

## Parish of Central Exeter

Morning Worship and Spiritual Communion  
Sunday before Advent, 3<sup>rd</sup> in second lockdown.

Celebration of Christ the King: the last Sunday of this  
current Christian Year.

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020



### 'King and Kingdom'

Welcome everyone.

*Our reflections this morning are by Sheila and the Intercessions provided by Helen. Many thanks to you both.*

*The spirituality of this festival must never be forgotten or understated. No one recognised this more than Henri Nouwen in his *Sabbatical Journey*: 'on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, Christ is presented to us as the mocked King on the Cross as well as the King [of the] universe. The greatest humiliation and the greatest victory are both shown to us in today's liturgy. It is important to look at this humiliated and victorious Christ before we start the new liturgical year with the celebration of Advent. All through the year we have to stay close to the humiliation as well as to the victory of Christ, because we are called to live both in our own daily lives.' Canon Terry Palmer, *Church Times*, 14 November 2014.*

#### **Call to Worship**

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.

*(written by Thom M. Shuman and posted on Lectionary Liturgies.  
<http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>)*

### **Gathering Hymn**

*'Rejoice the Lord is King', sung in St Alban's Cathedral. Words are on the screen.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDFAv0eh-s8&t=3s>

### **Confession and Absolution**

Sovereign God,  
we confess we have given idols power over us,  
the idols of power and wealth, fame and security.  
We confess we have fallen into the ways of this world  
and have forgotten our kindred in Christ.  
We have lost sight of the reign of God here on earth,  
and instead have allowed the idols of the world to rule over us.

Forgive us.  
Call us into Your reign,  
to declare You the One who has power over us  
because Your power is love.  
Call us to love our neighbours as ourselves,  
and to work for justice, show mercy, and love one another  
in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Jesus came to us not to reign as a king over us,  
but to serve us,  
and to show us the way of God is the way of love.  
Jesus said the first would be last and the last would be first.



Jesus called us to become humble and serve one another,  
and that the most important commandment  
was to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.  
This is the way of our Sovereign.

Go, knowing you are forgiven,  
and love and serve one another,  
especially our neighbours in need,  
as Christ serves us. Amen.

*(written by Rev. Mindi and posted on the Rev-o-lution blog. <http://rev-o-lution.org>)*

### **A collect for this Sunday**

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.

### **Worship song and reading**

'O come let us sing unto the Lord.'

The Psalm appointed for today is Psalm 95, vv1-7. Those who have worshipped as Anglicans for many years will recognise this as the Venite Exultemus Domino, which was sung each Sunday at Morning Prayer. The tune you will hear was commonly used.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNj-NgZ4gh0>

- 1 O come, let us sing unto the Lord:  
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving:  
and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.
- 3 For the Lord is a great God:  
and a great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are all the corners of the earth:  
and the strength of the hills is his also.
- 5 The sea is his, and he made it:  
and his hands prepared the dry land.
- 6 O come, let us worship, and fall down:  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
- 7 For he is the Lord our God:  
and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:  
and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:  
world without end. Amen.



**Reading** Ezekiel 34:11-16,20-24

For 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.



*Christ: The Good Shepherd. 5<sup>th</sup> Century mosaic in Mausoleum of Gallia Placidia, Ravenna.*

## Reflection

The church's calendar concludes its annual cycle today with readings linked to the theme of 'Christ the King'. Various psalms are suggested which acknowledge worship of Yahweh as king. We read the first seven verses of Psalm 95 with its call to sing, rejoice, be thankful and bow down in worship before God our creator. This section concludes with the recognition of belonging to God as his covenant people (Israel in the past, Jews & Christians now). We are described as 'the sheep of his hand.' The psalm does not end there but continues with verses that warn us not to be like our forebears, 'do not harden your hearts' (v8). The example given comes from the Exodus when the Israelites disobeyed God in the wilderness. However the admonition can be applied through successive generations of God's followers.

The prophet Ezekiel knew about the disobedience of God's people and the judgement of God on them as he grew up through the last days of the kingdom of Judah, in Jerusalem where he was training to be a priest. At the age of 25, in the year 597BC, he was taken to Babylon, along with the king, royal family, courtiers and 10,000 others by Nebuchadnezzar's army. Only the poorest in the land were left along with a replacement king, Zedekiah. (See 2 Kings 24:10-17). At the age of 30 Ezekiel had his first vision and so began his ministry. Five years later, in 587 BC, Zedekiah rebelled against Babylonian authority and Nebuchadnezzar's army returned, laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed the temple and city. After that date Ezekiel's message changed from words only of judgement to ones that contained messages of hope for those in exile.

