



# ***Worshiping at Home, Reign of Christ , Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2020***



## ***Gathering***

Come, let us come.

Come from the Shearwater congregations. Come from across Victoria. Come from further afield. Come to the rich pastures of our service today and be nourished. You are welcome into the hospitality of God.

## ***Call to worship***

The Shepherd seeks you and calls you out, calls you by your name. Come from your scatteredness, come and be fed on rich pasture. As we come to this, the last week of our liturgical year and begin afresh, in these watercourses we are refreshed and renewed.

## ***Acknowledging***

We acknowledge the Bunurong and Boon Wurrung people from this place and we pay respect to their elders, past, present and emerging. May we commit ourselves anew to building the relationships between us all.



## ***Singing Community of Christ***

Community of Christ,  
who make the Cross your own,  
live out your creed and risk your life  
for God alone:  
the God who wears your face,  
to whom all worlds belong,  
whose children are of every race  
and every song.

Community of Christ,  
look past the Church's door  
and see the refugee, the hungry  
and the poor.

Take hands with the oppressed,  
the jobless in your street,  
take towel and water, that you wash  
your neighbour's feet.

Community of Christ,  
through whom the word must sound -  
cry out for justice and for peace  
the whole world round:  
disarm the powers that war  
and all that can destroy,  
turn bombs to bread, and tears  
of anguish into joy.

When menace melts away,  
so shall God's will be done,  
the climate of the world be peace  
and Christ its Sun;  
our currency be love  
and kindness our law,  
our food and faith be shared as one  
for evermore.

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## ***Prayer***

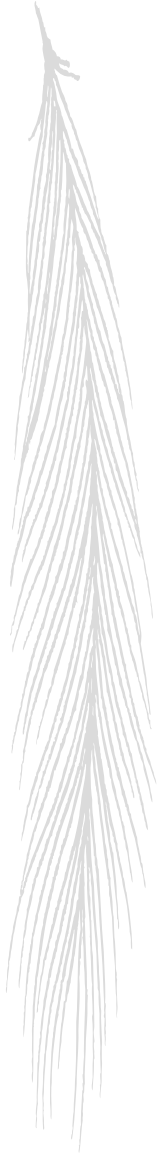
God calls us to care for the least, to reach out and love the lost.

And so we pray for the courage to step out of our own place of comfort and into a deeper place of service. We hear your invitation to Come, to walk alongside you into the places of need. We acknowledge that this is tough space and that it takes all our strength. Sometimes we don't even want to, sometimes we withhold and withdraw.

Forgive us and give us again that radical Love and your Spirit of Wisdom and Life. Make our service the prayer that we offer for our community. We are your hands and feet. Help us stand in solidarity for peace and grace.

*Spring is a season of New Life:*

*Where in Toora, Foster, Fish Creek, Tarwin Lower, Inverloch, Wonthaggi, or Phillip Island can you see it?  
The Uniting Church in Australia Synod VicTas, from Shearwater Team Presbytery of Gippsland.*





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### ***Listening***

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- **Read** Ephesians 1: 15-23
- **Read** Matthew 25: 31-46

For these words of faith  
& Jesus the Word: **Thanks be to God.**

### ***Reflecting - Rev. Ian Turnnidge***

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When do we choose to take the model of leadership as reflected in the life and ministry of Jesus: and when do we not?

Our world has just seen the lead Western nation come through a very messy election.

Other leading liberal democracies are struggling in leadership.

We are in a world fractured by power, personality and popularity.

On this Sunday, once called Christ the King Sunday, we consider the Reign of Christ in our lives and in our world. The image of Jesus as 'King': enthroned, empowered, is one that has inspired communities into thinking Jesus' power in the human terms we understand: King or Queen: President or Prime Minister: Manager or Team Leader!

Jesus, however, seems to resist such imagery in his leadership: Jesus resists these humanly devised ideas of power. On Christ the King Sunday, we need to constantly check in with the kind of "king" Jesus may be. The Reign of Christ is a reign like no other: that asks of us both as community and as individuals: Can you live the Beatitudes we considered last week? Can you be the hands and feet of mercy and peace and compassion in our world?

One of the best leaders I worked with was a woman named Judy Balding. She was Australia's first female Taxation Partner in the big Chartered Accounting

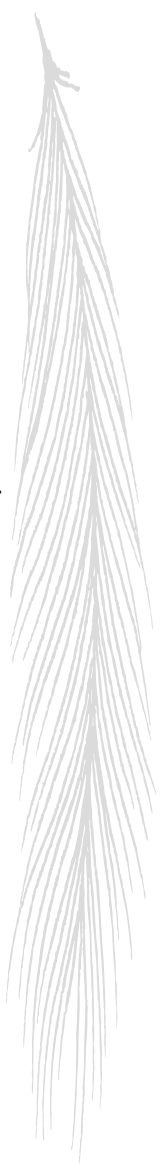
firms in Australia. I was a graduate accountant: and a very dreaming, ill-fitting one at that: totally incompetent! Somehow had landed a job well beyond my level of skill or expertise. She knew it: but she also knew how to get the best out of me. She was a manager you would do your best for: who you would care for: who you would try to help in any way you could. She was successful because of her brilliance both technical and personal. What I learned from her has been a life-long gift. She died in 1998, and would have no idea that her life had such a profound effect on mine in such a positive way.

