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**SERMON – CHRIST THE KING****NOVEMBER 24, 2019****LUKE 23:33-43****“WHO’S YOUR KING?”**

*“Christ the King”* Sunday brings to a close what we call the church year. We begin anew next week when we enter Advent - a season of waiting for the birth of a savior. Some think it odd that Advent is preceded by a festival on which we read a seemingly “out of place” story. But visiting the story of our Lord’s death even as we start scouring our closets and attics to find the decorations needed to celebrate his birth, serves as a reminder of just what kind of Savior we celebrate and King we serve.

The seasons of the church – in order from first to last – are Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent/ Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost. Church “seasons” and their unique themes can teach us how to wait, celebrate, have expectations rise only to see them dashed, wait some more till new hopes emerge and thus enable us to celebrate again. I offer by way of illustration our nation’s *“now less than one year away”* election.

Next November someone will be elected president, usually for four years, though you can never be sure about that. Think about how you have felt after an election “didn’t go your way.” You might feel dejected, even fearful. Such a post-election season may feel much like the season of the church we call Lent with its themes of sorrow and suffering. In the season of Lent Christians are invited to participate in the sufferings of Christ, who prayed *“not my will but thine be done”* over a world that was not going God’s way. Come next November, your preferred candidate may not be president, but you must nonetheless consider, who is your King? Is he not the crucified Jesus – a servant whom the prophet Isaiah called *“a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?”*

Some of you after the next election will be encouraged. For you, the trajectory of our nation and perhaps even your life will remain, or again be, hopeful. Such a post-election season may feel very much like the season of the church we call Easter with its themes of life arising out of death and hope rekindled. Your preferred candidate is president – but you too must still consider, who is your King? Is he not the same Jesus – of whom at his Transfiguration a voice from heaven says *“this is my Son, listen to him”* – the Lord who through the Prophet Isaiah says *“my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

Post-election seasons by their very nature may be compared to the season of the church we call Epiphany – which means “revealing.” In Epiphany, we read stories that reveal Jesus as an altogether different kind of king than most people expected, or were comfortable with. We begin to hear the stories of Christ the healer of the sick, Christ the forgiver of sinners, Christ the defender of God’s eternal truth, Christ the challenger of human wisdom and customs, Christ the one who welcomes all in his name, Christ who receives by faith both rich and poor, privileged and

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powerless and commissions them together to bring the world to his throne – to the cross. This is your King.

Back to today however. We have set apart this Sunday for another purpose - to ask you to express your faith in gratitude. To the Kingdom we ask you to pledge yourselves, your time and your possessions – signs of our King’s gracious love. No matter who you voted for in our nation’s last election or like in the upcoming one, the higher calling to which our worship on Christ the King Sunday invites us to is the Kingdom of God - established through Jesus’ whose coronation was on a cross - of which this congregation is a visible sign.

This Kingdom calls forth your support. In a few minutes you’ll rise and make a statement of faith – by that I mean you’ll make your offerings. Giving is a confession of faith – stewardship is everything we do after we say, *“I believe in God the Father Almighty...I believe in Jesus Christ God’s only Son our Lord...I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church...”* Our nation, which we all love, asks us to pursue a common good – liberty and justice for all. The church, which we all love, calls us to a common pursuit – the fulfilling of Christ’s Great Commission. Your giving endorses that commission and our congregation’s participation in it. Your giving is an act of gratitude that releases the resources God has placed at your disposal for a great and happy task.

Think of it this way - your commitments and giving are a “ballot” of sorts – the result of which is a clear statement of who your King is. AMEN