

## Order of Service for Sunday November 22, 2020

Last Sunday after Pentecost, Christ the King

St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, OR

Rev. Sb. AJ Buckley and Br. Finn Coll

### A Greeting

#### Today's 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 for ever. **Amen.**

#### First Reading -- Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

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.

- Hear with the Spirit is saying to God's People
- ✦ **Thanks be to God**

#### Psalm: 100 *Jubilate Deo*

- 1 Be joyful in the LORD, all you lands; \*  
serve the LORD with gladness  
and come before his presence with a song.
- 2 Know this: The LORD himself is God; \*  
he himself has made us, and we are his;  
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.



- 3 Enter his gates with thanksgiving;  
go into his courts with praise; \*  
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.
- 4 For the LORD is good;  
his mercy is everlasting; \*  
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

## Second Lesson – Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

- ✦ Hear with the Spirit is saying to God's People
- ✦ **Thanks be to God**

## A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus said, "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. 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, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 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; 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, 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.' 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? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 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, you did it to me.'

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; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 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.' 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?’ 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.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- ✦ This is the Gospel of the Lord
- ✦ **Thanks be to God**

**Homily** – “A Forgotten People”

Rev. Sb. AJ Buckley

**What does it mean to simultaneously call Christ the King and “the least of these?”**

How easily we forget  
How easily we look away  
When the reality we see doesn’t suit us  
When the pain we feel is too much for us  
A people, forgotten and abandoned.  
But God comes in unexpected ways.  
God shows up when we least expect it.  
God comes as a surprise, a shock.  
Like a cold shower, or a sudden rain storm,  
God wakes us up out of our sleep.  
Like being shaken awake by a nightmare,  
We are jolted back to reality.  
A reality where nations are divided,  
People are divided.  
We, ourselves, are divided.  
We grapple for power, for an end to vulnerability,  
But we are just as much the baby in the manger as the king on the throne,  
Like Jesus, we are just as much on the cross as we are walking on water.  
Jesus is mighty but humble,  
King but least of these.  
How can this be?  
How can Jesus be both powerful and powerless?  
How do we see Jesus in both?

The sheep and the goats are not individuals.  
They are nations,  
and to be separated in this instance means to be marked off by others by boundaries.  
Boundaries can be crossed.  
Boundaries can be obliterated.  
Boundaries are not the be all end all.  
God is unexpected.  
God comes to the forgotten.  
God comes in the guise of the least of these.  
Neither the righteous or the unrighteous noticed  
the Son of Man within the persons they served/ignored.  
Sheep and goats have different needs.  
That’s why they’re separated by shepherds,  
the same goes for the nations...they have different needs.



There is no moral judgment of sheep vs goats.  
 It's more of a statement of fact.  
 Jesus sent out the disciples to the nations to preach the Gospel.  
 They were given instructions about what to do if they were not given hospitality---  
 to continue on, to shake the dust off their feet.  
 I wonder if it's the same for Matthew's community.  
 Maybe they were experiencing a similar situation as the disciples did,  
 where it was rather hit and miss if they were accepted or not.  
 How easily people are forgotten.  
 And, once forgotten, abandoned.  
 How can Christ be found in the least of these and in kings?  
 We think of these two categories of having nothing to do with one another.  
 One rules whilst the other is ruled over.  
 I gotta be honest, it's harder for me to see Christ in kings,  
 As King of Kings,  
 Then it is for me to see Christ as least of these.  
 His life is very much that of a poor person,  
 It doesn't resemble the life of a king.  
 That's my blindspot.  
 For others, it might be the opposite.  
 This passage is a wakeup call more than anything.  
 Wake up.  
 Take notice.  
 This passage comes right before Jesus announces  
 to his disciples his impending death.  
 It's a call to remember.  
 To recall a forgotten people.  
 To rediscover Jesus through the radical act of hospitality.  
 Not just to those whom it's easy or expected to provide hospitality,  
 Such as the kings.  
 But, also, to those who are often seen as undeserving,  
 Of hospitality, of kindness, of attention.  
 Be alert.  
 God comes in unexpected ways,  
 Through unexpected people.  
 Let the shock and surprise wake you up.  
 The time for wakefulness, for vigilance is here.  
 Vigilant like a shepherd looking after sheep,  
 Like a watchman on the night shift,  
 Like my dogs when someone comes to the door.  
 Vigilance is how we brace ourselves for the unexpected,  
 We cannot predict what will happen, but we can be at the ready.  
 That's how it is for our life as Christians.  
 This is how forgotten people are remembered once more,  
 This is how we live our lives for Christ.  
 Jesus IS the least of these,  
 In that he can be vulnerable, as a child in a manger,  
 As a man on a cross.



When God became incarnate in the person of Jesus,  
God chose vulnerability.  
But God is also king,  
In that he had the power to overcome death,  
To lead people,  
As a shepherd leads a flock,  
As the reign of God has a leader,  
And that leader, that king is Jesus.  
It may seem contradictory,  
It may not seem logical,  
But neither is God's kingdom.  
It defies logic and reason,  
In favor of love, always love.  
Love is powerful.  
Love is the ultimate power.  
Love remembers;  
no one is forgotten when love is in charge.  
Love breaks even the bonds of death.  
Love is the way forward.  
Love is present in kings, and the least of these,  
And everyone in between.  
Love is. And so we are.  
How easily we forget  
How easily we look away  
When the reality we see doesn't suit us  
When the pain we feel is too much for us  
A people, forgotten and abandoned.  
But God comes in unexpected ways.  
***Amen.***

### **A Litany of Thanksgiving**

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all his gifts so freely bestowed upon us.

For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea.  
*We thank you, Lord.*

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women, revealing the image of Christ,  
*We thank you, Lord.*

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,  
*We thank you, Lord.*

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,  
*We thank you, Lord.*

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,  
*We thank you, Lord.*



For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering and faithful in adversity,  
*We thank you, Lord.*

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,  
*We thank you, Lord.*

For the communion of St. Martin and all the saints, in all times and places,  
*We thank you, Lord.*

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus  
our Lord;  
*To him be praise and glory, with you, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.*

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Blessings,  
Dismissal**

