



St. Peter's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church

Bay Shore
New York 11706

We extend a warm welcome to everyone, especially any visitors who may be worshiping with us today.

If you do not already have a church home, please feel welcome to join this Parish family.

*Our Services begin with the Opening Voluntary.
You are invited to enter quietly into the spirit of worship
as the music is played.*

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING THE HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE II 22 November 2020 ✠ 10:00 am



THE WORD OF GOD

Opening Voluntary Sinfonia from Cantata No. 29 "We Thank Thee, God, We Thank Thee" J. S. Bach

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever Amen.

The Celebrant says the Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Song of Praise: Gloria in excelsis

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect of the Day (Christ the King)

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Lessons

The First Lesson: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 100

- 1 Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; *
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.
- 2 Know this: The Lord himself is God; *
he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
- 3 Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise; *
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.
- 4 For the Lord is good;
his mercy is everlasting; *
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

The Second Lesson: Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord

Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

The Right Reverend Johncy Itty

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People, Form VI (BCP, p. 387)

The Leader and People pray responsively

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

For all people in their daily life and work;

For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world;

For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;

For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;
For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

For Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Lawrence, GERALYN, Daniel, and William, our Bishops; and for John, our Bishop-in-Residence; and for all bishops and other ministers;
For all who serve God in his Church.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation. . .

For those who have asked our prayer: Alan, Andrea, Ann, Annakutty, Anthony, Autumn, Ben, Betty, Betty C., Caroline, Chris, David, Diane, Donna, Elinor, Emily, Gary, George, Greg, Hannah, Helen, Jackie, Joanne, Joel, John, Joy, Kamryn, Ken, Lenore, Lorraine, Mark, Matthew, Michelle, Roger, Ronald, Sarah Grace, Shanti, Sister Joy, Steve, Sue, Theresa, Tria, and William;

For those in the Armed Forces, especially Christian, John, Robert, and Stephen;

For the unemployed and underemployed; for all who suffer from addictions; for all who suffer chronic illness, and for all caregivers;

For our companion Dioceses Torit & Ecuador-Central; and for mercy, peace, and justice among all peoples, especially those whose lives have been devastated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, natural disasters, terrorism, war, famine, tyranny, or injustice.

Silence

Hear us, Lord;
For your mercy is great.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life;
Silence

We will exalt you, O God our King;
And praise your Name for ever and ever.

We pray for all who have died, remembering especially Ellen Jung and Ed Ritchie; and all those whose lives have been lost to the Covid-19 virus; that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.
Silence

Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;
Who put their trust in you.

We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.

Leader and People

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
in your compassion forgive us our sins,
known and unknown, things done and left undone;
and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life,
to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Bishop says

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

The Peace

The Celebrant says to the people

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Music at the Offertory Prelude on “Kremser”

William C. Steere

The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer B (BCP, p. 367)

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

The Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, through Jesus Christ our Lord; because in Jesus Christ our Lord you have received us as your sons and daughters, made us citizens of your kingdom, and given us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,

We proclaim his resurrection,

We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in

subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Blessed Mary, St. Peter, St. Edmund, and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. *AMEN*.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People and Celebrant

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,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast.

AT THE TIME FOR COMMUNION:

- ◆ *Only the Host (Bread) will be distributed; not wine*
- ◆ *Please approach the Altar in SINGLE FILE from the CENTER AISLE only, not the side aisles*
- ◆ *Observe Social Distancing in the aisle by using the pew markers for vacant pews*
- ◆ *Communicants should sanitize their hands before receiving the host. You may use your own, or a bottle is placed at the head of the aisle*
- ◆ *The Host will be placed in the palm of each Communicant, not on the tongue*
- ◆ *Please return to your seat, by way of the side aisles*
- ◆ *Remove your mask to take the Host, then replace the mask for the remainder of the service*

The Postcommunion Prayer

Celebrant Let us pray.

Celebrant and People

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing and Dismissal

Closing Voluntary Chorale Prelude on “Now Thank We, All Our God”

J. S. Bach

— FOR THE SERVICE —

Officiant and Preacher

Lector

Lay Eucharistic Minister and Intercessor

Acolyte

Organist

Ushers

Altar Guild

The Right Reverend Johncy Itty

Brian Clark

Juanita Moon

William Logan

Mark Engelhardt

Marc and Dawn Johnston

Rosemary Johnson, Dawn Johnston, Irene Feola, Beverly Eastman

*The Flowers today are given to the Glory of God
and in loving memory of Ellen Jung by Linda and Bruce Rauch.*

Diocesan and state health guidelines prevail. Please observe the procedures listed below, and as always, thank you for observing these protocols, which is an expression of your care for everyone in the Parish family.

