

## Reign of Christ the King

### Reign of Christ the King – 25 November 2018

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to thank Rev Tina Kemp, Minister of Helensburgh with Rhu & Shandon, for her thoughts on the last Sunday of the Christian Year, Reign of Christ the King.

We thank Side by Side for the intercessory prayers for use during the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence (25 November to 10 December).

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 Samuel 23: 1-7.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Psalms 93 .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Revelation 1: 4b-8 .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>John 18: 33-37.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sermon ideas .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Time with children .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Prayers .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Musical suggestions .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Side by Side.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Intercessory Prayers for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## Introduction

Sunday, November 25, the last Sunday of the Christian year, is known as Christ the King Sunday. The Feast of Christ the King was introduced in 1925 by Pope Pius XI in the dark days between the world wars and amidst the rising tide of fascism. Pope Pius XI felt it was time to call on Christian people everywhere to declare their allegiance to the rule not of men but of Christ.

### [2 Samuel 23: 1-7](#)

This is the second of two psalms and contains the last words of David as he reflects on his experience of God's presence and power throughout his reign as king. Here, as David's reign is described, he emphasises his covenant relationship with God. It is because David ruled 'justly' and 'in the fear of God' that Israel has been blessed with peace and prosperity.

### [Psalm 93](#)

This is the first in a series of seven psalms underlining the theme of the Lord's kingship. The opening verse resembles a creed in which the people affirm God's majesty. From on high God ensures the safety and security of the world below (v.1-2) while the storms below cannot match God's majestic rule (v.3-4). Verses 2 and 5 reflect the omnipotent and everlasting nature of a God who occupies an eternal throne and who lives among the people, seeking their commitment to holiness.

### [Revelation 1: 4b-8](#)

The blessing 'grace and peace' are words associated with the new and old covenant, and together embody the salvation of the kingdom of God. Here we see God's kingdom plan coming to fruition in Jesus Christ who, through his death, as firstborn and heir, has assumed the first place in the kingdom of God, has opened it to all humanity and will come again to establish it (v.5-7). Verse 8 emphasises, through echoes of Exodus 3: 14, the firm establishment of God as Lord of all time.

## [John 18: 33-37](#)

Here John continues the running theme, introduced in chapter 1, of Jesus' kingship incarnate in human flesh: "*And the Word became flesh...*" (1:14). This conversation between Jesus and Pilate takes place, significantly, in a palace. Here Jesus makes it clear that the concept of kingship and kingdom is different to that of His captor and did not require physical force in order to establish its power (v36). Pilate most probably uses the term 'king' to show contempt for the Jews. Truth is embodied in Jesus Christ and is not something that can be proved. Truth is "*the Word became flesh*" (1:14).

### **Sermon ideas**

Today's readings invite us to think about the competing kingdoms and power with which we live as Christians in today's world. Worldly kingdoms represent institutional authority. God's kingdom is one where authority is recognisable not by force but by its fundamental values of love, compassion and inclusion. This kind of authority is witnessed in the Gospel passage where Jesus slowly dismantles His interrogator's argument. Pilate might still have political supremacy but he loses the spiritual battle. Jesus is not advocating a change of regime but the coming of an entirely different way of being in relationship with God and one another. It is through acknowledging God's ultimate authority and living the values personified in Jesus that we begin to glimpse the kingdom here on earth. As the author and evangelist Alan Redpath puts it: "*Before we can pray Lord, thy kingdom come, we must be willing to pray, my kingdom go.*"

### **Time with children**

Explain that this is the day we call Christ the King Sunday. It is the last Sunday of the church year as next week we begin a brand new year, and our preparations for Christmas and the coming of Jesus who we call the King of Kings. Ask what it means to be a king/queen. Then ask for a volunteer to be king/queen for the morning. What will make X look more like a king/queen?

Responses could be a throne (*get the child to sit on a chair with a fancy cover over it*), a crown (*a cardboard crown from a well-known fast food outlet or something from the nativity box should suffice!*), a cloak (*a bit of material or nativity item*), a sceptre (*a walking stick with something to decorate the end, e.g. a ball of tinfoil*), treasure (*a box with some costume jewellery*) and servants (*get the other children to kneel down before the king/queen*) and get everyone to shout "long live the king/queen!"

Wait a minute...there's something not quite right. Today we're remembering Jesus, the king. People called Him a king, but did Jesus have all these things? He didn't have a throne (*take away the chair*), he didn't have a robe (*take away the cloak*)... etc., until none of the royal accessories remain. Then ask what Jesus said when His followers wanted to serve Him by washing His feet – '*no, let me serve you*'. Get the servants to stand and the king/queen to kneel.

Summarise by saying Jesus doesn't look or act like the kings or queens we see in our world. Jesus shows that having authority and power isn't about fancy clothes or money or thinking we're better than others. It's about who we are inside and how we treat one another. And we have no better example than Jesus the king to show us the way to do that.