Today's Gospel is about people like Judy, who lived the Gospel in the real world: embodying what it is to live the principles you espouse. "Come you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world": for I was hungry...I was thirsty...I was a stranger...I was naked...I was sick...I was in prison...and you did something to help me!

Leadership in our current time, struggles to find an agreed platform from which to bring coherence to our community. The myth of the self-made person has formed generations who have lost touch with our communal responsibilities to one another. The well-being of the wider community, as an important element in our decision making, has evaporated. We have seen this reflected in this pandemic by people fighting over toilet paper in the supermarket, or people boasting that they have stockpiles of food (leaving those less able: the aged; those on the front line of health; those who are mobility challenged with nothing).

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Today's Gospel is a vision of a different community. A different kind of kingdom: and therefore: a different kind of Reign. It also dares to imagine a kind of people shaped by that very King. It is a vision of how we can be for each other; with a particular eye for the weak and the marginal. It is a vision of the kind of community I'd like to live in.

This week I had the privilege of interviewing students who have put themselves forward for positions of leadership in the school community: 'Social Justice Captain'. It is a role where a student may be able to harness enthusiasm in the school community to become, through actions and education, the kind of people this Gospel speaks of. It is inspiring to see such young people respond to injustices they see in the world. One student had spent some time in South East Asia; encountering street beggars. Another student had lived in Hong Kong, and is now following the stories of students there who are protesting to keep the freedoms they have enjoyed. There was even a student who had just joined Amnesty International and was beginning to see how her Year 8 life could have world-wide significance for others.

It made me wonder, when was the last time I looked at the Uniting World website?

<https://www.unitingworld.org.au>

When was it that I last looked at the Just Act website?

<https://justact.org.au>

The vision, however, in the Gospel today, is far more local. The hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, those who are left naked, sick or in prison are all about us, in our local communities. Can you recognise them in your neighbourhood?

Over the past few years, the congregation here at Cowes has operated a community meal on a Monday night. Anyone could come. We opened the doors at 5.30 for a two-course meal. No questions, just welcome. All that was pre-Covid-19, of course. A friend of the congregation, a social worker began attending, assisting with guests with access to aged-care packages and helping to organise for them, an aged-care assessment. She told me that many of our Monday night guests put their 'best face' forward to attend the community meal. Behind closed doors, some were the 'least of these'; and we would never have known.

The Reign of Christ is so different to that of any of our human models of leadership. It invites us to see the world as God sees it, starting with those who may be deemed 'the least of these'. Christ the King is nothing like any form of leadership we can see in our society. Rather, it consists of heartfelt actions towards our neighbours, that create a community who would first meet the needs of the voiceless and the marginal in priority.

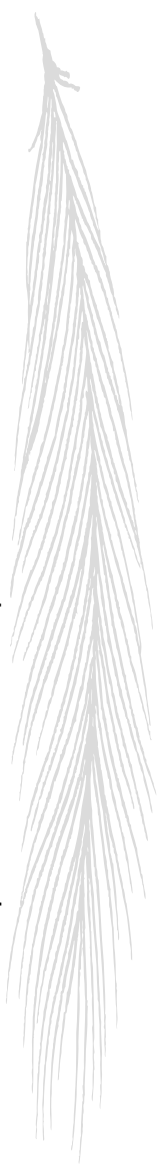
Imagine if we were to live that way of leadership? Imagine if we were to demand that framework of assessing if leadership was effective? Imagine if public policy met the needs of the least first?

Would we see a world fractured by power, personality and popularity?

May we live the Reign of Christ this day and every day, never needing to know who are the least, but always aware of the heart that calls to us their need.

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### ***Responding:***

#### ***Prayers for World & Community***

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*In light of our gospel reading this week,  
we pray for those who are hungry,  
thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick or in  
prison.*

Storyteller God,  
you write your narrative  
in the world around us, and  
through the lives of your people.  
Help us to read the story  
of your presence  
in this time and place  
as we pray for our world.  
We pray for people who are hungry, for  
food, for meaning and for love.  
For the hungry earth,  
starved by our greedy consumerism.  
For communities who hunger  
for healing, justice and rebuilding.

**Help us to see you, Jesus,  
in the faces of the hungry  
and to offer what is needed  
in your name.**

We pray for people who thirst,  
for clean water, for a better life.  
For the parched earth,  
struggling with drought and disaster.  
For a world thirsty for hope,  
for the refreshment of peace.

