Glebe-St. James United Church

Reign of Christ **November 22, 2026**

Please note: the livestream camera only captures the chairs at the front of the church. Sitting in the pews or at the back will keep you off camera. During the theme conversation, only the backs of children's heads are shown. – The Worship Team

Gathered by God

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

"Gloria"

Welcome

In the name of the Holy Mystery,
who is Wholly Love,
we welcome you to Creator's House.

Good morning and welcome, everyone, to our worship service at Glebe-St. James United Church in downtown Ottawa on this Reign of Christ Sunday, November 22nd.

My name is x and I am …

We're so glad you're here today. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a longtime member, whether you are joining us in person or online, we hope you feel at home. Please remember to wear a name tag if you are here in person – it's so much easier to feel part of a community when we can greet each other by name. Name tags are available at the entrances to the sanctuary.

We are an Affirming Community of Faith in the United Church of Canada - a place of faith, love and community. You are welcome in our sanctuary. If you are looking for a place where your soul can breathe, sit back and listen to the inspirational music. If you are looking for community and connection, this is a place of acceptance, friendship and support. If you are looking for somewhere where you can make a difference in your community, this is a place where you can help to feed those struggling to make ends meet. We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities feel loved and supported. Thank you for being here.

Announcements

Glebe-St. James 2026 Advent Book Study starts Tuesday, November 24th, 7 – 8 pm on zoom. We will be using the book "The Wall Between". Revised and Updated Edition. Raja G. Khouri and Jeffrey J. Wilkinson. Olive Branch Press. Zoom link will be sent out Monday evening, so please don't forget to sign up.

This morning, we welcome Spencer Lombardi, a student at Canterbury High School. Spencer will be doing some recordings in the Sanctuary following today's service. Please bring your belongings with you to coffee time and exit via the Lyon Street doors if you are able. Thank you Spencer for sharing your musical talents with us this morning.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the bazaar a success. You are invited to browse through Fraser Hall following worship this morning to see what bargains can be had.

Land Acknowledgement Edith Gardell

Today is National Housing Day.

We are facing another Ottawa winter and around 3,000 persons in Ottawa are homeless. The latest available data mention over 30% of them as Indigenous and their percentage in the population is only around 4%. Many do not self-identify for fear of being ostracised by the community.

Yet, we in Ottawa have reason to celebrate today. In a concerted effort with multiple faith groups, the Multifaith Housing Initiative has secured the land and worked collaboratively to realize the Odenak ("community") project to help decrease homelessness in Ottawa. The United Church of Canada plays a major part of this effort and has worked tirelessly to support the building of the slim two Odenak towers beside the new National Library building. The project will have 608 units, of which 41% will be rented under market value. 133 units are owned and maintained by the MHI and in 30 units Indigenous persons will find new dignified lives with wrap-around services and culturally appropriate living conditions. From the beginning the work took place in continuous consultations with our Algonquin Anishinaabeg neighbours and with first-class architects and experts in accessible carbon-neutral living.

The MHI committed to $ 72.6 m and the goal of our Capital Campaign 'United We Dream" is $ 1.6m. The UCC is a major donor through the United Church Foundation, the Regional Council and through many local congregations, including our GSJ faith community. I specifically mention our own Marily Hamilton, a strong advocate for the MHI. Many congregations held successful fundraising events, including the 2025 educational series with the Odenak architects and multiple solo and choir benefit concerts.

To fully provide for 30 Indigenous family units, with understanding and respect for their ancient heritage, seems like a small dent in the midst of the many adversities that our Indigenous brothers and sisters encounter on a daily basis. However, it is another small step on the path from Truth to Reconciliation in this part of the unceded and never surrendered Algonquin territory.

United We Dream - Multifaith Housing Initiative.

Candle Lighting Live Into Hope VU 699

Live into hope of captives freed
from chains of fear or want or greed.
God now proclaims our full release
to faith and hope and joy and peace.

Call to Worship

Let us celebrate this day.
Christ reigns!
This is a day to declare:
Christ reigns!
In the light of Christ, the powers of the world are shown false.
Christ reigns!
In the light of Christ, even death holds no sway.
Christ reigns!
Christ reigns!
Hallelujah! Christ reigns!

Hymn Make A Joyful Noise VU 820

Refrain

Make a joyful noise all the earth!
Worship your God with gladness.
Make a joyful noise all the earth.
Come to this place with a song!

