



Heacham Parish Church

**Christ
the
King**

Sunday Service 22nd November 2020

Adrian Flower plays 'God's time is best' from a JS Bach church cantata

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

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God; the God who is the same, today, yesterday and tomorrow; the God who is with us today, during this lockdown and always; the God who loves us.

O Lord open our lips **and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**
O God make speed to save us. **O Lord make haste to help us.**
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

Praise the Lord. **The Lord's name be praised.**

Prayer of confession:

Truly, we say to you that we have seen the broken and have not been moved to compassion.

Truly, we say to you that we have heard people mourning and have not given them our time.

Truly, we say to you that we have witnessed oppression and have not raised our voices.

Truly, we say to you that we have seen the stranger and not said a word.

God, hiding in all strangers, all around us, we are truly sorry for what we have done, and for what we have not done. We ask you to deepen your welcome in us, so that we might deepen our welcome around us.

Amen

The God of love and power forgives us and frees us from our sin, heals and strengthens us by his Spirit, and raises us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Song: **At the name of Jesus**

sung & played by Richard C, Judith, Sue, Hilary, Richard G, and Colin

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess Him King of glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
Who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

Mighty and mysterious in the highest height,
God from everlasting, very Light of light.
In the Father's bosom, with the spirits blest,
Love, in love eternal, rest in perfect rest.

Humbled for a season, to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom He came;
Faithfully He bore it, spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious when from death He passed.

Bore it up triumphant with its human light,
Through all ranks of creatures to the central height;
To the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast,
Filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone Him; there let Him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true.
Crown Him as your captain in temptation's hour,
Let His will enfold you in its light and power.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
With His Father's glory, with His angel-train.
For all wreaths of empire meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him King of Glory now.

Bible Reading: **Matthew 25: 31-46** read by Margaret Hyde

A Reflection from Pip Lawrence

If we cast our minds back to the Sunday before Advent last year, the landscape looked very different to what it does today. Back then the coronavirus was a world away. Only avid news-watchers were really aware of a new virus causing issues in far flung places. Back then we were planning for an angel festival, a village Carol service, a Christingle, and all the usual paraphernalia of Christmas. Today, as we end our church year with the Sunday referred to as "Christ the King" or 'stir up Sunday', things look very different. All our plans are going to be in keeping with the new rules.

One thing, however, is not different. Whether we are living in the new normal, or in the times of the more familiar and comfortable, it is how we respond to the reading today. For me, these verses in Matthew are among the most powerful in his gospel. Why - because they are very direct, very clear, and (unlike other verses) there is no 'wriggle room'. They speak clearly of how we, as Christians, are called to live as we wait for the time when we will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. As Penny reminded us all last week, Christ will come again.

So, what are we called to do? Is the call only for those who reside in important places? For the great and the good? Is it beyond our comprehension and ability? No, far from it. We are told that living this way is the right way for all. The most incredible result is that it will conclude with an invitation to take our inheritance in the kingdom prepared for us since the creation of the world. We are told that care for our fellow man is the key to pleasing our Heavenly Father. Our Father, who cared for us by sending his son Jesus, asks us to care for others.

We are called to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty. To invite the stranger in and clothe the needy. Very relevant in these coronavirus times we are called to look after the sick. Also to take care of those in prison. Basically summed up in the command to "love our neighbour as ourselves".

Easy isn't it? Well not if we are honest. To be honest we are all rather good at looking after ourselves, but loving others as ourselves is not so easy. There are people, it has to be said, who are easy to love and care for. They are the people who present us with no challenges. They are joy bringers. Others are more difficult, and cross, and different to us. So loving them is far from easy.

So, how do we personally respond to these verses today? We are all called to love as Jesus did. In our own strength we will only set ourselves up to fail, but with the help of the in-dwelling Holy Spirit we are given the grace to see people as Jesus sees them; and that makes a world of difference. It enables us to serve others. As the reading says: "whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me".

So, on the last Sunday of our church year, when we are all struggling to make sense of these unfamiliar times, let's remind ourselves of a verse of the prophet Micah which sums up the direction and guidance we have received from our gospel reading in Matthew this morning - "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God". Amen.

Song: Brother, sister, let me serve you

sung & played by Lesley, Hilary, Rosie, Colin, Karen, and Terry

Brother, sister, let me serve you; let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you; let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

Prayers of Intercession, led by Sue Bird

Our loving Heavenly Father we pray to you today, knowing that you hear us, even though we are not in our usual places of worship. We know that wherever we are we can talk to you and you are always ready to listen. We turn to you now in prayer in this difficult time in which the spread of Covid-19 has led our government to force restrictive measures upon us that limit the normal course of our lives; but which are necessary.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of all hope we call on you today. We pray for those who are living in fear - fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear for the future. May your spirit give them a sense of calmness and peace.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for your church at this time of uncertainty. For those of us worried about not attending church, for those needing to make decisions in order to care for others, for those feeling ever more isolated by not being able to attend. Give to Veronica, and all who minister here in Heacham, strength, wisdom, and patience as they seek to share your truth with others. Fill them with the inspiration and love to be able to share the Christmas Story this year in new and innovative ways.

Help us to respond in love and service to the needs of our community. Thank you for those who work in our care homes, shops, hospitals, schools, food banks, and night shelters. Keep them safe and healthy. Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our cupboards. Do not let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Protect our Queen, Lord. We thank you for her example to us as she also seeks to follow the current Covid-19 guidelines. We pray for wisdom for all those in her government; may they continue to strive for solutions to our present crisis regardless of their political differences.

