



## **Worship at Home—22 November 2020—Rev Easter Smart**

### **Call to Worship**

O come, let us sing to the LORD;  
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!  
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;  
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!  
For the LORD is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.  
In his hand are the depths of the earth;  
the heights of the mountains are his also.  
The sea is his, for he made it,  
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!  
For he is our God,  
and we are the people of his pasture,  
and the sheep of his hand.

### **Opening Prayer**

Lord God, this new day, we pray again for the coming of Your Holy kingdom.

You sent Your Son to bring good news to the poor, sight to the blind, freedom to captives and salvation to Your people:

Anoint us with Your Spirit; rouse us to work in His name—even in a times such as this.

Loving God, by Your Spirit, be with us and in us.

Send us to bring help to the poor and freedom to the oppressed.

Loving God, help us to speak out and to proclaim Your justice in the world.

Loving God, by Your Spirit help us to share your wisdom and truth with others.

Send us to tell the world the good news of Your healing love.

Send us to those who mourn, to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.

Send us to proclaim that the time is always here for You to save Your people.

Loving God, Lord of the Church, hear our prayer, and make us one in mind and heart to serve You in Christ our Lord

And please hear the words in our hearts as we say them,

*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*

## Bible Readings —Read by Bronwyn Patterson

### **Ephesians 1: 15-23—Thanksgiving and Prayer**

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

### **Matthew 25: 31-45—The Sheep and the Goats**

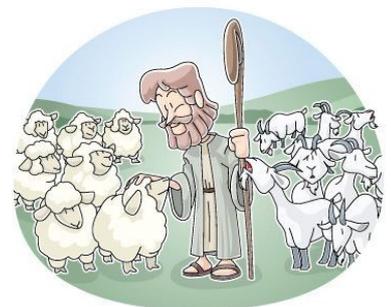
“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared



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for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

"He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

## Sermon

### PART 1

#### The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

Firstly, hello to everyone and I simply want to thank you so much for all your thoughts—your love and support. Things have been tough adjusting to the loss of Mum because we had no time to prepare and we never saw it coming—and even now there are puzzling questions which we may never get answers to this side of heaven.

Speaking of heaven, today's reading in the Christian Lectionary is an image of the shepherd gathering the sheep into His heavenly fold. This, as you may well know is Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday before Advent. We may feel uncomfortable with the image of Christ as a King—especially if our ideas of kingship are rooted in the earthly rulers of history.

When we think about Royal Kings and Queens they often live in palaces with large gates. Even here in Baltimore there are many large expensive residences in posh areas known as 'gated communities.'

Dad reminded me the other day that 'heaven is a gated community' when he told me the story of three gangsters from a rough area of Glasgow who died in a brawl. As they approached heaven, they knocked on the pearly gates and St Peter answered. They asked to come in, but St Peter wasn't sure—so he asked them to wait while he went away to consult Jesus. Jesus, considering that they had had a hard life told Peter to let them in. Peter went back to tell them, but they were gone! And so were the pearly gates.

In today's reading, on this Christ the King Sunday, Jesus teaches a parable in order to wake up minds and hearts. He uses these images of sheep and goats. In the parable, the Good shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. Those on the right hand will be given entrance to the Kingdom of heaven, while those on the left will be denied it. Those who thought they were religious and devout turn out not to be as good as they thought—these are the goats. Those who felt they were not good enough and wanted to do a better job are, in fact the lowly sheep whom the shepherd gathers in.

The image of God as a tender shepherd can be found throughout the bible. In Ezekiel 34, we read, "*For the Lord God says: I will search and find my sheep . . . I will seek my lost ones, those who have strayed and I will bring them safely home. I will mend their broken limbs and I will heal the sick.*"

However, reading today's story in Matthew we might think that the bible blesses sheep but looks down on goats. But this is not a reflection on the goat as an animal. You may remember my minister friend, Matt Davis, from Mendocino California who brought his Youth Group over in 2018 to visit us in Currie. Since then, California has been ravaged so many times by forest fires and so many places, have been destroyed. Many animals were killed or badly affected too. My friend Matt adopted several orphaned goats. He now calls the Holy Goats because of all the good that the goats are doing. Matt's church farms the goats out

to places where people can't get fire insurance because there is too much dry brush. The goats devour the flammable foliage and make the properties safe. This is one of those creative ministries that leaves helps people and the environment.

