

Words of Welcome

Amid what is surely becoming the holiday rush, let's pause to reflect:
not yet on a stable, or star, or Advent candles,
or everything for which we're thankful.
Those days are surely coming, but others are as well:
days of holiness and righteousness, salvation and safety, deliverance and rescue;
the dawn of a day when God's tender mercy will trump oppression and death.
Such are the days of Christ's reign.
They are surely coming! Let's celebrate today!
[Ministry Matters™ | Worship Elements: November 20, 2022](#)

Call to Worship

Blessed be the Lord God who looks with kindness on us.

**We are the inheritors of the promises
made long ago to our ancestors.**

Blessed be the Lord God who gathers us here in this place.

**From across the street, from halfway around the world,
God brings us home to the heart of grace.**

Blessed be the Lord God who has remembered us.

**Scoffers and singers, watchers and wigglers,
we are those redeemed by God.**

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Hymn

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

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| 1. Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming,
as prophets long have sung.
It came, a floweret bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night. | 2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half-spent was the night. |
| 3. This flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor
our darkness everywhere.
True flesh, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and shares our every load | 4. O Saviour, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe.
O Saviour, King of glory,
who dost our weakness know,
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and to the endless day. |

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Prayer of Adoration and Confession

O Jesus,

You are the King of Glory, you are the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings.

And we pray that your Kingdom will reign forever in our hearts and in this world.

Lord, we pray for your Kingdom to come here now, bringing a kingdom of justice, righteousness, hope, love, peace, mercy and grace for all.

Lord, we ask that you rule in our hearts,

lead in this world and govern over your kingdom.

But Lord honestly,

We often have our own plans and agendas and we want to be rulers of our world.

Forgive us for those times.

And Lord we live in a time that would rather idolize the King of Pop than worship you.

Help us to know how to live as your Kingdom People in these times.

And Lord, there are a lot of Kings in this world who terrorize, over tax, humiliate, over exploit, and abuse those they are to lead.

Help us to spread the good news of the different kind of King you are.

Lord, thank you for being a different kind of King.

Thank you for your goodness and kindness in our lives.

Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for loving us.

Thank you for your Kingdom that is unlike any Kingdom in this world.

~ written by Rev Abi, and posted on **RevGalBlogPals** blog. <http://revgalblogpals.blogspot.ca/>

God of truth and justice, send us your Holy Spirit as we hear the Scriptures read and interpreted. Through your Word, grant that we might see your truth and justice unfolding in the world you love. Amen

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November 27, 2022. Sunday of the Reign of Christ. Year C.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Christ embodied God's love and mercy so powerfully that he offered forgiveness to his tormentors from the cross. In grace he reaches out to us, too. Receive his forgiveness this day, and offer it to others for his sake.

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Scripture Reading Luke 23:33-43

³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [[³⁴Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.']] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and

saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?' ⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' ⁴²Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' ⁴³He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

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The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Message Reign of Love

We began our worship with the singing of *Lo, how a rose e're blooming*. Most often sung during the Christmas season it speaks to the one we are celebrating today as King of our lives on this Reign of Christ Sunday. This Sunday marks the end of the Christian calendar year. Next week with the season of Advent we launch into a new cycle of living and learning. Advent brings the story of the anticipation of the Messiah and the birth of Christ. Today we celebrate that Christ has lived among human beings, remember that he died at the hands of power and politics, and by God's power was raised up, and lives among us, move among us, breathes in us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is a joyful day and yet our scripture reading is about the death of Jesus on a cross. Hardly seems the way to celebrate and exult the life of a King. Think of it. In our own time we are going to witness the coronation of King Charles. We know it will be a time of pomp and ceremony. The money going into that day from security, to food, to paper, and whatever else you may be able to imagine, is a number I can't even begin to imagine.

Yet here, in the story of Christ the King, we find violence, death, insults, pain and suffering. The inscription said "King of the Jews". It was a mockery. It wasn't intended to do anything but make fun of the one who claimed to have a kingdom of his own. What kind of King has no wealth, no status, no power, well at least not in the mind and experience of human beings. For us, kings and kingdoms have power, might, strength, money, influence, and prestige.

The King Christians claim has none of that, at least not in the way that may seem to have meaning in a world that sees power, wealth, popularity, and influence as important and necessary. This king that we Christian's claim is sung about as a Rose, tender, arriving in the middle of the night, no fanfare.

This life with its humble beginning also ended in a powerless sight. Clothes were divided because this seeming criminal would not need them. Leaders scoffed saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" Please hear

their words oozing with sarcasm. He was mocked by soldiers offering him sour wine, and saying “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!

Put yourself in the scene listening to those around you who are laughing and joking as Jesus is hanging there suffering. Then there are the two hanging there with him. One criminal joins in with the others, “Are you not the Messiah! Save yourself and us!” There may have been a little hope there, but really, he was likely just angry, scared, and lashing out.

Then there is the other who hangs on a cross with them. Remember this is not an easy death. It is slow and suffocating. This one person alone sees something, experiences something, notices. We really don’t know what he senses or why he speaks as he does, but his words to the other criminal speak to the guilty verdict they have received, and that though there is good reason for them to be there on a cross, the other with them, Jesus, is innocent. “He has done nothing wrong. Then he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

So today we are here as Christians. But what difference does it make? Are we here just like any other service organization? Do we come because of the community of people? Is it a safe space for you? Is it tradition?

