

SERVICE SHEET
22nd November
Christ the King

The 8.00am Holy Communion Service will be shared on zoom

The 8.00 Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion will be live streamed from church. All welcome to connect using the Zoom link. The congregational liturgy will be on the screen, so a service book is not required. The service lasts about 30 minutes.

Zoom Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87558407907?pwd=TFBoMnRoRHkwU3FPLzZhZW1DMXVtQT09>

Meeting ID: 875 5840 7907

Passcode: 019631

10am Service

Canticle A Song of the Justified

**Our hope is not in vain,
because God's love has been poured into our hearts.**

**God reckons as righteous those who believe,
who believe in him who raised Jesus from the dead;**

**For Christ was handed over to death for our sins,
and raised to life for our justification.**

**Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Through Christ we have gained access to the grace in which we stand, and rejoice in
our hope of the glory of God.**

**We even exult in our sufferings,
for suffering produces endurance,**

**And endurance brings hope,
and our hope is not in vain,**

**Because God's love has been poured into our hearts,
through the Holy Spirit, given to us.**

**God proves his love for us:
while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.**

**Since we have been justified by his death, how much more shall we be saved from
God's wrath.**

**Therefore, we exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
in whom we have now received our reconciliation.**

Romans 4.24,25; 5.1-5,8,9,11

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Collect

Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King. Keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet. Who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

New Testament Reading.

1 Ephesians 1.15-end

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Psalm 95.1-7

1 O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

5 The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

6 O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

7 For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Gospel Reading.

Matthew 25.31-end

Jesus said to his disciples: ³¹When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."



³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?"

⁴⁰And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me."

⁴⁴Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?"

⁴⁵Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

Sermon

Christ the King 22nd November 2020

I enjoy reading history books and I have a lot of them covering all kinds of topics and a wide range of periods.

Some years ago, I became interested in a particular strand of history writing that is somewhat unusual. It's called counterfactual history or "What if?" history – in fact What if? is the very title of one of my books. It's not hard to guess what this book and others like it are about. They take the idea that events that shape our world might have gone differently – different choices made – other decisions taken– which would have set the path of history on a different track. Books like this are usually a series of essays which each take a different *what if?* idea and a particular moment in history. Let me give you a few titles so you can see what I mean;

"What if Charles I had avoided the civil war?"

"What if President Kennedy had survived?"

"What if Hitler had invaded England in 1940?"

Of course, all these essays are full of speculation – and some of them are quite imaginative about possible futures. But even though there is speculation and assumption, each writer works with the known character of key people at the time and also the critical circumstances of each crucial moment. In the sense that these essays take into account what we know about the people and the factors involved they are serious history-albeit of a rather different kind.

Of course, all of us are used to *what if?* moments in our own lives – though none of them are likely to turn the course of world history - even if they are the things we ponder about - because they might have turned the course of our own lives and those close to us.

"What if I had spoken out at that moment?"

"What if I had kept my mouth shut!?"

"What if I had had the courage to do that?"

"What if I had looked at that more carefully?"

Love unexpressed, chances not taken, moments of inattention, foolish and un-thought-out words or actions can all be the subject of our *what if* musings and may be the subject of our deepest regrets. How different life might have been – if only.

Now *what ifs* or *counterfactual scenarios* do not seem immediately relevant to the feast of Christ the King which we celebrate today. After all, to Christ's own followers, his disciples, Christ *is* the King of all – this is no counterfactual but the truth of our faith. Certainly he is not king in the way of earthly powers and rulers – whose moment upon the world stage comes and goes – and whose rule is imperfect and often flawed. Christ is the King of all creation and his rule over all is established by God the giver of all life. It is Kingship within and beyond this world – it is universal.

And yet – look around you – it is by no means obvious that the Kingdom of Christ our King holds sway on earth today. Other people seem to exercise the power and authority – sometimes well, with a good conscience and care for others – at other times selfishly and with narrow interests and concerns – and some hold on to power or the delusion of it, long after it has passed from them.

How then can Christ be King, but his Kingdom not be apparent to everyone? After all, most rulers don't leave you in any doubt that they are in charge.

Throughout his ministry Jesus – the Christ of God – appears to those around him as a man like them – he draws disciples around him – to listen and respond to his teaching in parables and direct instruction – to see how the power of the Kingdom is edging in through healing the broken and challenging the self-satisfied.

This is God's way – God does not force obedience or service – God invites and draws us in – if we have ears to hear and eyes open to the possibilities of life on offer – then we can and will respond.