## Prayers

### Prayer of approach and confession

What other king  
abandons heaven's mystery  
to meet us on familiar  
and unholy ground?  
Fashions creation  
with pleasure and passion,  
and then trusts it to  
our fragile faith.

What other king  
comes without elaborate fanfare?  
Slipping quietly in  
to settle not in lofty pulpits  
but among bags, brollies, bibles,  
and ordinary folk in the pews.

What other king  
invites us to come as we are,  
bustling and busy,  
half-hearted and harassed?  
Is always happy to see us  
even in our reluctance,  
always anxious to speak to us,  
to remind us that we are

the special guest.

What other king but You, God.  
The part of You that  
gambled with glory  
to make princes of the poor  
and provoke the privileged;  
that chose humanity  
over monarchy,  
gentleness over greed,  
and peace over power;  
the part of You  
that picked as a palace, a stable;  
as a throne, a father's knee;  
as a crown, a mother's kiss,  
and as Your kingdom, the world;  
whose servants were friends  
whose judgements were just;  
whose challenge was peace  
and whose only command was love.

Your kingdom come, O God,  
is what we pray.  
But still we place ourselves  
above others and above You.  
Still we abuse our position  
and bend the rules to suit us.  
Still we look down on others  
when what we need  
is to look up to You.  
Still we claim as our own  
a creation over which You labour  
and weep to see wasted.

Only You know our deep places  
where hurt and harm lingers.  
Only You have the authority  
to excuse our poor attempts  
at kingdom-making.

And so we ask for that forgiveness now  
in a moment of silence...

Come among us, God,  
Raise our heads  
as a forgiven people.  
Make us rich servants of Your truth  
and gentle leaders of Your people.  
Confine our dreams of power  
to working for Your glory.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.

### **Prayers of thanksgiving**

When You spoke of Your kingdom, Lord,  
You left us puzzled and perplexed,  
yet confident that one day  
we might see it for ourselves.  
When You invited us  
to make it happen here on earth  
You assured us that nothing is impossible  
and filled our inadequate hearts  
with the power and presence of Your Spirit.

So thank You, Lord,  
for the gift of possibility  
and for the trust You place in us  
as builders of a better,  
fairer, more caring world.  
Thank You for the reality of Your presence  
in our labour of love  
for we serve in hostile times  
and look to You to guide and to gather us.  
Thank You for the timeless truths  
which were spoken in Christ Jesus  
who told stories of how it could be  
if only we would have faith in Him.

Thank You that He,  
as foot washer and table guest,  
as holder of the untouchables  
and healer of lost causes,  
as one who was far from  
the world's understanding of royalty,  
has shown us a new way to be  
that brings riches  
beyond our imagining.

Lord, thank You  
For all those who treat  
positions of power  
not as a means of exploitation  
but as an opportunity  
to serve others with justice  
and with compassion.

May we seek to follow that example  
in all that we do.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### **Prayers of intercession**

Lord, as You hung on a cross,  
Your first thought was for others.  
You forgave the ones  
who ridiculed and tortured You,  
You accepted the criminal  
who hung beside You.  
And it was You who made a mockery  
of the sign they placed  
above Your head.  
For little did they know  
that they did indeed  
gaze at a king.

We don't need signs and labels  
to recognise Your power

and Your authority, Lord.  
It is because we have seen  
the unlikely become reality;  
because we have witnessed You  
in the unexpected,  
and because we believe  
in truths honed by a carpenter's son,  
that we dare to hope, Lord,  
that Your kingdom has come among us  
and continues to come,  
day after day,  
among the poor and the lonely,  
the sick and the weary,  
the angry and the abused,  
the warmongers and the peace seekers.

And so it is for those  
and others whose lives are touched  
by grief and greed,  
injustice and injury,  
emptiness and endlessness  
that we pray now,  
trusting in the goodness and the grace  
that retrieved lost sheep and wayward sons;  
that consoled grieving mothers  
and weeping women at a tomb;  
that fed aching stomachs  
and eager minds;  
that soothed the open wounds  
of untouchables  
and the throbbing scars of hatred;  
that laid open itself  
to pain, rejection and abandonment  
so that we might know healing,  
acceptance and belonging.

And if we catch only a glimpse  
of Your mercy among the hardness of life,  
if we can sense Your presence

only for a fleeting moment  
in the busyness of life,  
if we can witness that wholeness  
happens among the brokenness of life,  
then we will know  
that Your kingdom has come  
and we pray that Your will be done.  
This day and always, for Jesus' sake  
and in his name we pray.  
Amen.

### **Prayer of dedication**

You do not ask for much, Lord,  
only our humility  
our open hearts.  
Our hopes of a better world.  
Our hands to serve You.

These gifts we bring, Lord,  
as guests of a king,  
grateful for Your hospitality  
and hopeful that what we offer  
expresses our gratitude.

