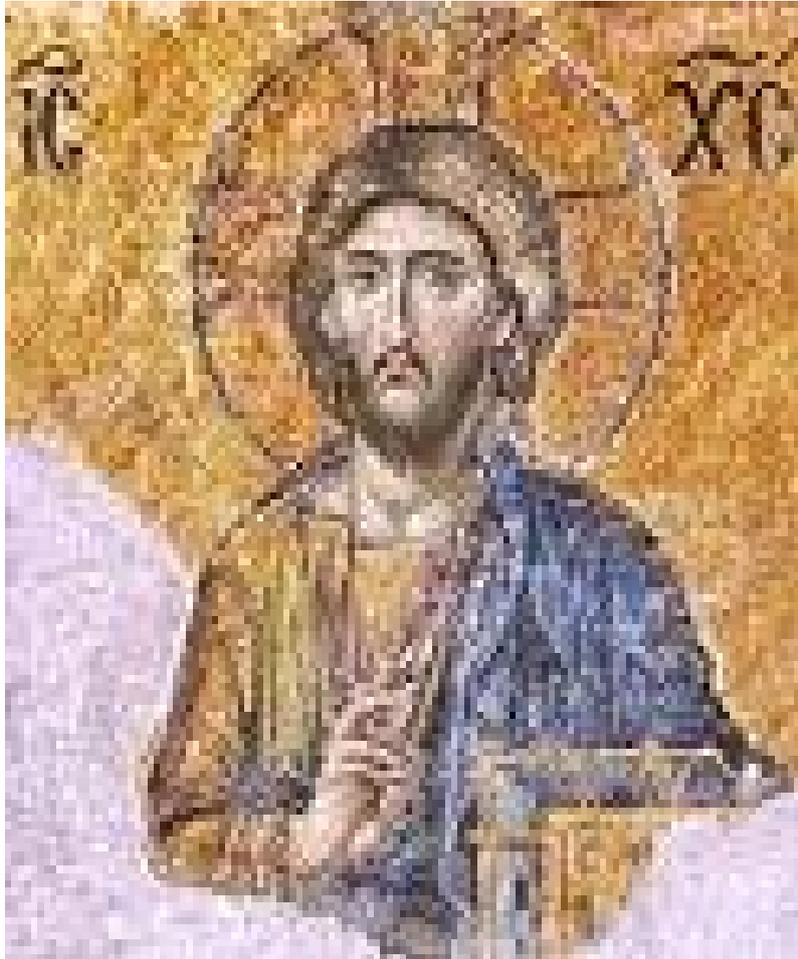


## Christ the King Sunday



**Welcome - Community Announcements** (John Cox)

**Call to Worship:**

Let us worship God...

'How very good and pleasant it is  
when kindred live together in unity!' (Ps 133:1)

**Prayer**

Almighty God,  
who gave to your Son, Jesus Christ,  
a realm where all people, nations, and races  
worship and serve him,  
help us to see your reign among us.

Give us the courage to acknowledge your lordship  
amid the competing and conflicting claims to loyalty  
that other powerful forces make upon us.

Companion along the way,  
still our anxious hearts,  
give us renewed confidence in the ultimate triumph  
of your will for the world.  
Give us the gifts we need to be loyal citizens  
of your kingdom and no other. **Amen.**

## Introduction

We have been on a most unusual journey these past twelve months. In one sense it has been like the season of Lent for most of the year. We began well following in the steps of Jesus from his birth in a stable, walking the dusty hillsides of Galilee, watching the blind see and the lame walk, and listening to his teaching. We remember the blackened and burnt branches of Lent that lingered much longer than the traditional forty days. Yes, we celebrated the resurrection at Easter and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, but they were more restrained than normal. We reflected Zoom-like on the mission of the Church and what it means to be a disciple during the epidemic but it has been hard. Today is the last Sunday of our journey through this church year. We express our gratitude to God who has kept us hopeful and united. Next Sunday we begin the journey again, celebrating Advent face-to-face, and reminding ourselves, despite some restrictions, who we are and to Whom we belong.

