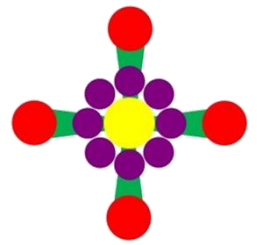


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
23rd November 2025
Christ the King**



Call to Worship

We meet in the presence of a king, but not a king as the world knows kings to be. The king whose reign we celebrate today is the King of kings and the servant of all.

Lift up your heads, O gates;
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.

‘Who is the King of glory?’

**‘The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord who is mighty in battle.’**

Lift up your heads, O gates;
be lifted up, you everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.

‘Who is this King of glory?’

**‘The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory.’**

As we draw together to worship,
let us remember that we are in the presence of a King,
not a King for whom we have to dress up and paint the building,
but a King who loves us and comes to us just as we are.

So come, Holy Spirit; come, enter this space,
enter our hearts and minds
and draw us into the presence of our King, the King of kings.

Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So let us turn away from sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

The kingdom is yours, but we turn away from your just rule:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The power is yours, but we trust in our own power and strength:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

The glory is yours, but we fall short of the glory of God:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

O King enthroned on high, filling the earth with your glory:

holy is your name,

Lord God almighty.

In our sinfulness we cry to you to take our guilt away,

and to cleanse our lips to speak your word, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the God of love

bring us back to himself,

forgive us our sins,

and assure us of his eternal love

in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Praise response

The Lord sits enthroned, as king for evermore.

The Lord shall give strength to his people; the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

From mist and darkness, from restful waters,

God gathers us.

From health and sickness, from plenty and poverty,

God gathers us.

From highways and byways, from fields and cities,

God gathers us.

To a feast, to a banquet, To life eternal

God gathers us safely 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.

The Collect

God the Father,
help us to hear the call of Christ the King
and to follow in his service,
whose kingdom has no end;
for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, one glory.

Amen.

The Readings

First Reading: Colossians 1:11-20

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

Gospel reading: Luke 23: 33-43

When 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. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And 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!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.'

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?

And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Reflection with Mary

Today is the last Sunday in the Church year, the day we celebrate the feast of Christ the King. A day when we're encouraged to both look back on the past to all that Christ achieved for each of us, as well as looking forward and asking ourselves how we can serve him both now and in the future! Today is a day to celebrate! To help us think about what this really means let's take a brief look into our readings to provide us with reasons why this is the case. In our first reading from Colossians, Paul reminds us that Jesus is the most important person ever to have walked the earth, he is actually God himself! Christ came in order to fulfil his promise of a new reality, a new hope, he is ever present and encouraging everyone into this new kingdom of relationship and joy. Wow!

Our second reading from Luke's Gospel takes us into the horrific heart of Christ's suffering in the crucifixion.

As hard as it is to hear this, we need to remind ourselves there was a marked difference between the freedom-fighting warrior king that was expected, and the homeless travelling teacher and healer who arrived. Just before our reading for today began, we know that Jesus had been 'crowned' king with a crown of thorns in painful mockery of his kingship.

In our reading we then hear the words spoken by the thief who acknowledged his guilt whilst also recognising the innocence of Christ; “..this man has done nothing wrong”. When he turned to Christ acknowledging him for who he truly is, we hear Christ’s forgiveness in those welcoming words “..today you will be with me in paradise.” We are offered exactly the same promise!

Christ reaches out to us exactly as we are day after day and because he has lived among us, he meets us with understanding and compassion. He promises to will be with us, offering us strength and refuge. I wonder, do we daily recognise how dependent we on him or do we sometimes need reminding?

I know I do. The actual feast of Christ the King is relatively new, being established 100 years ago by Pope Pius XI in the aftermath of World War 1 which left destruction in Europe. An estimated 20 million people had died, and a further 20 million were wounded. Governments were on the edge of economic collapse, and unemployment soared. In some places, people were on the brink of starvation. For many there was a real sense of pessimism and helplessness and figures powerful figures like Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin were emerging. I wonder, although the timing and figures differ does any of this sound at all similar to how some people are feeling today? We certainly can’t claim to be living in peaceful and equitable stable times. Even here in England today many question how to deal with what is happening both close to and at home. When Pope Pius XI instigated today’s feast he was trying to reaffirm the kingship of Christ. He emphasized that Jesus holds ultimate authority over all aspects of human life, reminding them and us that Christ must reign in our minds, wills, and hearts. We are to love God above all things, allowing such love of God to spill over into our everyday dealings with others. So, as we celebrate today my prayer for us all is that we welcome Christ as King into every part of our lives enabling us to become more loving towards others in the here and now, whilst we wait for his ultimate return as the King of Kings and Lord of lords.

We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Prayers of Intercessions with Judith

Jesus Christ is the everlasting King whose kingdom is not of this world but grows in the hearts of his people and lasts for ever.

As children of the kingdom, let us make our prayers to the eternal God who loves us.

We pray that the Church may be alive to God's beckoning, quick to obey his will and always ready to act in his loving service for the good of the world.

We pray for our church leaders of all the denominations, and those who lead ministry in our churches in the Benefice and we pray for ourselves, each local church fellowship. We are grateful to be able to gather in worship; and for the care and love we share with each other.

Jesus, we exalt you as Lord and King: May your kingdom come

Gracious Saviour we pray for those making political and economic policy in our own country. Give them wisdom in their thinking; mercy in their action; and fairness in all that they do. We pray for all those who are really struggling with the cost of living, who are afraid that they may not be able to make ends meet. We pray for all those who are having to make hard choices about eating or heating. We pray for our local services, our food banks, warm places, that they will offer compassionate assistance to all who need it. Help your Church to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

Jesus, we exalt you as Lord and King: May your kingdom come

Loving Lord, we commend to you those who are striving to make peace in the world. Give them wisdom in their thinking; mercy in their action; and fairness in all that they do. We remember all those who live in regions where there is conflict and unrest; those who have been injured; those who have lost loved ones. Grant to them comfort and strength.

Jesus, we exalt you as Lord and King: May your kingdom come

We pray for those we know who are sick, sad or struggling with their mental health. Be close to them and enfold them in your loving arms. We remember all who are lonely or housebound; desperate for an adult to talk to; the homeless; or those struggling to care for family members. Lord, give us eyes and ears to see these people in our community and to bring your love to them.

Heavenly Father be with those who mourn the loss of a loved one. Bring them comfort and strength and let them know there is light after their darkness. May those who have died rest in the eternal peace of your presence, their burdens laid down and their suffering ended.

Jesus, we exalt you as Lord and King: May your kingdom come

Lord Jesus, we rejoice that you were willing to exchange your crown of glory for a crown of thorns. We thank you for humbling yourself to become one of us. We will never truly know the cost of your sacrifice, but we bow before you in gratitude. Give us the strength to keep faithful to you. As we go forward into the coming week, go before us and encourage us to keep close to you. Help us to be true servants of the King, we pray. You gave your all for us, so help us to give our all for you.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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 for ever. Amen.

The Peace

To crown all things there must be love,
to bind all together and complete the whole.
Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.
Stir up, O Lord,
the wills of your faithful people;
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works,
may by you be plenteously rewarded;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

You are called and loved by God the Father
and kept safe by Jesus Christ.
Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance,
from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.
Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible
The only wise God
Be honour and glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

Sending Out

Let us go now, into this world, that the King created,
and remember to treat all that we meet, as if they are the King who created
and saved us.
Amen.