
November 26, 2023

Reign of Christ
Proper 29
Year A

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24

Psalm 100

Ephesians 1:15–23

Matthew 25:31–46

SELECTED READING

Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 100:1–2

Make a joyful noise, all the Earth.

We rejoice with all creation!

Worship Holy One with gladness.

We give thanks with all creation!

Come into God’s presence with singing!

We sing with all creation!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God, our shepherd, hear our prayer:

be present with us, our comfort, our guide.

Holy One, be our shepherd still and again
through the care we offer each other. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy One,

we hear ‘God is our shepherd’

and expect you to take care of everything.

We are sorry for being lazy,
irresponsible, ungrateful.

You are our shepherd,

as we are shepherds for each other.

We hear ‘God sends shepherds’

and expect our leaders to take care of everything.

We are sorry for taking more
than we give and for not sharing the task of caring.

You, Holy One, send us shepherds,

and send us to be shepherds for each other.

We hear ‘God calls us to shepherd’
and wonder where all the sheep have gone.
We are sorry for misunderstanding paradox
and life; that we are both from time to time.
You call us as shepherds *and* sheep:
**we will care, we will receive care
for and from each other.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God calls and sends particular shepherds
to serve and model care,
and God calls us to care,
to nurture, to seek, to carry,
in short, to love each other.
Because God loves us and trusts us
to follow God’s lead, our Holy Shepherd,
welcoming us home,
sheep and shepherds,
cared for and caring,
loved and loving.
Live into that welcome, healing, and trust,
and be at peace. Amen.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

Psalm 100:3–5

Know that Holy One is God.

It is God who made us.

It is God to whom we belong:

we are Holy One’s people.

Holy One is our shepherd;

we belong to the flock of Holy One.

Holy One is good;

Holy love endures forever.

Holy One is faithful –

faithful to all generations.

Enter God’s presence with thanksgiving;

we come with our praise and thanks.

Give thanks to Holy One.

We give thanks and bless the holy name. Amen.

DISCIPLESHIP THOUGHT

The verses we hear from Ezekiel 34 bring before us again the image of God as shepherd, and anointing and charging shepherds among humans. For those of Christian faith, Jesus embodies this shepherdness of God and is, simultaneously, the epitome of the called/sent/anointed shepherds.

Ordained ministers wear stoles in some traditions as a symbol of the yoke of

Christ, the mantle of, in part, such shepherdness. But the clergy are not the only ones charged with the caring, feeding, guarding, and guiding of the flock. Clergy do this with and to empower *all disciples* to take on a posture of deep care for one another, reflecting Jesus, reflecting the long history of ‘shepherds’ of holy flocks: reflecting our ultimate shepherd, Holy One.

How are the set-apart shepherds in your flock encouraging and equipping shepherding practices for each other? How are you sending shepherds – carers, nurturers, protectors, and guides – into the wider community with such loving presence as we experience from our Holy Shepherd shown to all wherever we go?

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

As our Holy Shepherd feeds us, so we share to feed those hungry.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God our shepherd,
you bless us with your trust,
inviting us not only to be your sheep,
welcomed into belonging but also sent
as shepherds, each to each charged
to embody your love, nurture, and care.
May we enact care,
nurture, and love for a world in need. Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Pause and or name situations of concern. You might invite people to speak about situations of concern in response to each prayer or prepare your own words to speak into those spaces. Alternatively, you might open the prayer with an invitation to pray in the silences held throughout.

We hear your voice resound
through the generations with promise.

**O Holy One, may your promises
come true in, for, through us today:**

We hear your promise for rescue:
may rescue come for the vulnerable today. *Pause*

We hear your promise to feed:
may food reach those hungry today. *Pause*

We hear your promise for rest:
may rest come to the weary today. *Pause*

We hear your promise to bring home the lost:
may home become a reality for those lost today. *Pause*

We hear your promise for justice:
may justice come for the oppressed today. *Pause*

We hear your promise for a shepherd:
may shepherds care for their flocks today. *Pause*

We hear your voice resound
through the generations with promise.

**O Holy One, may your promises
come true in, for, through us today. Amen.**

COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

God seeks out God's sheep;
God sends shepherds to watch and lead;
God calls the sheep to shepherd, too.
Go, then, to receive and to give
the care of our Holy Shepherd,
and may you know God's presence
with you and through each other. Amen.

HYMNS

Reign of Christ Sunday

Come, thou long-expected Jesus TiS.272

(adapted words by Sarah Agnew in *Pray the Story* (2019))

O for a world where everyone respects NCH.575

Jesus Christ is waiting TiS.665

Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24

All the sleepy should have a place to sleep TiS.697

Almighty God, lift up our eyes TiS.615

Gather us in TiS.474

Psalms 100

Come all you people/*Uyai mose* ATW.419

Halle halle halle TiS.720

Jubilate Deo Taizé ATA.107

Jubilate Servite / Raise a song of gladness Taizé TiS.731

Make a joyful noise ATFG.517

Ephesians 1:15–23

Bring many names beautiful and good TiS.182

O Christ the great foundation NCH.387

The church's one foundation TiS.457 AHB.385

The kingdom of God is justice and peace Taizé

This is a day of new beginnings TiS.653

Matthew 25:31–46

Inspired by love and anger TiS.674 AHB.559

Like a candle D W.p. 144 ATFG 582

When I needed a neighbour were you there TiS.629