



The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 24 November 2024
The Feast of Christ the King



Preparation

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

Call to Worship

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.’

Opening Prayer

We stand before the throne of God with countless crowds
from every nation and race, tribe and language.

**Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honour, power and might
be to our God for ever and ever. 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.**

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Praise response

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised:
There is no end to his greatness.
**One generation shall praise your works to another,
And shall declare your power.**
All creation praises you, Lord,
And your faithful servants bless you.
**They declare the glory of your kingdom
And tell of your mighty power.**
My mouth shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.
**Let every living thing bless his holy name
For ever and ever.**

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 Word of God

First Reading: Revelation 1: 4-8

John to the seven churches that are in Asia:
Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and
from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the
faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the
earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his word

Gospel reading: John 18:33-37

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word

Reflection from Brenda Wilkinson

Our first reading from Revelation foretold of the coming of Christ the King. With Advent and Christmas just around the corner, the Christian world waits for the birth of The Baby. I wonder what the Jewish people felt when they realised Jesus was in fact Christ The King? The Shepherds knew it and the Wise Men too. But I wonder about Judas when Jesus was older. He thought Jesus had come to be king, a king to free their nation from oppression by leading a great army of warriors to rise up against the Romans. Instead Judas saw Jesus the king preach a Gospel of peace, love and redemption, not just for neighbours but for enemies too.

I truly believe Judas loved Jesus. But he was faced with an emotional and moral dilemma when he saw the kind of king Jesus was. And he chose to betray Jesus, with that symbol of love, a kiss.

In our second reading, from John's Gospel, we see Pontius Pilate, who asked Jesus if He was a King. Jesus replied with the answer that His Kingdom was not of this world. Clearly Jesus was no revolutionary about to overthrow Roman rule and Pontius Pilate saw this. Although not part of today's reading John went on to tell us that Pilate to faced a moral dilemma.

Pilate knew that Jesus was not guilty but he was unwilling to make the courageous decision to free an innocent man in the face of such pressure from a baying crowd. So he abdicated responsibility and washed his hands of his choice.

Judas and Pilate's choices make me think of the times in my life when I have faced less far reaching but no less painful moral choices and decisions. Maybe you have in yours too.

When I was a Social Worker, I was aware of choices made by those in social care every day. How much easier it would have been if we could have seen into the future to know how our choices would work out, or to have known immediately all that subsequently became known in the days, weeks and years ahead.

Over the last few days I have been thinking a great deal about Archbishop Justin Welby and the moral dilemmas he has faced. He is a man I admired and to a large extent I still feel compassion and empathy for him and his family. In a small way I have shared experiences similar to his. He, like I, lost a child. He, as I did, experienced bouts of depression as a consequence. Plus I have admired some of the issues he has spoken out about. Especially in relation to the poverty suffered by a high percentage of our society and the treatment of refugees, asylum seekers and 'the boat people.'

We have heard recently about choices and dilemmas that he faced in the particular case looked at in the recently released Makin Report. When he resigned he took personal and institutional responsibility for his actions and those of the decision-making team at the time.

I wonder how many moral dilemmas the Archbishop went through in his time of office?

We all face choices and moral dilemmas. How do we face them? How do we choose what path to take?

Pontius Pilate could surely never have imagined that his actions were part of the story of Jesus becoming the King of kings. Jesus, that innocent of whom he washed his hands, Jesus Our Saviour, Jesus the light of the world whose radiance burns ever brighter. Jesus. Christ The King still two millennia later.

His teachings of Love, Repentance, Redemption and Forgiveness are the Tenets of our Church. And this king is the one we turn to when we face our own choices and moral dilemmas.

I pray for each of us, that we may know Christ the King beside us and around us, ruling and guiding our hearts. Amen.

Affirmation of faith

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the father.**

through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession with Chris Wilcock

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

We pray for your kingdom to come
in the worldwide communities
of those who believe in Jesus Christ –
may our lives enthrone him.

We pray especially for the Church of England facing difficult times
in the wake of the Makin Report and the resignation of the
Archbishop of Canterbury. May we take our responsibilities for
the safeguarding of those in our congregations seriously.

We pray that those responsible for selecting and appointing
a new Archbishop fulfil their duties with wisdom
and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Spirit of the living God:

may your kingdom come.

We pray for your kingdom to come
in the nations of our world
and in their leadership;
for God's values to take root and grow;
for each person to be respected
as a beloved child of God.

We continue to pray for those parts of the world
torn apart by violence and warfare. For the Ukraine, Israel
and Palestine, the Yemen and Sudan. May there be speedy
and just settlements in all areas of conflict and an end
to the suffering of those innocently caught up in warfare.

Spirit of the living God:

may your kingdom come.

We pray for your kingdom to come
in our homes and families,
our neighbourhoods and places of work,
in all thinking, all speaking and all action.
As we look forward to Advent and Christmas we pray for
all those who are homeless and for all those for whom
Christmas is a time of sadness and loneliness.
We thank you for all those who seek to provide shelter
and companionship for those who have no families over
the festive period.
Spirit of the living God:
may your kingdom come.

We pray for your kingdom to come
in all hospitals, hospices and surgeries,
and in every place of pain and sadness.
We pray for all those suffering illness at this time.
For those who are anxious about pending operations
or awaiting the results of tests. We give thanks for
the dedication of Doctors and nurses and all those
involved in the NHS as they prepare to cope with
the winter months. Grant them compassion and
understanding as they undertake their task of healing.
Spirit of the living God:
may your kingdom come.

We pray for your kingdom to come
in the final stages of earthly life,
in the journey through death,
and in the awakening to eternal life.
We give thanks for the lives of all those who have
died this week and are now at rest with you in
your kingdom. We pray for those who mourn the loss
of a loved one knowing that you are with them in their
grief.
Spirit of the living God:
may your kingdom come.

We thank you for making us,
and redeeming us,
open wide to us the gates of heaven.
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.**

Closing Prayer

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

God the Father, who has given to his Son the name above every name, strengthen you to proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord. **Amen.**
God the Son, who is our great high priest passed into the heavens, plead for you at the right hand of the Father. **Amen.**
God the Holy Spirit, who pours out his abundant gifts upon the Church, make you faithful servants of Christ our King. **Amen.**
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you today and always. **Amen.**

Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.