

November 20th, 2011 Christ the King Sunday

Introduction to the Day

On this final Sunday of the church year our gospel is Jesus' great story of judgment. In the end, the faithful are those who served Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick, or estranged. In the first reading God is the shepherd who seeks the lost, weak, and injured and feeds them with justice. We gather this day to celebrate the reign of Christ and his victory over death, yet awaiting the consummation of all things yet to come. Acknowledging Christ as our merciful ruler, we go forth that his reign may be known in our loving words and deeds.

After a moment of silent meditation to prepare ourselves for worship, we will begin the liturgy.

Prayers of the People

Clinging to the promise of abundant life and resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

Ruler of the universe, bring your wisdom to the churches of the world. Strengthen their proclamation of the gracious reign of Christ to all people everywhere. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of creation, make us wise and mindful caretakers of the land, air, and water. Turn us away from patterns of careless and neglectful stewardship of your good earth. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of power, guide the nations into ways of justice and truth. Where conflicts prevail, may peace be forthcoming. Strengthen the weak. Temper the strong. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Shepherding God, you are the source of life and health. Surround those who struggle with illness or other difficulties of life and bring them to wholeness and healing. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of glory, guide our lives in service to you through love and care for all your children. Strengthen us to seek justice for all people and to reach out in welcome to the stranger in our midst. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Life-giving God, strengthen us to face our mortality with humility and courage, and to trust in your promise of life from death. Support those who grieve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive these our prayers, O God, and give us all we need for this day and the days to come, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Lector: Please read the introduction, then the citation (i.e.. “The First Reading is from the.... chapter of ...” - then read the text.)

First Reading – *Since Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the Lord will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The Lord will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people*

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm Psalm 95:1–7a

Come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving
and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms.**

For you, LORD, are a great God,
and a great ruler above all gods.

**In your hand are the caverns of the earth;
the heights of the hills are also yours.**

The sea is yours, for you made it,
and your hands have molded the dry land.

**Come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD our maker.**

For the LORD is our God,
and we are the people of God's pasture
and the sheep of God's hand.

SECOND READING - *In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected, exalted Christ is Lord both of the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.*

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

* **Gospel Reading** – *Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.*

Matthew 25:31–46

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.