And this is where the parable of the Sheep and the Goats that we heard as our gospel reading comes in.

Here are two ways of responding to others – those on the margin of society – the ones usually ignored or even vilified by those in power. Here are two groups of people who act either in recognition of the needs of others or ignoring them. Those who act well and for others might not even think that they are serving Christ as King – they are simply acting out of a recognition of common humanity and a deep sense of the value of all life. They show empathy and heartfelt concern flowing from a generous heart. And Jesus says to them – “whatever you did for the least of my brothers and sisters, you did also for me”.

There is judgement at the heart of this parable. Once it is told you cannot be in any doubt about the connection between our actions and the way we profess Christ as King. We cannot be in any doubt either that those who act with generous and open hearts but do not share our profession of faith – may well be those more able to stand at the moment of judgement than we are.

The idea of judgment makes us uncomfortable – perhaps even more uncomfortable today when we can have no excuses that we are not aware – do not know -what is happening in our world. The needs of our community, our country and our world flood into our homes everyday through all the communication media we rely upon.

So, the challenge of the parable is this – and it's a *what if*? It asks us to take seriously the Kingship of Christ – even in a world where that is not obvious.

What would your life be like if we took seriously the Kingship of Christ?

What decisions would you and I make if Christ were King?

What would you change in your thoughts and opinions if the King called you to account?

The call of the gospel and the message of this parable is to think, speak and act **as if** Christ was really king – really King now and visibly so. If we affirm that it is true – then the *what ifs*?

follow. What kind of a world might we strive for – what kind of a community would build – what kind of relationships and family life would we treasure – if Christ really were King?

Furthermore, in the acting and thinking and speaking *as if* – we actually, gradually bring about the new reality we hope and pray for – we begin to open up in ourselves and others, the possibility of the Kingdom.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of this royal child our King come among us in the vulnerability of our flesh. But we all know that this year Christmas will be different. Perhaps it will be a sadder and more sober occasion. A time maybe to reflect on the true significance of all this rather than be caught up in the commercial treadmill. Maybe a time when our own vulnerability will be more obvious – separated from family and friends.

So, this Christmas, alongside whatever other presents you manage to get and give – make another – a present to those even more vulnerable – even more isolated or alone. Give to a charity that hears these voices and takes up their cause. Remember that whatever you do for the least of them – you do it for Christ who is both child among us and our King.

Some might say that small acts of kindness and generosity won't change the world. Not on their own perhaps, but if many people get drawn into the vision and possibility of *what if* – maybe we can make a difference. More than that we *will* make a difference because this is God's way – and Christ is King.

Oh, and if you really were in any doubt about the potential impact of individual action – you only need to read some counterfactual – *what if* – history. You might be surprised just how often history turns on the determined decision – for good or ill – of one person: how much depends on a telegram or letter sent or not sent: how big an impact the judgement call by one person on the spot can have. On such seemingly small things our whole world changes.

On the seemingly small things of your life and mine – the world can change again.

Revd Simon Baker

FOR YOUR PRAYERS

ST MICHAEL

Those newly in need of prayer

Martin Dewes, Chris Clayton

Those in continuing special need of prayer:

Sam Bassett, Mark Berry, Elizabeth Chapman, Dorothy Clayton, Jo Cobb, Dottie Collins, Alison Cox-Toplis, Chris Dickerson, Sonia Doidge, Colin Eastwood, Joseph Harrington, Robert Harris, Bill Hill, James Knight, Matthew and Emmeline and their parents, Ruth and Andrew Martel, Marielouise Oliver, Arthur Palin, Nick Rutter, Anthony Staples aged 6, John Tipper, Sheila Vaughan, Judith Watson, Renee Wellings, Peter and Anne Watson, Felicity Woodfield, Jamie, Gary and Denise, Julian & Wendy,

Those who have died

Audrey Egleston, Yvonne Harper, Brenda Cross & Peter McCree

ST JOHN

Pat Crowe, Jo Hearn, Ann Kinson, Allan Law

Post Communion

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**

Next Sunday is Advent Sunday

There will be an Advent Service on Zoom at 10.00am. This will include well-known Advent hymns and readings.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87610417336?pwd=eGU4M3dibzVKcmF5NEJveEtCT0g4UT09>

Meeting ID: 876 1041 7336

Passcode: 472494

PARISH DIARY

Sunday 22nd November

8:00am	Holy Communion	Zoom
12pm – 2pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