The first 10 verses of chapter 34 consist of judgements against the 'shepherds of Israel' who have grown rich while oppressing the poor. Here he is attacking both the kings of Judah (and Israel before them) and their religious leaders. This continues to be a warning for those in leadership today. In verse 11 the imagery changes so that God becomes the shepherd who will seek out and rescue the sheep. He will bring them together from where they have been scattered. He will care for them, leading them to well-watered pastures to feed. Yet there is hint that even here, among the community of believers, the sheep, there are tensions as God needs to judge between the 'fat sheep and the lean sheep'. It seems that again the powerful are oppressing those without power. *(Verse 17-19 begin the theme of judgement and may be ones that Jesus had in mind with his parable of the sheep and the goats in today's gospel, see night prayer.)*

Today's passage concludes with words that point to the coming of one who will be both a shepherd and a servant of God from the royal line of David. The final verses of the chapter (vs25-30) picture a 'covenant of peace' with a vision of restored prosperity and security for people and creation, in which people acknowledge God. These are verses that point to the coming of the 'kingdom of God'.

What, you may ask, has all this bible study to do with us here in Exeter during a pandemic? Firstly, it reminds us that God our creator is in charge, however bleak the circumstances may seem. For those Israelites in exile in Babylon they were VERY bleak. Secondly, there are the warnings of judgement for disobedience, so that we should not be

complacent. Thirdly, there are the words of restoration and hope. These have provided comfort and assurance through the centuries and, as Christians, we see the fulfilment of the Davidic servant prophecy in Jesus.

The challenge not to be complacent comes in Cranmer's collect for the last Sunday after Trinity (now the post communion prayer for today) which gave this Sunday the name 'Stir up Sunday' (yes, with all those Christmas puddings to stir and make your wish!). Our circumstances change as we grow older but still we are encouraged today to continue to 'hear the call of Christ the King', the good shepherd who knows his sheep by name (John 10 v14), and 'to follow in his service'

## **Prayer**

The sky is dark.

We are  
frightened,  
scattered.

Come rescue us,  
shepherd  
king.

Find  
us  
lost,  
and  
bring  
us home.

We are  
wounded from virus and discord.  
And our planet, so wounded.  
Bind all our wounds.

And, Lord,  
let us act the way you act;  
let us bind the wounds  
of others.

## **Affirmation of Faith**

I believe in God,  
the God,  
the only God,  
who created everything  
and reigns as King  
over earth, sky, and water,  
Sovereign and Holy,  
and yet revealing Himself  
in the intimacy of the name  
“Father”.

*He reigns over the nations;  
He is seated on his holy throne.  
Psalm 47:8*

And I believe in Jesus Christ,  
the Son,  
the only-begotten Son  
whose reign began  
in the weakness of a manger-bed,  
conceived by the Spirit  
and born of a virgin,  
who reigned  
even while nailed to a cross of wood;  
who died and rose again, ascended and will come again.  
He will reign forever;  
*and his kingdom will never end.*  
*Luke 1:33*

And I believe in the Spirit,  
the Holy Spirit,  
the Spirit of God  
who as God Himself  
brings the presence of God  
and extends the reign of God  
in every believer and throughout the world,  
who ever directs hearts  
to our Lord and Saviour,

*so that grace might reign ...  
to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Romans 5:21*

*(© 2009 Rick Lindholtz on his blog on the  
tracks. [Http://rlindholtz.blogspot.com/2009/09/creed-god-who-reigns.html](http://rlindholtz.blogspot.com/2009/09/creed-god-who-reigns.html))*

## Worship song

'King of Glory, King of Peace' recorded this October by the churches of the Oxford Methodist Circuit. Words on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbPaDHx4l0A>



## Intercessions

*These intercessions are adapted by Helen from prayers on [www.layanglicana.org](http://www.layanglicana.org)*

Today we address our prayers to the second person of the Trinity, King of kings and Lord of lords, as we thank Him for the last year and for the fellowship of our worshipping community. As we set out towards a new horizon, let us put our hands into His hand in the knowledge that it will be better than light and safer than a known way.

Guide us, O Lord, to a new beginning: in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, may we grow in faith and knowledge of you. Help us to be your body on earth. Where we move too slowly, give us courage and a nudge in the right direction. Where we move too fast, help us pause and open ourselves to your wisdom. If things take time, help us to hold on to hope. Give us the patience and forbearance to wait for the ripening of the fruit in your time, not ours.

