

**22 Nov 2020**

**Worship Sheet for Sunday 22 November – Served and serving**

This week is the last in the Christian year before we begin again with Advent next week. Traditionally, we focus on “Christ the King” but it’s important to remember what sort of king we have – a servant King. We are answerable to God but in Christ we have no need to fear though we are called to serve too.

**Call:** Lord, the passage with the sheep and goats can cause us to fear; Remind us that you forgive us in Jesus your Son. Lord, you are our King; but a king who loves and serves. Lord, your forgiveness is free in Jesus; though you call us to serve you and our neighbours out of loving response.

**Pray** Lord, we live in a world where people love to lord it over others and set themselves up as superior. If truth be told we are not immune from such faults. As we consider your position as Lord of lords and King of kings remind us of your humility and readiness to serve, even at great cost. Come among us we pray and really make us able to be at home with you and your purposes. Forgive us all our faults; forgive us our refusal to engage in working out our faith in joyful service. Dwell in us by your Spirit so that we may practice what we preach, love and serve generously and align ourselves with your loving purposes so that we may be whole and holy people and that our attitude and actions may foster love and service in others and bring glory to your name, for the sake of Jesus who taught us to pray together saying: Our Father...

**Read** Ephesians 1:15-23 Christ’s authority (also refs to Matthew 25 Sheep and Goats)

**Thought** Kings then were regarded as all powerful rulers having an absolute right to exercise authority over all their subjects. Some were reasonable, but many were not – and there was little anyone could do if they got on the wrong side of them. The temptation is that our view of God is influenced by this less than healthy portrayal of the absolute ruler who may act irrationally or at a whim. Sadly, there is still evidence of leaders who exhibit such tendencies. The story of the sheep and goats and the big division is apt to scare esp in if the one making the decision is seen to be fanciful. The Ephesians passage, and indeed much of the New Testament, certainly portrays Christ as ruler over all, but as one who is full of grace and truth, whose life and attitudes are full of mercy and characterised with love. There is no ogre in heaven who condemns anyone on a whim. God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who gave his life out of love that we might be forgiven and restored to loving fellowship with him and all who love him. Our acceptance is based on his grace. That does not give us the right to do as we like; there is an obligation to live out his love in practice and we need to heed that and draw power from his Spirit to engage in loving service. But the Christian faith is good news and while we should remember that we are answerable to God we need to hold fast to our faith in Jesus his Son and live out of his grace

**Praise** MP 366 Jesus is King v 1-3.

**Pray** Heavenly Father, so many people in the world have cause to fear and this year even more so. Yet, your Son came to bring peace and perfect love casts out fear. Help us to face up to the risks that face us – individually and together in the world – of covid yes, but also worries about climate, about conflict, about justice and peace, about how we might learn to live together in spite of so much that divides. Help us to play our part in promoting the love and acceptance of Jesus – not only in what we say but also in how we live. May Jesus’ love dispel people’s fear of one another, of events, of the future, even of eternity. May the peace that passes all understanding still hearts and minds and work a miracle of grace. We give thanks for the initial positive reports of a vaccine but pray on. Today, we ask a particular blessing on all whose lives have been disproportionately affected by the virus and/or the restrictions – we pray for mental health concerns to be taken seriously and for all of us to be aware of the pressures we are all under and seek help when we need it. Locally, we bring to you those under particular pressure and perhaps feeling weary and in our prayer walk this week we remember those who live or work in Panmure Place, Row and Street.

SILENCE

Lord hear our prayers spoken and unspoken and answer them for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen Blessing May the Lord bless you. Amen.