It may be that you feel all of that applies, and it is good if it does, but the life of a Christian is marked by the same characteristics that Jesus modeled and lived, taught about and did. He healed, he loved, he forgave, then he promised that we would be with him in Paradise.

We often think of that paradise as the place we go after we die. Heaven. And it is that, but it is so much more. Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” For God, time and day is not the same as for you and I. Today is now. We don’t have to wait until we die to experience the love of Christ, the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit. We live into this today.

As we consider this, I would like you to reach back into your memories and think of a time that you experienced holiness. A moment when you thought, God is here. God is with me. A time that felt sacred, like you knew there was more going on than what was in front of you.

One of the moments for me was when I was preaching for the search committee of St. Andrew’s. I had been put up at the Prince Arthur Hotel. Rev. Hunt made sure to request a room that had a view of the Nanabijou, also known as the Sleeping Giant. He could not have known what that would come to mean for me. I had met with the search committee and toured St. Andrew’s. There was something about this place. I had interviewed and toured other churches by this time. But as I went to sleep that night, or tried to sleep I should say, I ended up just sitting at the window looking out at the Giant. My chest was warm and I could hardly speak. When I went to preach the next day at Lakeview, I was afraid that no words would come from my mouth as my chest continued

to radiate warmth. It was like the very presence of God was with me. I knew before I preached, that if St. Andrew's would have me, I would say yes.

These moments don't come always or often, yet they can sustain us. They remind us that there is a kingdom that is not of this world. It is a kingdom that is present, holds us. It is a kingdom of holiness, love, hope, joy, peace, and grace. It is not one of earthly power, but power that goes beyond our circumstances. It is power that enables us to reach out to others with love and grace. Christ's reign, God's kingdom is one that is marked by love, deep love for God, for ourselves, and for others. Not just the others we like, but others who are not at all like us. This reign of love includes and especially remembers the destitute, the forgotten, the downtrodden.

It is a kingdom where people are valued regardless of colour, gender, or social or economic standing. It is a kingdom where the subjects extend love and honour to anyone and everyone. It is a kingdom where justice prevails for all, not just for some. This is what we celebrate today on this Reign of Christ Sunday. We celebrate and claim the power of Christ to transform us and the world. We live it out, sharing it with others, experiencing the holiness that is the practice of love and grace, forgiveness and hope, justice and peace.

God's kingdom is now. Christ's reign is now. We are God's people remembered in love yesterday, today, and in the days to come. Jesus remembers us, stands with us, loves us and lives in us. Thanks be to God for this reign of love.

Prayers of the People

Lord Jesus Christ,
we give you thanks that you reign through love
as the power that embraces the world with mercy and hope.
Thank you for revealing that to trust is wisdom, to forgive is the best way
to deal with enemies, and to serve is the best way to lead.
We pray that, through the grace of your kingdom,
each beloved creature and citizen will know safety and satisfaction in their homes.
Let the vision of your peaceable kingdom take root in our hearts,
bringing healing to families and communities,
and in every place wounded by violence or destruction.

*Jesus, Prince of Peace, **reign in us and among us.***

Lord Jesus Christ,
We give you thanks for reaching out to those on the margins and those others
shunned, so that each one knew they belonged in your kingdom.
We pray for those who face discrimination or insecurity in our communities,
longing for respect and a change to thrive. Teach us how to live differently as
neighbours, to acknowledge and work with others we've never worked with before.
Lead us by your Spirit to share in your work of mending the world.

*Jesus, Prince of Peace, **reign in us and among us.***

Lord Jesus Christ,

Thank you for enduring the pain of the cross and the darkness of the tomb to show us there is life beyond death through your resurrecting love.

We pray for those who are grieving a loss this day,
the loss of someone beloved,
the loss of love or hope or trust,
the loss of opportunity or security or future plans.

Be present with all who the sadness and disruption of a loss,
and bring each one comfort and courage.

*Jesus, Prince of Peace, **reign in us and among us.***

Lord Jesus Christ,

This day we pray for your church at work in the world,
confronting the challenges and changes of these times.

Unite us in witness and service, and encourage us when difficulties arise,
for we are your people, committed to the unfolding of your reign among us,
as we pray the words you taught us:

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Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

Invitation to the offering

The story of Jesus offering forgiveness out from the Cross reminds us of the mercy and compassion we have received from God. We offer our gifts in gratitude for this love, so that the world will be continue to be touched by such mercy and compassion.

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If you consider St. Andrew's your church, regardless of where you live, would like to learn more about St. Andrew's, get involved in our ministry and work, or make a donation toward the life and ministry of St. Andrew's Presbyterian, in Thunder Bay visit our website at <http://standrewspres-tbay.ca>

Hymn

O Lord, thou art my God and King

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1. O Lord, thou art my God and King;
thee will I magnify and praise:
I will thee bless, and gladly sing
unto thy holy name always.

2. Thee will I bless each day I rise,
and praise thy name time without end;
much to be praised and great God is;
whose greatness none can comprehend.

3. Thy saints shall praise thy glorious name;
thy mighty acts they shall declare;
thy wonderous works I will proclaim
and meditate on them with prayer.
4. Thy might shall be by all extolled;
thy glorious grace I will record;
with all my strength I will unfold
thy great and mighty acts, O Lord.
5. Thy faithful shall make known the fame
of thy great goodness and shall bless
the splendour of thy glorious name,
praising aloud thy righteousness.

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Benediction

Go in love and loyalty, knowing that Christ goes before, Christ goes behind you,
Christ walks beside you and Christ lives within you.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and communion in the Holy Spirit be yours, now and evermore.

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