**24th November 2019 Pentecost 26 (Proper 29) Reign of Christ**

**A short but structured service**

*(other suggestions and alternatives are below)*

**Gathering**

**Call to worship**

The grace of our only King, the Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all.

***And also with you.***

Today is a day when we ask you to turn an idea upside down −

to firmly take the word “king” and stand it on its head.

Christ is our King, the monarch of all things,

is that humble, compassionate person who–

 never went to university

 never wrote a book,

 never held any public office,

 never had friends in high places,

 never travelled out of his tiny country,

 never met anyone more important than a provincial governor.

His only crown − a wreath of thorns.

His only throne − two crossed planks of wood.

At his right hand, and at his left, two dying thieves.

***Come, let us celebrate a remarkable thing;***

***Jesus of Nazareth is our incomparable King!***

**Prayer of Approach** *© B.D. Prewer*

Thank you, loving God, for giving us a king unlike any other; for rescuing us from all our false ideas of importance, like power, wealth, mansions, and the glory of armies. By your grace, assist us to get into the true spirit of things, and to show you a worship which fits your sublime humility. For your love’s sake.

*Amen!*

**Hymn**

**Prayer of confession and**

We come before God in confession, laying our faults at the feet of Christ.

Let us pray.

***To you, Christ our King:***

***We bring our lust for power and set it down before your rejection of power.***

***We bring our love of money and place it before your willing poverty.***

***We bring our stubborn pride and set it before your utter humility.***

***We bring our pay-back mentality and lay it before your mercifulness.***

***We bring our desire for self glory and put before your love of God’s glory.***

***We bring our self interest and rest it before your self giving.***

***We bring all our vaunted wisdom and lay it before the “folly” of your cross.***

Most merciful God, please forgive us once again. Enable us to let go of guilt, and to take steps to prevent future debacles. Correct the distortions in our thinking and feeling, and realign our hopes and ambitions to your will. Let us become in action as well as intention, the brothers and sisters of Christ the King.

***Amen!***

**Word of Assurance**

Good news! Wonderful news! My friends, God has already forgiven you. Believe it, take it to heart, and live it! It is for real!

***In the name of Christ.***

***Amen!***

*(often the Psalm may be used for the prayer and/or the word of grace)*

**Service of the Word**

**Psalm for the day – Luke 1: 68-79**  *© B D Prewer 2000*

Wonderful is the Lord God of Israel,

who has visited and set the people free,

 ***and has lifted up the trumpet of salvation***

 ***for the descendants of God’s servant David.***

As the prophets preached long ago,

that we should be rescued from enemies,

 ***and from the hands of those who hate us,***

 ***to live by the love promised to our forebears.***

To keep remembering the holy covenant,

that oath which God made to father Abraham;

 ***that we, free from the grasp of enemies,***

 ***might serve God without being afraid***

 ***and do good things in God’s presence***

 ***throughout every day that we live.***

And you, little child, will be named

the prophet of the Most High.

 ***For you will go on ahead of the Lord***

 ***to prepare a new path for him,***

 ***that people may know what it is to be free***

 ***as all their sins are forgiven.***

This will be the outcome of God’s yearning love,

when the new dawn shall shine on the heights,

 ***to shed light on those who crouch in darkness***

 ***and in the deep shadows of death,***

 ***to guide our feet into the way of peace.***

**Epistle or Old Testament/alternate reading:** **Colossians 1: 11-20 or Jeremiah 23: 1-6**

**Gospel reading: Luke 23: 33-43**

**Short reflection and discussion** *(see links below)*

(Hymn)

**Prayers for others**

**Sharing of concerns**

**Sharing of notices**

**Prayers**

FOR OUR NATION

We pray, Most holy Friend, for a future where everyone will get a fair go. Where the lucky will not lord it over the unfortunate, nor the strong force their will on the weak, nor the clever treat the ordinary as their servants. Please let justice flow around us like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.

FOR WORLD PEACE

Loving God, we ponder a fallen world, with violence and war, wrecked communities, broken bodies and shattered minds. We long, we yearn painfully, for that new world where wolf and lamb shall lie down together and nations learn war no more.

FOR THOSE IN HOSPITAL

Motherly Spirit, put your arms around your suffering children, those we name in our minds and many whose names we will never know. Cradle them through the long hours, and by night grant them the precious gift of sleep. May they wake up each morning a little stronger in body and more buoyant in spirit.

FOR THE SORROWING

God of our dear and holy dead, the hardest thing for us is that we can no longer, see, hear, touch, soothe or kiss our loved ones. Help us to know that your arms are never closed, and to trust those so dear to us into the wisdom and tenderness that is truly resurrection and life. May they have your kiss of peace.

FOR OURSELVES

Implant us, dear Lord, with that miracle of trust which can transform setbacks into new growth, suffering into deeper compassion for others, and heavy duties into the glory of practical praise. Through Christ Jesus our Redeemer.

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Sending forth the people of God**

**Offering** (a sharing of our gifts and the call to bless others as we have been blessed)

**Hymn**

**Blessing and commissioning**

May Christ the King give you the secret of his humble contentment.