Guide us, O Lord, to a new beginning: in your mercy, hear our prayer

All thrones, dominions, principalities and powers are subject to your reign, O Lord. The world is charged with your grandeur, whether flaming out like lightning or wrung from the press like oil. We are daily reminded of the continual renewing power of your creation in the way morning always waits on the other side of dark night, however dark the night is. Today, we pray especially for \_\_\_\_\_.

Guide us, O Lord, to a new beginning: in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord and king, help us, your subjects, to be servants to one another, mindful that in imitating you we shall meet you in the most unlikely of places. For our hands offering bread to the hungry and drink to the thirsty are yours. And the hands reaching out to receive are yours also. You taught us by example how to touch the lives of others. Help us so that our own wounds may bear fruit in love. Stir up in us generosity, graciousness in giving, and lavishness in love.

Guide us, O Lord, to a new beginning: in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord of compassion, we pray for all who are in need, and especially for \_\_\_\_\_. Heal us and give us the hope that we cannot grasp alone. When we cannot hope because we have forgotten, in these times of pandemic and political upheaval, how to dream, kindle

a fire in our hearts. Hear us and help us. Heal us and fill our hearts, our souls and our bodies with your Spirit; heal us and open the gates of heaven.

Guide us, O Lord, to a new beginning: in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord of the dance, we pray for all those whom we love who have departed this life, remembering in particular \_\_\_\_\_. As we cross the ocean of eternity, losing the shoreline as we seek new horizons, teach us how to trust, knowing that in you we live and move and have our being. Into light, into freedom, into the Trinity of God where you reign, draw us, our Saviour.

We thank you, Lord, for all you give us. Guide us, O Lord, to a new beginning: in your mercy, hear our prayer. Amen

### **The Peace**

If alone, smile and hug yourself (God does). If otherwise, share the Peace as appropriate.

### **A short Spiritual Communion**

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

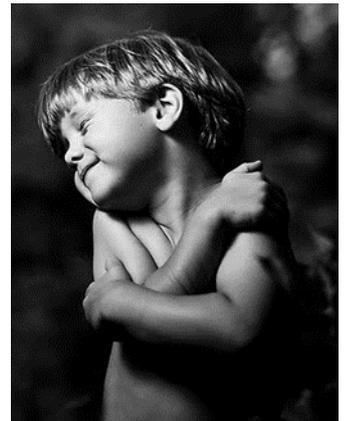
Lord, have mercy.

O God,  
help me to trust you,  
help me to know that you are with me,  
help me to believe that nothing  
can separate me from your love  
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **An offertory prayer**

*We may not be in church, but we can still offer ourselves and our talents to God.*

Blessed are you, God and creator of the universe,  
as we offer you our activities, thanksgivings and our life.  
We present ourselves, and our world, as we are and as you can make us,  
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours,  
and of your own do we give you. Blessed be God for ever.



*As we prepare for communion you might like to listen to a Taizé version of Venite Exultemus Domino sung by a quartet from Ústi nad Labem, Czech Republic.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DZFGyidsV4>



*Because there is no Breaking and Sharing we can have only Spiritual Communion with Christ. I'm sure you can find a way to use a few minutes of silence or conversation to enjoy this, and make it a sacramental moment.*

*Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say*

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits you have given me,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

### **Post Communion Collect**

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people;  
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works,  
may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*(As you can see, we are at 'Stir up Sunday'— time to get the Christmas puddings made!)*

### **Commission & Benediction**

It is not enough to acclaim Jesus Christ  
as our Lord and King.  
Our mission in life is  
to make his kingdom a reality among us  
and to bring it to those around us  
by our words and deeds.  
The way to do this is to live as he lived:  
for others, in love and service.

May almighty God bless you for this task:  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
and to give shape to his kingdom. **Thanks be to God!**

*(from Liturgies Alive, Models of Celebration.)*

### **Closing Music**

'Tell His Praise in Song and Story.' The words are by Timothy Dudley-Smith. The tune will be well-known. I'm not sure who is singing, but it is clearly a recent recording. Words on the screen.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_9MdqCwVY4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_9MdqCwVY4)



*Scroll down for Coffee Break*

## Coffee Break

### *Medical Mission Sisters*

Bob Burn sent this poem/song following last Sunday's zoom discussion.

It is by the Medical Mission sisters, who are an association within the Roman Catholic Community founded in 1925 to offer women the health care they deserved but were often denied because of local cultural norms or poverty. Over the years they have moved towards preventative community-based holistic health care, with equal concerns for the health of the planet and a just sharing of our limited resources.

They were operating in Bangladesh in the 1960, when lots of new music was coming out. They produced several records – Bob still has some – which he could play via zoom. Bob describes their songs as very Biblical and often give a surprising twist to the meaning. They are just women's voices and guitar. Their lead singer and composer is now a professor of music in Connecticut.