This parable is not a reflection on arable animals. Jesus uses the goats and sheep to depict human behaviour. Sheep tend to be humble and they will follow the shepherd to the places where he leads and obey his voice. Goats typically don't listen. They can be cheeky, greedy and wayward. They go their own way and do as they will, consuming everything- butting heads to shove others out of their way to get more for themselves.

So the parable explains that Jesus our "heavenly" king sees our human attitudes as well as our actions. The story is about faithful people.

(Music: Worthy is the Lamb.)

## PART 2

### The 'eyes of our hearts'

In Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, he prays for the believers saying:

*"I 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, so that with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know the hope to which he has called you."*

I think this is a lovely expression—*with the eyes of your heart enlightened*. What are the things that our hearts can literally see? Jesus knows that our hearts focus on the things that matter to us. When we love, we give our hearts. When we feel a loss we say we are, "heart-broken." In our story Jesus wants us to know that God sees our hearts and God will judge us ultimately by the love and compassion we have shown.

Jesus explains the eyes of our hearts are revealed in our actions. "When did we see you hungry, or thirsty or naked or sick or in prison or lonely?" "when did we see you depressed or in at your wits end? When did we see you close yourself from your friends in despair? When did we see you ostracised and without a friend or without hope?"

Jesus healed many people who were physically blind. But it was the socially blind, the spiritually blind that he wants to reach in this story. His message is clear. If we ignore the sick, the refugee, the hungry or weak, we may as well ignore Christ himself.

This week I had to get my eyes tested in order to send in the forms to renew my Maryland drivers licence. I had to get my peripheral vision tested. I realised as I sat waiting that this parable about God's judgement is really a test of our peripheral vision. DO we see the people on the fringes. Do we see people on the margins of society, those least likely to have access to all the good things if life. Do we not only see them, but welcome them with warmth and dignity and do we, show them kindness. Would we rather walk by someone in need like the Pharisee on the opposite side of the road, or like the Samaritan will we cross over to see show we care. The Christian faith teaches us to see with the eyes of our hearts the people and things who matter to God.

## PART 3

### Christ the King

I was interested to learn about the origins of Christ the King Sunday. It was first marked by Pope Pius XI just after the end of the First World War. The Pope was worried that the, “majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and His holy law out of their lives; that these had lost their place in private affairs and politics. Pope Pius declared that as long as individuals and states refused to submit the rule of our Saviour, there would be no hopeful prospect of lasting peace among the nations.” The feast of Christ the King was intended to assert the power of Christ in the world, over and above the powers of war and totalitarianism.

Pope Pius believed that we must prepare for the Kingdom of God through our actions in the world—recognising Christ’s Kingship recognises that we have a role to respond to injustice and to speak out against the ways in which authority supports injustice. Like a Divine King, Jesus will judge those who are greedy and who oppress others for personal gain.

Since I arrived in the United States, there has been a lot of crazy rhetoric surrounding the election—and a lot of labelling. The Grand Old Party frequently called the Democratic candidates socialists or communists or anarchists. One of my friends posted something and it said this. “Wanting everyone to have healthcare and food does not make you a communist, socialist or unpatriotic. It just makes you a good person!”

Wiley Stephens tells a story about a hungry man who was walking down the street in a village of medieval Turkey. He had only a piece of bread in his hand. He came to a restaurant where some meatballs were being grilled. The cooking meat was so near and the smell so delicious the man held his piece of bread over the meat to capture some of the smell. As he started to eat the bread, the angry restaurant owner seized him and took him away to see a judge.

The owner protested, “This man was stealing the smell of my meat without asking permission. I want you to make him pay me for it.” The judge thought for a moment, then held up his purse in front of the owner and shook it. “What are you doing that for?” asked the restaurant owner? The wise judge replied, “I am paying you. Surely the sound of money is fair payment for the smell of food.”

