

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

Christ the King—22nd November 2020

Collect:

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.

Psalm 95.1-7

1 Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.
3 For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.
4 In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.

5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;

7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.



A reading from the letter to the Ephesians (1.15-end)

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's 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 in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy 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 is 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. **This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (25.31-end)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. **This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, o Christ.**

Reflection: *‘The King will reply: Truly, I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ Matthew 25.40*

It’s the season for saints, and any of you who follow morning prayer from the Bishop’s oratory will have noticed that we have had many inspiring saints during November, among them Queen Margaret of Scotland (1043-1093), Princess Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) and our much loved King Edmund (~840-870), who we commemorate on 20th November. Today, as we are thinking about ‘Christ the King’ in the light of the above Bible readings, I find the example of these medieval ‘royal’ saints extremely helpful, as I struggle to hold together our contemporary image of kings and queens with that of Christ the King.

What do we know about King Edmund, apart from him being beheaded by the Danes, his head separated from his body and found by a wolf? Born in about the year 840, Edmund was nominated as king while still a boy. He became King of Norfolk in 855 and of Suffolk the following year. As king, he won the hearts of his subjects by his care of the poor and his steady suppression of wrong-doing. When attacked by the Danes, he refused to give over his kingdom or to renounce his faith in Christ. He followed closely in the example of Jesus, not taking up weapons when the Danes came to arrest, torture and kill him. The people of Bury, who added St Edmund to the name of their town and people across the world, have been inspired by his example ever since.

I wonder what happened over the centuries that it became harder and harder for Christian kings and queens to live a life of service inspired by their faith, with a concern for the poor and vulnerable at the centre? Thankfully, our society to this day has been shaped by the values of Christianity, which sees everyone as a child of God and encourages us to take care of each other, especially those who are in need, who are hungry, homeless, imprisoned, victims of injustice and exploitation. I am not keen on using military language in relation to the Christian life, but it is a great image to think of the army of Christians, following a king who inspires us to follow him in the service of others; in caring for the least of our brothers and sisters as the gospel reminds us today. The COVID pandemic is generating armies of volunteers, many Christian, many from other religions, many of no faith, living out the gospel calling to feed the hungry, the thirsty, to welcome the stranger, visit the sick and those in prison. However, seeing the need of our time, in our own country and across the world, it’s easy to become overwhelmed, thinking ‘what difference can I actually make?’ Especially, when we feel tired, anxious and overwhelmed ourselves. That’s where prayer comes in, everyday! To hear Jesus’ invitation to come to him, when we feel weary, full of doubts and overwhelmed. To pause, to be nurtured by his word and presence; to remember that we have friends, family who care about us, who are Christ to us; to notice the varied ways Christ comes to us. Sometimes, it is us, who are the ‘poor and needy’ – remember - ‘blessed are those who are poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Mt 5.3). At all times, whether we are weary or full of energy, staying close to Jesus reminds us that every single act of love and kindness makes a difference. Last Sunday’s gospel, in the parable of the talents, Jesus encouraged us to use everything we have and are, in the service of his kingdom.

So, as we celebrate the feast of Christ the king today, we may want to ask ourselves which kingdom we choose to live in: one in which the king, like King Edmund, leads by example, having such love for Jesus and faith, that he dedicated his life to building a kingdom on earth in which people care for each other, irrespective of background and status, willing to make sacrifices for their faith. Or would we rather live in a kingdom where everyone pursues their own wealth and status?

In our first reading today, St. Paul encourages the Ephesians: *‘I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy 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.*

Our king, Christ, chose to be with the poor and to give his life to save the world. He lives in us, invites us to trust his presence and follow his example of self-giving love. Amen.

Rev Jutta

God is love. Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

This week's hymn:

Christ triumphant, ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King!
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
hear us as we sing:

*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.*

Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
power and majesty concealing
by your humble birth:
Yours the glory...

Suffering servant, scorned, ill - treated,
victim crucified!
death is through the cross defeated,
sinners justified:
Yours the glory...

Priestly king, enthroned for ever
high in heaven above!
sin and death and hell shall never
stifle hymns of love:
Yours the glory...

So, our hearts and voices raising
through the ages long,
ceaselessly upon you gazing,
this shall be our song:
Yours the glory...

For Our Prayers:

The Bishops are calling on every parish to join them using this prayer at home and at every act of worship for our church, that we grow in trust in God's providence and deepen our own generosity giving of ourselves and of our gifts.

