

# Pennington Presbyterian

FAITH ♦ COMMUNITY ♦ SERVICE

## Order of Worship for November 22, 2020

### Christ the King Sunday

---

#### PRELUDE

*Be Thou My Vision*

Franklin Ashdown

Don Dolan, *organ*

#### WELCOME

Matt Heisler

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Today is Christ the King Sunday. This day ends our marking of Ordinary Time after the Day of Pentecost, and moves us to the threshold of Advent, the season of hope that anticipates the celebration of Christ's coming at Christmas and Christ's Second Coming at the end of time.

The day centers us on the crucified and risen Christ, whom God exalted to rule over the whole universe. The celebration of the lordship of Christ looks back to Ascension, Easter, and Transfiguration, and points ahead to the appearing in glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Christ reigns supreme. Christ rules in peace. Christ's truth judges falsehood. As the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, Christ is the center of the universe, the ruler of all history, the judge of all people. In Christ all things began, and in Christ all things will be fulfilled. According to Ephesians 1, God has put Christ above all "rule and authority and power and dominion." In the end, Christ will triumph over all the forces of evil.

These concepts cluster around the affirmation that Christ is King and Christ reigns! As sovereign ruler, Christ calls us to a loyalty that transcends every earthly claim on the human heart. To Christ alone belongs the supreme allegiance of our lives. Christ calls us to stand with those who in every age confessed, "Jesus Christ is Lord!" In every generation, demagogues emerge to claim an allegiance that belongs only to God, but Christ alone has the right to claim our highest loyalty.

I have some announcements to share. First, the Session has moved our Fall Congregational Meeting to December 6 at noon. It will be on Zoom. The purpose will be the same: elect officers, vote on pastoral terms of call, and celebrate our ministry with photos and music.

Our local clergy group is hosting an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Zoom this Tuesday, November 24 at 7:00. Two of our newest clergy, Rabbi Jordan Goldman from Har Sinai and Pastor Joe Jueng from the Methodist Church are taking the lead. The offering this year will be directed to the Hopewell Mobile Food Pantry. Eva will be sending out the Zoom link so watch for it in your email.

We are committed to sharing our blessings with folks who may be having a hard time during this upcoming holiday season. Here are two ways you can make the holidays brighter: 1.) Bring cans of cranberry jelly and green beans and also juice boxes or pouches to the church and leave them between the glass doors off our courtyard. Donations are needed by tomorrow, Monday, November 23. We will get them to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen who is providing to-go bags for hungry friends. 2.) Our deacons are taking the lead on our Angel Tree Gifts. You can mail a check for any amount to the church or use our *Donate Now* button on the website. Either place, please note this is for the Angel Tree. Our deacons will then shop for toys, and the good folks at the Capitol Health Clinics in Trenton will be sure the children have something special this Christmas.

As you are thinking about toys for your family or friends or the Angel Tree, please go by Twirl on Main St. At checkout mention the Pennington Presbyterian Nursery School and they will donate 10% to our nursery school. The school can't host its big Christmas celebration this year, so this is an important fundraiser for the school.

And finally, Advent begins next Sunday! This year's theme will be "Those Who Dream." Rev. Miriam Diephouse-McMillan will be leading a small group on the theme, utilizing art and scripture and meditation. It will take place on Tuesdays at 7:30 pm over zoom. Contact the church office to sign up.

Shalom Women's Bible Study on Wednesday mornings is studying "Light of the World," by Amy-Jill Levine. New women are welcome. They meet over Zoom. The Bible and Theology class will begin a new theme on Sundays at 9:00 am: "Faith and Beauty: the Art of Vincent Van Gogh. Finally, our Young Families Group is planning and hosting an Advent Kick Off on Sunday, November 29 at 4:30 pm on Zoom. There will be carol singing, crafts, and activities. All who register will have a kit delivered to them so you'll have all the supplies ready. Please RSVP for this event.

### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Rev. Nancy Mikoski

Psalm 95: 1-2, 4

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

**Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.**

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise.

**Give thanks to God, bless the LORD's name.**

Our first hymn is "*Gather Us In,*" which is hymn #401 in the Glory to God hymnal.

**HYMN**

*Gather Us In  
Here in This Place*

Glory to God #401

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION and WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Rev. Casey Aldridge

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In humility and faith let us therefore confess our sin against God and our neighbor. Let us pray.

Sovereign God, we confess that we are not ready for your holy realm. You guide us toward right paths, but we refuse to follow where you lead. You love and feed and care for us, but we fail to love and serve others. Forgive us, merciful God, so that we may return to your fold and rejoice in your presence.

And hear us now as we confess our sins to you in the silence of this moment.

*30 seconds of silent confession*

Amen. However long we wander, however far we stray, God's steadfast love endures forever. Siblings in Christ, be assured: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Matt Heisler

Holy God, open your Word. Give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation, that our eyes may be enlightened and we may know the hope to which we have been called; through Jesus Christ we pray.

**Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Rev. Casey Aldridge

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.  
Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.  
Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he that made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise.  
Give thanks to him, bless his name.  
For the LORD is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

## TIME WITH CHILDREN

Rev. Casey Aldridge

Howdy kiddos! Gather around now for our time with children!

How many of you remember the song “Old Town Road?” Not that long ago, “Old Town Road” was everywhere, playing on the radio, featured in television commercials, and the headlining song at more than one dance party. There were many different versions of that song, but the common thread among all of them was the combination of two different types of music that are often seen as total opposites: rap and country.

For a moment last year, “Old Town Road” brought people together from all different backgrounds to dance and sing together. I remember studying outside in Princeton a little over a year ago and hearing a large group of fifteen or twenty kids joyfully singing at the very top of their lungs that they were about to get their cowboy on and ride their horse along the old town road.

I remember that as such a joyful noise. A large group of kids from different racial backgrounds and genders belting out that song together in the park. What is the first thing *you* think of when you hear the words “joyful noise?” Perhaps it’s the sound of bluebirds chirping, or your dog barking excitedly when you get home from school, or the theme song to your favorite television show. I think about those kids singing in the park, but I also think about joyful family conversations around the holidays and some of my favorite church hymns.

The scripture that I just read invites us to make joyful noises for God. We’re about to sing a beautiful hymn called *Be Thou My Vision*. The words will appear on the screen—I’ll be singing it here from my home, but I want you to try and sing it as enthusiastically and joyfully as those kids in the park once sang “Old Town Road.” Let’s make a joyful noise with our singing in order to give thanks to God for everything God does for us.

And, if singing isn’t your thing, find some other way to make a joyful noise for God this week. Maybe that means saying something kind and complimenting someone who is having a hard day, or offering to lead your family prayer on Thanksgiving day. It can be something a little bit like this:

Let us pray. God, we are so very thankful for the life you give us, for your world that feeds and sustains us, and for the friends and family you have placed in our lives. This Thanksgiving week, fill us up with a spirit of compassion for our neighbors, knowing that the love you have shown us and the joy you have given us are not for us to keep to ourselves, but to share with everyone around us. Amen.

That sound, amen, is a joyful noise indeed. And this next hymn will be as well: our second hymn this morning is *Be Thou My Vision*, Glory to God #450.

**HYMN**

*Be Thou My Vision*

Glory to God #450

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Matt Heisler

Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 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 what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

**SERMON**

Matt Heisler

**OFFERING**

Rev. Nancy Mikoski

In gratitude for the immeasurable gift of Jesus Christ, let us bring our tithes and offerings to God.

We also want to give a big thank you to the 99 individuals and families who have submitted pledge cards to the church, indicating support for our ministry in 2021. We are nearing our pledge goal and every gift helps us to fulfill our calling so please consider making a pledge if you have not already done so.

You may drop a pledge card into the mail or go to our website and use the Pledge Online button. Pledging is both an act of personal discipleship and commitment and also a way to help our Session plan well for the coming year. All we do in the name of Christ comes from our collective response to God's grace in our lives. Thank you!

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Rev. Nancy Mikoski

We praise you, great God, for you are the ruler of the universe. You sent Jesus to be the King of kings. We rejoice that he has triumphed over all the powers of this world. We celebrate his victory in his life,

death, resurrection, and ascension to honor and might at your right side. When we are tempted to put our hope and trust in earthly rulers, turn us around by your Spirit, we pray, and claim our complete loyalty so that Christ's rule will be established in every heart.

Lord, as we near Thanksgiving Day, we lift our gratitude to you. Our celebrations may look and feel quite different this year and that is hard for us. Yet, even with the loss we experience, we are grateful. We are grateful for the people who love us most deeply. We are grateful for celebration foods that make us smile. We are grateful for our church that encourages and inspires us to live as Christ's disciples. We are grateful for those who work to keep us safe, and for those whose daily energy and focus goes to restoring health for those who are sick and to prevent the spread of the virus. We are grateful for our country, that even in divisive times, we stand together as the most diverse country in the world. May our strength come from our amazing combination of unity and diversity and may our love shine forth into every neighborhood. Most of all, generous God, we are grateful for you, for your unending love and for your commitment to being our faithful God in every season of life.

Today we lift up in prayer those who are in need of your healing touch. In particular we pray for Gary Coleman's brother Bruce who is out of the hospital now but still recovering from covid 19. We pray for him and for all who have become infected. Lord, hear our prayers. We pray for those whose tears flow freely with grief or anger or fear. We pray for those overwhelmed by responsibilities. For those who struggle to respond to stress in ways that lead will lead to greater health and happiness instead of with behaviors that diminish life. We lift up those who are lonely and need a sign of your care. God, please show up for all of these people, for all of us, for we all need you. And Lord, by your grace, help us to be channels of your peace and love to those around us.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, the King of Kings, who taught his disciples to pray:

**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 and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**HYMN**

*Rejoice, the Lord Is King!*

Glory to God #363

**BENEDICTION**

Matt Heisler

**POSTLUDE**

*Invention No. 8 in F Major, BWV 779*

J.S. Bach

Don Dolan, *piano*