There was a Baptist pastor named Peter West who was riding the subway tube in London. Like most clergy, he was wearing his clerical collar and as he rode the train, he noticed a man looking at him angrily. Just before the man got off, he said to Peter West, “You clergy really aren’t much good. You talk about saving souls but you don’t do anything to help anyone, and you are never there when we need you!”

Peter West was totally discouraged by the conversation and from that day he began looking around. He saw the telephone on his desk in a new way and he began to envision something he could do. His idea was to use the telephone as a point of contact for hurting people in the community. He trained volunteers who would serve as listeners on the phone line day and night. He launched the very first telephone crisis-listening line in the world and since then thousands of people can make calls and receive help because the scales were lifted off Peter West’s eyes and he saw a need—he found a way to fill it, to help those hurting or in need of healing.

This Pandemic has been an experience which has brought about so much uncertainty, isolation, bereavement and difficulty. We are in need of one another more than ever and yet we have to overcome the barriers of social distance and lockdown. These are times when we as the Church are having to be ever more creative in the ways we can show that we care for one another—even while physically apart. And my goodness, the love of our Shepherd King who promises to call us and lead us, to give us peace and to refresh our souls is something we so need.

Our faith calls us to see people through the eyes of Christ, with the eyes of our hearts and to care . . . to bring to action the God-given love God has given us to share with one another and to trust that in each conversation or call or card, in each small act of kindness, His presence with us, in us and in each other.

### **Pastoral Prayer (adapted from Thom Shuman)**

Almighty God from the beginning of time to the end of eternity  
You have chosen to use your power and majesty  
To love us, to redeem us, to shape us as your people

King of Kings, you became weak  
So you could confront the strength of sin and death  
Confounding their ridicule with your resurrection

We pray today for all those who are struggling with illness or diagnosis  
For those affected by Covid  
We pray for those working in nursing homes,  
For nurses and doctors who may be tired or overwhelmed

Bless we pray parents working at home  
Trying to keep their children going with school  
Bless especially those who are isolated  
And lonely due to the Pandemic

Bless those in our church who have ongoing worries  
Or concerns about health or family  
Loving God, please care for each according to their need  
Help us to be the blessings others need  
Show us how to care for one another in these strange times  
And let us remember always to turn to you,  
Our Sovereign Lord and Saviour

Loving God may your Spirit rest upon us  
May your power enflame us with your peace  
May your peace touch us with your grace  
May your grace fill us with your hope  
And may your hope lead us into your heavenly Kingdom. Amen

## Currie Kirk Needs your Helping Hands



It's that time of year again—Christmas Cards are being prepared and printed for distribution to the Parish of Currie. Difficult under lock down but we can make it!!

Are you able to help to distribute these cards?

If you are able to help can you email/phone Nina who is coordinating the streets. Let Nina know which street(s) you are able to deliver.

The office is closed but your bundle of cards will be delivered to you once ready. This should be around 30 November.

The cards must be posted through the doors before the first Sunday in December—so if you have a spare few days the first week in December to get fit please get in touch.

Nina is waiting on a call from you.



## Christmas Cakes For Sale

I have Christmas cakes for sale, all Covid-free and sealed as usual and delivered in plenty time for Christmas.

There are a few designs to choose from. If you would like one can you please contact me directly. Still £8 and all profits will go to Currie Kirk this year. 466-1459 / 07584-678990 / [fpigott19@gmail.com](mailto:fpigott19@gmail.com)



## Christmas Fair

As you may be aware we have been busy selling goods on FaceBook as part of the virtual Christmas Fair. If you have anything you'd like to sell can you please contact Shona Moyes, Nina at the Kirk office or me for collection as soon as possible. We will be producing a brochure to be handed out and don't want to miss any goods.

Search CK Fair on Facebook.

Thanks,  
Fiona



## Currie Kirk Guild

We had another successful meeting on Tuesday when Derek Blyth told us the history of Edith Piaf complete with pictures and music. She led an extremely interesting life and it was wonderful to hear her singing.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 1 December at 10 am when Conor Moran will be talking about "The Boys' Brigade" which is our chosen charity for this year.

Keep the advent calendars and selection boxes coming. We have passed the one hundred mark so let's see how many more we can get. Bring them to 13 Dolphin Gardens West or e-mail [elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk) or phone 466-3472 and I can collect them.