## Song: *O Lord My God* (TIS 155, vv 1,2 and 4)

1. O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the works Thy hand has made,  
I see the stars I hear the mighty thunder,  
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed:

### Chorus

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

2. When through the woods and forest glades I  
wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

4. When Christ shall come with shout of  
acclamation  
And take me home - what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,  
And there proclaim: my God, how great Thou art

CCLI Song # 14181  
Stuart Wesley Keene Hine

© Copyright 1949 and 1953 Stuart Hine Trust CIO Stuart K. Hine Trust (Admin. by Integrity Music)  
*For use solely with the SongSelect® [Terms of Use](https://www.ccli.com). All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](https://www.ccli.com)*

CCLI Licence # 300742

## The Journey

### Advent:

**Reader 1:** The royal colour of purple begins the Church Year in Advent, a word that means 'coming'. During the four Sundays of Advent we experience the waiting of the Israelites hoping for a Messiah. We sing the song 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' with longing, not because we seek a Messiah yet to come to the world, but because the Christ has come and we long for him to come to us again. The quiet pace of Advent is in direct contrast to the bustling commercialism of the world about us. And so we begin our new year, reminding ourselves that in the midst of the worldliness of our lives we need to renew our relationship to this King who has come.



### **Hymn: O Come, O Come Emmanuel (TIS 265, vv 1,2 and 5)**

1. O come, O come Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

2. O come, O come, great Lord of might  
who to the tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law  
on cloud and majesty and awe

#### **Chorus**

Rejoice! rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you O Israel.

Rejoice! rejoice! ...

5. O come O Dayspring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by your advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! rejoice! ...

CCLI Song # 31982  
John Mason Neale | Thomas Helmore  
• © Words: Public Domain  
• Music: Public Domain

*For use solely with the SongSelect® [Terms of Use](https://www.ccli.com/terms-of-use). All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](https://www.ccli.com)  
CCLI Licence # 300742*

### Christmas:

**Reader 2:** In the season of Christmas we change the sanctuary colours to white and gold, a celebration of the purity of the infant who was born in a manger, and yet a King with all the splendour of God come to dwell with his people. Christmas Day is both the culmination of the waiting of the Advent season, and the beginning of twelve days of celebration as we rejoice in the gift of our Saviour and the daily rebirth of grace in our own lives.



**Hymn: *Angels, from the realms of glory* (TIS 309, vv 1,3 and 4)**

1. Angels, from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth:  
Heralds of creation's story  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:

**Chorus**

Come and worship  
Christ, the newborn King,  
Come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

3. Wise men, leave your contemplations,  
brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of nations,  
you have seen his natal star:

Come and worship...

4. Thou an infant now we view him,  
he shall fill his Father's throne,  
gather all the nations to him:  
every knee shall then bow down:

Come and worship...

CCLI Song # 2402828

James Montgomery

- © Words: Public Domain
- Music: Public Domain

*For use solely with the SongSelect® [Terms of Use](http://www.ccli.com). All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)*

CCLI Licence # 300742

**Epiphany:**

**Reader 1:** Epiphany means 'to make known,' and in the season of Epiphany we remember the ways and events through which God revealed himself through Jesus Christ.

The colours of Epiphany are usually the colours of Christmas, White and Gold, the colours of celebration, newness, and hope that mark the most sacred days of the church year.

Epiphany is now observed as a time of focusing on the mission of the church in reaching others by 'showing' Jesus as the Saviour of all people. It is also a time of focusing on Christian fellowship, especially in healing the divisions of prejudice and bigotry that we all too often create between God's children.



**Hymn: *There's a spirit in the air* (TIS 414, vv 1,2,and 6)**

1. There's a spirit in the air,  
Telling Christians everywhere;  
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,  
Living, working in our world.'

2. Lose your shyness, find your tongue,  
Tell the world what God has done;  
God in Christ has come to stay,  
Live tomorrow's life today.

6. May the Spirit fill our praise,  
Guide our thoughts and change our ways:  
God in Christ has come to stay.  
Live tomorrow's life today.

