

St Martin's Church, North Nibley : A service of the Word - Christ the King [Using Common Worship, esp.

Times and Seasons pp.586ff.]

Welcome to all. *[Priest]* Notices

[Priest] We meet today at the Feast of Christ the King,
in the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Lord, speak to us that we may hear your word.
Move among us that we may behold your glory.
Receive our prayers that we may learn to trust you. **Amen**

The Collect

God our 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.**

Reading: Ephesians 1.15-end

Sermon

Our reading stresses the greatness of Christ's kingship. The letter to the Ephesians has already stressed that God's purpose to save us in Christ was set before the universe was created. Jesus's reign is the purpose, meaning and goal of all history, all creation. It thus so far precedes us that it cannot be seen as our achievement. It is God's purpose, God's action in grace, freely given love, which establishes the rule of Christ. When the Bible calls Christ Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, it reflects Christ's saving reign as eternal, from before the beginning to beyond any end. It is God's action by the work of God the Father, who willed it and sent Christ to bear all the results of evil that disfigure creation, so that God in Christ took responsibility for all, and, by raising Christ, showed that all the results of evil are finally overcome and cancelled in Jesus. That is what Christ's victory and reign mean and entail, and Christ's reign is God's own reign, the reign of the Father through and with Christ.

Christ's reign is of course the action of God the Son, Christ himself fulfilling God's will of love, and saving creation from the inside, becoming a creature for us as Jesus, to raise us and creation by his reign. Christ's reign is the great act of solidarity, the union of love between God and creation. And Christ's reign is the action of the Holy Spirit, for Christ reigns in us by giving us God's Spirit, to share God's life and love with us.

So celebrating Christ the King is a fitting conclusion to the Church's year, for it shows God's goal which we consider at Advent, and is the result of Christ's birth, manifestation, teaching and healing, suffering, resurrection and ascension, and sending the Holy Spirit.

Christ reigns now, for he has risen and ascended. But his reign will be completed at the completion of creation, at the end of time in eternity. Let us trust and live out that reign now by care for those in need, whose needs Christ shared and met, that we may share that reign eternally. Amen.

Creed. *[Priest]* Let us declare our faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Though he was Divine, He did not cling to equality with God, but made himself nothing.

Taking the form of a slave, he was born in human likeness,

He humbled himself and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore God has raised him on high, and given him the name above every name:

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Praying for ourselves as we ask God for forgiveness

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.

The kingdom is yours, but we so often turn away from your just rule:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

The power is yours, but we so often trust in our own power and strength:

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

The glory is yours, but we fall short of the glory of God:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Saviour forgive your sins and make you holy to serve him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving,

Let us with confidence present our prayers and supplications to the throne of grace.

We pray for all those in positions of power, that they may govern with wisdom and integrity, serving the needs of their people. May your reign come: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for the Church, the sign of your reign, that it may extend your welcome to people of every race and background. May your reign come: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for Christians of every denomination, that together we may come to understand the royal priesthood you bestowed on us in baptism:

May your reign come: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose commitment to truth brings them into conflict with earthly powers, that they may have courage to endure: May your reign come: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for this community of faith, that, attentive to your word, we may always worship in spirit and in truth. May your reign come: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Loving God,

you have taught us that the power of the heart is greater than the power of wealth and might.

Hear us as we pray for the fulfilment of your reign.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our King; to him be glory for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Our service draws to a conclusion *[Priest] As we come to close our service, we use the traditional collect for Stir up Sunday, the old name for the Sunday before Advent. Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people, that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may be thee be plenteously rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The Blessing

Christ our King make you faithful and strong to do his will,
that you may reign with him in glory;
and the blessing ...