



Team Parish of Christ the King St Aidan's, Brunton Park Sunday 26th November 2023 Feast of Christ the King

Today, Christ the King Sunday, is the last Sunday of the Christian year. This is the Church's New Year's Eve, the culmination of the story we have been telling for the last 12 months. I don't know what the last year has been like for you.

Perhaps you have found it easy to keep sight of Christ's kingdom. Perhaps the opposite is true, and it seems far off. Perhaps you have lost faith in this kingdom altogether, in the face of so much suffering around you. Perhaps this is the first you're hearing of it. However the last year has been, we are each asked to consider the question presented to us in our liturgy: Who is this king of glory?

Let's look at the scene Jesus sets: the Son of Man will come in glory, with all the nations gathered before him and calling him 'Lord'. There is no limit to the reach of his kingdom. This is also a king with searching knowledge: he divides up all the people of the earth as easily as a shepherd splits sheep from goats. But this analogy of sheep and goats does even more than affirming that he is an all-powerful ruler. Jesus seems to be identifying himself as God. His Jewish listeners may well have recognised echoes of the passage from Ezekiel that we heard this morning: the God of Israel who rescues his people from their failed and corrupt kings, shepherding them to safety, judging between fat sheep and lean sheep, defending the weak – and, in verse 17, which our lectionary misses out – between sheep and goats. Jesus is telling his listeners that he has the authority of their God, and not just authority over Israel, but over all nations.

The strangeness of Jesus' self-description continues in the next part of the passage. Jesus tells those on his right that they are blessed to enter his kingdom, because they have served him in his time of great need. And he tells those on his left that they are cursed, eternally cast from his presence, because they have refused to serve him in his time of great need. Those he has judged are, understandably, surprised by this. We all know what a king looks like when we see one. If the king of the world asked any of us for a meal, or a drink, or a change of clothes, of course we would remember that. But Jesus insists. They have met him. Whenever they met the least of these, his sisters and brothers, they encountered the king. This is a king like no other: he comes to us with great power, and he comes to us hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, imprisoned. He comes to us to bring life, and he comes to us to die. Are we willing to meet him?

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.

Matthew 25.31-end

Jesus said to his disciples: '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.'

TODAY

There is no 9:30am service at St Aidan's this morning

10.00am: **Christ the King Team Celebration**, St Matthew's

4:00pm: **Team Confirmation Service**, St Aidan's

THE WEEK AHEAD

Mon 7:30pm, Zoom (code below): **Bible Study Group**

Wed 10.00am, Church: **BCP Midweek Eucharist**

Sat 10am, Community Room: **Saturday Café**

Sun 3rd 9.30am: **Advent Family Service**, St Aidan's

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Wed 6th Dec 7.00pm: St Columba's Church, **Advent Quiet Evening**

Thurs 7th Dec 2.00pm: Community Room, **Chat and Craft**

7.00pm: Northern Rugby Club, **Mens Group Christmas Dinner**

Fri 8th 6.30pm: Christmas Lights Turn on and official opening of the Windsor Wing, **Manor House**

Mon 11th 7.30pm, Carols on the Green/Salvation Army, **Melbury**

Wed 13th 12.30pm: Rugby Club, **Lunch Group**

Thurs 14th 2:00pm: Community Room, **Film Club – 'Alleluia'**

NOTICES

CHRIST THE KING SERVICE – today, is at 10.00am at St Matthew's Church.

TEAM CONFIRMATION – today at 4:00pm, in church with Bishop Helen-Ann. Please keep those being baptised and confirmed in your prayers and come along to the service to offer your support. There is a small reception afterwards. If you are able to bring some food it would be much appreciated.

CHRISTMAS CARDS – are ready for delivery. We would really appreciate any help that can be offered by putting cards through doors, either in your street, when out for a walk or by getting the kids involved. If you can help, please let us know, we particularly need help on Great Park. Church is open daily, you can take some cards and mark on the sheet where you have delivered to.

BIBLE STUDY - will be looking at Christmas in Matthew. For further information, contact Ken Newitt, kmnewitt@outlook.com.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT – are continuing to run their online group on the 1st and 3rd Friday's of the month.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE – thank you to everyone who supported our fayre last week. The final total including donations was £1160. We are very grateful for your generosity.

LUNCH GROUP - will meet on Wednesday 13th December at 12.30pm at the Rugby Club. If you would like to join us please see Pat or Pauline.

GOSFORTH AND DISTRICT CHOIR CONCERT – at St Aidan's on Saturday 2nd December at 7pm. Tickets at the door £6 (£5 concessions). Complimentary mulled wine and mince pie.

ST AIDAN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE CHRISTMAS TEA PARTY - Thurs 7th Dec: 3.00pm-5.30pm. A free event open to anyone over 70-ish – food, drinks, entertainment, music, singing and lots of Christmas cheer. Further information from Leigh Geddes. tel. 07941 295 449 (incorrect telephone number was provided last week).

ZOOM CODES – all our Zoom sessions will use only the following details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7573778713?pwd=NGVjcTRLQjBEaStqYjFDSm1KOURtQT09>

Meeting ID: 757 377 8713 Passcode: StAidan

BOOKING ZOOM MEETINGS: if you would like to use the St Aidan's Zoom account for a church meeting, please contact Janice

FOOD BANK – any items placed in the box at the back of church will be donated to Kenton Foodbank.

PLANNED GIVING - If you would like to set up a regular financial gift to support St Aidan's please click on the following link <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/brunton-park-st-aidan-newcastle-upon-tyne>

For Our Prayers: St Aidan's Cycle of Prayer

For the church – Christ the King Team Parish, PCC members and officers. Moira and Kathryn, and all who enhance our services by their playing or singing

For the community – West End Refugee Service

For the world – all countries facing hardship and conflict. For our own national and political life

On their baptisms and confirmations: Jamie, Luca, Sam, Skye

For those in need - Gladys Johnston, Esther Wooler, Alan Gregg, Martin Seaton, Bruce Smith

For those who have died – Jack Murgatroyd, and on their anniversaries: Anne Havis, Brian Adair, Douglas Hunter, Margaret Wilkinson, Bill Burn, Eric Ball, Lillian Futers, Thomas Gill

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