1 **Know that your God has made you.**
Know it's to God we belong.
And come to this place with joyfulness and praise.
Worship your God with a song! R

2 **Enter these gates, thanks giving.**
Enter these courts with praise.
Sing thanks to your God and bless the holy Name.
Worship your God with a song! R

3 **Ages through endless ages,**
seasons of endless years,
the love of our Maker ever shall endure.
Worship your God with a song! R

Opening Prayer

Loving and compassionate God,
as we gather in worship, open our hearts to the presence of Christ among us.

Help us to see beyond the familiar, to recognize the sacred in one another, and to notice those who are too often overlooked.

May our worship inspire us to live with greater compassion, to seek justice, to welcome generously, and to share the gifts we have been given.

May the spirit of Christ guide our thoughts, our words and our actions, today and throughout the week ahead. Amen.

Prayer for Healing

Dear God, we come before you on this Reign of Christ Sunday to celebrate the end of one liturgical year and the dawning of the next one. We admit that we have disregarded "end times" that lie ahead in our own lives and in this world.

Despite their inevitability, we limit our focus to accumulating material things and count this as the measure of success.

Alpha and Omega, we forget your mysterious and majestic nature. You created the heavens and the earth and only you know when they began and when they will end. Despite our fear of endings, you, O God, remain our refuge and strength.

Let us remember that although mountains shake, waters roar and foam, and nations are in an uproar, you are there, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

Help us to shift our priorities and consider the end times in all their mystery and uncertainty. For, as people of God, we can rest assured that while heaven and earth will pass away, your presence will never pass away. For this we give thanks as we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Assurance of God's Love

Despite our naivety, God's presence with us is steadfast; despite our possessiveness, Jesus reminds us to focus on those around us; and despite our oblivious nature, the small still voice of God reminds us of what is truly important: caring for God's children and for Creation.

We are a forgiven and beloved people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Sign of Peace

Hymn Shout for Joy! *(Verse 4)* VU 482

Praise the Maker, praise the Maker's Son,
praise the Spirit, three yet ever one;
praise the God whose food and friends avow
heaven starts here! The kingdom beckons now!

Theme Conversation We Show God's Love by Caring for Others

Good morning, everyone!
Today is a special Sunday in the church. We call it Reign of Christ Sunday.
Can you tell me what a king or queen might wear?
(Pause for answers.)
Perhaps a crown? A beautiful robe?
Maybe they sit on a big, fancy chair called a throne!

But Jesus tells us something surprising about what it means to be a king.
Jesus says that the most important thing isn't having a crown or being powerful.
The most important thing is loving and caring for other people.

I wonder what that might look like?

Jesus tells a story about people who helped others.

Let's see if we can think of some ways we can help!

Take the piece of bread
Jesus said, "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat."
What could we do if someone was hungry?
(Pause for answers.)
Share our snack or help give food to someone who needs it.

Take out the little cup.
Jesus said, "I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink."
What could we do if someone was thirsty?
(Pause for answers.)
We could bring them a glass of water!

Take out the scarf or sweater.

Jesus said, "I needed clothes, and you gave me something to wear."
What could we do if someone was cold?
(Pause for *answers.)*

Take out the paper heart.

And Jesus said something else.
He said, "When you helped someone who needed help, you were helping me!"
Isn't that wonderful?

Where do we find Jesus?

Now, here's a question.
Where do you think we can find Jesus?
(Pause for answers. Children may say church, heaven, or in the Bible.)

Yes, we can think about Jesus here in church, and we hear stories about Jesus in the Bible.

But Jesus tells us that we can also find him when we care for other people.
When we share, we show love.
When we help, we show love.
When we include someone who is lonely or left out, we show love.
When we are kind to someone who is sad, we show love.
And every time we show love, we are sharing God's love with the world.

Let's try something together!

I'll say, "When someone needs help..."
You say, "We can show love!"
Let's practice!

When someone is hungry...
We can show love!
When someone is lonely...
We can show love!
When someone needs a friend...
We can show love!

And when someone needs a hug…
We can show love!
Wonderful!

Repeat-after-me prayer
Let's put our hands together and say a little prayer.

Dear God,
thank you for loving us.
Help us to share.
Help us to care.
Help us to be kind.
Help us to welcome everyone.
And help us show your love,
Every day and everywhere.
Amen.

Hymn O, When the Saints

O, when the saints go marching in,
O, when the saints go marching in.
Lord, I want to be in that number
when the saints go marching in.

O when the sun begins to shine,
O when the sun begins to shine.
O, I want to be in that number
when the sun begins to shine.

