

Throne Of Christ



Canonbie United & Liddesdale 24th November 2013

Order of Service

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Call to worship

Rejoice The Lord Is King

Rejoice! The Lord is king
And he calls us to his presence
Let us gather in worship
Rejoice! The Lord is king
And he calls us to serve him
Let us gather as one body
Rejoice! The Lord is king
And he calls us to love
Let us gather and lift up our hearts

All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Brightbrother sun with golden beam,
Clear sister silver moon with softer gleam!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Swift rushing wind so wild and strong
High clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
New breaking dawn in praise rejoice,
And lights of evening, find a voice!

Cool flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for your Lord to hear,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Fire with your flames so fierce and bright,
Giving to all both warmth and light.

Dear mother earth, who day by day
Unfolds God's blessings on our way,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
All flowers and fruits that in you grow,
Let them His glory also show.

And all who are of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care!

And you most kind and gentle Death,
Waiting to hush our fading breath,
O praise Him! Alleluia!

You homeward lead the child of God,
And Christ our Lord the way has trod.

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!

Approach

Promise Of The Kingdom

Almighty God and sustainer of all that is

All that we see and all that we know is your creation.

It has its maker's mark upon it -

The majestic dance of the planets, the awesome canopy of the cosmos,

The wondrous intricacies of insects and the inner secrets of the atom.

All yours, Lord, as promises of your kingdom.

All that we feel, all that we admire in humanity is your gift to us

It has its maker's mark upon it -

The warm secure glow of the love of family, the gentle peace of friendship

The inner strength we find in doing what is right,

The powerful cries of conscience

All yours, Lord, as promises of your kingdom.

All that we hope for, all that that we sense ought to be is your word to us

It has its maker's mark upon it -

The burning reach in our hearts for what is just, and the inner ache of compassion

The soft, insistent call of mercy, the uplifting sigh of forgiveness.

All yours, Lord, as promises of your kingdom.

Your kingdom - your rule

Your authority over all that is.

We speak of it in our prayers - 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done' we say

We build it into our creeds and confessions

But so often we lose track of what it really means

We sense dimly the way you are directing us and we walk the other way

We see your will as in a mirror darkly, but turn to look at something else

We hear your voice - a still small voice, but treat it like background music

We do what we want, leave your commands unacted upon

And make of our lives and those of others less than you designed them to be.

Forgive us, Lord, and guide us more surely into your way

Forgive us Lord, and help us each day to seek your kingdom more surely

Forgive us, and let us bring to you our thanks,

For we are assured of your forgiveness

Not because we deserve it, or have earned it, or have paid of our debt

But because you so loved the world that you gave your only son for us

The Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray

Address

Shall I Bend My Knee?

Shall I bend my knee to the king of war
Who conquers by strength, by blood and the sword?
Who guarded with armour, with shield and with helm
Rides forth to battle to widen his realm
Bringing fire and pillage to widen his sway
But who will be gone, like the dew, some day?
No - I don't think so

Shall I bend my knee to the king of wealth
Gilded and furred and vaunting himself?
In a vast palace complex with servants to see
That he gets what he wants, when he wants it to be
Satins and velvets that come at the cost
Of taxes laid on the poor and the lost?
No - I don't think so

Shall I bend my knee to a national king
In rich robes of state, wielding signet ring?
With orb and with sceptre, with elegant throne
Majestic symbols in metal and stone
Who lives not the lives that his subjects have had
But who just has this job 'cause he had the right dad?
No - I don't think so

Shall I bow my knee to a carpenter's son
Who accepted arrest when he could have run?
Who had no wealthy friends who might intercede
When beaten and broken was made to bleed?
Shall I bow to one who commanded no men
To bloody revenge or to rescue him when
He was nailed to a cross?
Yes. I shall

Address

Our God Reigns

What does a king look like?

Does he look like a carpenter's son?

Does he look like you? Does he look like me?

When God came into the world he lived a life like yours and mine

As if to say "You can do this"

The King of Love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine for ever.

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 spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction grace bestoweth;
And O 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 ring Thy praise
Within Thy house for ever !

Reading(s):**Jeremiah 23:1-6**

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD. The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Colossians 1:11-20

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers--all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Luke 23:33-43

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Hymn

CH4 473 Thy Kingdom Come,

Thy kingdom come! on bended knee
The passing ages pray;
And faithful souls have yearned to see
On earth that kingdom's day.

But the slow watches of the night
Not less to God belong;
And for the everlasting right
The silent stars are strong.

