



Worship-at-home—Christ the King

November 22, 2020

God's love for us is never ending!

Welcome to worship-at-home on this Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday of our church year. In today's gospel Jesus teaches us about a different kind of "reign", one based on radical love, mercy, peace, and forgiveness.

Even during a pandemic, Zion continues its Turkey Trot tradition. Yesterday, we distributed 50 food boxes to our neighbors in need. Thank you to all who participated with your time and resources.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for our Call Committee. You'll find a brief explanation of the process at the end of the written devotional. As the Call Committee continues their work, the Southeastern Iowa Synod continues to search for an interim pastor for Zion.

Thank you for your faithful support to Zion's ministry.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Blessing the Commitment Cards

Deacon Janine Johnson

Song of Praise (*Jonathan Turner*)

Thank you Jonathan Turner

Prayer of the Day

O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing the Reader

Thank you Gavin Bates

Readings Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24
Psalm 95:1-7a

Thank you Carl and Char Engstrom

Matthew 25:31-46

Reflection

Pastor Elaine Olson

Today is the last Sunday of the church's liturgical calendar and affirms the "Reign of Christ." It is the newest of the church's festivals, established by the Pope in 1925. At this time, oppressive leaders overwhelmed Europe, including Nazi Germany and the Russian Revolution. The Pope proclaimed Christians knew a different kind of kinship where Christ is King, one of justice, integrating radical love, compassion, and mercy.

The Gospel describes just how different this reign of Christ is. It says that the Son of Man will gather all the nations at the end of time and divide the people into sheep and goats. The "Son of Man" makes the judgment call about who he accepts as part of his kingdom. He blesses the sheep and sends the goats away.

The Son of Man calls the sheep righteous, for they lived in alignment with God. They fed the hungry, gave water to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, cared for the sick, and visited those in prison. Jesus taught these actions to his disciples and followers as the way to live in the kingdom of God. Again, and again, Jesus encouraged his followers to embody these actions of profound compassion and mercy.

The goats are accursed, out of alignment with God. They did not feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, or visit those in prison. The Son of Man sends these people into eternal punishment.

Jesus is so direct in this teaching. So clear. It is NOT to create fear for what happens in the afterlife but to give clarity in how we live as followers of Christ on this side of eternity, in life now.

To make the point even more profound, Jesus teaches that he, the Son of Man, is among those who are hungry, thirsty, alone, naked, sick, and imprisoned. If we want to see Jesus, we need to see those in need. Jesus dwells within the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, imprisoned, and the stranger. When we care for one of these, we care for Jesus.

Christ is King, not in the realm of power, procession, or privilege, nor the prosperity many of us enjoy. Christ is King within those in need, hurt by a chaotic, greedy, and unjust world. Christ dwells as a “servant king” among those who need compassion, justice, mercy, and care. Christ needs us, our hands, and feet, to embody this servanthood.

The truth of the Reign of Christ is so clear. As Christians, marked with the sign of the cross in our baptisms, we live within the Kingdom of God set within an unjust and chaotic world.

Within God’s kingdom, it all comes down to giving care or withholding care. God’s love cares for us. We love in return by caring for others. Providing care is what matters, not perfection in the caring. For this, we are blessed within the Reign of Christ.

Song *Worship & Praise 124 Shout to the Lord*

Thank you Jonathan Turner

Prayers of the People Longing for Christ’s reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God’s power on the church, the world, and all in need.

For those in need of care. Train our ears to hear your cry in the needs of those around us.

For the creation. Direct our use of creation to provide for the needs of all people and the earth.

For the nations. Bring peace to every place where there is conflict.

For those weary of caring. Grant peace and rest to those on the front lines fighting Covid.

For those who stand between us and danger. Hold them in the safety of your love.

For Zion. Grant resilience through the transitions and wisdom in discernment in calling a pastor.

Thank you for saints now departed who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and tended to the sick.

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer

Blessing

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad!

The blessing of God, Sovereign, ✝ Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

+ **Beloved of God, Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.**
Thanks be to God +

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Call Committee process: The committee is creating a Ministry Site Profile that is intended to paint a picture of the Zion congregation. It includes our demographics, our ministries, and the gifts we hope to find in our next pastor. Thank you in advance for your assistance if a committee member calls seeking your input. Once completed, Zion's Council will review the document and after approving will forward to the Synod office. This profile becomes the basic document used in the call process. Based on the information in the profile, the Synod will recommend pastoral candidates to Zion. Pastoral candidates will review this document as they discern accepting a call to Zion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOSPITALS & PRAYERS—If you or someone you know is in the hospital and would like Zion to be aware, please call the church office or Deacon Janine. If you would like them included in the prayers, please let us know if it's okay to print the name in the weekly devotional.
563-322-3533

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE—If you or your group have information to share in the December Zion News, please have it emailed to the office by tomorrow, November 23rd.
office@ziondavenport.org