the values of justice, love and peace operate as the normal state of affairs.

It is not the kind of king Pilate was familiar with, nor anybody else around Jesus for that matter. And it's not really the kind of king we are familiar with either. Here is a king whose strength and power come from love and sacrifice, not dominion and might. The boundaries of this kingdom of Christ are not defined by anything other than God's unfailing love.

It is hard to comprehend just how big and deep and broad and wide this Kingdom must really be. What we can understand and give heartfelt thanks for is that Jesus has moved on from his conversation with Pilate



and been led to his cross. There he has laid down his life, and then three days later has walked from his grave - Jesus, our Good Shepherd, Christ the King, who knows our name and calls us. This is the kind of king Jesus is – a shepherd king. What does this mean for us as Jesus' followers?

When we confess Jesus as king and invite in the reign of Christ, we are praying that Jesus' rule of peace and justice and equity and equality will come... also to us. We are praying that we might be part of Jesus' kingdom, that we might share the wonder of his reign with others, participate in it, feel it made real and actualized in our own lives, and experience the joy that comes from being caught up in and aligned with the purposes of God. It means that we are drawn into a different way of being, here and now, equipped to love and serve with joy, to confess with honesty, to recommit ourselves to the healing of the world with confidence. Because the kingdom of God is coming...on its own...even now, and we get to be part of that. Thanks be to God.

KING?

King is your word not mine;
Friend I am, and not very choosy,
pagans and prostitutes,
publicans and sinners,
grace is my kingdom.

King is your word, not mine;
Servant I am, no one beneath me,
feet washer and waiter,
serving the least,
love is my kingdom

King is your word, not mine;
Physician I am, all free of charge,
touching the leper,
expelling the demons,
health is my kingdom.

King is your word, not mine;
A seer I am, seeing God's word
in mustard seed and yeast,
wildflower and ravens,
truth is my kingdom.

King is your word, not mine;
Tradesman I am, honing my craft,
familiar with wood,
hammer and nails,
grace is my kingdom.

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HYMN TiS 256 From heaven you came, helpless babe

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEDICATION OF OFFERING



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Almighty God:
from the beginning of time
to the end of eternity,
you have chosen
to use your power and majesty
to love us,
to redeem us,
to shape us as your people.

King of Kings
and Lord of Lords:
you became weak
so you could confront
the strength of sin and death,
confounding their ridicule
with your resurrection.

Spirit of God,
resting upon us:
may your power enflame us
with your peace;
may your peace touch us
with your grace;
may your grace fill us
with your hope;
may your hope lead us
into your Kingdom.

God in Community, Holy in One,
may your word be on our lips,
as we pray together as Jesus
has taught us, saying,

*. 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.*

HYMN TiS 147 To God be the glory

Blessing

Go now in peace.
Bring the good news of God's eternal love,
the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit to all you meet.
Go in peace. Amen.

TiS 779 May the feet of God walk with you