If you wish to attend any of our meetings, send me your e-mail address and I will send you the link.



## **Kirk News Update— Reminder**

### **Currie Kirk comes under Tier 3 Guidelines**

We are still operating under Tier 3 Guidelines which means the Church Office will **NOT** open on Tuesday mornings, likewise the Gibson Craig Hall too, and Nina will continue to work from home. However, should you wish anything picked up and stored in the Hall for future attention, please contact either Nina on 0131 451 5141 or Gordon on 0131 449 2313 and we'll do our best to arrange uplift.

Hopefully, these guidelines will be short lived.

Gordon

## **News from America—Easter**

Assuming British Airways don't cancel Easter's flight, she will be returning to the UK on Monday 30 November. Her flight leaves 10.30 pm on Sunday 29 November from the States.

Easter sends her love and thanks for all the correspondence and calls she has received over the past month and looks forward to being back home soon.

Easter has prepared the Service, technology willing, for the 22nd and Grant has kindly volunteered to prepare the service for the 29th November— the first Sunday in Advent—these will be able to be viewed on our website.

Nina is working from home but can be contacted:

Telephone 451 5141; email: [currie\\_kirk@btconnect.com](mailto:currie_kirk@btconnect.com)

And the link to the website: [//www.curriekirk.org](http://www.curriekirk.org)

where you will find links to all the organisations.

## King of Compassion

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

### Prepare yourself...

Lord Jesus,  
may we keep other people in our hearts  
as we worship with joy;  
may we remember those  
who are fearful or crying today;  
let us be filled with your compassion.  
**Amen.**



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### Question...

Would you rather....  
Be kind to someone or be shown kindness?  
Be a sheep or a goat?  
Help or be helped?

### Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in Matthew 25:31-46. You can read them in a Bible or find them here: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew%2025%3A31-46&version=ERV>

You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage, or watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWSkdx-XwWY>

If you want to make it more interactive, come up with a noise or action for a sheep and a goat. Each time one is mentioned in the story, do the appropriate noise or action.

## Talk together...

In today's Bible passage, Jesus tells a story about a shepherd sorting sheep and goats to show how God separates the kind from the unkind.

What did the people, described as sheep in the story, have in common?

What was the last thing someone did that made you feel cared for?

How does God want us to treat people?

Can you think of anyone you could show kindness to this week?

As a family, come up with a list of 10 things you can do this week to help each other and others. Caring for others doesn't earn us rewards from God. God won't love us more if we help others, and he won't love us less if we are selfish sometimes. But we should want to love people and show them care because God loves us, and them. These verses remind us that it is important we learn to see everyone as God sees them- as valuable and being worthy of care.

## Pray together...

Prayer washing line – You'll need: string/washing line, pegs, paper, pens.

If the weather is suitable then you could do this outside using a washing line. If inside tie a line of string across the room. Think about situations or people in your family, community, in the world where there are problems or difficulties. On paper write or draw prayers for those who need help and peg them on the string. Spend time reading what others have written and praying for those that need help. Finally pray, "Loving Jesus, help us instinctively want to help those in need. Show us what we can do. Amen."



## Praise together...

*Nobody loves me like you* by Chris

Tomlin: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG\\_IXFEO8yE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG_IXFEO8yE)

## Act together...

Reverse Advent calendar: Find a large box and decorate it, either with pens and craft materials, or wrapping paper.