We pray for those who mourn and for those facing the loss of a loved one. Give us quiet moments with you, with our thoughts, and our memories and prayers. Help us to trust that one day we shall be with those we love; when your mercy gathers us together in the joy of the life you promise us.

Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

We pray together the Lord's Prayer, led by Martin Turner

Final Prayer

Heavenly Father,
as we consider the parable of the sheep and the goats,
let us be followers who seek to encourage unity and amity
among all those who are made in your image.

May we never be people who rush to judgement,
or fall into the trap of condemning, or criticising harshly
those who do not share our beliefs, political views, or cultural values.

May we display your compassion, integrity, and wisdom
when engaging with others;
remembering your cautions to
'judge not' nor 'cast the first stone'.

Send us out with more time for interruptions, and more generosity for
kindness and compassion.

This we ask in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may He make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, may He look kindly on you and give you peace. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you and those you love always. **Amen**

*Adrian plays 'Go, tell it on the mountain' by John A Behnke
(from 'Jazz inspirations for organ')*

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2020 (a preview of what we have sent to the Village newsletter for December, so you know what is going on; with added notes in italics)

LIGHT UP HEACHAM with STARS

After last year's great angel festival, we would like to encourage everyone to make and/or display stars in your windows, on your fences, in your trees, in your garden, wherever you can - for all to see. **Lighting up Heacham with Stars**, to bring some joy and light in this dark time, so we can walk around the village spotting stars from mid-December onwards. In the Christmas story it was the star that the wise men followed to find Jesus...maybe you could follow the stars around the village and see where you can find Jesus?

(We will be decorating the church with stars too, whether we can open for services or not, so if you want to make/lend a star or 2 for church could you let Liz know please? The 2 schools are going to be making some for us to display) Please do put stars in your windows, etc and, if you can, also a nativity scene with Jesus in... if you want a printed picture of a nativity, ask and we can print one in the office)



Christmas Church Services

When writing this, we do not know whether we will be able to hold services in church or not at Christmas - please keep an eye on our website and facebook page, and the notice boards at the church and church hall.

We hope to be able to have a Christmas Eve Midnight service and a service on Christmas Day in church. (You may need to book a seat as numbers will be limited due to Covid-19 regulations - details of how to do this will be published if needed).

Our VILLAGE CAROL SERVICE and CHRISTINGLE will both be online this year, pre-recorded and accessed via Heacham Parish Church Youtube channel.

Prayer and Remembering

At present the church building is open on **Wednesdays from 10-12 and Saturdays from 2-4** for private prayer and reflection. You can light a candle, sit and pray in the quiet, and enjoy the peace of the church building.

From mid-December we will have a Christmas tree in church on which you can hang a Star with a prayer, or the name of someone you wish to remember.

We also plan to have, in the church porch, a festive display and prayer board; so even when the church is not open, anyone can come into the porch to write a prayer, or remember someone.

Churchyard

The churchyard is always open for you to walk in. We will have a nativity scene on display from mid-December in front of the church... and a star on the top of the tower.

Advent and Christmas ideas & resources from the Diocese

Reflections for Advent and Christmas, by Susanna Gunner, available at <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/resource/advent-reflections/>

If you would like paper copies of these please leave a message on the church office answerphone: 01485 572539.

Digital Advent Calendar - Twenty-six varied contributors from across the Diocese (a shepherd, a teacher, a prison chaplain, for example) will offer us something to ponder each day, starting with an image or a poem or some music. Each door will leave us all with something rich to turn over prayerfully throughout the day in question. Sign up to have each day's offering sent to your email inbox - <http://eepurl.com/hiEuQv> You can also access the calendar via all the Diocesan social media channels.

Come and join for **virtual Church, Coffee and Chat - on Sunday at 10am** - this is the Zoom link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9960936343?pwd=TIerVHp3UHBzZHNTSm16QzdCNUY0Zz09> Meeting ID: 996 093 6343 Passcode: 150936

Contact Veronica at heacham.vicar@gmail.com to invite you.

HEACHAM PARISH CHURCH online service will be on YouTube from 8am on Sunday morning. Watch out for the email link from Veronica.

Morning Prayer continues Monday-Friday at 9am via Zoom.

The link for Mon, Tues, Wed and Thurs (Veronica)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9960936343?pwd=TIerVHp3UHBzZHNTSm16QzdCNUY0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 996 093 6343 Passcode: 150936

On Friday, (Bernard and Kate)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/2789441922?pwd=NmRMSnVRVTd5ODFKa1VaUnZKZIBXdz09>

Meeting ID: 278 944 1922 Passcode: 2AN2A7



The Archbishops Call to Pray for our Nation

We call upon the Church of England to make November 2020 a month of prayer for our nation. We know that we are in the faithful hands of the risen Christ who knows our weaknesses, tiredness, and struggles and whose steadfast love endures forever. Anyone who wishes to do so is invited by the Archbishops to **join them in daily prayer at 6pm during lockdown** using resources published on the Church of England's website and social media channels.

Podcast: 'Sunday Hope'

The Diocese of Norwich has a weekly audio podcast called 'Sunday Hope'.



It is available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Overcast, and more.

The podcast can also be listened to from any landline telephone: call **01603 537577** (local rate) to hear the latest edition.

Daily Hope offers music, prayers, and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set-up particularly to help those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions.



