

Our Service of Worship for November 21, 2021
CHRIST OUR KING SUNDAY

Westwood First Presbyterian Church

Cincinnati, OH



Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: Festive Peal on “*Hymn to Joy*”—arr. Michael Ryan
Chancel Bells

During the Prelude, please take a moment to prepare for worship.

Ringling of the Tower Bell

Introit: “*Come, Let Us Sing!*”—Ruth Elaine Schram

** Call to Worship (responsive)

Grace and peace from the one who was, who is and who is to come,
**And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.**

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of God’s glory.

Great God of Love, in Christ you offer us the light of the world.

We pray that your Spirit will help us reflect that light to others.

O God you name us the salt of the earth.

Use us, we pray, to bring health and healing to a hurting world

Teach us to be good stewards of our love and compassion.

May we learn to share others burdens of and lighten their load.

Teach us to be good stewards of our time and talents.

May we learn that in serving your church, we glorify your name.

In this time and in this place

Help us to seek your will in all that we do.

Opening Prayer

** Hymn No. 155: “*Rejoice, the Lord Is King*” (all verses) *

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Readings: *Revelation 1:1-8; John 18:33-38* *

Sermon: “*The Voice of Truth*”

** Affirmation of Faith (from *Our World Belongs to God*, Calvin Institute—responsive)

**As followers of Jesus Christ, living in this world—which some seek to control, but
which others view with despair—we declare with joy and trust: Our world belongs
to God! From the beginning, through all the crises of our times, until his kingdom
fully comes, God keeps covenant forever. Our world belongs to him! God is King!
Let the earth be glad!**

**Christ is Victor; his rule has begun. Hallelujah! The Spirit is at work, renewing
creation. Praise the Lord! We rejoice in the goodness of God, renounce the works of
darkness, and dedicate ourselves to holy living.**

As covenant partners, called to faithful obedience, and set free for joyful praise, we offer our hearts and lives to do God's work in his world. With tempered impatience, eager to see injustice ended, we expect the Day of the Lord. And we are confident that the light which shines in the present darkness will fill the earth when Christ appears. Come, Lord Jesus! Our world belongs to you.

Anthem: "*Christ's Flock*"—Martin Shaw

Chancel Choir

A Time of Offering—A Prayer of Dedication (responsive)

[No collection will be taken. Please place your offerings (and pledge cards if you have them) in the collection plate just outside the sanctuary. Thank you for your generosity!]

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

We possess nothing, not even ourselves. We are but stewards for our Creator, and all that we have is a gift from God. You have entrusted us with gifts—time, talent, energy, money—and asked us to use them to build your kingdom. With thanks and praise we respond to your call.

"Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."

Gracious God, enable us to be good stewards of all your gifts. Help us to use our time, talents, and resources wisely and to your glory. Help us to seek first your kingdom; offering back what you have given, returning your generosity, paying it forward.

From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded. Remember: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Lord, grant us joy in giving. Light a passion in our hearts for building up your body and providing for the work of your kingdom. We offer ourselves, our lives, our hopes and fears, our dollars and our hours. We commit ourselves to work for your world, to love and serve wherever you call.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

Jesus said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Help us to be generous givers, so that we might know the joy of your blessed life, and in this way we will lay up treasure for ourselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that we may take hold of life that is truly life.

Gracious God, we celebrate the new life we have in you—a life filled with love and grace! We dedicate these gifts to the building of your kingdom and ask that you would bless them to the work of your church. Bless our pledges, our investment in your future, so that they may multiply in faith, hope, and love. Bless our church, as we seek to follow you with heart, mind, and soul. We pray now and always in the name of Christ our King. Amen.

Offertory Music: Arioso on "*Thanks Be to Thee*"—Handel/S. Eithun

Chancel Bells

Pastoral Prayer

[During the pause in the prayer, feel free to call out the name of someone for whom prayer is requested, or briefly, a joy or concern on your heart. The prayer concludes with the Lord's Prayer, offered in unison.]

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

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 and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

** Hymn No. 551: "*Come Ye Thankful People Come*" (verses 1-2, 4) *

Charge and Benediction

Response: "*Go Forth with Thanksgiving*"—Whitworth

Postlude: Fanfare on "*Now Thank We All Our God*"—Michael Burkhardt

Where indicated (**) please rise, and stand as you are able.

As Our Service of Worship Ends, Our Ministry of Service Begins!

Leading Worship This Morning:

Rev. Dr. Jeff Colarossi
Pastor

Heather MacPhail
Organist/Director of Music Ministries

Ann Regan
Lay Worship Leader



Prayer Requests and Announcements

✚ November West-Fed Food Pantry do nations: pasta (rigatoni, linguine, etc.) & pasta sauce

✚ Prayers are requested for:

- ♥ Wendy Beckman, recovering from shoulder replacement surgery
- ♥ Sharon Crowell, recuperating from knee replacement surgery.
- ♥ Pat Mueller, a friend of Beth Richmond and Marc Baverman's cousin, recovering from a successful double transplant.
- ♥ Sandra Hickey's family after the death of her brother John Flynn.
- ♥ Linda Kugele who is dealing with breathing issues.
- ♥ Betsy Forte, Chancie Brown's sister, dealing with personal issues.
- ♥ Carol Hunt, Dave Hunt's mom, in the hospital after a series of falls.
- ♥ The discernment team: Steve Beckman, Mary Ellen Betz, Jane Colarossi, Kent Kochheiser, Ann Regan, Phil Zorn, Bruce Smith, Jan Tepe, Bode Olakanmi.