AT THE TIME FOR COMMUNION:

- ♦ Only the Host (Bread) will be distributed; not wine
- ♦ Please approach the Altar in SINGLE FILE from the CENTER AISLE only, not the side aisles
- ♦ Observe Social Distancing in the aisle by using the pew markers for vacant pews
- ♦ Communicants should sanitize their hands before receiving the host. You may use your own, or a bottle is placed at the head of the aisle
- ♦ The Host will be placed in the palm of each Communicant, not on the tongue
- ♦ Please return to your seat, by way of the side aisles
- ♦ Remove your mask to take the Host, then replace the mask for the remainder of the service

Please also remember, *per the mandates of the State of New York and
The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island:*

- Face Masks are required to be worn by all in attendance at all times.
(We have a supply on hand, if you forgot yours.)
- Physical Distancing of 6 feet must be maintained at all times, and pews are marked for that purpose.
- Check in upon arrival, and if your name is not in the data base, please provide your NAME, E-MAIL ADDRESS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER for Contact Tracing.
- One-time use paper bulletins are provided, and must be taken away by the user. Please be sure to take yours with you, and don't leave it behind in the pew or in the Narthex.
- PLEASE PLACE YOUR OFFERING IN ONE OF THE OFFERING PLATES NEAR THE ALTAR BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS. IF YOU COME IN LATE, PLEASE PLACE IT IN THE PLATE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SERVICE.

Until further notice, all Day-by-Day booklets and sign-up sheets will be kept in the office. To pick up a tract, or sign up for anything, including memorial flowers, please ask Mark or Brian, or on Sundays, an usher.

— PRAYERS FOR THE WEEK —

We pray for those who have asked our prayers: Alan, Andrea, Ann, Annakutty, Anthony, Autumn, Ben, Betty, Betty C., Caroline, Chris, David, Diane, Donna, Elinor, Emily, Gary, George, Greg, Hannah, Helen, Jackie, Joanne, Joel, John, Joy, Kamryn, Ken, Lenore, Lorraine, Mark, Matthew, Michelle, Roger, Ronald, Sarah Grace, Shanti, Sister Joy, Steve, Sue, Theresa, Tria, and William;

We pray for those who have died; remembering especially Ellen Jung and Ed Ritchen; all those whose lives have been lost to Covid-19; and those grieving the death of a loved one, that they may they find comfort and peace;

We pray for those in military service, and especially for Christian, John, Robert, and Stephen;

We pray for the unemployed and underemployed; for all who suffer from addictions; for all who suffer chronic illness, and for all caregivers;

We pray for our companion dioceses of Torit & Ecuador-Central; and for mercy, peace, and justice among all peoples, especially those whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters, terrorism, war, famine, tyranny, or injustice;

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for Christ Church, Oyster Bay; St. Margaret's, Plainview; Seminarians and Inquirers; St. Stephen's, Port Washington; Church of the Ascension, Rockville Centre; St. Paul's, Roosevelt; Trinity Church, Roslyn;

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for the Church of Bermuda (Extra-Provincial to the Archbishop of Canterbury); and the Dioceses of Santiago (Chile); Santiago (Philippines); Sao Paulo (Brazil); East Carolina, East Tennessee (The Episcopal Church); Sapele (Nigeria); East Kerala (South India); Saskatchewan, Saskatoon (Canada); East Ruwenzori, Sebei (Uganda); Eastern Himalayas (North India); Eastern Kowloon (Hong Kong); Kyushu (Japan).

Parish Financial Snapshot for the Week ending November 15, 2020

Compared with the Third Weekend in November, 2019

	Total 2020 Annual Budget	\$363,544	2020	2019
Total Parish Expenses Per Week			\$6,991	\$7,465
Donations Third Weekend in November			3,201	3,610
LPL Transfer			1,865	1,865
Weekly Overage (Deficit)			(1925)	(1,990)
Year-to-Date Deficit			(\$85,758)	(\$105,138)

— PARISH NOTICES —

PLEASE PLACE YOUR OFFERING IN ONE OF THE OFFERING PLATES NEAR THE ALTAR BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS. IF YOU COME IN LATE, PLEASE PLACE IT IN THE PLATE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SERVICE.

COMMITMENT SUNDAY IS TODAY NOVEMBER 22ND. Please remember St. Peter's Parish in your prayers of Thanksgiving, and return your pledge card today by placing it in the Offering Plate.

