

20.11.22 second order, second thanksgiving

Hymn

Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Sentence

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9.9

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: 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.

Prayer of the Day

Eternal God, you exalted Jesus Christ to rule over all things, and have made us instruments of his kingdom: by your Spirit empower us to love the unloved, and to minister to all in need, then at the last bring us to your eternal realm where we may be welcomed into your everlasting joy and may worship and adore you for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Jeremiah 23.1-6

¹ 'Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!' declares the Lord. ² Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: 'Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,' declares the Lord. ³ 'I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. ⁴ I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,' declares the Lord. ⁵ 'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, **a King who will reign wisely** and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.

Song of Zechariah

Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel: you have come to your people and set them free. You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour: **born of the house of your servant David.** Through your holy prophets, you promised of old: to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us, To show mercy to our forebears: and to remember your holy covenant. This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, Free to worship you without fear: holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life. And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High: for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way, To give God's people knowledge of salvation: by the forgiveness of their sins. In the tender compassion of our God: the dawn from on high shall break upon us, To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death: and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Colossians 1.11-20

¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the **kingdom of the Son he loves**, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Luke 23.33-43

³³ When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left.

³⁴ Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

³⁵ The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One.'

³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷ and said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.'

³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the **king of the jews**.

³⁹ One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!'

⁴⁰ But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.'

⁴² Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' ⁴³ Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'

Sermon

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

the prayers

Let us pray for the world and for the Church. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Jesus said: Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11.28

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table.

Confession

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.** The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn

OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.

Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Thanksgiving 2

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.** It is right to praise you, faithful God, always and everywhere, for with your only begotten Son and life-giving Spirit, you are the one true God from everlasting to everlasting. At the dawn of time you wrought from nothing a universe of beauty and splendour, bringing light from darkness and order from chaos. You formed us, male and female, in your image, and endowed us with creative power. We turned away from you but you did not abandon us. You called us by name and searched us out, making a covenant of mercy, giving the law, and teaching justice by the prophets.

And so we praise you, joining with your faithful people of every time and place, singing the eternal song: **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.**

When the fullness of time was come, you sent your Son to be born of Mary.

Bright image of your glory, he learnt obedience to you in all things, even to death on a cross, breaking the power of evil, freeing us from sin, and putting death to flight. You raised him from death, exalting him to glory, and the new day dawned. On the night he was betrayed your Son Jesus Christ shared food with his friends, his companions on the way. While at table he took bread, blessed, and broke it, and giving it to them, said: 'Take, eat; this is my body.' He took a cup of wine, and, giving thanks, he gave it to them, and said, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Do this in remembrance of me.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, living God, as we obey his command, we remember his life of obedience to you, his suffering and death, his resurrection and exaltation, and his promise to be with us for ever.

With this bread and this cup we celebrate his saving death until he comes.

Accept, we pray, our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and send your Holy Spirit upon us and our celebration that all who eat and drink at this table may be strengthened by Christ's body and blood to serve you in the world. As one body and one holy people, may we proclaim the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom, with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, eternal God, now and for ever.

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: **so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.**

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.

Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

AFTER COMMUNION

Bountiful God, at this table you graciously feed us with the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.

May we who have reached out our hands to receive this sacrament be strengthened in your service;

we who have sung your praises tell of your glory and truth in our lives; we who have seen the greatness of your love see you face to face in your kingdom and come to worship you with all your saints for ever.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Hymn

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

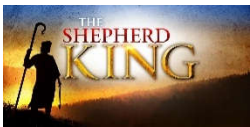
Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen**



Today is the day we celebrate Christ the King. This, as Brian pointed out last week, is the last day of our church year and next week we start the new Church year with Advent. The church year does not follow our calendar year or the financial year (that's a fairly modern invention), it follows the life of Jesus. It starts with preparation for Jesus' birth and actually commemorates his death fairly early in the year but then looks back over all he said and did and achieved for us for the rest of the year and culminates today with a celebration of all he accomplished and that he is now our Saviour, or Lord and our Almighty King.