O, when the saints go marching in,
O, when the saints go marching in.
Lord, I want to be in that number,
when the saints go marching in.

Listening for Wisdom

Prayer for Wisdom

God of wisdom and understanding,
As we listen to the words of scripture, help us hear more than a familiar story. Open our minds to new possibilities and our hearts to the challenges of your teaching.

Give us the wisdom to recognize Christ in the hungry, the lonely, the stranger and the vulnerable. Help us understand that faith is not simply what we believe, but how we live, how we love, and how we care for one another.

May your wisdom guide us toward greater compassion, deeper understanding and a more just and generous world. Amen.

Scripture Matthew 25:31-46 David Brown

"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 who 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 brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who 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."

This is wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

Gift of Music

Violin solo: "Abendlied" performed by Spencer Lombardi

Reflection Where We Find Christ Rev Dr Teresa Burnett-Cole

There is something rather surprising about the way Jesus describes the Reign of God in today's Gospel reading.

We might expect a story about a great king sitting on a magnificent throne, surrounded by splendour and power. We might expect a celebration of authority, a demonstration of strength, or a declaration of victory over all those who have opposed him.

After all, today is Reign of Christ Sunday. It is the last Sunday of the Christian year, the Sunday when we proclaim Christ as the one whose vision and values shape our lives and our world.

But Jesus gives us a very different picture of what it means to reign.
There is a throne, yes. There is a gathering of nations. There is a king, and there is a separation of people.

But the surprising thing is what the king uses to determine who belongs where.
Not wealth.
Not power.
Not religious credentials.
Not how often someone attended worship.
Not how many prayers they offered or how well they knew their scripture.

Instead, the king asks a very different set of questions:
Did you feed the hungry?
Did you offer water to someone who was thirsty?
Did you welcome the stranger?
Did you provide clothing for someone who needed it?
Did you care for the sick?
Did you visit those who were imprisoned?

In other words, how did you treat the people who needed you?

And then comes the extraordinary declaration:
"Just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me."

It is a remarkable understanding of kingship. It is a remarkable understanding of faith. And it is a remarkable understanding of where we encounter God.

A very different kind of king

In the world of Jesus, kings were generally associated with power, privilege, wealth and control. They lived in palaces, surrounded by servants. They expected others to bow before them. Their authority was demonstrated through their ability to command.

But Jesus turns that image upside down.

The king in this story identifies not with the wealthy, the powerful or the privileged, but with those who are hungry, thirsty, homeless, sick, imprisoned and excluded.

The king is found among those who are most easily overlooked.
This is the heart of the Christian understanding of the Reign of Christ.

Christ does not reign through domination, intimidation or force. Christ reigns through compassion, justice, mercy and love.

And that is a very different kind of kingdom from the ones human beings have often tried to build.

It is a kingdom where the measure of a society is not how wealthy its richest members have become, but how well it cares for those who are struggling.

It is a kingdom where human dignity is not determined by someone's income, nationality, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, social standing or usefulness to society.

It is a kingdom where no one is disposable, no one is forgotten, and no one is beyond the reach of compassion.

For a progressive Christian community, this is an important distinction.

We are not simply called to be kind individuals who occasionally do something generous. We are called to participate in creating a world that reflects God's justice and compassion.
That means looking beyond individual acts of charity to the systems and structures that create hunger, poverty, homelessness, discrimination and exclusion in the first place.

Feeding someone who is hungry matters enormously. So does asking why people are hungry in a country with so much abundance.

Welcoming a stranger matters. So does examining the policies and attitudes that make newcomers feel unwelcome.

Caring for someone who is sick matters. So does advocating for a society in which everyone has access to the care they need.

The Reign of Christ invites us to do both: to respond to immediate human need and to work toward a world in which fewer people are left in need.

The surprise of recognition

There is another fascinating detail in this passage.

Neither the sheep nor the goats seem to recognize Christ in the people they encounter.

Both groups ask essentially the same question:
"When did we see you?"

The sheep are surprised to discover that when they fed someone who was hungry, they were feeding Christ.

When they welcomed a stranger, they were welcoming Christ.

When they visited someone who was sick or imprisoned, they were visiting Christ.

They hadn't been looking for Jesus. They hadn't been consciously trying to earn God's approval. They had simply responded to the needs of the people around them.

And perhaps that is the most important part of this story.

We do not always recognize the sacredness of the person standing before us.

Sometimes we are so caught up in our own lives, our own concerns, our own schedules and our own assumptions that we fail to see the human being in front of us.