**Lent:**

**Reader 2:** With the ashes on our heads after the service of Ash Wednesday, the sanctuary colours for Lent turn to sombre hues: purple or violet, sometimes black or none at all. Throughout the six weeks of Lent we follow Jesus' three years of ministry. We relearn the faces and names of people who, like you and me, were sometimes faithful and sometimes selfish; people who heard the good news and responded and others who laughed and scorned.



Lent is a long season, a season that calls us to stop and take a look at ourselves in the light of Christ. It culminates in Passion Week, the word 'passion' coming from a Latin word meaning 'to suffer'. Starting with Palm Sunday and the joyful entry of Israel's Messiah-King into Jerusalem, it ends with that very same crowd yelling 'Crucify him, crucify him.' In between these two days, the week's events are remembered with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services.

**Hymn: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* (TIS 342, vv 1,3 and 4)**

1. When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an present far too small:  
Love so amazing, so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all

3. See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

**Offering**

**Offertory Prayer**

## The Journey Continues

### Easter:

**Reader 1:** On Easter morning Mary Magdalene weeps at the tomb until she is told the good news 'He is not dead! He has risen!' And that call echoes down through the centuries as Christians around the world joyfully cry out 'Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed!' year after year on the holiest day of the Christian calendar.



And the fifty days of Easter ring jubilantly with the new life and new hope that the Risen Saviour brings to us, to our world, and to all peoples who open their hearts to him. We listen in on the conversations of the disciples as they struggle to wrap their human hearts and minds around this new revelation. We watch as those who previously had persecuted the people of God now fall on their knees in awe and wonder. We experience anew for ourselves in this season the freedom and joy that is our heritage as the people of God.

### **Hymn: Christ the Lord is Risen Today (TIS 370, vv 1,3 and 4)**

1. Christ the Lord is risen today:

*Hallelujah!*

Let the whole creation say:

*Hallelujah!*

Raise your joys and triumphs high:

*Hallelujah!*

Sing now heaven and earth reply:

*Hallelujah!*

3. Lives again our glorious king,

where, O death, is now your sting?

Once he died our souls to save;

Where your victory O grave?

4. Soar we now where Christ has led,

following our exulted Head;

made like him, like him we rise:

ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

CCLI Song # 2728588

Charles Wesley

- Public Domain

*For use solely with the SongSelect® [Terms of Use](https://www.ccli.com/terms-of-use). All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](https://www.ccli.com)*

CCLI Licence # 300742

### Pentecost:

**Reader 2:** The red of flames is the sanctuary colour of Pentecost as we remember

the great rushing wind and the dancing flames like fire, and the words of Jesus,

baptizing his disciples with the Holy Fire of the Spirit. We remember the disciples were one

moment huddled in fear in a small upper room. Then the Holy Spirit came in power and they

rushed out of the building and into the streets, telling everyone about the good news in ways

that all could understand.



**Hymn: *Breathe on me, breath of God* (TIS 407, vv 1, 2 and 4)**

1. Breathe on me, breath of God,  
Fill me with life anew,  
That I may love all that you love  
And do what you would do

Breathe on me, breath of God;  
So shall I never die,  
But live with you the perfect life  
Of your eternity.

2. Breathe on me, breath of God,  
Until my heart is pure,  
Until with you I will one will  
To do and to endure.

CCLI Song # 99481  
Edwin Hatch | Robert Jackson  
• © Words: Public Domain  
• Music: Public Domain  
*For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com*  
CCLI Licence # 300742

**Ordinary Days:**

**Reader 1:** Ordinary time includes the Sundays between Pentecost and Advent.

Since there are no Holy Days in this time it serves to remind us of the ordinary times of life. Ordinary? Yes, but through our lives God brings the living water to a thirsty world in our offerings of service and mercy that we offer to others on a daily basis. And this is the *extraordinary* way that God builds his Kingdom—through ordinary people like us.