**Help us to see you, Jesus,  
in the faces of the thirsty  
and to offer what is needed  
in your name.**

We pray for people who are lost,  
disconnected, estranged, isolated.  
For the land, ravaged  
by unsustainable farming practices.  
For nations torn apart, divided,  
strangers in the same land.

**Help us to see you, Jesus,  
in the faces of the stranger  
and to offer what is needed  
in your name.**

We pray for the vulnerable people,  
invisible, inadequately clothed.  
For the bare and stripped earth,  
soils blown away on the winds.  
For poorer countries,  
unable to house and clothe children.  
**Help us to see you, Jesus,  
in the faces of the naked  
and to offer what is needed  
in your name.**

We pray for people who are sick,  
in body, mind and soul.  
For the aching planet,  
groaning under changing skies.  
For ailing politics, failing to serve,  
harming and not helping all to thrive.  
**Help us to see you, Jesus,  
in the faces of the sick  
and to offer what is needed  
in your name.**

We pray for people incarcerated,  
locked in cells, imprisoned lives.  
For disappearing species  
entombed in hostile environments.  
For countries locked up in debt,  
slave to oppressive powers.  
**Help us to see you, Jesus,  
in the faces of the imprisoned  
and to offer what is needed  
in your name.**

Storyteller God,  
you write your narrative  
in the world around us, and  
through the lives of your people.  
Help us to read the story  
of your presence  
in this time and place  
as we make our way in your world.

*We pray the prayer Jesus taught his  
disciples.*

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### ***The Lord's Prayer***

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**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 trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

### ***Passing the peace***

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Think about an image of a bubbling fountain. This is the love God has for you. How might you share that image today?

### ***Offering***

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We offer our talents and our service. We offer our tithes and offerings. Use us for your Glory. In Christ we pray, Amen.

### ***Notices***

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Next week we begin our 'Everyday in Advent' series, offering a service of worship for each Sunday, and a devotion for each day of the following week. Your very own Shearwater Ministry Team Advent series at the beginning of a new liturgical year. Look out!

### ***Singing***

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Sent forth by God's blessing  
our true faith confessing  
the people of God

from his table take leave.  
The supper is ended:  
may now be extended  
the fruits of his service  
in all who believe.  
The seed of his teaching,  
our hungry souls reaching,  
shall blossom in action  
for all humankind.  
His grace shall incite us  
his love shall unite us  
to work for his kingdom  
his purpose to find.

With praise and thanksgiving  
to God ever-living  
the tasks of our everyday life  
we will face  
our faith ever sharing  
in love ever caring  
embracing as neighbours  
all those of each race.  
One feast that has fed us,  
one light that has led us,  
unite us as one in his life that we share.  
Then may all the living,  
with praise and thanksgiving,  
give honour to Christ  
and his name that we bear.

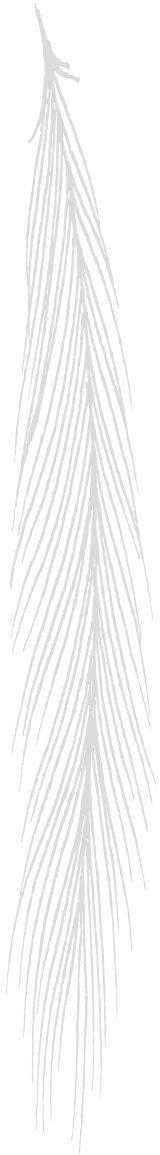
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### ***Re-Collection***

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Today, on 'Christ the King Sunday' we have been considering what kind of King and what kind of people we are under the Reign of Christ.

Who are "the least of these" in your community?  
Would you even know?  
How then might you live the Gospel this week in the Reign of Christ?



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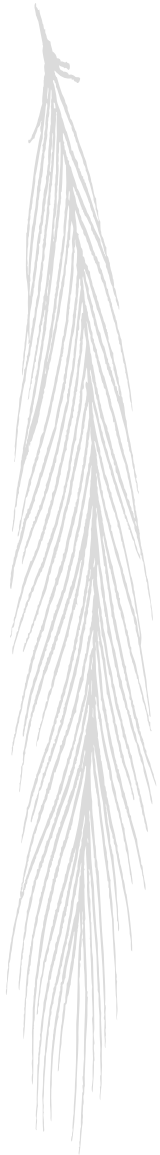
***Blessing***

I have heard of your faith and your love.  
I give thanks for you and pray for you.

I pray that God will give you a Spirit of  
wisdom and revelation.  
Go in peace to share it.

May the grace and love of God, the  
Trinity in relationship, walk with you.  
This day, and every day. Amen

*Shearwater Ministry Team:*  
Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson  
Rev. Jennie Gordon  
Rev. Ian Turnnidge



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