



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Today is Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday in our liturgical year. This day provides us an opportunity to acknowledge Christ as King of our lives and to see our King in all his glory. Our first reading in the book of Daniel shows God's people as they faced terrible oppression and suffering, thinking it would never end. Daniel's vision shows the people that God, the "Ancient One," is still ruling, and that their suffering will come to an end. God's dominion is from beginning to end, alpha to omega. Daniel spoke this word of hope to God's people wanting to give strength to endure their hardship and suffering.

This same theme is echoed in today's second reading. "Grace and peace to you from the one who is and who was and who is to come." These words state the summary of the book of Revelation. God's reign will span the length of time from before time existed until time is no more. These hopeful words assure us that no matter how hopeless our situation, God is still in control, watching over us and guiding us into His way of peace. We can face the future boldly, as we place our trust and our lives into the hands of the God who controls past, present, and future.

Our Gospel reading from John, gives us a glimpse of our great king coming into his glory. Throughout all of Jesus ministry we see examples of Jesus living differently than those around him. He cared for all people equally and continued to strive against the ills of society. His kingdom is nothing like this world has ever known.

Thinking back on the church year, which ends today, one cannot help but focus on the who God is, what God is about and our calling to be the people of

God in the world. Each season we have gone through, provided us with a different picture of Jesus. Each season shows us a different face of Christ as Ruler of all.

During Advent we prepare for the coming of Christ. Scripture speaks of God coming to earth in human form. We prepare for the babe in the manger as well as hear that Christ will return at the end of time, in judgment and glory.

And then Christmas arrives, and we pray “let every heart prepare him room.” It is a time when we all look forward with hope of a promise to be fulfilled, hope of a future restored, and hope for the life to come.

The Christmas season is a season often ignored. It lasts for one to two weeks and comes at a time when many of the world are ready to be done with the holiday. In the church’s Christmas season, we remember why Jesus came as he did, as a human baby. He came to redeem all of humanity from its sinful ways. We hear clearly that Jesus was born to die. He came for our salvation.

The season of Epiphany is marked by the magi following the star to Bethlehem, in search of a leader, a savior, a newborn king. The image of Epiphany is light. We witness to the light of Christ shining into our darkness. The season focuses on Jesus’ miracles and how God dwells among us. Christ shines in our world to cast out all darkness and evil and enables us to turn away from our sin and to have hope. Epiphany ends with Jesus on the mount being transformed, shrouded in light, before the eyes of His followers. Jesus’ power and purpose in the world is revealed.

Lent is a time that many people know. We hear stories of people denying themselves during this season. It is a time for study and change. It was a baptismal time where many candidates prepared their hearts to enter the church through this sacrament. During this time, we learn of Jesus’ journey to the cross on our behalf and the challenges he met along the way. Jesus meets us in our life and faith journey, as he walks with us during our times of frustration and suffering. Lent is a time of repentance, of turning around as we recommit our lives to living out faith in Christ in a practical way.

Holy Week concludes the Lenten season with a series of special events. Maundy Thursday we learn again about the institution of the Lord’s Supper as Jesus instructs his disciples to love one another as He has loved them. Good Friday is only good because we know what happened next. That day gives Jesus’ followers a chance to walk with their Lord to the cross and to know

what pain and grief lay there. Our salvation was bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus.

Easter is God's great surprise. Jesus does not remain in the tomb, and neither will we? Through Easter we learn that God's promises can be trusted. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus; therefore, we are free to live our lives for others and in service to our God. The 50 days of Easter provide us time to explore this mystery of our faith as we take time to discover how God comes to us in our daily lives.

The longest season of the church year begins with Pentecost. We celebrate this holiday where the Holy Spirit comes to us. We hear the disciples proclaiming the good news of Jesus in all the languages of the world. During the Sundays after Pentecost, we sit with the crowds at Jesus' feet and hear his teachings. We learn what it means to be a disciple and to trust God with our lives so we can come to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Throughout the church year we see, time and time again how Christ rules in our lives. We are blessed with many gifts that God has given us, and we are empowered to put those gifts to service. During the year we are reminded of God's love for us; a love that transcends time. God sent His only son to die for us so we might have forgiveness of our sins and eternal life.

And yes, Jesus is a different kind of king. He was not like the kings of old that waged war to add more land to their kingdoms. He was not like the kings that would overthrow the oppressed with power and subjected them to slavery. He was not even like the kings that would bring peace and security to the people of their kingdom so they would be loyal subjects.

Earthly kings wear a crown of gold and jewels. Jesus wore a crown of thorns. Earthly kings rule from a throne that is frequently made from the finest fabrics, metals, and jewels. Jesus rules from a cross of rough wood.

Earthly kings rule by strength and power.
Jesus rules by love.

Earthly kings have their own turf in which they rule the people with force when needed.
Jesus' kingdom is not geographical. His kingdom is the lives of the people who respond to the gospel and follow him.

Throughout all the seasons of the church year and throughout all the seasons of our lives, God is with us, supporting and guiding us. He sent Jesus Christ to be our king. Paul in Philippians 2:10-11 says it well. "Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Yes folks, Jesus Christ is our King. Praise be to God.
AMEN