

11/24/19

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you
O Lord.

Today is the last Sunday after Pentecost. It is the end of our Liturgical year. The Church Season *after* Pentecost can last up to 28 weeks long. It is the longest stretch in the Church year. The Last Sunday after Pentecost is also known as Ordinary Time. So we are here today to attend to the last day of Ordinary Time - this year.

As “The Holiday Season” started poking ads and music our way – (and it seems to me this happens the very instant that the Last Trick-or-Treater has swept the neighborhood) - earlier and earlier each year. It is easy to gloss over this time – the many “After Pentecost string of Sundays” – It is a long haul and can become a bit routine. And it sits just before some of the very favorite Seasons to come.

I really think that the “Holiday Season” should start the very moment our own perfect Saint Andrews Bazaar throws open our doors. It was a bit of a challenge to work this into today’s Readings – but suffice it to commend all on excellent work for another stellar Church Bazaar – a tribute to the spirit of participation we celebrate here.

Another of the Blessings here is the very stalwart Lutheran presence at Saint Andrews. I notice it not just because Janet Downes grew up as a member of the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Brookfield (hers was one of the founding families of that Church). Our sometimes substitute Priest Mark , was the Pastor of the Prince of Peace Church for almost two decades. Our brother in worship Mark Hanley grew up around the corner from Prince of Peace, as did Peter Messer . I know of several members of our Congregation who provide us with that strong, even stoic Lutheran presence – which is characterized by service to others.

Today is also known as Christ the King Sunday. Perhaps a more celebrated Feast Day in the Lutheran and Roman Catholic traditions than in the Episcopal Service. Christ the King Sunday is a joyful day of proclamation and tribute to the Kingdom of Christ. We celebrate that the Kingdom of Christ is known to us.

The Third Reading today (usually read by a priest and referred to as the Gospel), is the Lesson according to Luke of Christ's Crucifixion. Christ's torture on the Cross – and we are holding a Feast day of celebration? On this day we are invited to look back and remember what we have learned about Jesus and our faith over the past year. Christ promises salvation as he is on the Cross is to a fellow prisoner also being crucified. Christ is not on some elegant throne. He is on a Cross, his a crown of thorns. He is alongside a fellow prisoner sentenced to death. No gilded touched in this Kingdom. Christ is saying that salvation is for us – for anyone regardless. We are challenged once again claim Jesus as Lord and Savior.

It is said that Christ was 33 years old when he was Crucified, died and was buried. He rose again from the dead. I claim absolutely no resemblance to Christ the King. But it is not lost on me that I spent my 33rd birthday in the Rhinebeck Lodge for Successful Living - the ironic name of a Center for recovery from alcoholism. It was a time of hopelessness and some desperation for me in many ways. I do very much claim the kinship with Jesus' fellow prisoner who pleads to Jesus for salvation. The result of my pleas and prayers brought me here – a path for which I had lost hope and in fact had longed for. Forgiveness, Salvation, Reconciliation are here for us. That is Christ's Kingdom.

One of the things that I have come to know is that the way Christ rules is through people. His is not a Royalty ruling OVER people. Christ the King is the power of Faith that works through people – with people. Today Christ the King Sunday celebrates that Kingdom of Christ.

We are all in that Ordinary Time. Our beloved Priest and friend has retired – interestingly to a place very close to the Prince of Peace Church. It is noticeable that Roger's departure leaves us in that Ordinary Time - the time before Advent.

I do want to emphasize that part of Christ's Kingdom is here at Saint Andrews. This is a piece of God that I cherish. I like the buildings they are truly wonderful - as are our grounds and our furnishings. I *cherish* the commitment in Christ that we *all* participate in here - Christ's Kingdom.

Let us celebrate our Faith, and also what is in store for us in the Seasons to come. Let us offer our prayers to those who will lead Saint Andrews through our coming Seasons of change.

When Christ says “forgive them Father they know not what they do,” it is his final earthly act of Forgiveness. If there is any element of sin in the way we live our lives, we must walk toward forgiveness. I believe that no one sets out to live in a sinful way. Sin is the way of the world. Sin is in search of takers.

Forgiveness is the way of Christ. Forgiveness is not always easy. Often it is not tied in a pretty bow. It is my experience that it usually does not lead to perfection - but forgiveness and reconciliation leads to Peace, freedom and love.

May the end of Ordinary Time be good to you – to all of us. I bid a very fine Christ the King Sunday to you all!! I hope we can take a cue from our Lutheran Sisters and Brothers in faith. May we all celebrate like a Lutheran today! God Bless.