If you google Medical Mission Sisters you will easily find their website and learn more about this interesting community. You can also hear the poem being sung by clicking on this link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljivE20S1d8>

#### Howl, my Soul

Howl, you, for the day of the Lord is near.  
Howl, my soul, for the day of the Lord is here.  
Let ev'ry knee be bent and ev'ry head be bowed,  
For He will come like thunder tearing up the cloud.  
Howl, my soul, tremble, my soul, in fear.

Weep, you, for He comes to judge the land,  
Weep, my soul, for none but the just shall stand.  
He will come in a whirlwind to uproot the trees,  
Yet He will rock my soul as the gentle breeze.  
Weep, my soul for the judgement is at hand.

Sing, you, for the Lord was born of men.  
Sing, my soul, for the Lord returns again.  
He will breathe new spirit into old dry bones  
Trade a heart of flesh for a heart of stone.  
Sing, my soul, sing my soul: Amen.

Peace, you, there's no need to be afraid,  
Peace, my soul, for He knows of what you're made.  
Though mountains crumble when He bares His breast,  
In the crook of His arm I will lie to rest.  
Peace, my soul, it is the moment for which you've prayed.

## Extra Cup

Betsy, being a proud Grandmother (again) has sent these pictures of the latest addition to the family. Meet new granddaughter Lily, mum and dad (Skye and Tony) and big sister Sophia. Lily was born on November 10th.

Blessings on them and all families at this time.



May you bring light to the home,  
warmth to the heart  
Joy to the soul  
And love to the lives you touch.

*(Irish prayer)*

**Scroll down for Night Prayer**

# Night Prayer

Sunday before Advent  
22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

For I was hungry and you  
gave me food, I was  
thirsty and you gave me  
drink.

## Preparation

Father God,  
We rest in you.

Jesus the Son,  
We rest in you.

Holy Spirit,  
We rest in you.

*Silence*



*If you are able to do so, you might wish  
to light a candle near a window.*

O Jesus,  
King of Creation,  
you came from glory,  
to the rough roads of Galilee;  
you took a crown of sharp thorns,  
and received a killing cross for your throne  
You put on poverty, to be like us,  
so that we might be holy  
like you are  
holy.

So  
let us care  
for your creation that is ill,  
welcome the stranger,  
visit him in prison,  
feed her and  
clothe  
her,  
and slake  
your deepest thirst.

### **Opening hymn**

'Lord enthroned in Heavenly Splendour' sung for us by the congregation of St Peter's Church, Swinton. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gq29FeQbKY>

### **Prayer for Forgiveness**

God of the people,  
you have called us to walk humbly before you  
and to share in the struggle with the least of these,  
yet we have failed to live up to this call.

Today, we come before you  
asking your Spirit to empower us  
to be agents of transformation for the world.

Make us a chalice from which all the oppressed  
can find the living waters of God,  
who calls us to live a life of service, of humility,  
and of reconciliation with you, with creation,  
and with the world. Amen.

*(posted on Many Voices. <http://www.manyvoices.org/blog/resource/prayer-of-confession/>)*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Loving God, within and around us,  
we revere you.

We seek to live life  
as you would want us to do;  
with love and respect  
for all people and all things in the universe.

May we find each day sufficient for our needs,  
and find forgiveness when we do wrong,  
just as we forgive those who do wrong to us.  
In times of trouble, may we centre our lives in you.

For your being is love,  
which comes with strength and with beauty,  
throughout eternity. Amen.

*(Margaret Rolfe, on [rainbowcathedral.wordpress.com](http://rainbowcathedral.wordpress.com))*

**New Testament Reading Matthew 25: 31-46 (New Revised Standard Version)**

<sup>31</sup> “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. <sup>32</sup> 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, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

<sup>34</sup> 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; <sup>35</sup> 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, <sup>36</sup> 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.’

<sup>37</sup> 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? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’

<sup>40</sup> 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, <sup>[g]</sup> you did it to me.’

<sup>41</sup> 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; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> 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.’

<sup>44</sup> 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?’ <sup>45</sup> 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.’ <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”



*Part of series of mosaics on The Last Judgement C 500  
Basilica di Sant'Apollinare Nuovo,  
Ravenna*

## Reflection

As we bring this church year to a close, we are presented with a very clear statement that repeats the same image four times about the nature of Christ the King. He is not a ruler who seeks to dominate by physical or psychological pressure, but instead characterises himself as the good shepherd, and associates himself with the margins of society.