Our Old Testament reading is from Jerimiah, a prophet who saw the way that God's people and especially their leaders were heading, saw the deportation to Babylon, and told the exiles to settle down and live in that land but promised that one day they would return and that one day *'I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.'*



This promise is repeated time and time again throughout the Old Testament including in the song of Zechariah that we read today: *'a mighty Saviour: born of the house of your servant David'*. **Born into the House of kings to reign for ever.** *'And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High: for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way, to give God's people knowledge of salvation: by the forgiveness of their sins. Even then thousands of years before Christ was born, they knew that he would be their Shepherd, Saviour, and King.*

Have you ever noticed that occasionally there has been painted a nativity scene with a cross on the wall, or sometimes a picture of Jesus wearing a cross? We sometimes point them out and think that the person who did that was being quite inaccurate because no one knew Jesus would die on a cross in his lifetime and no one celebrated it for hundreds of years but in fact Jesus knew throughout his ministry and on various occasions warned his disciples.



Luke in listening to all the people tell their stories picked up on all the clues throughout Jesus' life and included them in his gospel. One of Luke's great themes in his gospel is salvation, the saving of humanity by Jesus the saviour. Even in the very beginning, his birth stories he records the words of the aged Simeon to Jesus' mother concerning the baby: *'he will be a sign that is spoken against and a sword will pierce through her own soul also. It is thirty years ahead but there already on the horizon.*

Much later, when his ministry has begun, and he has gathered around him a group of disciples he tells them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected and be killed and on the third day be raised. So there too is the cross and so often if we are only aware the cross looms over his life and the disciples are oblivious. Throughout his gospel Luke records the sayings of Jesus himself, recognising the looming shadow and show that Jesus knows himself to be deliberating walking the road to Jerusalem, to the cross.



For us too, in the coming weeks as we celebrate the birth of Jesus with all the tinsel and excitement, we need to remember that Jesus only came to earth to die on the cross. Which is why we have what we might consider an Easter gospel reading today. When we consider the road to the cross, it is as if we hear Luke proclaiming, from the beginning of his gospel, that Jesus has come into the world to die, and the words echo down the years. The shadow of the cross is always there.



The crucifixion was on a skull shaped hill in Aramaic called *Golgotha*, in Greek it was *Kranion* and became in Latin *Calvaria* which in English became *Calvary*. On *Calvary*, the first thing Jesus did was pray for those who were killing him, that his Father would forgive them, he died as he lived, full of compassion and love. There is nothing so lovely and so rare as true Christian forgiveness. When our unforgiving spirits are tempted to turn our hearts to bitterness, let us hear again our Lord asking forgiveness for those who crucified him.



We know that Jesus did not die for his own sin, as the second thief recognised: Jesus was innocent. He died for us, for our sin. The leaders mocked Jesus, the soldiers ignored him and divided his clothes, the first thief joined in the ridicule, but the second thief found salvation. His prayer is simple and beautiful. When he didn't know what to seek and knew that he did not merit any favour he simply petitioned: 'Remember me', in the confidence that Jesus would know what he needed and provide. He had come to faith in Jesus' kingly power and Jesus promised him paradise.

'Paradise' in Persian means a walled garden, a place where the king walked and where he would invite an honoured guest to walk with him. It was more than immortality that Jesus promised the penitent thief. He was promised the honoured place of a companion in the garden of the king.

I have been thinking about this prayer this week, I don't know what the future holds for me but I can say to the Lord 'remember me' and I know that he will walk with me in this earthly garden until he takes me to be with him in that heavenly garden.



Because Jesus came to earth and died for us, we are able to be in relationship with him, able to worship him; Christ the King, and so live our lives trying in every way to honour him *being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that we may have great endurance and patience,* ¹² *and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.*

Humanity was living in darkness due to our sin and we could never find the light on our own but because of Jesus we are welcomed into the kingdom of light, his kingdom. *For God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,* ¹⁴ *in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*



What can we do to thank him but to give him all our praise and live for him? For ⁵ *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.* ¹⁶ *For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.* ¹⁷ *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*



When Jesus died he wore a crown, a crown of thorns and the sign above him on the cross said The king of the Jews. They thought they were mocking him when they placed that crown on his head but Pilate had some inkling of the truth when he ordered that sign to be hung on the cross but none of them know that truth that he was in truth the king of kings and he would exchange that crown of thorns for a glorious crown .

¹⁸ *And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.* ¹⁹ *For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him,* ²⁰ *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

Praise the king Amen