



**Ardoch and Blackford Parish Churches
Sunday 21st November 2021**

We worship on this the last Sunday of the Christian year.

Advent Sunday next weekend heralds in a new year.

This Sunday, known in several church circles as Christ the King Sunday, is therefore the climax and conclusion of the Church's liturgical journey through the life of Christ and the Gospel message. We celebrate the coming reign of Christ as King of the Earth and the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God.

We say the Lord's Prayer and celebrate the hope and expectation contained in the phrase "Thy Kingdom Come.

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

Our first hymn was written by a Church of Scotland minister who served for 45 years near Helensburgh. He therefore named the tune "Cardross" after that parish.

Look forward in faith—All time is in God's hand

Walk humbly with Him and trust His future plan

God has wisely led his people by His power

Look forward in hope He gives us each new hour

Look forward in faith—the world is in God's care
His purpose of love He calls on us to share
In our neighbour's need the Lord is present still
He blesses the meek the earth will know God's will

Look forward in faith—God gives us life each day
Go onward with Christ, His Spirit guides our way
Now God lets us live within the sphere of grace
Trust ever in Him—He rules o'er earth and space

Words & Music: Andrew J. Scobie
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Joyce Wighton reads from Daniel 7. All the famous events of Daniel's life take place in the first six chapters of his book, then he tells us about the visions he sees from God.

⁹ “As I looked,

“thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.

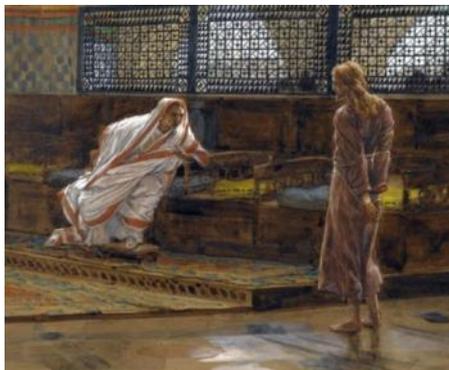
Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court was seated, and the books were opened.

¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

On Christ the King Sunday we always read from Jesus' “trials” as Pilate and/or Herod try to understand Jesus . They fail. How will we do as we read from John 18?

³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”



³⁴ “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

³⁵ “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

³⁶ Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

³⁷ “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

³⁸ “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?”

⁴⁰ They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Our second hymn is about Jesus coming as King to fulfil Old Testament prophesy (See Luke 4: 18, 19)

Make way, make way For Christ the King In splendour arrives
Fling wide the gates and welcome Him Into your lives

*Make way! Make way! For the King of kings
Make way! Make way! And let His kingdom in*

He comes the broken hearts to heal, the prisoners to free
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance, the blind shall see
And those who mourn with heavy hearts who weep and sigh
With laughter, joy and royal crown, He'll beautify

We call you now to worship Him as Lord of all
To have no gods before Him; their thrones must fall!

Words & Music Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thankyou Music

We pray together

Today we acknowledge Christ as King. His throne is a cross, and he reigns from high heaven. Beauty and holiness are the marks of his kingdom. He is the face of God revealed in human form. Let us keep our eyes fixed on him: King Jesus – the Way, the Truth and the Life.

God of gods and King of kings, be with us as we seek to know more of your truth. Speak to us by your Word and your Spirit. Help us to see Jesus, and to hear his voice – not just for today, but for all days, and for the glory of your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray.

King of kings and Lord of lords, you are our God. Before time began you were. Your voice, Lord God, is louder than the roars of the oceans. You are more powerful than the crashing waves of the sea. You are forever and forever and forever. You were. You are. You will be.

God of mystery and magnificence, we see you as our king. We read of visions of your throne, flaming and ethereal. You are beyond our imagining, beyond our dreams and visions and wildest hopes. You are in us and with us and among us. You are all we could imagine and wish for and more. You are our God, our king of all creation.

O Lord our mighty God,
we have heard but not always listened to you:
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.

We have seen need and closed our eyes to it:
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.

We have closed our ears to cries for help:
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin..

We have known your truth and yet followed lies and falsehoods:
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.

The Lord God says: be assured your sins are forgiven, your slate is wiped clean. Listen to the word of God and know its truth. Amen.

Our next hymn points us to Christ again asking us to consider the mystery of God in human form.

Meekness and majesty, manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.

*O what a mystery, Meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship For this is your God, This is your God.*

Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience to death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life, conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify prays: 'Father forgive.'

Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
Love indestructible in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.

Words & Music Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thankyou Music

What is truth?

That's Pilate's despairing question as he tries to extricate himself from the responsibility of making a decision about Jesus.



Just a few hours earlier Jesus has told his disciples over the Passover dinner, "I am the Truth," but now that truth is too uncomfortable for Pilate. He has a crowd of people to please—or at least keep quiet for the sake of his Roman masters—and he just wants a quiet life. He finds no logical basis for condemning Jesus to death and offers the crowd the King of the Jews. They don't throw him a lifeline; they want anyone but Jesus; they want anything but the Truth.