We see a homeless person rather than someone with a story, a history, hopes and dreams.

We see a newcomer rather than a neighbour who may be frightened, lonely or struggling to find a place to belong.
We see someone who is different from us rather than someone who shares our fundamental longing to be loved, respected and accepted.

Jesus challenges us to look again.

What if the person we are tempted to overlook is precisely where we are most likely to encounter Christ?

What if the face of Christ is reflected in the person who needs our compassion, in the person whose story makes us uncomfortable, or in the person whose experience of the world is very different from our own?

This passage asks us to reconsider where we expect to find God.

Perhaps God is not only found in sanctuaries, in beautiful music, in familiar prayers or in the words of scripture.
Perhaps God is also found in the food bank line, in the hospital room, at the shelter, at the border, in the prison visiting room, and in the quiet loneliness of someone who feels forgotten.

Perhaps Christ is waiting to be recognized in the people we encounter every day.

The least of these

The phrase "the least of these" has sometimes been used to describe people who are poor or vulnerable.

But we need to be careful about how we hear those words.

Jesus is not suggesting that some people are worth less than others. Quite the opposite.

He is challenging the way society assigns value to human beings.

The people whom society considers least important are, in God's eyes, worthy of particular attention.

And this has profound implications for how we live our faith.

It means that we cannot separate our love of God from our concern for the world.

We cannot proclaim Christ as Lord while ignoring the suffering of our neighbours.

We cannot celebrate the Reign of Christ while remaining indifferent to racism, poverty, violence, environmental destruction or the ongoing injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples.

We cannot speak of God's love while creating barriers that exclude people because of who they are or whom they love.

For those of us who are part of a progressive United Church community, this means that our commitment to inclusion must be more than words on a banner or a statement on a website.

It must be visible in how we welcome people, how we listen, how we share resources, how we make decisions, and how we stand alongside those whose voices have too often been ignored.

It means recognizing that the work of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is not finished.

It means understanding that affirming 2SLGBTQIA+ people requires more than saying everyone is welcome. It means standing against discrimination and ensuring that everyone can participate fully and safely.

It means caring for creation, because the effects of environmental destruction are experienced most harshly by those who have the fewest resources to protect themselves.

It means recognizing that justice and compassion are not optional additions to Christian faith. They are at its very heart.

Christ's reign begins here

There is something else worth noticing about this Gospel reading.
Jesus is speaking about the ultimate fulfilment of God's purposes. There is a sense of final judgment, of a time when the truth of human choices will become clear.

But the invitation is not simply to worry about some future day of reckoning.

The invitation is to live differently now.

The Reign of Christ is not just something we wait for. It is something we help bring about.

Every time we choose compassion over indifference, we make room for God's reign.

Every time we welcome someone who has been excluded, we make room for God's reign.

Every time we challenge injustice, share what we have, speak up for someone whose voice is not being heard, or offer companionship to someone who is lonely, we make room for God's reign.

And sometimes these actions are quite ordinary.
A meal shared.
A telephone call made.
A visit offered.
A stranger welcomed.
A child encouraged.
A person listened to without judgment.
A neighbour treated with dignity.

These may not seem like particularly grand or heroic acts.
But perhaps that is precisely the point.

The Reign of Christ is not built through grand gestures of power. It grows through countless small acts of love, justice and compassion.

And when those acts become part of who we are as individuals and as a community, something remarkable happens.

The world begins to look a little more like the world God dreams for us.

What kind of reign will we choose?

Today, as we mark the end of the Christian year, we are invited to reflect on the kind of world we are helping to create.

We live in a time when power is often celebrated, when political and economic success can be measured in wealth and influence, and when fear and division can seem easier to cultivate than understanding and compassion.

Against that backdrop, the Gospel offers us a very different vision.

It reminds us that greatness is measured by generosity.

Leadership is measured by service.
Faith is measured by love in action.
And Christ is found among those who need our care.

The question before us is not simply whether we believe in Christ as King.

It is whether we are willing to live according to the values of the one whose reign is founded on love.

Are we willing to build communities where everyone belongs?

Are we willing to challenge the injustices that leave people hungry, homeless, excluded or afraid?

Are we willing to see Christ in people whose lives and experiences are different from our own?

And are we willing to recognize that the work of creating a more compassionate and just world belongs to all of us?

Perhaps the most challenging part of this passage is that Jesus does not ask us to look for him in some distant, heavenly place.

