



Church at Home **Sunday 22nd November 2020**

He is our God : we are the people he cares for, the flock for which he provides.
Psalm 95:7

Today is the end of the Church's year. Next Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent and we begin the rundown to Christmas. Today is also designated as the day when we celebrate Christ as the King, a fitting summary of the events that we have celebrated during that year of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the birth of the Church.

This Sunday's Bible readings include:

Ezekiel 34: 11-16,20-24. Here the prophet prefigures Jesus' stories of the good shepherd with his own vision. Gathering the sheep together Ezekiel gives us the picture of the weak and sickly being included at the expense of the fat and strong.

Psalm 95: 1-7 – Here is a song of praise to the King who cares and provides for his flock. Perhaps the psalmist had a picture of just the Jews as his subjects, but the gospel enlarges that not only to the whole world but also the whole of creation.

Ephesians 1: 15-end (Epistle) – We are reminded that our strength comes from the ruler of all, the ultimate power.

Matthew 25: 31-end (Gospel)– The famous story of the sheep and the goats immortalised in Sydney Carter's famous hymn, When I needed a neighbour. As we picture that story remember that in the east goats and sheep look remarkably similar.

Before we sing, read, or pray. Today, sit quietly in a healthy position. Breathe deeply and slowly and bring your week into the focus of God's love - the God who cares and provides and knows us.

Suggested hymn: [Rejoice the Lord is King](#)

Beginning: Bring the past week before God, remembering the events and words of the week and good and the bad things that have happened in your life and around the world. There have been opportunities to do and say helpful things and other times when opportunities will have been missed or ignored ; naming those moments that let God and other people down; asking forgiveness for the good we failed to do and the blessings we failed to pass on. Turn to the King and the good Shepherd.

Prayer of Confession

Lord we acknowledge that there have been times when we have not followed your way and headed off in our own direction, taken the easy route and became deaf to the needs of others.

And in a moment of quiet we bring into your light our own personal confessions.

Lord, we remember you are a God of mercy and grace, who forgives us and transforms us, by the power of your Spirit, into the people you have truly made us to be. **Amen.**

Hymn [Christ is our King](#)



First thoughts on today's Gospel

If you have been to Coventry Cathedral, or even if you haven't, you will probably remember Graham Sutherland's vast East window tapestry of Christ in Majesty. It is reassuring for many to see Jesus above everyone and everything else- the top gun who can take on the world's evils and triumph. We want to be reassured that we are backing the right horse.

In a world of so many competing horses with vocal and often violent supporters, that becomes very important. And so we listen to the slogans and look at the tweets and decide whether we want to "make America great again" or "take back control" or "go on the march of China".

As we get caught up in the hurly burly of survival, decisions are based on self-interest and, like the king makers of history, we can change sides, if it seems to our advantage. It is at these moments of getting caught up in the world that we need that vision of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, sitting

on the right hand of the Father. The Book of the Revelation of St. John, the last book of the Bible, vividly gives his readers that picture as they cope with persecution and martyrdom. But then we come to today's Gospel and the sheep and the goats. "When you did it for the least of these you did it to me". The King is among us as we will be reminded this Christmas. If we do not know that we might miss him as we gaze up into heaven. If we are to be faithful to the King of Kings we must recognise him in one another and in everyone we meet; and in the hungry, the sick, the stranger, the homeless. In Ezekiel's picture the weak lambs are the special ones like any of the projects supported by Children in Need recognises. It must warm God's heart as He sees the care and commitment and the value of all. Let us keep the King of Heaven and The Servant King in balance as we live out our lives.

For our prayers, let us remember:

- Those at university and college whose studies are disrupted and lives isolated.
- Those who face unemployment or the failure of their businesses.
- Those developing vaccines.
- Those who have never left the front line of care.
- Those who are suffering physically, mentally or spiritually
- Those who try to make excess financial gain out of the crisis
- Those throughout the world who suffer without the resources to handle the pandemic.
- Our neighbours, our community and our families as we try to belong to one another

Add any particular people and situations that The Holy Spirit brings to your mind as you have been praying and then say our family prayer, **The Lord's Prayer**.

Suggested Hymns: [At the name of Jesus](#) [From heaven you came](#)

End the time of church-at-home by saying out loud the words of **The Grace**, reaching out your hands to include in your imagination all those you know and love, who live here in the village and beyond

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