



## **St Martin of Tours Chelsfield**

*St Martin's worships and serves a loving God,  
reaching out to the community in the name of Jesus Christ.*

**Sunday 22 November 2020**

**THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT**

**CHRIST THE KING**

A keen golfer often missing from the church congregation on Sundays, once asked his vicar if there were golf courses in heaven. The vicar admitted that he had no idea, but that he would pray about the matter. A few Sundays later he called to the man and said, 'Fred, I have some good news and some bad news for you. The good news is that there are superb golf courses in heaven'. Fred smiled happily before asking, '..and the bad news?' 'Well sadly', said the vicar, 'You're booked on the first tee next Sunday at 11.00!'

Good news/bad news jokes abound, as do good news/bad news stories in the news. This week there is good news that the Covid vaccines are showing great efficacy in test trials, the bad news that it will probably be next summer before we can inoculate everyone. Good news that we might be allowed to meet families at Christmas, bad news that we might need to be locked down again throughout January.

There is good news and bad news in the gospel story today too, good news for sheep, bad for goats! The sheep are those who care for the poor and needy, the goats those who fail in such charity. In which group does our approach to those around us in these Covid days place us?

St Paul offers this prayer in our epistle this week. "I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe."

On this the last Sunday of the church's year, we think of Christ the King. Not a king of wealth and power in earthly terms, but a shepherd and a servant revealing the love and hope of the Christian gospel – the 'Good News' and that really is good news in these sometime seemingly bad times.

*Revd John*



*You are invited to spend a quiet time with these prayers, readings and reflection.*

### *Prayers for the week*

Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

[Collect for Christ the King]

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Post Communion for Christ the King]

*A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus*

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy.  
Sustain and support the anxious,  
be with those who care for the sick,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may find comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen.

*A prayer for the nation*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
in these dark and difficult days, we turn our hearts to you.  
In ages past, you have delivered our nation from disaster.  
Do it again, we pray.

Give wisdom beyond human wisdom to our leaders,  
Give strength beyond human strength to the NHS  
and all our frontline workers.  
Give comfort beyond human comfort to the elderly  
and all who grieve.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
in these dark and difficult days,  
turn your face towards us,  
have mercy upon us,  
and heal our land, we pray.  
Amen.

*The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London have called the Church of England to prayer for the nation throughout the month of November. Some of the prayers are printed above – for a prayer diary and more resources see:*

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/call-prayer-nation>

*Today's psalm*

*Psalm 95:1-7*

*A Call to Worship and Obedience*

O come, let us sing to the Lord;  
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!  
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;  
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!  
For the Lord is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.  
In his hand are the depths of the earth;  
the heights of the mountains are his also.  
The sea is his, for he made it,  
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!  
For he is our God,  
and we are the people of his pasture,  
and the sheep of his hand.

Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

## *Today's readings*

### *Ezekiel 34:11-16,20-24*

#### *God the True Shepherd*

<sup>11</sup> For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup> As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup> I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. <sup>14</sup> I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. <sup>16</sup> I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup> Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, <sup>22</sup> I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

<sup>23</sup> I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup> And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.

*The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians 1:15-end*

*Paul's Prayer for Wisdom and Revelation*

<sup>15</sup> I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup> I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup> so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup> God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup> And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

## *The Gospel according to Matthew 25:31-end*

### *The Judgement of the Nations*

<sup>31</sup> '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. <sup>32</sup> 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, <sup>33</sup> and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

<sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup> 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, <sup>36</sup> 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." <sup>37</sup> 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? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

<sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> 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."

<sup>44</sup> 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?" <sup>45</sup> 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." <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

### ***Scriptural Comfort***

**'Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand'**

***(Isaiah 41:10)***

**'Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'**

***(Philippians 4:6,7)***

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.'**

***(John 3:16)***

***As we do not know how long this situation will last it is important that we look out for one another.***

***Please let Revd John know of anyone who is ill or in distress.***

***Or if you need prayer or spiritual support,  
or are lonely and just need a short chat please phone***

**St Martin's is closed owing to further Covid-19 restrictions**

**Public worship is suspended until further notice**

**Please check the web site for updates**

Worship from St Martin's will continue to be available online:

- A Sunday service on the web site
- Daily prayer on Facebook at 8.15am on Tuesdays and Thursdays

The church will be open for **private prayer** on Sundays from 10.00am until 11.00am and on Wednesdays from 9.30am until 10.30am.

Please note that this is a time for quiet personal prayer, it is not a service. If you come to pray you must follow the guidance posted by the door or follow the direction of the steward to observe the requirements of hygiene and social distancing. The reason for opening only twice weekly is to avoid the need for extra cleaning and leave space to arrange funeral services.

If you need to pray outside these times please let Revd John know and we will try to accommodate you. Please also let Revd John know of any urgent prayer requests or people in particular need.

**Please note that to accommodate pastoral offices or with any changes to Diocesan or Government guidelines these arrangements are subject to change at any time.**

For more information on St Martin's please visit our web site and Facebook page:

[www.stmartinchelsfield.org.uk](http://www.stmartinchelsfield.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/ChelsfieldStMartins](https://www.facebook.com/ChelsfieldStMartins)

## Other links and resources

**Daily HOPE** is a national, free phoneline from the Church of England on **0800 804 8044**.

The line is available 24 hours a day and offers music, prayers and reflections, as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone.

For today's online Sunday service from the Church of England visit:  
[www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online)

Prayer for the nation:  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/call-prayer-nation>

For other Church of England resources please visit:  
[www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturg-and-prayer-resources](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturg-and-prayer-resources)

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