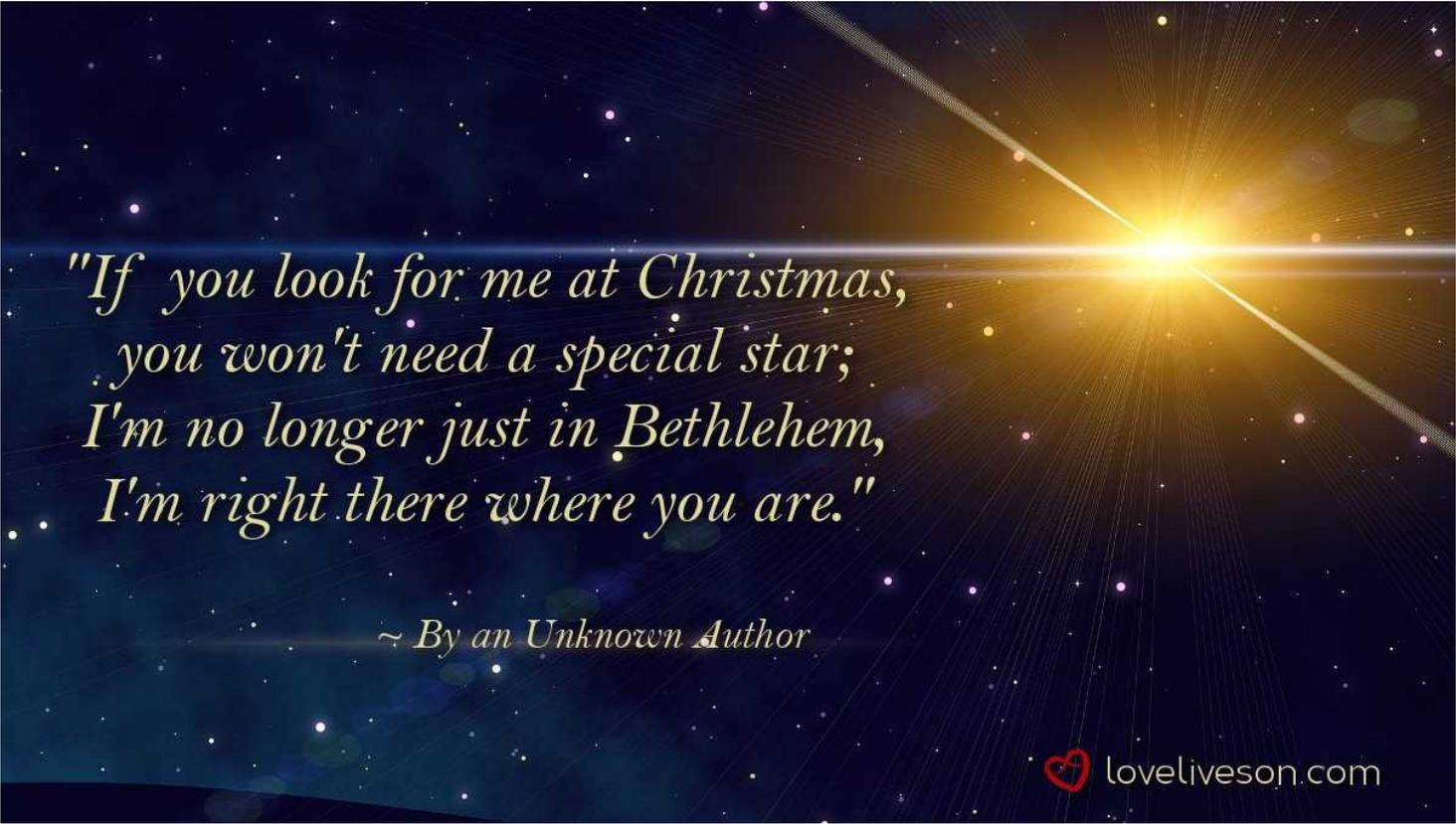
Use it to collect gifts for a reverse Advent calendar. Research a local foodbank and find out what they need. Then add one thing each day for the next few weeks and once finished, donate the items to your chosen foodbank.

If you're self-isolating, consider shopping online or adding an extra item to your shopping list. Or you could check your cupboards for useful items you might not use (just make sure the use-by dates extend into 2021!)



## Challenge...

Have a bowl of sweets such as skittles or smarties (something with lots of colours!) How quickly can you sort the sweets into piles of each colour? How about if you only use one hand?



*"If you look for me at Christmas,  
you won't need a special star;  
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,  
I'm right there where you are."*

*~ By an Unknown Author*

 [loveliveson.com](http://loveliveson.com)

Christmas is not far away and if you have any announcements or special occasions that you would like to share over this coming festive period please get in touch.

The Sunday pdf file keeps the congregation and friends up to date.

You can send items via Nina at the Kirk Office.