



St Leonard's Church Christ the King 22nd November 2020

"To be a Christian presence in the community, embodying God's love in all we say and do."

Revd Sue Burchell 01295 271008

Churchwardens: Jerry Lewis 01295 262854; Alison Brown 01295 367247

Verger: Liz Spittle 01295 254035

Today's Readings:

New Testament: *Ephesians 1:15-23*

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards 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.

Gospel: *Matthew 25:31-46*

Jesus said to his 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. 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, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 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, 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." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 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." 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?" Then he will answer 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." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

Points for Reflection

- As Christians, we put great stock in what we believe – Paul, in particular, repeatedly emphasises that we are saved through our faith, our belief in Jesus as Christ and Saviour. As such, the Church values ‘orthodoxy’ – right belief. But here, Christ the King exercises his judgement not on the beliefs of the nations in front of him but on their actions. Not so much orthodoxy as ‘orthopraxy’ – right action. And it is entirely unconscious, not expecting reward for those actions.
- When he rewards the ‘sheep’, the king says, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ These words from the end of Jesus’ teaching ministry (according to Matthew) echo those near the beginning, in the Beatitudes. They are like ‘bookends of blessing’. But the blessing extends to those who might not recognise themselves as being blessed, and are often not recognised by the world at large as being blessed. Christ’s kingdom clearly has a different value base.
- The story of the ‘sheep and goats’ has inspired practical engagement with social need down through the centuries, from John and Charles Wesley and the early Methodist ‘Holy Club’ at Oxford University, going out to visit prisons (very dangerous places in eighteenth-century England), through to Mateo 25 SoCal, a group of faith activists in Southern California, supporting undocumented immigrants and refugees in the face of a currently hostile US government policy. What is our practical engagement with social need?



There will be no services in church for the rest of November.

Regular online services are scheduled for Wednesdays 10am Morning Prayer; **Saturdays** 10am Morning Prayer; **Sundays** 10am Eucharist.

The church will be open on **Saturday mornings, from 10.30am to 12 noon**, for people to drop in for individual private prayer.

Salvation Army Christmas Toy Appeal: This year, we are not collecting toys for the Salvation Army, but would like to send a monetary donation instead. If you would like to contribute to this, you can drop a cheque off at (or post to) the vicarage, or pay directly into the church bank account. Please contact Revd Sue for bank details and mark payments ‘Toys’. Please send any monies by 1st December. Thank you in advance for your support.

Christmas at the Ridings: Could you write a Christmas poem to send some cheer to the residents at the Ridings? Sue Ayliff would be glad to receive poems from people of any age. Deadline is Sunday 12th December.

Children and Families work: The church needs people to do this work - is God calling you? Ideally a team of people with a co-ordinator is needed. Sue Ayliff will no longer be doing this work when the church reopens but she can offer support, training and resources. Please contact Sue to find out more at sueayliffchurchac@yahoo.co.uk

Ride and Stride: Thank you to all those who gave donations for this. The money we raised will be split 50-50 between OHCT and St Leonard’s Church.