

Celebrate

Christ the King
November 22, 2026

On this final Sunday of the church year our gospel is Jesus' great story of judgment. In the end, the faithful are those who served Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick, or estranged. In the first reading God is the shepherd who seeks the lost, weak, and injured and feeds them with justice. We gather this day to celebrate the reign of Christ and his victory over death, yet we await the consummation of all things yet to come. Acknowledging Christ as our merciful ruler, we go forth that his reign may be known in our loving words and deeds.

Prayer of the Day

O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading — Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the LORD will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The LORD will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will
search for my sheep and will sort them
out. 12As shepherds sort out their flocks
when they are among scattered sheep,
so I will sort out my sheep. I will rescue
them from all the places to which they
have been scattered on a day of clouds
and thick darkness. 13I will bring them
out from the peoples and gather them
from the countries and bring them into
their own land, and I will feed them on
the mountains of Israel, by the water-
courses, and in all the inhabited parts
of the land. 14I will feed them with good
pasture, and the mountain heights of
Israel shall be their pasture; there they
shall lie down in good grazing land,
and they shall feed on rich pasture on
the mountains of Israel. 15I myself will
be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will
make them lie down, says the Lord GOD.
16I will seek the lost, and I will bring
back the strays, and I will bind up the
injured, and I will strengthen the weak,
but the fat and the strong I will destroy.
I will feed them with justice.

20Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD
to them: I myself will judge between the
fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21Because
you pushed with flank and shoulder
and butted at all the weak animals with
your horns until you scattered them far
and wide, 22I will save my flock, and they
shall no longer be ravaged, and I will
judge between sheep and sheep.

23I will set up over them one shep-
herd, my servant David, and he shall
feed them; he shall feed them and be
their shepherd. 24And I the LORD will
be their God, and my servant David
shall be prince among them; I the LORD
have spoken.

Psalm

Psalm 95:1-7a; refrain, Ps. 95:7



Come, let us sing | to the LORD;
let us shout for joy to the rock of | our salvation.
[2]**Let us come before God's presence | with thanksgiving**
and raise a loud shout to the | LORD with psalms.
[3]For you, LORD, | are a great God,
and a great ruler a- | bove all gods.
[4]**In your hand are the caverns | of the earth;**
the heights of the hills are | also yours. R
[5]The sea is yours, | for you made it,
and your hands have molded | the dry land.
[6]**Come, let us worship | and bow down,**
let us kneel before the | LORD our maker.
[7a]For the LORD | is our God,
and we are the people of God's pasture
and the sheep | of God's hand. **R**

Second Reading — Ephesians 1:15-23

In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected, exalted Christ is Lord of both the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord
Jesus and your love toward all the
saints, and for this reason [16]I do not
cease to give thanks for you as I remem-
ber you in my prayers, [17]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, [18]so that, with the eyes of your
heart enlightened, you may perceive
what is the hope to which he has called
you, what are the riches of his glorious
inheritance among the saints, [19]and
what is the immeasurable greatness of
his power for us who believe, accord-
ing to the working of his great power.
[20]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, [21]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. [22]And he has put all things under
his feet and has made him the head
over all things for the church, [23]which
is his body, the fullness of him who fills
all in all.

Gospel — Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "When the
Son of Man comes in his glory and all
the angels with him, then he will sit on
the throne of his glory. [32]All the nations
will be gathered before him, and he
will separate people one from another
as a shepherd separates the sheep from
the goats, [33]and he will put the sheep
at his right hand and the goats at the
left. [34]Then the king will say to those
at his right hand, 'Come, you who are
blessed by my Father, inherit the king-
dom prepared for you from the foun-
dation of the world, [35]for I was hungry
and you gave me food, I was thirsty and
you gave me something to drink, I was a
stranger and you welcomed me, [36]I was
naked and you gave me clothing, I was
sick and you took care of me, I was in
prison and you visited me.' [37]Then the
righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when
was it that we saw you hungry and gave
you food or thirsty and gave you some-
thing to drink? [38]And when was it that
we saw you a stranger and welcomed you
or naked and gave you clothing? [39]And
when was it that we saw you sick or in
prison and visited you?' [40]And the king
will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just
as you did it to one of the least of these
brothers and sisters of mine, you did it
to me.' [41]Then he will say to those at his
left hand, 'You who are accursed, de-
part from me into the eternal fire pre-
pared for the devil and his angels, [42]for
I was hungry and you gave me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave me nothing
to drink, [43]I was a stranger and you did
not welcome me, naked and you did not
give me clothing, sick and in prison and
you did not visit me.' [44]Then they also
will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we
saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger
or naked or sick or in prison and did
not take care of you?' [45]Then he will an-
swer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you
did not do it to one of the least of these,
you did not do it to me.' [46]And these will
go away into eternal punishment but
the righteous into eternal life."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

United with the great cloud of witnesses, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Prepare your people for your reign to come among us. Where the church is wary, make us bold; where we are complacent, stir us to action; where we are anxious, assure us of your never-ending care. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

All the heights, depths, and expanses of the earth belong to you. Deliver every corner of your creation from disaster. Restore lands ravaged by floods, fires, drought, or contamination (*places or events may be named*). God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Gather all the nations at your side and teach them the ways of your kingdom of wholeness and abundant life. Empower judges, juries, and legal advocates to create and uphold pathways toward transformative justice. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Bind up the wounds of all your people. Give courage to all who experience uncertainty, guide all people facing difficult decisions, and lift the spirits of any who are in need (*especially*). God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Accompany communities struggling with conflict. Help us to listen deeply to one another, that we might know one another more fully and release any hurt or anger. Create ways of healing and reconciliation among us. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Fill us with the spirit of wisdom and perseverance that you grant to all the saints, and bring us, at the last, into the hope of your promised new day. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Into your steadfast love, faithful God, we entrust all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus, your beloved.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Clement, Bishop of Rome, died around 100; Miguel Agustín Pro, martyr, died 1927) Psalm 7. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Justus Falckner, died 1723; Jehu Jones, died 1852; William Passavant, died 1894; pastors in North America) Esther 8:3-17. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Isaac Watts, hymnwriter, died 1748) John 5:19-40. **Thursday** Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (Day of Thanksgiving [USA]: Exodus 16:15-16). **Friday** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18. **Saturday** Micah 2:1-13. **First Sunday of Advent** Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37.

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