

## **The Reign of Christ,(Christ the King), November 21, 2021**

**“We respectfully acknowledge that we are located in the traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig (Mississauga) and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations which include Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Alderville, Scugog Island, Rama, Beausoleil and Georgina Island First Nations,”**

**“We respectfully acknowledge that the Williams Treaties First Nations have been stewards and caretaker of these lands and waters, and that today remain vigilant over their health and integrity for generations to come.”**

### **The Opening responses:**

Peace on each one who comes in need,  
PEACE ON EACH ONE WHO COMES IN JOY.  
Peace on each one who offers prayers,  
PEACE ON EACH ONE WHO OFFERS SONG.  
Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,  
PEACE OF THE SPIRIT, THE TRIUNE ONE.

### **The Collect:**

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 forever. Amen.

### **The Readings:**

#### **Samuel 23:1-7**

23:1 Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, son of Jesse, the oracle of the man whom God exalted, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the favorite of the Strong One of Israel:

23:2 The spirit of the LORD speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue.

23:3 The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God,

23:4 is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

23:5 Is not my house like this with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. Will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?

23:6 But the godless are all like thorns that are thrown away; for they cannot be picked up with the hand;

23:7 to touch them one uses an iron bar or the shaft of a spear. And they are entirely consumed in fire on the spot.

### **Psalm 132:1-12, (13-18)**

132:1 O LORD, remember in David's favor all the hardships he endured;

132:2 how he swore to the LORD and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob,

132:3 "I will not enter my house or get into my bed;

132:4 I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids,

132:5 until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

132:6 We heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of Jaar.

132:7 "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool."

132:8 Rise up, O LORD, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.

132:9 Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your faithful shout for joy.

132:10 For your servant David's sake do not turn away the face of your anointed one.

132:11 The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.

132:12 If your sons keep my covenant and my decrees that I shall teach them, their sons also, forevermore, shall sit on your throne."

132:13 For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation:

132:14 "This is my resting place forever; here I will reside, for I have desired it.

132:15 I will abundantly bless its provisions; I will satisfy its poor with bread.

132:16 Its priests I will clothe with salvation, and its faithful will shout for joy.

132:17 There I will cause a horn to sprout up for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one.

132:18 His enemies I will clothe with disgrace, but on him, his crown will gleam."

### **Revelation 1:4b-8**

1:4b Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,

1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,

1:6 and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1:7 Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen.

1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

### **John 18:33-37**

18:33 Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

18:34 Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

18:35 Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

18:37 Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

### **The Sermon:**

Traditionally this day is called Christ the King and ends our church year. In recent years the language has shifted to refer to this Sunday as the Reign of Christ. There are those who took offense to using Kingly language as Christians. Christ after all was about the poor and the disadvantaged and above all else; justice. I do not get caught up in those arguments as all through history we see the struggle of powers; and whether political or grassroots there remains a call to justice that all people are called to realize.

With the death of King David there is a reflection on his contribution to justice. We are aware of his very significant failures in his humanity. Nevertheless he strove to be a symbol of justice for the people and remain faithful to God's order. We know that David's kingdom becomes the foreshadowing of the coming of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God. This whole Sunday is about the recognition that the two kingdoms are very different. As much as David wanted to believe that he could use his political power and position to create justice for the multitudes; it did not succeed. Human political systems strive to create justice but too often develop unexpected oppression. Our government turned away boat loads of Jews prior to the Second War; our government chose a system of residential schools in order to educate and assimilate young Indigenous people; democratic governments have used oppressive regimes in other countries to ensure financial stability in their own country; the list can go on and exists from the beginning of time.

Our Collect of the day is clear; that people divided and enslaved by sin should come together under God's rule. The Kingdom of God is a much different rule. I know that every politician, like David, yearns to bring about peace and justice. And even among the great failures there have been important moments and symbols of profound justice. Political systems can never be the total solution. We have to look inside ourselves and our own communities to build the peace and justice that Jesus Christ calls us to live out. In 2 Samuel, the godless are described as thorns. Thorns divide and rip people's souls. We cannot dare to be divided in the sight of God by race, by sexuality, by gender, by vaccines, by yearnings for peace. Don't misunderstand me; we can have differing opinions and even convictions about a lot of things. But, we cannot ever let any of that divide us or worse create hate. Our community is in every struggle together and no one is to be left out of the circle. In Politics, people can be kicked out of Caucus and even the party but no one kicks anyone out of the Kingdom of God.