Monday 23rd November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Tuesday 24th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Wednesday 25th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
10 – 12pm	Private Prayer	St John's
10.30am	Bible Study	Zoom
1:30pm	Funeral: Dr Peter McCree	St Michael's

Thursday 26th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
12pm – 2pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

Friday 27th November

8:15am	Morning Prayer	Zoom
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Saturday 28th November

Sunday 29th November

8:00am	Holy Communion	Zoom
10:00am	Advent Sunday Service	Zoom
12pm – 2pm	Private Prayer	St Michael's

CHURCH NOTICES

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHURCH AND WORSHIP DURING THE PRESENT LOCKDOWN

St Michael's Church Lichfield

The Church will be open for private prayer on Sundays from 12.00 – 2.00pm
Thursdays from 12.00-2.00pm
The church will be staffed and there will be the opportunity to light candles

St John's Church Wall

The Church will be open for private prayer on Wednesdays from 10.00am-12.00pm (this is a correction).

WORSHIP BY ZOOM

The 8.00am Holy Communion service will be shared on Zoom – see readings sheet for link.

Our regular zoom worship is on the first and third Sundays of each month.

Next regular service

Sunday 6th December 6.00pm

You can join the service from 5.45pm. The service will last about 40mins. ***If you have not had a link by Friday at 11am please contact the office office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk***

BIBLE STUDY

The Book of Acts: Wednesday 25th November If you would like to join in our Bible Study please contact Angie in the office for the zoom link.

OFFICE – Angie will be working from home during lockdown, so please contact the office via email. office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

ST MICHAEL'S & ST JOHN'S CHRISTMAS BAKE AND DELIVER SCHEME

Nominations are now be open for the **Christmas Bake & Deliver Scheme!** If you know anyone in Lichfield or Wall who might be in need of some good cheer and a baked treat, please complete the [nomination form on our website](#), or printed forms which will be at the back of church during times of private prayer. Nomination deadline is **Monday 7th December**. For full information about the scheme visit <https://www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/bake--deliver.html>

If anyone would like to volunteer to bake and/or deliver please let Mel know revdr.melclark@gmail.com. Thank you!

NO CHRISTMAS CARDS

Because of Covid-19 restrictions it will not be possible this year for anyone to bring Christmas cards to church to be collected by other members of the congregation. Also it will not be possible to hand out cards personally either at the start of the service or outside after the service. Both of these would be in danger of breaking the social distancing that we have in place in church and the rule of 6 outside church.

I am sorry that this is rather a Ba! Humbug! notice but it will be safer for everyone if we all restrict our card giving to those that we can post or personally deliver.

You might like to donate any money you save on cards to the church or a charity.

Simon Baker, Rector

CHRISTMAS FOOD DONATIONS

Lichfield Foodbank is **now collecting for Christmas hampers**. If you wish to donate, please check the item will be in date till after Christmas.

CHURCHES TOGETHER There are new messages on our website
www.stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk/churches-together.html

CHRISTMAS CHARITY COLLECTION DATES 2020 @ St MICHAEL'S

Donations may be brought to church as part of private prayer on Sunday or Thursday

Sunday December 6th

Morning Services

Donations to 'Angel Tree'

Collection of toys and gifts for women for Pathway

Food for the Food Bank.

Sunday December 13th

Morning Services

Collection of toys and gifts for women for Pathway

Food for the Food Bank

Christmas Eve Christingle

Open Church

Donations for the Children Society, white envelopes and a collection plate will be available in church.

All the arrangements are subject to government guidelines and may have to be changed . We will keep you informed.

Brenda Liptrot

THE FOODBANK is always happy to receive gifts of

- Tinned meat and fish
- Tinned fruit and vegetables, soup and beans
- Rice pudding and custard
- Instant coffee, tea, sugar, long life milk and fruit juice
- Packets of cereals, biscuits and snacks
- Pasta, rice and pasta sauce
- Jam

Items should be **at least 3 months in date** or the Foodbank is not allowed to issue them.

If anyone wishes to donate but is unable to shop for Foodbank, we shop most weeks and would be able to buy items for them. Just let us know 01543 255308

Maggie and David

WARNING!!!

If you receive an email from: **Revd Preb Simon Baker** and the email address is either:
onlinechurch954@gmail.com churchvicar8@gmail.com

Please do not reply or open any attachments. I never use that title in any emails I send and these are not my email addresses.

If you receive any email that asks you to spend any personal money on my behalf please delete it at once.

Simon