



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 22nd November 2020, 10:30am “Christ as King – Fulfilment” Matthew 25:31-46

Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon and Local Preacher Chris Stuckey.

This written worship has been prepared and distributed to bless you, dear one in Christ. We gather, physically separate, in our homes but fully united in love for our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as brothers and sisters we are blessed by sharing in this time of worship together and encouraged by knowing you are not alone. Worship brings us all spiritually closer together as a church, the family of faith in Jesus. This Sunday, as we consider Christ as King in the fulfilment of prophecy we will have the opportunity, from our homes, to share in Holy Communion together.



Proclamation:

From mist and darkness, from restful waters

God gathers us

From health and sickness, from plenty and poverty

God gathers us

From highroads and byways, from fields and cities

God gathers us

To a feast, a banquet, to life eternal

God gathers us safe home

Christ the King, King of justice

We belong to you

Christ the King, King of glory

We belong to you

Christ the King, King of integrity

We belong to you

(from Candles & Conifers by Ruth Burgess Wild Goose pub. 2009 permission given for worship purposes)

Opening Prayer: Loving God, come to us, we pray, as we join in worship with others this morning. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, open our hearts to receive your love and enable us to hear your voice. Inspire and strengthen us to live with compassion for those in need, acting with justice and righteousness in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Song: Rejoice the Lord is King StF 335

Sing/read/pray/proclaim.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgyUp0i2MnQ&ab_channel=KeswickConventio_n

Rejoice, the Lord is King:
Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing,
And triumph evermore.

Lift up your heart,

Lift up your voice!

Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus, the Saviour, reigns,
The God of truth and love;
When He has purged our stains,
He took his seat above;

His kingdom cannot fail,
He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus giv'n:

He sits at God's right hand
till all his foes submit,
and bow to his command
and fall beneath his feet

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Our Lord and judge shall come
And take His servants up
To their eternal home:
*We soon shall hear the archangels voice
God's trumpet-call shall sound -rejoice!*
Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayer of Confession:

*Almighty God, we come to make
confession, for we have sinned in thought
and word and deed.*

*We now repent in honesty and sorrow;
forgive us Lord, and meet us in our need.*
(StF 419 v.1)

We confess O Christ, that we have often forgotten your words to love as you love us; we have neglected the reading and studying of your word; we have judged others and not shown them the love and care which, as your followers we should do. Forgive our lack of faith and our unwillingness to place our lives and wellbeing into your hands. Forgive us that we are often impulsive, hasty and unwilling to listen to your voice.
In your mercy...**Lord forgive us**

Forgive us that we are too often obsessed with the trivialities and distractions of life

so that our priorities are distorted and we become blinded to your direction for our lives and the lives of our church community. We so often close our eyes to the needs of others because the pain of poverty upsets us.

In your mercy...**Lord forgive us**

Forgive us for the poverty of our worship, especially at this time when we have to worship in separation from each other. Help us to feel the togetherness of us all as a church family within your embrace; to be still in your presence and to focus on your love. Awaken us to grasp the awesomeness of your love for us and in our worship to truly celebrate and know your wonderful presence with us.

In your mercy...**Lord forgive us**

Gracious God, Renew us and keep us firm in our faith and strong in your service; create in us a new heart that we may respond to your great love and mercy.

Through Christ our Lord, **Amen**

Song: Ye servants of God StF340

Sing/read/pray/proclaim.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ9j3e8_yQc&ab_channel=HymnChannel

You servants of God, your Master
proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol;
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

God rules in the height, almighty to save;
though hid from our sight, his presence
we have;
the great congregation his triumph shall
sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

(the linked video misses out this verse)

"Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!"
let all cry aloud, and honour the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore and give him his right:
all glory and power, all wisdom and
might,
all honour and blessing with angels above
and thanks never ceasing for infinite love.
Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayer for our preparation to read and understand scripture:

Lord, prepare our hearts like fertile soil for the reading of your Word. Speak to us through the readings and the preaching of the word and enable us to be not just hearers, but doers of the Word which leads to life.

Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

New International Version

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God Amen

A time to pause, read again, pray, and reflect.

Preaching notes: This passage from Matthew's Gospel describes the second coming of Christ and the last judgement.

The first coming (or advent) of Jesus was as a vulnerable baby. He was to grow up and live amongst us in weakness describing himself as 'the servant of all'. In this final advent he would arrive in glory with a great company of angels. This would be a time of fulfilment when all the nations would be judged. Those who have followed the way of Jesus would join him and those who have rejected him would be lost.

The analogy of sheep and goats does not particularly resonate with us today, but in the time of Jesus the hearers of his message would often see herds of sheep and goats all mixed up together. To the casual outsider they looked very similar but not for the shepherd. He would be able to separate one from the other. The sheep would take precedence over the goats as their wool was more profitable. Hence in this passage, those people classified as sheep will receive life in God's kingdom while the goats are cast out.