**Christ the King:**

**Reader 2:** On 'Christ the King' Sunday we are reminded that God is with us

through all the seasons of life as the writer of Ecclesiastes so poignantly reminds us. As we gather for worship today may you feel the freedom, the joy, the strength of Jesus' presence in your spirit. Remember his words? 'Look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.' (Matthew 28:20 NJB)

**Scripture:** John 18:33–37 (Denise Cameron)



**Sermon Reflection:** The Kingdom of Truth

### **The Kingdom of Truth**

*'I came into the world, to testify to the truth.  
Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice' (John 18: 37)*

### **Christ the King**

This Sunday, the last Sunday in the Church Year, is traditionally known as the Festival of Christ the King. For those with more republican leanings, it may be referred to as the 'Reign of Christ'. Either way the emphasis in the set reading is on the nature of Christ's reign or kingship and the nature of God's kingdom.

### **Truth in John's Gospel**

Earlier this year when we were discussing our favourite Scripture passages, I was tempted to name part of John 18:37 as one of mine. In it Jesus says:  
he 'came into the world to testify to the truth.'  
I like the idea of testifying to the truth.  
Truth is foundational for justice and peace.  
In a world where leaders like Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin repeatedly lie, we need people committed to truth.  
The 531-page Afghanistan Inquiry Report on war crimes by Australian soldiers in Afghanistan is marvellous testimony to truth challenging evil.

'Truth' is an important theme in John's Gospel, so much so, that God's Kingdom or reign may be thought of as the 'Kingdom of Truth'. In John's gospel Jesus is repeatedly presented as one whose teaching witnesses to 'truth'.

In John 8:32, Jesus says to the Jews who believe him:  
'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.'

In John 8: 40 Jesus is described as 'a man who has told you the truth that he heard from God'. Truth is a foundational idea in John's Gospel. It is the spiritual bedrock of Jesus' political and social engagement. It is the essence of his morality; the source of his authority; the very reason for his being.

Witnessing to the truth lay at the core of Jesus' faith. He says he came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and all who heed the truth, heed Him.

Truth was Jesus' greatest satisfaction. In John's Gospel, Jesus says,

'I am the way, the truth, and the life.  
No one comes to the father except through me' (John 14:6).

I am aware that John 14: 6 is used to exclude people,  
To test people about their beliefs,  
but I don't see it that way at all.  
I see truth in this verse being closely connected to a *way of life*,  
a *journey* of truthfulness,  
a *movement* through life that begins with encountering Christ  
and ends with Christ.

### **Belonging to the Truth**

Jesus' disciples are those who belong to the 'truth';  
they embody truth and practise truthfulness.  
They are truthful in thought, word and deed.  
They tell the truth.  
They are eager to discover the truth.  
Seeking the kingdom, is seeking the kingdom of truth.

Truth is the disciples' pearl of great price.  
Like Jesus, they say publicly what they mean.  
There is no devious purpose, no guile, no cunning nor deceit.  
There is no secret agenda. No duplicity.  
They don't think one thing and say or do another.

Speaking the truth does not mean speaking in a harsh, rude or violent manner.  
truth has to be spoken in a gentle way.  
Truth-telling and love are inseparable,  
like the two sides of a coin.  
If you cannot speak the truth in a gentle way  
then you shouldn't speak at all.

Admittedly, speaking the truth with gentleness and humility is not always easy;  
it has to be practised in the everyday decisions of life.

Truthfulness is not something we just talk about;  
it has to be practised.  
There needs to be a harmonious link between word and action.\;  
'Talk the talk *and* walk the walk'.

There is a temptation on the part of many Christians to cut themselves off from public life;  
say that religion has nothing to do with politics.  
It's not true.  
Jesus did not compartmentalise religion  
from economics and politics.  
He did not separate the private from the public.

Being a person committed to the truth takes courage.  
It's like being a whistleblower for Christ.  
It can be deadly dangerous.  
It can destroy careers.  
When Dr Fauci called Trump out on his lies about the pandemic,  
someone threatened to behead him.

It's not easy standing up to powerful people and institutions  
(including the church);  
people and institutions  
who misuse their power and authority and wealth.