He asks us to look around.

To notice.
To care.
To respond.

And to discover that in caring for one another, we are already participating in the Reign of Christ.

So, as we bring this Christian year to a close, may we remember that the measure of Christ's reign is not the power we possess, but the love we share. May we be a community that feeds the hungry, welcomes the stranger, stands with the vulnerable, challenges injustice, and celebrates the dignity of every person.

May we be a people who recognize Christ not only in the bread and wine of our worship, but in the faces of our neighbours and in the lives of those the world too often overlooks.

For this is the kingdom Jesus proclaimed.
This is the reign of love.
And this is the world we are called to help create.
Amen.

Responding in Thanksgiving

Hymn Christ Has No Body Now but Yours MV 171

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours.
Here on this earth, yours is the work,
to serve with the joy of compassion.

1. **No hands but yours to heal the wounded world,**
   no hands but yours to soothe all its suffering,
   no touch but yours to bind the broken hope
   of the people of God.

2. **No eyes but yours to see as Christ would see,**
   to find the lost, to gaze with compassion;
   no eyes but yours to glimpse the holy joy
   of the city of God.

refrain

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours.
Here on this earth, yours is the work,
to serve with the joy of compassion.

3. **No feet but yours to journey with the poor,**
   to walk this world with mercy and justice.
   Yours are the steps to build a lasting peace
   for the children of God.

4. **Through ev'ry gift, give back to those in need;**
   as Christ has blessed, so now be his blessing,
   with ev'ry gift a benediction, be
   to the people of God.

Invitation to Give

On this Reign of Christ Sunday, we are reminded that Christ's kingdom is not built through power or privilege, but through compassion, generosity and love. Each time we share what we have, support someone in need, or work toward a more just and caring world, we help make that vision real.

Our offering is one expression of that commitment. Through our gifts, we support the life and ministry of this congregation and extend our care beyond these walls.

Let us give with grateful hearts, remembering that what we share can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Offering Hymn Shout for Joy! *(Verse 4)* VU 482

Praise the Maker, praise the Maker's Son,
praise the Spirit, three yet ever one;
praise the God whose food and friends avow
heaven starts here! The kingdom beckons now!

Offering Prayer

Generous and loving God,
we bring these gifts with gratitude for all that we have received.

Bless the money, the time, the talents and the caring that are offered here today.

May these gifts become food for the hungry, welcome for the stranger, comfort for those who are lonely, hope for those who are struggling, and strength for those working for justice and peace.

May our giving reflect the values of Christ's reign, where compassion is stronger than indifference, generosity overcomes greed, and every person is treated with dignity and love.

Bless these gifts and bless us, that together we may help create the world you dream for all creation. Amen.

Prayers of the People Jesus Remember Me VU 148

Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.

Prayer of Jesus

Our Mother and Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Sent by the Spirit

Hymn Jesus Christ Is Waiting VU 117

1 **Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets;**
no one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.
***Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.**
Make me, friend or stranger, fit to wait on you.

2 **Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets,**
where injustice spirals and real hope retreats.
***Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too.**
In the Kingdom's causes let me rage with you.

3 **Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets;**
curing those who suffer, touching those he greets.
***Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too.**
Let my care be active, healing just like you.

4 **Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets,**
where each sign of hatred he, with love, defeats.
***Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too.**
On suspicion's graveyard let me dance with you.

5 **Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,**
'Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet.'
***Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.**
Walk one step before me; I will follow you.

Sending Forth

As we leave this time of worship today,
remember Christ's reign of justice and compassion
is carried out into the world in us, through human love.
May we be people of peace and justice, now and always. Amen.

Sung Amen VU 968

Music for the Journey

"Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds" (LASST UNS ERFREUEN)

End of Worship | Beginning of Service

Thank you to those who have joined us this morning for worship.
We invite those here to join us in Fraser Hall, follow the service, for a time of fellowship & refreshments.

Musical Acknowledgements

- This week's gift of music and offering music are from Joseph Rheinberger's "Six Pieces for Violin and Organ," a Romantic chamber work composed in 1887. Spencer Lombardi is a Canterbury High School student.
- The organ prelude is an adaptation by George Blake of the choral work "Gloria" from Twelfth Mass, originally misattributed to W.A. Mozart, now believed to have been composed by Wenzel Muller.
- The organ postlude is an arrangement by Canadian-born composer, organist and novelist James Mansfield (1927-2018) of LASST UNS ERFREUEN, a tune found in Voices United as "All Creatures of Our God And King."

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