Those of us who give of our time and talents in generously serving others, especially the needy, will be blessed. Those who do not will forfeit this blessing and miss out on life. Throughout Jesus' ministry his message is one of 'love your neighbour as yourself'. This is a message the prophets also proclaimed. Amos ch.4 v.1 condemns those who oppress the poor and crush the needy. Isaiah ch.58 v.6-7 states that we should not countenance injustice; we should share our bread with the hungry; look after the homeless; clothe the naked.

John Wesley took these words very seriously. He spoke of 'social holiness' and preached a 'social gospel' exhorting people to embrace the teaching of Jesus

in loving your neighbour as yourself. He told Methodists to spend time with the poor and to care for the lonely and distressed. He visited prisons; he set up the first Food Banks; established a Medical Dispensary; introduced electric shock treatment (though apparently after experiencing it no one returned for more!) His preaching gave hope to those for whom life was a struggle. He demonstrated his faith in both word and deed.

There is an element of surprise in this gospel passage. Those who are invited to enter the kingdom are perplexed when Jesus says to them 'I was hungry and you gave me food; thirsty and you gave me something to drink; a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me; sick and you took care of me; in prison and you visited me'. When did they minister to Jesus? They had acted in accordance with the gospel teaching to 'love your neighbour', because they had experienced for themselves the saving grace of God. They acted not to inherit a reward, but to serve as Jesus served and in doing so had ministered unknowingly to him. The prayer of St. Ignatius sums this up. *"Teach us good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do thy will."*

Amen. Local Preacher Chris Stuckey

Home Communion: At this point, Communion is taken, for those who have received the separate sheet please follow the words. For everyone else I ask that you respond in the way you feel most appropriate, as we together acknowledge Jesus as our Lord, Saviour and King. **Amen**

Song: Longing for light, we wait in darkness StF706

Sing/read or proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGNWu_iWd44&ab_channel=mkariobangi

Longing for light, we wait in darkness
Longing for truth, we turn to You.
Make us Your own, Your holy people
Light for the world to see.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in Your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Longing for food, many are hungry
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us Your bread, broken for others
Shared until all are fed.

Longing for shelter, many are homeless
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us Your building, sheltering others
Walls made of living stone.

Many the gift, many the people
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another
Making Your kingdom come.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in Your church gathered today.*

Beradette Farrell (b1957)

Prayers of Intercession: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)*

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us as we pray for others.

We pray for our world, for places where there is strife, for those for whom the storms of life are overwhelming and dispiriting. We pray for places where people are caught up in war and violence and for those exploited by unjust governments. We pray for migrants and displaced people who fear each day and have little or no hope for the future. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for our country, for our leaders, that they would have wisdom and integrity in dealing with the increased number of infections from Covid-19 and the horrific numbers of daily deaths. We pray for those who are struggling through this lockdown; people alone; relatives unable to visit loved ones in Care Homes or hospital; those who need hospital treatment and have been told they have to wait, regardless of pain and necessity for treatment. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

God of love, we thank you for those around us who have shown us kindness and compassion at this time. We thank you for the care of those who keep us in touch with each other. We pray that the light of your Spirit would continue to shine through all who seek your way. Help us to keep our eyes focussed on Jesus and give us compassion and love for those around

us who are in need, praying for all who work in Food Banks and for those who provide care for the homeless.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those known to us who are going through difficult times. For those who struggle with faith, those who look for answers and become bewildered; those who are depressed or lonely. We pray for those gripped by fear because of the spread of Covid-19; for those who are afraid to go out, afraid to meet others. Help them to know that your promises are true and you are with us all, no matter what. We pray for those known to us who need our prayers and for ourselves; help us to trust you for our lives, make us aware of your presence with us and help us to live knowing that the storms of life cannot overcome us because you have promised to never let us go.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Loving God, who calls us to follow you and whose grace knows no limits, fill us with your love that we might reflect your beauty in our lives. Give us the courage to step out in faith and to trust in you for our future. Enlarge our vision and fill us with the power of your Spirit enabling us to bring light and hope to the world. **Amen**

The 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.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil,

For the Kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours,
now and forever.

Amen.

Song: Soon and very soon SoF 1007

Sing/read or proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kc3BfDjKFQ&ab_channel=GaitherVEVO

Soon and very soon we are going to see the
King

Soon and very soon we are going to see the
King

Soon and very soon we are going to see the
King

Hallelujah hallelujah

We are going to see the King

No more crying there we are going to see the
King,

No more crying there we are going to see the
King,

No more crying there we are going to see the
King

Hallelujah hallelujah

We are going to see the King

No more dying there we are going to see the
King,

No more dying there we are going to see the
King,

No more dying there we are going to see the
King,

Hallelujah hallelujah

We are going to see the King Andre Crouch

Blessing:

May the road rise up to meet you, may
the wind be always at your back, may the
sun shine warm upon your face, the rain
fall soft upon your fields, and until we
meet again, may God hold you in the palm
of his hand. **Amen.**

(An Irish Blessing from Methodist Women in Ireland)

Phillip Dixon, November 2020. YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith and Hymns and Psalms resources are provided under license: CCLI 178182