May they, in Your hands,  
help to show and share  
and celebrate Your love  
throughout the world.  
May they be used  
that Your kingdom will come.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.

## Musical suggestions

- CH4 129 – “The Lord is King!” – an affirmation of Christ as the one true King.
- Mission Praise 454 – “Majesty” – a rousing call to worship Jesus as King and Lord.
- CH4 279 – “Make way” – Christ as fulfilment of prophecy and heralding the good news of the kingdom.
- CH4 453 – “Christ, of God unseen the image” – Christ at the centre of all creation, from before the beginning of time to eternity.
- CH4 641 “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” – an old favourite!
- MP 651 – “The kingdom of God” – a hymn which embodies a blueprint for God’s kingdom.
- CH4 470 – “Jesus shall reign” – the eternal and all-encompassing nature of Christ’s reign.

## Side by Side

Side by Side is a growing movement of people of faith who want to see gender justice become a reality. It includes national churches such as the Church of Scotland; international faith organisations such as the Anglican Communion; and justice movements, including Christian Aid, Cafod; and many other organisations and individuals.

While diverse in cultural background and their understanding of society, Side By Side members are united by a common desire to see injustice overcome and people from every background treated with dignity, respect and justice, regardless of gender. Each global region has its specific barriers to gender justice, so the movement works within its respective countries to influence and promote gender justice. Side By Side believes that gender inequality violates human rights and keeps people in poverty.

The first Convener of the Scottish Side by Side Chapter was the Rev Kathy Galloway. Our vision in Scotland is to shine a light on the challenges that faith communities face when working towards gender justice, highlighting the innovative tools and approaches which faith communities have used to ensure gender justice becomes a reality.

['Faith in Gender Justice'](#) is a new exhibition from Scottish Side by Side, showcasing the role women have played in breaking the silence and becoming messengers of hope. The exhibition tells this story through the work of sixteen women from Scotland and around the world in their campaigning work for climate change; with refugees; in the areas of domestic abuse, education, poverty, and health.

Side By Side aims to:

- engage with faith leaders and faith-based organisations, of all traditions
- work towards gender justice, and so create a Faith Movement in which no one is excluded on the grounds of gender
- support and equip faith leaders to recognise and use their position of power and responsibility – within their spheres of influence – to promote gender equality
- challenge and help change harmful social norms and religious or cultural practices
- actively challenge the structures and systems that prevent women and girls from participating fully within their community and society

- fully involve men and boys in redefining just and equal gender relationships
- work to enable everyone to recognise and achieve their full potential
- seek and value the participation of all stakeholders that we can work with to promote gender justice.

The 16 days from 25 November, the Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, are known as the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#). Side By Side is committed to action during these days.

## Intercessory Prayers for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

*Bidding prayer/Leaders Voice:* Lord in Your mercy

*Response:* **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, Mother and Father of us all,  
Your kingdom is abundant in love, justice and peace.  
Help each of us hear Your call to make this a living reality in our time.  
As we enter these 16 days of activism against gender-based violence,  
we give thanks for those who work to end to gender injustice;  
and we bring before You our sisters, and our brothers, each precious in God's eyes,  
but who weep with the pain of abuse which shames and impoverishes them.

### SILENCE

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Compassionate God,  
stay near, and give healing and wholeness to all who have suffered violence, we think of those  
for whom home is not safe; *(Moment's silence)*  
caught unwillingly in the snares of prostitution; *(Moment's silence)*  
exploited in human trafficking; *(Moment's silence)*  
girls and young women subject to female genital mutilation; *(Moment's silence)*  
children and all young people whose bodies have been violated by sexual abuse as a  
weapon of war.

### SILENCE

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God,  
May Your power – known in strength and gentleness – let Your kingdom prevail.  
We bring before You those who have the power and means to convert hearts and minds  
to new ways of being in community and living with one another.  
Strengthen the determination of Scotland's leaders to work towards the elimination of all  
forms of gender-based violence and all harmful practices.  
Give them wisdom, integrity, and a thirst for justice.  
Transform systems so that human trafficking has no place in Scotland.

## SILENCE

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God,  
we give thanks for the legacy of Scottish women, and men,  
from many denominations, and none, who have protested against gender-based violence.  
We give thanks for those who realised the transformative possibility of faith leaders in  
speaking out, and who had the vision to birth this global movement of people of faith  
standing in solidarity for gender justice.  
We pray for the Scottish Side by Side Chapter as they move forward together.  
Give them wisdom, patience and the passion needed to bring about a kingdom where  
healing and justice and peace reign.

## SILENCE

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

These prayers we ask in the name of the one who has gone before us,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Note: You are free to download, project, print and circulate multiple copies any of these materials for use in worship services, bible studies, parish magazines, etc., but reproduction for commercial purposes is not permitted.