

Last Sunday after Pentecost: Christ the King Sunday, November 22, 2020

The Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Track 1 & Track 2 Old Testament: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 read from the Christian Standard Bible

11 “For this is what the Lord God says: See, I myself will search for my flock and look for them. 12 As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he is among his scattered flock, so I will look for my flock. I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and total darkness. 13 I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own soil. I will shepherd them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the land. 14 I will tend them in good pasture, and their grazing place will be on Israel’s lofty mountains. There they will lie down in a good grazing place; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will tend my flock and let them lie down. This is the declaration of the Lord God. 16 I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the injured, and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will shepherd them with justice.

20 “Therefore, this is what the Lord God says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Since you have pushed with flank and shoulder and butted all the weak ones with your horns until you scattered them all over, 22 I will save my flock. They will no longer be prey, and I will judge between one sheep and another. 23 I will establish over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will tend them himself and will be their shepherd. 24 I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be a prince among them. I, the Lord, have spoken.

Hear what the spirit is telling God's People

Track 1 Psalm 100, read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

- 1 Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; *
 serve the Lord with gladness
 and come before his presence with a song.
- 2 Know this: The Lord himself is God; *
 he himself has made us, and we are his;
 we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
- 3 Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
 go into his courts with praise; *
 give thanks to him and call upon his Name.
- 4 For the Lord is good;
 his mercy is everlasting; *
 and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

Track 2 Psalm: Psalm 95:1-7a, read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

- 1 Come, let us sing to the Lord; *
 let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *
 and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.
- 3 For the Lord is a great God, *
 and a great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *
 and the heights of the hills are his also.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it, *
 and his hands have molded the dry land.
- 6 Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *
 and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
- 7 For he is our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Epistle: Ephesians 1:15-23 read from the Douay-Rheims Bible

15 Wherefore I also, hearing of your faith that is in the Lord Jesus, and of your love towards all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making commemoration of you in my prayers,

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation, in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what the hope is of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us, who believe according to the operation of the might of his power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, raising him up from the dead, and setting him on his right hand in the heavenly places.

21 Above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

22 And he hath subjected all things under his feet, and hath made him head over all the church,

23 Which is his body, and the fulness of him who is filled all in all.

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Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46 read from the English Standard Version Bible Anglicized

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or

naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' 40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' 45 Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On November 26 we celebrate the life of Isaac Watts Hymnwriter. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses.

Isaac Watts is remembered as the father of English hymnody. He was born in Southampton, England, in 1674, the eldest child of a devout Nonconformist family. His academic capabilities, and particularly his ability with the English language, were recognized at an early age. He was offered the resources to enroll at Oxford or Cambridge and pursue ordination in the Church of England, but Watts remained faithful to his background and, in 1690, enrolled in a Nonconformist academy at Stoke Newington. In 1702, Watts was ordained and served the Mark Lane independent congregation in London for a decade before his health made it impossible to continue.

As a hymn writer, Watts wrote more than six hundred hymns, about a quarter of which continue in popular use. Among his works was his Psalms of David, a metrical psalter that versified the psalms in English for hymnic use. Perhaps his most enduring contribution in this genre is "O God, our help in ages past" (found in The Hymnal 1982, #680) based upon the opening verses of Psalm 90.

Watts also wrote a wide variety of other hymns and spiritual songs that are well beloved. The attractiveness of his texts is often said to be reflective of Watts' own personal faith: gentle, quiet, sturdy, and deeply devout. This can easily be seen in the final stanza of "When I survey the wondrous cross" (found in The Hymnal 1982, #474):

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

Among his more enduring hymns are "Jesus shall reign" (found in The Hymnal 1982, #544), "Joy to the world" (found in The Hymnal 1982, #100), and "I sing the almighty power of God" (found in The Hymnal 1982, #398). Due to ill health, Watts spent the last decades of his life in semi-seclusion, rarely preaching, but devoted his time to writing, as he was able. During this period, his writings took a new turn, and he completed books on logic, human nature, and the English language, in addition to sermons, devotional literature, works for children, and more poetry and hymns.

Watts died in 1748. He is honored with a memorial in Westminster Abbey.

Let us pray: God of truth and grace, you gave Isaac Watts singular gifts to present your praise in verse, that he might write psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs for your Church: Give us grace joyfully to sing your praises now and in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**