SUNDAY SCHOOL/ANGEL TREE/PAGEANT UPDATE! To all of our Sunday School and Church families: Greetings, and please be sure to pick up your Sunday School-to-go kit at this Sunday's 10am service as well as your child's chocolate advent calendar! Each kit contains simple lesson plans for the next two weeks, a fun craft to do at home, and a snack and juice box! Also included this week will be supplies for decorating Christmas ornaments which will be hung on our Angel Tree. We hope that you will decorate ornaments with your child at home and then return them the following week for the first Sunday in Advent 11/29/20. Traditionally we hold the annual ornament workshop at the start of Advent and proudly display our hand-made ornaments which are then printed with first names and Christmas wishes for a child and/or family in need. This year, for safety reasons, we will still be displaying our ornaments but instead will have a sign up sheet available by the tree in the narthex on 11/29/20 so that members of the congregation can "adopt" and shop for a person in need. If you are unable to shop or would like to make a donation so that we can shop for you, please reach out to Anne Perry at 631-894-7806. Please arrange to have all gifts in gift bags labeled and back to the church by 12/20 so they can be safely delivered to those in need. Thank you for all of your support!

Plans are underway for our first virtual Christmas Pageant! We are working on a safe, creative way to deliver the Gospel and wonderful news of Jesus' birth and are asking for children who are interested in participating with a small part from home to reach out to Anne Perry. The traditional script for our pageant will be shared amongst participants and pre-recorded, and Christmas Carols will be added with the assistance of Mark Engelhardt. Please let us know of your interest in participating by 11/29/20. As always, thank you for your ongoing support! Thanks Everyone, stay safe and well! . . . Annie Perry

WE RECEIVED WORD THIS WEEK THAT LONG-TIME PARISHIONER ED RITCHEN died last Sunday in Charleston, SC, where he had been living for some time. His wife, Terry, died a few years ago. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

THE ALTAR GUILD WILL MEET ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, AT 9AM IN THE LOUNGE.

BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES: Tuesdays at 10:30am in the Lounge and Sundays at 9am in the Lounge. Bring your bible and a mask! All are invited.

IN RECENT TIMES AN AVERAGE OF 15% OF AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS DO NOT HAVE DEPENDABLE OR CONSISTENT ACCESS TO FOOD AND HEALTHY LIVING. This is regarded as low food security and has been at its highest level since the mid 90's. If we can help please call St. Peter's Food Ministry 631-665-0051.

THE LADIES OF THE THRIFT COTTAGE have asked that no Donations be made until further notice. They are in the midst of reorganizing for an opening at a later date.

ST. PETER'S IS NOW HOSTING SEVERAL SUPPORT GROUPS in addition to Volleyball Clubs and two Soccer Clinics. Our two long-standing AA groups continue to meet on Monday and Friday evenings. New groups now meeting are Al-Anon on Friday mornings at 10am and Sunday evenings at 7pm, and a new support group for heroin addiction, also meeting on Sunday evenings. Please contact Megan via the hotline: 631-210-6297 or www.halongisland.org if interested in joining the HA group. Call the parish office if interested in attending the AA or Al-Anon groups for contact information.

Where all are queens and kings

BY J. DAVEY GERHARD



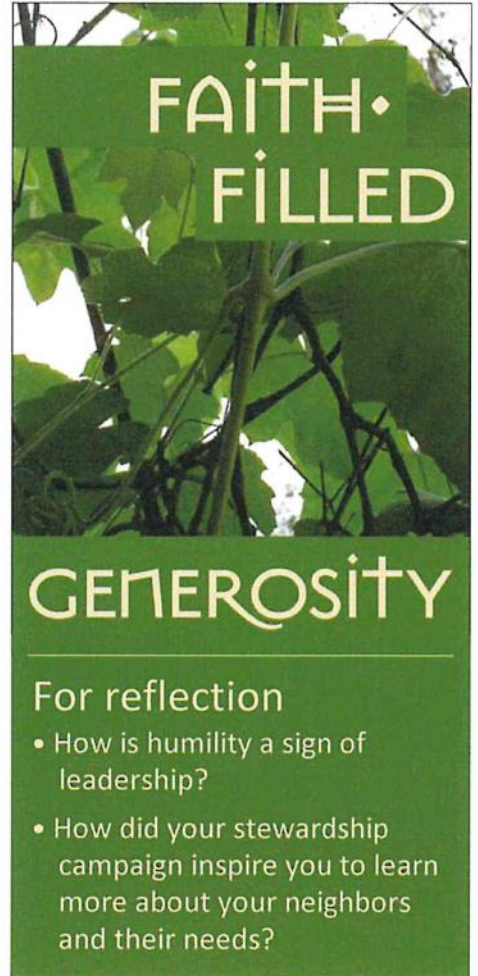
The Church designates the final Sunday of the Church year as the Feast of Christ the King, a day in which the united rule of Christ over all of the universe is celebrated. In many communities, it is a high feast, with altar guilds preparing white vestments, flower guilds celebrating God's glory in elaborate displays, and hymns filled with alleluias. What a way to end the year, to celebrate stewardship, and to prepare for Advent!