And lo, already on the hills
The flags of dawn appear;
Gird up your loins, ye prophet souls,
Proclaim the day is near.

The day in whose clear shining light
All wrong shall stand revealed,
When justice shall be throned in might,
And every hurt be healed.

When knowledge, hand in hand with peace,
Shall walk the earth abroad;
The day of perfect righteousness,
The promised day of God.

He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins
(Colossians 1:13)

I was looking back at some family holiday photographs the other day. Back in the year 2000 we went to Crete. On Crete there are the ruins of the palace at Knossos - once the seat of power of the Minoan civilisation. The ruins suggest a vast complex of buildings, some of which have been reconstructed. I remember queueing for some time to look into the throne room to see the throne that once supported the - let's just say the weight - of the rulers of what would become Greece. It turned out to be a rather unimpressive stone chair. I was rather underwhelmed. I had the same experience when I visited Holyrood Palace a few weeks ago. I realised I was in the throne room when I realised there were two big chairs at one end of the room that had some shiny material around them.

That's the thing about thrones - about human thrones anyway. When you look at them up close they are just chairs, made of wood that will one day rot, or stone that will one day be worn away. Here, this morning, we are gathered in a very special place. We are gathered before the throne of God. The architects of the great Gothic cathedrals knew that. Here and now, you and I are gathered in the presence of God - God who made all that is; God who is everywhere and everywhen simultaneously. God whose will has shaped a universe and to whose command the very rhythms of time itself dance.

We talk of kings and of kingdoms on Earth. But what are the kings and queens of the world, for all their robes of animal skins and their regalia of shiny things beside God? Men and women like you and me. What are their thrones of alabaster or onyx, however bedecked in gold and diamond, beside the throne of God in Heaven. Chairs - like the ones you have at home or seats like the ones you are sitting on now. We are members of the Kingdom of God revealed in Jesus Christ and it is at the throne of Christ in Heaven that we are gathered here today.

And yet. And yet if you think I am belittling earthly chairs, think again. I'm simply saying that human thrones are just chairs, like the ones you are sitting on now. Like, perhaps, the ones that Joseph the carpenter made. Like, perhaps, the seat at the back of a boat where Jesus fell asleep while a storm raged all around across the Galilean Sea. We are gathered here as Christians, as witnesses to what is perhaps God's most brilliant idea since he said "Let there be light" - let's call that the Big Bang. God entered his creation. He lived the life of an ordinary person like you or me - though perhaps somewhat poorer.

It's brilliant, isn't it? The creator of everything that is - the being whose word shapes time and space came into the world. Did he live the life of a king or an emperor? Did he live his life surrounded by luxury and the trappings of power and wealth? No. He came in the life of a carpenter's son from the backwoods of nowhere. he lived the kind of life too many people live in this world - nasty, brutish and short, as someone once said.

And so the throne of God is on the Earth too. It is wherever human beings try to deal with the stuff that makes life hard and difficult - you know; everywhere. Whatever hardships you're going through, God knows what they are like - he lived the kind of life you live. However bleak the future might seem for you, I doubt it was more bleak than the prospects Gethsemane offered. Here and now we are gathered in the presence of God in Christ - in the presence of Jesus who lived the life we live and who would die the death that too many die.

For Christ has another throne. A throne that is even simpler and coarser than the most rustic of human chairs. It is a throne made of two pieces of wood at right angles to each other. It is The Cross of Calvary. See, sin is not just an abstract concept - it is the stupid, hurtful, inhumane stuff we do. The stuff that causes pain and suffering, homelessness and hunger, injustice and barbarity. I said that when God came into the world he lived the life of an ordinary person. Yes, he did. In spades. On the Cross Christ hung for our sins. Yes - yours and mine and all humanity's. The sins that cause pain and suffering - the willingness to kill for an abstract cause, the readiness to exploit the weak and the poor for profit. The sins that result in homelessness and hunger - greed and selfishness. The sins that result in injustice and barbarity - the unwillingness to care for each other.

To one extent or another we are all complicit in bringing Jesus to the Cross. And

yet through the forgiveness he offers us from that throne we have a hope and a challenge. The hope comes from the chance we all have, whenever we need it, of a brand new start. The challenge is to be better people as a result of that forgiveness.

Will we continue to accept that homelessness and hunger are just part of life, or will we recognise that Christ walked among the homelessness and the hungry - the God, the maker of all that is, lived among the homeless and the hungry and do what we can to recognise them as our brothers and sisters? Will we continue to accept that pain and suffering are just part of life? Will we continue to allow millions to die of malaria when a cheap mosquito net could protect them? Will we continue to seek vengeance for the wrongs we have experienced?