Despite living around 600 years before Jesus, Daniel sees Jesus more clearly than Pilate. He sees "one like a son of man" (which will become the title Jesus most uses about himself) whose kingdom will not pass away.

Read on in Daniel and we'll see that he was "troubled in spirit" (7:15) then "turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer." (9:3). Pilate was troubled but turned to plead with the crowd. Big mistake.

Christ is King; his Kingdom will not pass away and in time "At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow" as the hymn and Philippians 2:10 say. What will you do with that truth? How will it shape the rest of today? The rest of this week? Your preparations for Christmas as we enter Advent? Your 2022 and your life in eternity?

There is no "alternative truth" but we do have to choose to accept it

We pray again for ourselves and for others

King of love, you came among us not as a mighty ruler but as a child. We pray for the children in our village that we would cherish them, listen to them and protect them.

We remember all who lead ministry among children and young people, and ask for courage, kindness and wisdom as they help children and young people to flourish in faith. We give thanks for all who work in safeguarding, and ask that we would all be more aware of the signs of abuse, and work to make our church communities places of safety and sanctuary.

King of love, we pray for fresh courage for all who work tirelessly for racial justice, and for all who challenge the status quo to urge change. May we never be bystanders to distress but ready to speak for the voiceless; more urgent in our cry for equal treatment of all and more insistent that our churches reflect genuine diversity.

King of love, we pray for the homeless and for the displaced peoples of the world; for people who sleep on the street in the cold of the night; for migrants who have become pawns in a proxy war on the border of Belarus; and for all children who are victims of adult wars that they would find shelter and comfort. You made your home with us; may we open our hearts to others.

King of love, we pray for standards in public life, and ask that decisions would be taken that reshape parliament and defend democracy. We pray that MPs would serve the needs of their constituents. When political leaders fail us because of self-serving desire for status or power and they do not show commitment to change, may we be faithful in prayer for them and all leaders. May we live as you taught us placing the needs of others above our own; and work for a world where status is unimportant and the least and last are first.

King of love, we pray for the people of Ukraine as Russian troops gather on the border and for people endangered because of floods and landslides in Western Canada. We pray for all who have been caught up in the terror attack in Liverpool: for bystanders and for the driver of the taxi whose quick thinking prevented a worse tragedy. We ask that the motivations for this attack would be discovered and that this incident would not give energy to those who wish to spread hatred.

King of love, we pray for all who feel alone or in despair that you would be present in their suffering. We pray today for all who work in mental health asking for skill and tenderness as they seek to restore well-being. We pray for all we know who are sick and ask for your healing. In the quiet, we name people who need your peace today. Surround all who are vulnerable with your care and compassion.

King of love, through the challenges all around us, keep our eyes fixed on you. We pray for our friends and our families in all their needs and their joys; and we pray for our church communities that we would be known by our love and welcome all in need just as you have welcomed us.

We long for your kingdom where we will all be at home. You call us to follow you. Help us to hear your voice. Amen

Our final hymn is based on the Prayer of St Patrick reputed to be on his armour in the 8th Century

Christ be beside me, Christ be before me,
Christ be behind me, King of my heart;
Christ be within me, Christ be below me,
Christ be above me never to part.

Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand,
Christ all around me shield in the strife;
Christ in my sleeping, Christ in my sitting,
Christ in my rising light of my life.

Christ be in all hearts, thinking about me
Christ be in all tongues, telling of me.
Christ be the vision, in eyes that see me
In ears that hear me, Christ ever be.

Our blessing is derived from St Patrick's prayer life as well

May the strength of God pilot you and the power of God uphold you,
May the wisdom of God guide you and the eye of God look for you.

May the ear of God hear you and the word of God speak to you.
May the hand of God protect you and the way of God lie before you,
Amen.



Intimations

The joint Kirk Session Meeting will take place in Blackford Church on Monday 22nd November at 7.00pm. Tea and coffee will be served to elders at 6.45pm.

Ardoch Kirk Session meeting is on Wednesday 24th November at 7.30pm. All items for the agenda and team reports to the Session Clerk by Monday evening please.

The next Community Lunch is on Friday the 26th November in the Church Hall at 12 noon. All members of the community are invited. Entry by donation. To book a place please contact, Charles Robertson, 880947 or Barbara McLaren, 880509.

Some worship opportunities on the BBC this weekend

7:30am BBC Radio Scotland New every Sunday Act of worship led by John Coutts, a member of the Salvation Army in Stirling.

8:10am BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship Baptist minister the Revd Richard Littledale seeks out the heart of the Winter Garden, and finds it to be a 'thin' place, where hope and faith may be found in the short, cold days and the dormant soil. Hope in the Winter Garden.

1:15pm BBC 2 Songs of Praise Aled Jones presents the girls' semi-final of the BBC Young Chorister of the Year competition

Ardoch Parish Church, CCLI Licence Numbers:
8326, 709991,2287040,1028468
Blackford Parish Church, CCLI Licence Number: 880762

Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139
Blackford Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC005594

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