When I was eight years old, I lived very near the United Church. My friends went there to join Brownies and I went with them. Every week I went to learn skills and the Brownie promise. On our last day we were to receive our uniforms. My excitement along with my friends was palpable. The final piece of business was the forms. They discovered I had been baptized Anglican and said that the Anglicans had their own Brownies. I explained that I wanted to be with my friends and I only lived next door. So they formed the Brownie circle without me. I sat on the outside of their circle and no one, not even one Christian adult sat by my side. I didn't want to tell my mother that I was kicked out of Brownies; so every Thursday night at 7:30 I sat on the steps of the Church while my friends were inside. Division not opinion does inordinate harm.

The Psalm is clear in its interpretation of David's legacy. Those who are open to God's teaching will witness the lifting up of the poor and the feeding of the hungry. The Priests will only be clothed in salvation and the horn sounded when there is joy for the faithful and justice for the poor. It is only that undivided justice that merits a gleaming crown. The Book of Revelation is not some mystical prediction of the future; it is God's vision for the union of all humanity. God, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end will ensure the coming together of all humanity. It is only God who can cleanse all sins. And it is only that God that can inspire us to break down divisions; and our faith in that God is the pathway to love, hope, joy and peace. And that dear friends is our gateway through Advent as we end this year and begin another.

As a year end review our Gospel reading would not be the one Corporations would expect of their CEO. No doubt Pilate is confused by Jesus as King. Surely a real King would muster the power to at least put up a fight? Even Judas, one of Jesus's own, wanted to continue the battle for justice and their ideals. But really the Kingdom everyone is trying to understand is not of this world. Something much more profound is happening. Jesus is about to die to establish a new reign; a reign where there are no divisions but finally a vision of all humanity united as one. That is the timeless victory we celebrate on the last day of our Christian year. We have way too many systems and well meaning structures that separate us from poverty and justice. We embrace truths that are not witnessing to the Spirit of God. Jesus was born to testify to the truth. Jesus' voice and spirit of truth always unites communities. If we are going to find a pathway through this pandemic, or through poverty or to embrace justice, then all our communities need to overcome divisions and unite with true Peace.

As a reminder:

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 forever.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

### **The Prayers:**

We bring to God

someone whom we have met or remembered today

and for whom we want to pray;

For Jane Hodder, recovering at home and for Roy and their family as Roy and Jane move into Cobourg

For Ann Dutton and her upcoming surgery

For those facing the challenges of chronic illness: Renate, Carla, Pat

For those who have died:

For those celebrating birthdays: For Norma Lenahan on November 22

For those celebrating Anniversaries:

For Diocesan Synod, November 25 to November 27

We bring to God,

someone who is hurting and needs our prayer

Those who continue to mourn the death of a spouse

Those who are living through instability and facing challenges

We bring to God

a troubled situation in our world

Victims of Residential Schools and actions of reconciliation and healing

The Hungry and Homeless and actions for a living income and secure housing

For the continuing challenges presented by Covid 19 and the Variants

We bring to God,

someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust

We bring ourselves to God,

that we might grow in generosity of spirit,

clarity of mind,

and the warmth of affection.

### **The Closing Responses:**

O Trinity of Love,

You have been with us at the world's beginning,

BE WITH US TILL THE WORLD'S END.

You have been with us at our life's shaping,  
BE WITH US AT OUR LIFE'S END.

You have been with us at the sun's rising,  
BE WITH US TILL THE DAY'S END.

AMEN.

**The Blessing:**

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of the Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

And the Blessing of God, Father (Creator), Son(Redeemer) and Holy Spirit(Sanctifier), be with you and remain with you; and those you love, now and forever. Amen

This is the day that God has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

We will not offer to God offerings that cost us nothing.

Go in peace to love and to serve; we will seek peace and pursue it.

In the name of the Trinity of Love,

God in Community, Holy and one.

Amen