But before we get too carried away with the grandeur of it all, today's Gospel tells a different story about kingship and leadership: It tells of service. Typical of Jesus, he begins with what we expect — in this case power and triumph — and turns it upside down and in doing so, reminds us that it is through our ministry that we increase the role of the Church in our community. True power doesn't come through force or wealth or conquest, it is derived from generosity, charity, and love. We change the hearts and minds of our neighbors by loving them and serving them.

Throughout this stewardship season we have heard about the mission of our own churches. You have learned about the ways that your gifts impact the life of your church and your neighbors. Perhaps this year you met the challenges of a global pandemic by adapting your worship. Maybe you responded to the needs of your community by increasing your outreach or your ministry to serve your neighbors. What is certain is that you had the opportunity to express your love and your hope for the world through your annual gift to your church.

We seek and serve Christ in all people by serving our neighbors. This is the great commandment of Jesus to his followers and it is one of the promises we make at our Baptism. When we are asked by those we meet on the street or those to whom we minister in our communities if we will offer them drink when they thirst, or visit them when they are lonely, or give them food when they hunger, our answer will be yes! Through our generosity and our faith, we are called to that same royal line as Jesus, leaders in our communities. Now that is a feast worth celebrating!

J. Davey Gerhard is the Executive Director of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship, and lives and teaches his faith in San Francisco, California.





BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

Christ the King Sunday (A) November 29, 2020

RCL: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46

The texts for Christ the King Sunday in Year A mince no words: from the beginning of the Ezekiel text to the end of the Matthew text, they work together to tell the story of what kind of reign we can expect from Christ. On a Sunday like this one, some questions may be helpful to explore around the whole concept of Christ as king:

- What strengths and challenges come up when you imagine Christ as a king or God as a ruler? How does this image resonate or not resonate with you, from where you are located in the 21st century?
- How might Christ's life, death, and resurrection rule us differently than human governments and rulers?

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

In Ezekiel, we are given a less familiar text about a more familiar image: God as the shepherd of the sheep. Writing from Babylon, Ezekiel has experienced the fall of Judah and deportation to Babylon. Ezekiel is currently under the thumb of a very different kind of kingship—the rule of an authoritarian, conquering king, legitimated by religion, who consumes the weak and those unable to defend themselves. This makes his vision of God's leadership and reign all the more significant. The lost will be found, the weak tended, the injured bandaged, the lean fed. The fat, the ones who grew big and strong by unjustly feeding off the weak, will receive their just rewards. These images are vital ways of showing what kind of leader God chooses to be, and what the reign of Christ will entail.

- What unjust human rule do you notice in the world around you? How might this vision of God as king, caring for the lost in the flock, speak hope into these situations?

Psalm 100

In this psalm of praise, God is named as creator and king, faithful and merciful to all the lands. Unlike our other readings for Christ the King Sunday, the central function of the people in this song is to rejoice, to be joyful, to praise and move toward God. With the world as it is, crisis after crisis abounding, it can be easy for us to be ultra-focused on God's condemnation of what is unjust, punishments or retributions for those who refuse to serve the least of these. Yet, through this psalm, we are reminded that following God

is also about joy: joy in God's creation, joy in our own selves as God created us, joy in receiving mercy, and joy in God's faithfulness to us.

- When was the last time you experienced a moment of true joy? How can you pray with that moment, lift it up to God, and be thankful for it?
- How can you cultivate moments of joy in your life, even amid hard circumstances?

Ephesians 1:15-23

Paul is, if anything, an amazing teacher on the nature of Christ. Here, he speaks as though Christ's reign is already here, and it is a powerful image of the one raised from the dead, who now holds authority over the entire cosmos. No empire or leader can take this power from our crucified Lord, now raised. Christ's power and authority come from that act of laying everything down and walking through death into life again, on behalf of all those on this earth in need of new life. Because of this, God has lifted up his name, placed all of creation under his feet and into his body. In the context of Christ the King Sunday, this invites us to wonder how that authority is at work in our own lives.

- Who—or what—has authority over you in your daily activities?
- How might we live if we trusted that Christ did indeed have the only authority that mattered? What small step would you take first?