This passage has encouraged many to link it with divine judgement: sheep sorted and divided from goats (and yes, goats do have an undeserved image in the Bible). But this is really to miss the point. When you read the passage carefully it is not God who is doing the sorting, but in fact we are sorting ourselves.

The real point is whether we have understood and become in tune enough with Christ that we can recognise him in what Mother Theresa described as 'his distressing disguise'. If we can see the face of Christ in the outcast, we are experiencing the reign of Christ within our own lives.

But this is not a new idea nor is it specifically Christian. To treat others as we would treat ourselves is an idea that is almost universally held by people of any faith and of none. There is something here that is fundamental to humanity and which expresses our relationship to the divine, or the other, whether we actually believe in the divine or not.

The challenge is to stop sorting and start seeing – and for those of us who follow Jesus, it means seeing Christ in others and serving others as if they were Jesus himself. In that way we have entered into the reign of God without trying. The idea that everyone belongs to God is so preposterous that Matthew's readers will have choked on it too. But if we cannot accept this, we will simply exclude ourselves.

There's no point trying to pretend it is easy, as our natural tendency is to stick with those who are like us. But understanding the dynamics of how the growth of our own closeness to God links into our recognition of God in others is complex. They appear to be closely intertwined, yet it feels as if it is our own self-choices of who we prefer to associate with that act as limiters to the full development of our closeness with God. Nevertheless, we are not called to beat ourselves with the question 'but have we done enough?' Jesus is quite clear that the smallest acts of recognition of himself in others show where you stand.

It is the extent that we can demonstrate that we practice understanding and forgiveness, inclusivity and celebration of difference that will make this reign of Christ manifest in our world now.

## Prayer

It's a tough thing for us to learn, Jesus,  
how you hide in the most unlikely places;  
how you beckon us into life and compassion  
by disguising yourself in broken humanity.  
But, when our eyes are opened,

we discover that we are never far from your heart,  
from your kingdom.

And so we ask you to show yourself to us again,  
and lead us into prayerful action;

Help us to share your grief when lives are needlessly lost  
simply because they have no money for food or shelter,  
because they have no access to medicine and care,  
because they have no choice but to live  
where war and violence constantly threaten;

Help us to feel your offense when the least are exploited  
by the lust of those who are physically stronger,  
by the greed of those who are financially richer,  
by the disregard of those who are politically more powerful.

Help us to know your pain when what you have created is destroyed  
by the carelessness of expediency,  
by the short-sightedness of progress at all costs,  
by the sense of entitlement of proud humanity.

Teach us to welcome you, Jesus,  
by welcoming those in whom your image is hidden,  
and by working, in our small worlds,  
to make visible your kingdom where all are welcomed.

Amen.  
Sacredise.com

### **We listen to a song**

'Make me a channel of your peace', a version sung by two young choristers. An uplifting moment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNagMjn1zXg>

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there is hatred, let me bring love  
Where there is injury, Your pardon Lord  
And where there's doubt, true faith in You

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness, only light  
And where there's sadness ever joy

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console

To be understood as to understand  
Or to be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
It is in giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we are born to eternal life

### **Prayer for Others**

O God, our Heavenly Father,  
give us a vision of our world as Your love would make it:

a world where the weak are protected  
and none go hungry or poor;

a world where the benefits of civilized life are shared,  
and everyone can enjoy them;

a world where different races, nations and cultures  
live in tolerance and mutual respect,

a world where peace is built with justice,  
and justice is guided by love;

and give us the inspiration and courage to build it,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*(Geoffrey Brown and John Pridmore, St Martin-in-the-Fields' Prayer for the World. Posted on  
The Church of Scotland's Weekly Worship website.  
<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship>)*

### **Blessing**    *(inspired by Matthew 25: 14-20)*

There are blessings  
meant for you  
to hold onto

clutched  
like a lifeline

carried  
like a candle  
for a dark way

tucked into a pocket  
like a smooth stone  
reminding you  
that you do not  
go alone.

This blessing  
is not those.

This blessing  
will find its form  
only as you  
give it away

only as you  
release it  
into the keeping  
of another

only as you  
let it  
leave you

bearing the shape  
the imprint  
the grace  
it will take

only for having  
passed through  
your two  
particular  
hands.

*(written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted <http://paintedprayerbook.com/>)*



### **Closing music**

‘Christ be our Light,’ sung for us here by what seems like the singing clergy of St Cuthbert’s Wells and Wookey Hole. May they continue to shine brightly!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjA-Hroa3Aw>

## **Thanks**

*Thanks to everyone who has participated, especially Sheila for this morning's reflection, Helen for the intercessions. Material taken or adapted from other websites has an attribution made where possible.*