See, you and I can change the world - the world that Christ lived in. Yes we can. That's what human beings are for. And that's why the only throne that really matters is the one inside you - the one in your heart. That's the one Christ was born to sit in - the one he was born to rule from - the one he died to protect. This is God's big project - change the human heart.

Imagine if God really ruled every human heart - yours , mine, everyone's. Where would there be a place for greed or selfishness in a heart ruled by one who gave his own life for everyone? Where would there be a place for vengefulness or hate in a heart ruled by one who yelled out "God forgive them" as they hammered nails through his hands? Where would there be a place for poverty or hunger in a heart ruled by one who was born among the poor and who knew hunger all too well?

In 2000 I queued to see a throne. It turned out to be a chunk of stone that long ago stopped making any difference in the world. Here today there is a throne in your heart. And a choice - pretend it isn't there, or let Christ sit in it and guide you - and go and make a difference in the world.

Lord may we enthrone you in our hearts. May we do your will. May we dwell in your kingdom

From Heaven you came helpless babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served, but to serve
And give your life that we might live
*This is our God, the servant king
He calls us now to follow him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the servant king*

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
Yet “Not my will, but yours” he said

Come see his hands and his feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone him
Each other’s needs to prefer
For it is Christ we are serving

From the shores of the Kingdom

May we reach out with love

Lord we rejoice that we are citizens of your Kingdom
Our feet are planted firmly on its soil through the Cross of your Son
Your Kingdom is love, love unmeasurable, love wholeness.
Out on the waves there are those who need love
Out on the wave there are those who need wholeness
Comfort them Lord

From the shores of the Kingdom

Out on the waves there are those who are suffering
Those who are ill in mind or soul or body
Those who are broken by the way we live
Those who are lonely and cast adrift
Those who are grieving the loss of a loved one
Some we know and name now in silence....

Be with them Lord

From the shores of the Kingdom

Out on the waves there are those who are brutalised
By poverty and want in a world that knows wealth
By slavery and exploitation in a world that knows freedom
By weakness and impotence in a world that knows power
By homelessness and want in a world that knows comfort
Bring justice to the world Lord

From the shores of the Kingdom

Out on the waves there are those who are victims
Victims of hatreds that are passed down through the years
Victims of anger and abuse in their homes
Victims of cultures that teach them rage
Victims of crime, scared to go out
Bring peace to this world, Lord

From the shores of the Kingdom

Out on the waves - that is where we are meant to be

Like those who man lifeboats

Belonging to the security of the shore

But going out to those in need

We are your church

Bless us, strengthen us and send us

To seek those who struggle against the waves

From the shores of the Kingdom

Offering

Throne Of Grace

Lord we stand before your throne of grace
And thank you for the love and mercy you have showered on us
We thank you for the opportunity for new starts
For putting aside the things that have tied us down
We thank you especially for your Son
Through whom we have grace and love and mercy
By his Cross and his resurrection
Lord we stand before your throne of grace
And thank you for the blessings of life
Fun, food, family, friends
Hope, home, happiness
Lord we stand before your throne of grace
And bring these offerings
We ask you to bless them and bless us
To rededicate them and to rededicate us
To your work in the world
To the building up of your church
To the bringing in of your kingdom

Hymn

CH4 449 Rejoice! The Lord Is King

Rejoice, the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore;
Mortals give thanks and sing,
and triumph evermore;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Jesus, the Saviour, reigns,
the God of truth and love;
When He had purged our stains
He took His seat above;

His kingdom cannot fail,
He rules o'er earth and Heav'n,
The keys of death and hell
are to our Jesus giv'n;

He sits at God's right hand
till all His foes submit,
And bow to His command,
and fall beneath His feet:

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Jesus the Judge shall come,
And take His servants up
to their eternal home.
We soon shall hear
th'archangel's voice;
trump of God shall sound, rejoice!

Benediction

Dwellers In The Kingdom

You are dwellers in the Kingdom

It is beneath your feet, wherever you go, supporting you

It surrounds you wherever you go, strengthening you

It is within you wherever you are, loving you

You are dwellers in the Kingdom

Go now to be light to the world and salt to the Earth

To be beacons of the Kingdom in the darkness

And now may God the Father be ever at your backs

May the teachings of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, be ever in your minds

May the presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit be ever in your hearts