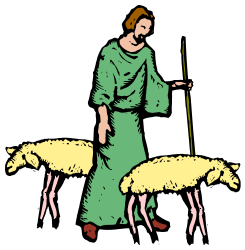
Cycle A – Feast of Christ the King – Nov. 22, 2026

"Come, inherit the Kingdom…."

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 23)



Leader: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

All: **The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.**
He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Leader: He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

All: **He leads me in right paths for his name's sake,**
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

Leader: I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.

All: **Amen.**

FIRST READING – Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

The prophet Ezekiel portrays God's kingship in terms of a shepherd. Shepherds are not the cleanest of folk and hardly wisdom figures. Shepherds rule their flock by the sound of their voice and by their care for each sheep. God's reign is all about relationships. Ezekiel's shepherd/flock metaphor is not about God herding us like dumb animals but rather God being totally committed to us. And as members of this flock we all stand in relationship to one another.

1. What word or phrase struck you from the reading of Ezekiel and how does it speak to your life?
2. How strongly is your sense of relationship with God connected to your sense of your relationship with others?

SECOND READING – 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

Paul's letter to the Corinthians portrays Christ as a conquering hero – a princely son who has overcome death and destroyed all the false and evil powers of the universe. Paul's imagery of Christ the King is that of the one who is over all. It is through Christ that all will be brought to God, "so that God may be all in all." Christ will hand over this kingdom to the Father.

1. What does this reading say to us here and now?
2. What forces in today's world do you consider to be enemies of Christ?
3. Paul at first thought that Jesus was coming back in his own lifetime – later he changed his mind. How should we think of the second coming of Christ?

GOSPEL READING – Matthew 25: 31-46

The Gospel of Matthew is the only place where Jesus is heard to associate the title of king to himself. But this king does not stand alone. His reign is in relationship to his Father to whom the kingdom is to be turned over. When all is subjected to the Son he will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him. Matthew portrays the Last Judgment with Christ as a prince who has freely become a pauper, disguising himself in the person of the least among us… the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the prisoner and the sick. This image of Kingship is a subverted image of a King.

1. God desires a deeper relationship with us. Are our lives changed as a result of becoming more aware of God's relationship to us?
2. Of what value is the local parish in helping us to become better followers of Christ?
3. Who is hungry, thirsty, in prison, in my relationships?
4. How does preoccupation with personal concerns take away from our relationships with others?
5. On what basis did the "goats" in this parable try to justify their actions?
6. "So, if I could interview the sheep lounging around in their recently inherited kingdom and ask them how they managed to find themselves in these excellent digs, I imagine them saying, "We just cared for every person we met, immediately, without calculation, and it was no big deal." *(On Earth as it is in Heaven, John Shea).* How calculating are we when it comes to caring for others?

LIVING THE WORD

God's challenge –in prayer, ask for the gift of an open heart to "see" Christ in those you find it hard to have patience for or to accept.

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: For those who suffer hunger and thirst– physically, emotionally, spiritually and for those who work in soup kitchens, food banks, outreach programs, and homeless shelters. We pray to the Lord.

(Invite personal intentions, ending with "Our Father…")

Concluding Prayer:

Leader: Father, merciful and ever-living God, you anointed Jesus Christ with the oil of gladness as the universal King claiming dominion over creation.

All: Help us to work at establishing your Kingdom on earth:

Leader: … A Kingdom of truth and life, holiness and grace, justice, love and peace.

All: Jesus, our good shepherd, we are among your lost sheep.
We acknowledge our failings. Have mercy on us.
Open our eyes to see you in each other and act without calculation. Amen.

Leader: Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.