Like Jesus before Pilate – a man of violence,  
stick to the truth;  
listen to the voice of Jesus;  
our only weapon is truth, or more accurately, the King of Truth.  
Let truth influence your will, your desires, your mind, your imagination and your loyalty.  
Truth is probing.  
Truth is powerful.  
Be like Jesus: testify to the truth.  
Seek with all your heart God's kingdom of truth.

**Prayer:**

Come, Holy Spirit, and show us what is true.  
In a world of great wealth where many go hungry  
and fortunes are won and lost by trading in money,  
**come, Holy Spirit, and show us what is true.**

In a world of great knowledge  
where many die of ignorance  
and every piece of information has a price in the marketplace,  
**come, Holy Spirit, and show us what is true.**

In a world of easy communication  
where words leap between continents  
and we expect to see a picture to illustrate each item of the news, **come, Holy Spirit, and  
show us what is true.**

In a church receptive to the truth of Jesus,  
moved by generous sacrifice and costly love,  
and interpreting the will of God with new insight,  
**come, Holy Spirit, and sho**

### **Prayers of the People** (Perce Marland)

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for all the wonderful blessings we have experienced throughout our lives – nourishing food, loving families, comfortable homes, peaceful lives, the model of Your son and Your presence in our lives, to name just a few. We acknowledge, too, that our present way of life was built on the sacrifices of our forebears and their enduring commitment to sound spiritual values grounded in our Christian faith. We owe much to them and the indigenous stewards who cared for our land for millennia. We are very grateful for the heritage they bequeathed to us.

This year, 2020, has brought into sharp focus many of the world's problems – the ravages of COVID 19, frequent outbreaks of hostilities among nations, international rivalries that threaten peaceful coexistence, world leaders who sow division, the plight of millions of refugees and the threat of climate change with its dire consequences for the planet and the myriad species on it. Lord, we ask that You intercede through the Holy Spirit to halt these evils on behalf of all humanity. We pray that the light of Your word be seen and heard throughout the world. Cast out all the evils that inhabit the human mind with their awful consequences and transform the world so that it becomes the joyous kingdom You have planned for us.

Lord, we pray for all Your institutional and human agents throughout our land. We pray especially for our Uniting Church, its leaders and ministers. Show them Your way, strengthen their resolve to do Your will and be with them as they seek to follow in Christ's footsteps. We pray especially for those who seek to ease the burdens that are afflicting others. Give them the strength and will to carry on and weigh on the minds of non-participating others till the body of helpers is overflowing.

We are acutely aware, Lord, that the COVID 19 pandemic has caused enormous hardships among our fellow citizens – loss of jobs, depressed income, rental stress, mortgage repayment difficulties, separation from loved ones, loneliness, comfortless deaths, travel restrictions and others. We pray for all those so afflicted. May they find comfort and understanding in the assistance of family, friends, counsellors and church agents.

We pray for all who are burdened by ill health, depression, injustice, and homelessness, especially those on our prayer list. Show us, good Lord –  
how to care till all are at ease;  
how to listen till all are heard;  
how to foster peace till violence is no more;  
how to share till all have enough; and  
how to love till all is made right. Amen

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Song: *Community of Christ* (TIS 473 vv 1,2 and 3)**

1. Community of Christ,  
who make the Cross your own,  
live out Your creed and risk Your life  
for God alone;  
the God who wears Your face  
to Whom all worlds belong,  
whose children are of every race  
and every song.

2. Community of Christ,  
look past the Church's door  
and see the refugee, the hungry,  
and the poor.  
Take hands with the oppressed,  
the jobless in your street,  
Take towel and water,  
That you wash your neighbour's feet.

3. Community of Christ,  
Through whom the word must sound -  
Cry out for justice and for peace  
the whole world round;  
Disarm the powers that war  
And all that can destroy,  
Turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish  
into joy

CCLI Song # 1121602

Meyer Lyon | Shirley Erena Murray

- © Words: 1992 Murray, Shirley Erena (Admin. by Hope Publishing Company)

- Music: Public Domain

*For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)*

CCLI Licence # 300742

**Benediction**

**Dismissal:**

L: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

**P: Thanks be to God!**