 ***and the grace to be thankful for whatever this new week brings.***

Be glad for those who encourage you and be civil to those who offend you,

 ***and learn when to speak and when to be silent, when to move into action***

 ***and when to be still and pray.***

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love...

\*Note: all prayers and litanies above, are courtesy ©B D Prewer. It was Bruce’s intention that the prayers and litanies be adapted by each user to their own situation. This material can only be used for worship with acknowledgement and not otherwise reproduced without permission. Thank you to the estate of Bruce Prewer for allow us to publish his material here. Contact <http://www.bruceprewer.com> for details.

**A shorter prayer service**

*(may include some of the above material in the following format. Hymns may be included if desired and music is available)*

Greet each other

Prayer (may include invocation, adoration, confession and recognition of grace)

Reading: Psalm: Luke 1: 68-79

Gospel reading: Luke 23: 33-43

Sharing and discussion of the readings

Sharing of concerns

Prayers for others (see above, may involve one or several people praying; may involve the use of symbolic actions as part of the prayers)

(Conclude with the Lord’s Prayer)

Blessing

***Howard Wallace suggests*** *(see****:*** [*http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/*](http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/)*)*

Verses 68-70 can be used in the **call to worship**. It could be used responsively or be said by the worship leader:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.

Verses 72-77 can be modified for the **declaration of forgiveness** after the **confession**:

The Lord has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
And so I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ,
‘Your sins are forgiven.’
***Thanks be to God.***

 Finally, the last two verse of the song can be used as an introduction to the final **blessing**:

By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.
And the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
will be upon you, now and forever.
***Amen***

Howard often uses the NRSV but other versions can be used such as Nathan Nettleton’s paraphrase (found at <http://www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html>), The Message, Bruce Prewer’s adaptations (both paraphrases) or the New Living Translation. The Message and New Living Translation are accessible via [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

**Songs which may bring deeper reflection are** – lots to consider:

TIS 275/AHB 2O3 Hail to the Lord’s anointed
TIS 272/AHB 200 Come, thou long expected Jesus

TIS 256 From heaven you came, helpless babe

TIS 229/AHB 166 Jesus loves me, this I know

TIS 378/AHB 301 The head that once was crowned with thorns

TIS 320 Never in all human story

TIS 224/AHB 159 All hail the power of Jesus’ name

TIS 730/SA 55 Jesus, remember me

TIS 747 The Lord is my light

ATO 313/AOV{2] 3 Christ, be our light

TIS 658 Here I am, Lord

David MacGregor has a range of contemporary songs. You may like to select one to learn. He often provides a downloadable mp3 file, music and lyrics for songs that are his own. His site is at: <https://togethertocelebrate.com.au/>

**Other Creative suggestions:**

* Visuals are very appropriate for most services. Art works can be used to draw people into the stories. http://www.textweek.com/yearc/christc.htm has links to artworks and movie suggestions related to the themes arising from the Bible readings. Some of these are by some of the greats and others by world class contemporary artists.
* Ann suggests 3 listening songs. The first is *Boss of me* by They Might Be Giants on their album, “Malcolm in the Middle”. She relates this song to an activity she suggests and also as an introduction to the sermon or discussion regarding power. She gives more detail than this which is helpful. The second is *Thief* by Third Day from their album “Third Day”. She links this to the Luke 23 reading. The third song suggestion is *He Reigns* by the Newsboys from their album “Adoration”. She links this to the Colossians reading. If you want to check them out, you can often hear a sample on Youtube.
* Ann suggests a video clip from Ben Hur. She gives guidance as to which parts to use and suggestions for reflection. The clip is available on YouTube and can be viewed on Ann’s site.
* Last week Ann suggested a discussion using Monopoly money regarding “fake money”. The general idea is identifying that which is true. The concept can be translated to the contemporary discussion regarding “fake news” and the way people use and abuse their power and the mass/social media.
* Geoff Shrowder suggests re the Luke 23:33-43 readings:
*Create a poster of a large crown in outline and attach it to an appropriate wall space. Provide all of the worshippers with a self-adhesive gold star (and/or other brightly coloured shape) and have them attach these stars/shapes to the crown at an appropriate moment in worship.*
* Seasons of the Spirit is a resource package available through Media Com. They have weekly resources available that can be purchased. They have great resources for all ages, creative ideas and thoughtful suggestions for reflection and sermon development. If you want to check it out, speak to Rev Peter or contact our Romsey congregation who use the material often*.*

**Other resources**

* See the Resources page of our web site for an extensive list of links and other resources.
* Our Romsey congregation has access to Seasons of the Spirit materials. Contact Jay for details as to what is available.
* Bruce Prewer’s web site has sermons and prayers. Go to <http://www.bruceprewer.com/>.
* Nathan Nettleton’s site has paraphrase versions of the readings, sermons and prayers. Go to <http://www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html>.
* Ann Scull has some great suggestions for creative worship. Go to <http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/>.
* Sacredise is a great web site that has a huge range of resources. Go to <http://sacredise.com/>.
* David McGregor has some great suggestions for contemporary music and songs. Go to <http://togethertocelebrate.com.au/>
* Geoff Shrowder has suggestions for the use of the Psalm, often a thoughtful piece and suggestions for hymns. Go to <http://thebillabong.info/>.
* Many other resources are available on the web site