

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2024:** Sunday before Advent

*For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.*



**Theme for today is “Christ the King!”**

**Our call to worship:** We come to worship the Lord who surrounds us, does good to us, invites us to trust and reminds us to follow scripture to lead the life destined for us.

**Hymn: StF 564 H&P 745 O Thou who camest from above**

**Prayers of adoration and confession**

Eternal Father, whose son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord. Keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace. Bring the whole created order to worship at his feet, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Prayer of Confession

For all the times we have placed self-interest over the care of others, Lord have mercy. When we have misused authority and power, Christ have mercy for everything we do that depletes our environment and weakens biodiversity, Lord have mercy.

**Bible readings: 2 Samuel 23: 1-7 Revelation 1: 4-8 and John 18: 33-37**

**Hymn: StF 317 Christ triumphant, ever reigning**

**The truth is revealed**

We arrive at the final service in our lectionary year, this is the climax of the story, the moment of the great revelation, the moment when every twist and turn of the story falls into place and the truth is revealed. Next Sunday, we begin again the journey that will lead us through advent, Christmas and epiphany, through the ministry of Jesus to the passion narratives, the ascension the story of Pentecost and the work of the spread of Christianity and they all lead to this point today, the recognition that Jesus is the Christ, the King, the promised Messiah, our saviour and redeemer.

**A message from a Circuit Friend**

***‘The truth of power or the power of truth’***

The events around the recent election in the USA are a reminder of the great power held by world leaders. Apart from the political issues, it seems incredible that the leadership of one of the most powerful nations in the world will change hands and much has been said about the peaceful transition of power.

Here before Pilate, Jesus represents a power and a Kingdom that transcends all earthly power.

Pilate asks the question “Are you the King of the Jews?” Here we have the most powerful military and political power then on earth, through Pilate, confronted by a power which they have no hope of comprehending. The answer to his question is yet another question.

Where is this suggestion coming from? Is it yours or someone else’s idea? Did Pilate expect a poor frightened man pleading for his life? He was not expecting to be confronted by such calm and assured confidence in the truth.

Jesus makes it clear his Kingdom is not from this earth. He declares that he is the truth and everyone on the side of truth follows him. Pilate condemns himself through his lack of understanding of this concept when he asks, “What is truth?” He betrays the earthly political understanding that ‘truth’ is what you say it is, not the pure undeniable truth reflected in our Lord Jesus Christ, a truth that could save all who are prepared to follow.

***From Steve Jones, one of our Local Preachers***

**Some questions to ponder**

Steve mentions in his reflection about the most powerful leaders in the world. There is so much emphasis in the modern world on personal power and authority and almost anybody today can become an “influencer” and mislead people.

- Who holds the balance of power in your life?
  - Who do you trust?
  - Do you believe all that you read in the media?
- Pilate is faced with an almost impossible task.
  - Could he have responded any differently?
  - Was the power in his hands?
  - Or in the hands of a greater power?

- How do we make our choices today?
  - Who do we turn to?
  - What do we believe?

Today is the Sunday entitled “Christ the King”

- What does that mean to you?

**Hymn: StF 312 H&P 209 The head that once was crowned with thorns**

**Prayers**

Over all the earth, you reign on high, Every mountain stream, every sunset sky. But my one request, Lord, my only aim is that you'd reign in me again. Lord, reign in me, reign in your power over all my dreams, in my darkest hour. You are the Lord of all I am, so won't you reign in me again? Over every thought, over every word, may my life reflect the beauty of my Lord; 'cause you mean more to me than any earthly thing, so won't you reign in me again? Lord, reign in me, reign in your power over all my dreams, in my darkest hour. You are the Lord of all I am, so won't you reign in me again? Amen

**Prayers of Intercession**

Jesus, Servant King, teach us we pray, to be your servants in the world, to hear and respond to the cry of the needy oppressed and forgotten. Teach us to be practical in our response to human need. Teach us to be very tender with those who are especially weak and vulnerable. We pray for this in the decision making of those in authority and in our own decision making. Help us to always make time for kindness and care. May we ever look to you our, Shepherd King. Almighty God, ruler of all, so, rule our hearts and lives that we might by your grace be found amongst those whose need is greatest. We pray this day for all who are suffering in body, mind and spirit. We pray for all who exercise authority in Church and State. We pray this day that we might ever look to Christ as our ultimate model of compassion, care and service. Amen.

Reflect for a moment on the people and situations that concern you today and offer them to God.

**Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...**

**Hymn: StF 185 H&P 244 Sing we the King who is coming to reign**

**Closing blessing –**

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be among you all, now and forever more.

The Blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and ever more. **Amen.**