Sunday 22 November 2026
Christ the King

Collect:
God the Father,
help us to hear the call of Christ the King
and to follow in his service,
whose kingdom has no end;
for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, one glory. Amen.

Readings for this week:
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46
The red colouring of vestments and hangings that have adorned our churches for the past few weeks mark an unofficial Kingdom Season, which is defined as the time from All Saints' to the First Sunday of Advent, which is observed as an opportunity to reflect upon the reign of Christ in earth and heaven. This mini-season culminates in the final Sunday of the Church Year, the Feast of Christ the King, when we affirm and celebrate Jesus as the ultimate source of authority in the lives of the faithful. As we approach the time of preparation for Christ's coming as the baby in a Bethlehem manger, we bring into focus his coming again at the end of time as the King of all creation. This is the Christ whose example is the ultimate pattern for our own lives; whose teaching is the supreme source of wisdom; whose moral demands are the definitive standard for our own behaviour.

Our readings for this feast open with Ezekiel condemning those leaders who have left the people to fend for themselves, without the comfort of rod and staff, of direction and protection. In contrast, God is a shepherd who is fully focussed on the flock under the Lord's care. The links with the Gospel reading are immediate and compelling. Psalm 95 draws out the cosmic nature of God's care which is coupled with the magnificence of God's universal glory. This magnificence flows through the Epistle, where Paul also makes it abundantly clear that the Church is subject to the ultimate authority of Christ.

These readings all lead us to the dramatic vision in Matthew of Christ coming to reign in power and terrible glory. In the subtheme of the shepherd separating the sheep from the goats we find echoes of the Ezekiel passage, a reminder that Christ's call to service is an imperative for all of us, no matter what our position, abilities or natures. Seeing Christ in others is not a way of turning everyone in need into a cipher of Christ, but is about seeing the full humanity and true potential of each individual. When we do that, some of the glory of Christ, described by Paul in Ephesians, comes flooding into the world.

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.

Readings for next week:
Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-8, 18-20; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
Advent 1