✚ The Flowers this morning have been donated:

- ♥ In honor of Anna Hedrick by her grandchildren and great grandchildren.
- ♥ In memory of our loved ones.

✚ **Monday School** will continue tomorrow, Nov. 22 at 6:30pm via Zoom. Please use the link previously sent out. If you need it resent, please let me know.

✚ The **City Gospel Mission Thanksgiving Exchange** will be open tomorrow, Monday, Nov. 22, and Tuesday, Nov. 23. It will end with clean-up Nov. 24, until set-up begins for the Christmas Exchange, on Friday, Dec. 3.

✚ The traditional "**Hanging of the Greens**," decorating the church for Christmas will take place next Saturday, Nov. 27 beginning at 9:00AM. If you would like to help, please contact Linda Gardner, or just show up!

✚ **We're looking for folks/families to light the Advent wreath this year.** Advent begins next week (Nov. 28), so if you and others in your family would like to take part in lighting the wreath, please let me know.

✚ **The Presbyterian Women luncheon and program will take place on Thursday, Dec. 2.** If you have any questions, or would like to make reservations, please contact Diane Ringshauser at 513-923-41223, or at dringshauser@gmail.com.

✚ **We will have poinsettias available for purchase** to decorate the sanctuary in the weeks before Christmas in honor—or in memory— of family and friends. There will be a separate order form in the bulletin and Parish Bell. Please have your order and payment by Dec. 12.



Hymns

Rejoice the Lord Is King—Hymn #155 (all verses)

1. Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore:

[Chorus] Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!
Lift up your heart! Lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

2. God's kingdom cannot fail; Christ rules o'er earth and heaven;
The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus given:

[Chorus]

3. Rejoice in glorious hope! For Christ, the judge, will come
To glorify the saints for their eternal home:

[Chorus]



Come, Ye Thankful People, Come —Hymn #551 (all verses)

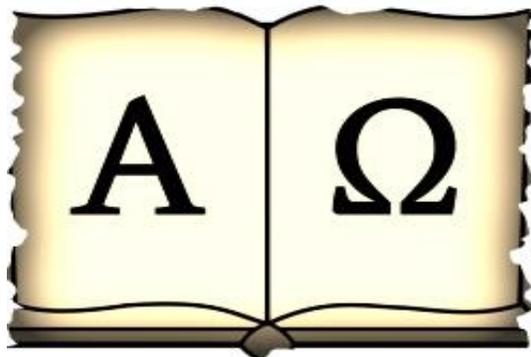
1. Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home:
All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin;
God our Maker doth provide for our wants to be supplied;
Come to God's own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.
2. All the world is God's own field, fruit unto God's praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown unto joy or sorrow grown;
First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear:
Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain and pure may be.
3. Even so, Lord, quickly come, to Thy final harvest home;
Gather Thou Thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin,
There, forever purified, in thy presence to abide;
Come, with all Thine angels, come, raise the glorious harvest home.



Scripture Readings

First Reading: Revelation 1:1-8

¹ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ² who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near. 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, ⁵ 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, ⁶ and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ 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. ⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Gospel Reading: John 18:33-40

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” ³⁵ 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?” ³⁶ 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.”

³⁷ 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.” ³⁸ Pilate asked him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no case against him. ³⁹ But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” ⁴⁰ They shouted in reply, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a bandit.



Moment for Meditation: Christ the King

“My kingdom is not from this world,” says Jesus. No kidding. That seems pretty obvious. Yet at the same time, this has to be one of the most obscure statements from Jesus. Working for Jesus’ kingdom, praying for “thy kingdom come” is a rather difficult endeavor when it seems so far away from the reality that we know and in which we live.

The kingdoms of our world could hardly be more opposite than the kingdom Jesus has in mind. It will not be sufficient...simply to suggest that the negative aspects of today’s kingdoms are therefore made positive in Jesus’ kingdom. God’s kingdom is not opposite of our kingdoms, it has to be more than—it just has to be.

While God’s kingdom will come regardless because it’s God’s after all, Revelation reminds us that Jesus “made us to be kings”...and since we have been made to be kings (and queens) of God’s kingdom, it is our calling to work for that kingdom. It is our calling to strive for different. It is our calling to bring about “thy kingdom come” even with the promise of God’s kingdom coming.

The concept of kingdom is radically recalculated in the Gospel of John, from kingdoms that strain and sever relationships to a kingdom that puts relationship at its core. That’s a whole different perspective on kingdom. When kingdom is construed from the truth of relationship and not rule, from the truth of incarnation and not location, from the truth of love and not law, then Jesus as truth will ring true.

This is the truth that the kingdoms of this world cannot see. God’s truth. Jesus as truth. But it is the truth that we can see and that we are called to preach, that we have to preach, not only on Christ the King Sunday, but every Sunday. To love fiercely even in the face of fear.

~ Karoline Lewis, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN