

Christ the King Sunday written by Kerri Lawton

Monday, November 26, 2018

Psalm 76:11-12 "Make vows to the

Lord your God, and perform them; let all who are around him bring gifts to the one who is awesome, who cuts off the spirit of princes, who inspire fear in the kings of the earth." How awesome it is that the term "awesome" is used to describe our heavenly Lord! A term we use to this day. The joy of bringing gifts to "one who is awesome" is a visualization we can understand even today. We also can understand the term "inspiring fear." The prince of sin attempts to inspire fear almost on a daily basis, it seems. Throughout the Bible we are taught that our "awesome God" will overcome. (Psalm 76:9) "When God rose up to establish judgement, to save all the oppressed of the earth." Time and time we are reminded of the promise of His coming. We must keep our part, to keep the promise alive. "Make vows to the Lord our God, and perform them." How simple a statement and yet how powerful. We, ourselves, know the vows we personally make to God and we know what it takes to fulfill them. The gift of individuality brings us all together as a whole. Let us each have the courage to perform our best and always in ways to please Him. Prayer: "O Lord, our awesome God, we pray for your ever presence. Help and support us as we perform vows we have personally made to you. Know our hearts are true and we long for your saving grace. Amen."

Tuesday, November 27, 2018

Revelation 11:15. "Then the seventh angel

blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever." Here we are being described a scene as if from an action packed movie. A movie we highly anticipated; a real thriller and keeps us on the edge. (Rev 11:18)"The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged." And here we are reaching the climatic moment of finalization. And throughout it, we enjoy a soundtrack full of glorious songs, such as Psalm 76:8 "From the Heavens you are uttered judgment, the earth feared and was still when God rose up to establish judgment, to save all the oppressed of the earth." Songs sung that reached us emotionally, as we are convinced of an upcoming Oscar award winner. We will be left feeling fulfilled and gloriously happy. Can you not deny how such a movie could bring all mankind together? And with only one purpose: to fulfill God's promise of a new Heaven on earth. Let us continue to enjoy the anticipation of God's time yet to come. Let us continue to invite others, to join in the excitement of the opening day. It will be an opening day like no other, as described in Rev. 11-19 "God's temple in Heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within His temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and heavy hail." We must invite all to see. To witness creation being restored and corruption destroyed. Prayer: "Dear Lord, help us to always be aware of your promises. The day of judgment will be up on us all and we will share his grace among us. May we witness your triumphant ways and be joyous for it. Amen."

"The Gift of Community" written by John Cundey

Wednesday, November 28, 2018

Luke 21: 27. "Then they will see 'the

Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory." As we move forward towards celebrating the coming birth of Jesus this Advent season, watching and waiting for events to happen always seem to hold us captive with anticipation; what time will things happen, how will it be received, what will it look like.....will I be ready? Folks in the near-east listening to Jesus must have had the same feelings then as we do now regarding the coming of the Son of Man, and yet Jesus makes reference to this moment happening.....on a cloud? Not the most elaborate way to make an entrance for someone most powerful and with great glory. How should this sign be taken? Well, it takes time and patience to make a cloud in the desert, especially one as magnificent to carry the Son of Man. So we need to have the same qualities and vigilance while we continue to wait and stay observant. So what do we do in the meantime? Thankfully, God gives us the gift of community to "pass the time." Like the old saying, a watched pot never boils. Prayer: Lord, grant us patience as we pass our time here on Earth working with each other in community, waiting on you to coming again with power and great glory. Amen.

Thursday, November 29, 2018

Luke 21: 34-35. "Be on guard so that

your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the

worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap."

Those words...."it's a trap!" Anyone who has grown up in the last 40 years probably is having a flashback to the Rebel forces realizing that all might be lost after coming out of hyperspace and seeing a working DeathStar, ready to fire. Is this the type of trap Jesus is referencing his disciples to, one that was put forward with the purpose of ensnaring non-believers? If this is the case, then living life would be very difficult since there will be "traps" laid out continually. Being able to handle obstacles in life becomes much easier once you're in a loving community where one can rely on others. Jesus is using these words to his disciples not to keep them from living their lives, but to reiterate the fact that friendship and family draws us closer to Him so that we do not need to feel overwhelmed when life's "traps" look to lead us astray. Prayer: Gracious God, continue to surround us with a good community that is willing to help us keep our hearts from being weighed down with life's traps as we welcome your return. Amen.

Friday, November 30, 2018

Luke 21: 29-31. "Look at the fig tree

and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near." Ever wonder how we take the telling of time for granted? It's not enough to just own the watch, whether its a precision instrument of gears and springs or a digital symphony of 1s and 0s, but it must be set to a standard that has been agreed upon by a collection of experts and social-economists. It was just 150 years ago when trains kept the pace of the time-march and since they always ran "on time," people adjusted their timepieces accordingly whenever they heard that familiar whistle blow. Staying attentive to the train meant you participated in the community since your clock would now be adjusted to your neighbor within the community. Being observant of changes within one's environment kept you on pace with everyone else, in the same way Jesus was asking his disciples to watch to sprouting leaves as a sign of the nearing summer. Prayer: Almighty God, give us grace to follow Jesus without delay and bring into His presence those who are also watching the sprouting leaves of Your Kingdom. Amen

Saturday, December 1, 2018

Jeremiah 33: 14-15. "The days are

surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Those are the words famously used to describe broken communities throughout time. And no matter how devoted one group is to being correct, as long as division remained, community could not exist. Moving through the preparation time of advent we are struck by the words of Jeremiah calling for a "righteous branch" who will come to deliver justice. But what does justice look like for a divided house? If you have any siblings or 2 or more children, righteousness looks very different depending on one's point of view. Exercising the gift of community that Jesus brings allows us to experience this new form of justice through other people's eyes who may not be part of your personal house, yet are members of God's House as we remember our covenant in baptism. Prayer: Stir up your power, oh Lord, so that we can see ourselves in one house for the community nations, in Jesus name. Amen

Sunday, December 2, 2018

1 Thessalonians 3: 12. "And may the

Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you." All you need is love, love. Love is all you need. Sounds easy enough; it fits on a mug, a t-shirt, and, of course, a song lyric. But to increase and abound, now that's not so easy. Paul is writing a group of believers who currently have community and are living as Jesus commanded. All was well, as long as the group stayed small and unto itself, for the city was a major trade route and contained people from a multitude of cultures and empires. Yet Paul nudges this early church to increase and abound, a request not simply made in jest, but done emphatically in the same way Paul and his followers are also doing. Love in community should not stop once a limit has been reached, it needs to increase. This is the gift of Jesus, that love abounds as a community grows and that by sharing this gift, the true hope for the upcoming season becomes more real. Prayer: Gift of God, continue to open our community up so that we may increase and abound in love for one another and for all, in your son's name. Amen