

DORCHESTER UNITED CHURCH  
LAST AFTER PENTECOST  
NOVEMBER 26, 2023  
REIGN OF CHRIST SUNDAY

**WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE**

**Prelude:** "Crown Him with Many Crowns"

DIADEMATA George J. Elvey (1816-1893) Setting by John Carter

**Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that we worship and reside on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Anishnaabe people.

It is in the spirit of reconciliation and right relationships, and working towards this reality that we come to worship the One who will empower and guide us with grace.

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

We light the candle on this last Sunday of the season.

**It will remind us that light has not gone out of the world.**

It continues to burn brightly against the darkness.

**Silent Reflection**

**Birthdays, Celebrations and the Life and Work of the Congregation**

**Call to Worship**

God is present where political realities no longer stand between us.

**We dream of open doors where the rich and poor go in and out freely.**

God has promised that milk and honey will flow more freely than money and power.

**We will change the way we live in spite of age, culture and race.**

**We believe that God will make all our dreams come true.**

**Hymn VU 240 Praise My Soul the God of Heaven**

Praise, my soul, the God of heaven;  
glad of heart your carols raise;  
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven  
who, like me, should sing God's praise?

Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise the Maker all your days!

Praise God for the grace and favour  
shown our forebears in distress;  
God is still the same forever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless:  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Sing our Maker's faithfulness!

Like a loving parent caring,  
God knows well our feeble frame;  
gladly all our burdens bearing,  
still to countless years the same.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
All within me, praise God's name!

Frail as summer's flower we flourish,  
blows the wind and it is gone;  
but, while mortals rise and perish,  
God endures unchanging on.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Praise the high eternal one.

Angels, teach us adoration,  
you behold God face to face;  
sun and moon and all creation,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

### **A Prayer for the Reign of Christ VU 214**

Mighty and tender God,  
voice of the voiceless,  
power of the powerless:  
we praise you for your vision  
of a community of wholeness,  
a realm of peace,  
in which all who hunger and thirst are nourished,  
in which the stranger is welcomed,

the hurting are healed,  
and the captive set free.

Guide us by your truth and love,  
until we and all your people  
make manifest your reign of justice and compassion.

We pray in the name of your anointed one, our servant-king,  
to whom with you and the Spirit, one Holy God,  
be honour, glory, and blessing  
this day and forever. Amen.

### **WE ARE BLESSED BY GOD**

#### **Time for the Young and the Young at Heart**

##### **The Prayer of Jesus (The Lord's Prayer)**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

##### **Psalm 95 VU 814 (Part One)**

*Refrain: Come, let us bow down and worship,  
let us kneel before God our maker.*

O come, let us sing to God,

**let us shout with joy to the rock of our salvation.**

Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving;

**let us joyously shout to God with songs of praise.**

*Refrain: Come, let us bow down and worship,  
let us kneel before God our maker.*

For you are a great God,

**high sovereign above all gods.**

In your hands are the depths of the earth;

**to you belong the heights of the mountains.**

The sea is yours, for you made it;

**your hands also formed the dry land.**

You are indeed our God;

**we are your people, the flock that you shepherd.**

*Refrain: Come, let us bow down and worship,  
let us kneel before God our maker.*

## **Scripture Readings**

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

<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.

### **Gospel                    Matthew 25: 31-46**

<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, <sup>[a]</sup> 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.’

### **Other Readings Ephesians 1: 15-23**

#### **Hymn VU 273 The King of Love**

The King of love my shepherd is,  
whose goodness faileth never.  
I nothing lack if I am his,  
and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow,  
my ransomed soul he leadeth;  
and where the verdant pastures grow,  
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed,  
but yet in love he sought me;  
and on his shoulder gently laid,  
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill,  
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;  
thy rod and staff my comfort still,

thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight;  
thy unction grace bestoweth;  
and oh, what transport of delight  
from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days,  
thy goodness faileth never;  
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
within thy house forever.

**Sermon                      Life under God's Rule**

**Hymn VU 330 Jesus Shall Reign**

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
does its successive journeys run,  
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

People and realms of every tongue  
dwell on his love with sweetest song,  
and infant voices shall proclaim  
their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns:  
the prisoners leap to lose their chains,  
the weary find eternal rest,  
and all who suffer want are blest.

Let every creature rise and bring  
the highest honors to our King,  
angels descend with songs again,  
and earth repeat the loud amen.

**WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE**

**Prayer of the People**

Most merciful God we pray for the day when war ceases to rage among the nations

of our world, that starvation and disease may no longer afflict your people. We pray for the day when we are healed of all our divisions that your love and grace may rule in our lives.

May we love and serve you in all we do, that cynical self-interest and grasping for power may no longer hold us captive. Jesus showed us that it is only through reconciliation and trust that we may be healed, for we have become victims of separation and suspicion, of coercion and not of communion.

May we not turn away at the sight of the homeless and the dispossessed. May those who are forced to live on the margins, the refugees who show up at our borders be received with courtesy and shown your compassion. May we express our solidarity for those who are unjustly treated for protesting injustice, those who are injured or killed in the streets.

Give to those who deal with organized protests the ability to make wise and fair decisions. We pray for oppressed people everywhere that the leaders of governments may hear their cries and move to stem the tide of violence by enacting laws that are sensitive to the needs of the broken and the hurting.

As the basic needs of people go unfulfilled and true freedom is denied everywhere, may your healing presence transform those places where we are overcome by anxiety, loneliness and fear. May your comforting presence bring hope to the despairing, the displaced and the lost. May your transforming presence bring generosity where there is greed, harmony where there is hatred and justice to those who long for peace.

We pray in the name of Jesus who is the very embodiment of love and compassion. Amen.

### **Invitation to Invest in God's Mission**

The One who came among us, the one called Emmanuel, has called us to follow the path of self-denial and humility, to offer ourselves freely, choosing to disavow all self-interest and personal aggrandizement. Let us be prepared to hold ourselves accountable to a mission of love and compassion in a world where money and power continue to hold sway.

### **Offertory Hymn VU 538 For the Gift of Creation**

For the gift of creation,  
the gift of your love,  
and the gift of the Spirit by which we live, we  
thank you and give you the fruit of our hands.  
May your grace be proclaimed  
by the gifts that we give.

### **Prayer of Dedication**

**We offer this prayer for all the places where darkness and confusion have taken hold, that these gifts may be a source of real hope. We offer our own lives where doubt and indifference have taken their toll. We open our hands because our eyes have been opened to a vision of wholeness. Wounded healer, as you offered yourself, may we, too, show your love and compassion. Amen.**

### **Hymn VU 747 The Lord's My Shepherd**

The LORD's my Shepherd, I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie  
in pastures green; He leadeth me  
the quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again;  
and me to walk doth make  
within the paths of righteousness,  
e'en for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk thro' death's dark vale,  
yet will I fear no ill;  
for Thou art with me, and Thy rod  
and staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnishéd  
in presence of my foes;  
my head Thou dost with oil anoint,  
and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life  
shall surely follow me:  
and in God's house forevermore  
my dwelling place shall be.

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

May the grace of the Word of life rest upon you.  
May the love of the Source of life embrace you.  
May the transforming power of the Breath of life  
strengthen you. Amen.



**Closing Response Go Now in Peace**

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.

God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.

Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.

Know He will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.

Reach out to others so all the world can see.

God will be there supporting us with love.

Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Amen, amen, amen.

**Postlude: "O Worship The King"**

Johann Michael Haydn Arr. Lennon D Renfrow