**Loving God,
you are always with us,
and give us all we need to be your church
in Suffolk.**

**Help us, we pray, to give as we have received:
abundantly, generously, and joyfully,
that our worship and our service
may bear witness to your Kingdom of
unfailing love.**

**In the name of your Son
who gave himself for us,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Please pray for:

Those with chronic or long-term illness: Eric Dickerson, Rosemary, Jenny, Andrew Barfield, Kathy Steele, Frank D., Andrew, Peggy, Natacha, Christine, Stephen, Samantha, Rex & Jill, Margaret Christian

Those undergoing treatment or currently ill: Emily, Gloria Elmer, Helen Harlow, Jean Dominy, Leslie Bloomfield, Katie (cancer), Jim, Alice (Joan's grandson's wife), Vincent Lightbody, Trish, Roger Dickerson, Vicky & Matt, Neil Pratt, Maureen Dobson

All who are affected by the Coronavirus in the UK and around the world: *For all who have lost their jobs due to Covid19; all who are despairing. For all who have lost their lives & livelihoods, the injured, the bereaved. For hospital and health care workers*

For our government & MPs', and local councillors: for honesty in politics, for wisdom and justice for all. For refuges across the world & diplomates and peace makers, working to end conflicts

Those who have recently died, and their families mourning their loss: Rachel Fry, Eric Gilson, Diane Bloomfield. RIP.

Call this number —> for free.

It's a lovely way to worship from home!



Notices:

Congratulations to Rev Jutta who was made an Honorary Canon on Sunday 15th! We are very proud of Jutta and thankful for all the work she has done.

Hymn-athon & Carol-athon: Sunday 6th Dec, 11am. Simon is going to perform a **2 hour** marathon of hymns and carols as a fundraiser! Please sponsor this amazing event, which will be livestreamed on our facebook page, and spread the word to get your friends and family to sponsor Simon! There will be a dedicated 'giving page' we can share online - watch this space!

Christmas Mail-Order Mini-Market: starting on *Sat 21st Nov*, you can buy items from our mail order market! Choose from a selection of jams, chutneys, cushions, tree decorations, & wooden bowls, all lovingly hand made! **See mini-market flyer for item details and prices.** To order, contact Alison on 07982 181645 or ajg@talk21.com

Videos in Advent: during Advent, instead of making our own videos each week, we will be sending links to watch the Church of England Advent worship videos at <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/church-online/weekly-online-services>

Advent Reading: Rev Jutta has a selection of Advent books available to borrow, if you would like some reflective reading over the Advent season. Please speak to/email Jutta if you are interested.

Advent & Christmas: Covid permitting, we are planning various special services (to be booked into as we do for Sundays), including:

- Carol service - 13th Dec 6pm
- Zoom Carols - 20th 6pm
- Christingle Service - 24th 4pm
- Midnight Mass - 24th 11.30pm
- Christmas Day - 25th 10am

Prayer for the Nation: every day at 6pm –please join in. Thank you.

This Week:

Sunday, 22nd November

10am: ZOOM Church & Video—do let us know if you would like to join ZOOM Church on the phone

6pm: Youth Group

Tuesday 24th November

6 pm Meditation Group livestream on Facebook/StThomasPilgrimCommunity

Wednesday, 25th November

10am Eucharist livestream on Facebook/StThomasIpswich

Church website:

<http://stthomasipswich.org.uk/>

Sunday Worship & other Worship resources on the Church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasipswich/>

Pray for members of the St Thomas Congregation

Roger & Gloria, Pam Everett, Christine Fisher, Caroline Fisk & family, Joanne & Patrick, Christine Thornhill, Alison & Malcolm, Carole & Frank, Mrs Hughes



Birthdays this week:

23rd: Amber Purnell, Julie Stevens,
25th: Gareth Andrews

Contacts:

Priest in charge: Revd Canon Jutta Brueck m:07958 360564

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Jutta's days off are: Fridays & Saturdays

Assistant Curate: Revd Cat Connolly m: 07530 412988

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Cat's day off: Mondays

Lay Evangelist: Malcolm Gibbs m:07906 665530

Director of Music: Simon Clark BA (Hons) FLCM ARCO

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Stephen Marginson 01473 258791

If you would like to chat, you could also ring:

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