Matthew 25:31-46

In this passage, the reign of God is clearly seen as a time of reckoning. Matthew is consistent here in his distrust of religion that does not act in the best interest of the hungry, poor, and lost. Christ the King is the one who will implement a just rule for the world, a rule that privileges those who are in league with the weak, rather than those who are in league with the strong. Likewise, Christ as King can be found in those all around us who are strangers, hungry, naked, sick, in prison, and thirsty. The good news of this passage is the promise that, someday, the world will be turned over—and those who do the work of serving the least will be those who celebrate and rejoice with God. In our current world, with human powers reigning as they are, it can feel as though care for the least of these is an exercise in futility. These efforts may feel like a useless drop in an ocean of pain and injustice, but the promise to us in this passage is that in God's reign, in God's dream, in God's time, these drops create an ocean of restoration. God notices what we are doing, even if the powers and the authorities of this world seem to have no interest—and in time, it will matter.

- Who in your neighborhood is feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick, or welcoming the stranger? How may the reign of Christ be found there among them?
- Based on who Christ claims to be in this passage, who in your neighborhood is Christ right now?

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Published by the Office of Communication of The Episcopal Church, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017
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BULLETIN INSERTS

November 22, 2020 – Christ the King Sunday (A) Special Insert: The Episcopal Church at Work

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we gather to worship and grow into the Jesus Movement. This edition of The Episcopal Church at Work will share stories of the people and programs that have helped our parishes, dioceses and fellow Christians walk in the Way of Love in these unsettling days.

The Sustaining Power of Small Group Ministry

The COVID-19 pandemic has recalibrated how we worship together and has highlighted the importance of Small Group ministry. What is Small Group ministry? It is a gathering of people who meet to share prayer stories, reflect on scripture, and pray together, supported by resources created by the Office of Evangelism. These resources outline all that a parish or parishioner needs to launch a small group in their faith community. Learn more at iam.ec/smallgroups.



Good News Gardens

In the early weeks of the pandemic, good news seemed elusive. But as with many of God's blessings, Jerusalem Greer, Staff Officer for Evangelism, realized good news was growing right in front of her—in her garden. Taking a page from the history books and the Victory Gardens of World War II, the Office of Evangelism launched Good News Gardens. Envisioned as a means for individuals and parishes to connect with the hope and promise of setting a seed in the soil, the Team believes that congregations and individuals can use their gardens to help address food scarcity in their communities, making Good News abundant. Learn more at iam.ec/goodnewsgardens.

Dismantling Racism Grants

At a June 2020 virtual meeting, the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church awarded new grants of \$150,000 each to the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky and the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. The Council approved the Dismantling Racism Grants in response to the challenges these two Dioceses confront in discerning how to engage their communities in faithfully responding to the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and others. The Episcopal Church in Minnesota's Diocesan Advisory Group identified three areas in which they felt the diocese could have the greatest impact in advancing racial justice: partnering with local community groups, encouraging youth and young adult volunteerism and formation, and creating anti-racism resources for parishes and church plants available in multiple languages.

You can receive our full offering, *The Church at Work*, as an email with links to articles, events, and information about how The Episcopal Church is serving you and your community. For more information, email Julia Alling at jalling@episcopalchurch.org or visit iam.ec/development.



Litany of Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all his gifts
so freely bestowed upon us.

For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea,
We thank you, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women,
revealing the image of Christ,
We thank you, Lord.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,
We thank you, Lord.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,
We thank you, Lord.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,
We thank you, Lord.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering
and faithful in adversity,
We thank you, Lord.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,
We thank you, Lord.

For the communion of saints, in all times and places,
We thank you, Lord.

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises
given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord;

*To him be praise and glory, with you, O Father, and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen.*

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A parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry

The Right Reverend Lawrence C. Provenzano, DD

The Right Reverend Geralyn Wolf

The Right Reverend Daniel Allotey

The Right Reverend R. William Franklin

The Right Reverend Johncy Itty, DD

Mark Engelhardt

Linda Ruggieri

Presiding Bishop

Diocesan Bishop

Assistant Bishop

Assisting Bishop

Assisting Bishop

Bishop-in-Residence

Associate for Administration, Liturgy, and Music

Financial Administrator

The Wardens and Vestry of the Parish

Brian Clark, *Senior Warden*

Joe Goncalves, *Junior Warden*

Class of 2021

Roger Burmeister

Bill Crawford

Clyde Payne

Class of 2022

Stephanie Campbell

Eric Eastman

Lisa Hallett

Class of 2023

Marc Johnston

Bill Kern



Praising God, Serving Neighbor

We seek to worship the Lord as one loving family

by serving our parish and community

through prayer, music, education, and outreach