

# THE LION

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## *Message from the Rector*

*“Now ye are the body of Christ,  
and members in particular.”*

**I Corinthians 12:27**

A couple of weeks ago I received a mass-mailing in my mailbox from a local church. And what that mailing was was a postcard that was introducing a new service at the church that is primarily targeted to young families with children; and the basic message on that postcard was “Come and check us out, and then join us.”

Now what I thought was particularly funny about it is that they were inviting *me* and *my* family to become members of this local church—as if I don’t have someplace else to be on Sunday morning, right. So thinking that was sort of funny, I just circled my name and address on that postcard, and then sent it back with nothing else on it. The minister at that church is a friend of mine, and I thought he might get a kick out of it.

But evidently he didn’t see the same humor in it that I did because on a Thursday morning – Ascension Day morning, to be precise – he called my cellphone and left a message wondering why I had returned the card with nothing other than my circled name on it. So I called him back and I explained to him that all I was doing was having a little fun with him; but before I hung up the phone I wished him a Happy Ascension Day, “the *true* Christ the King Day,” I said. And I called it the “*true* Christ the King Day” because for a long, long time now what many of the churches in the Anglican tradition have done is more or less “ape” whatever it is that the Roman Catholic Church is doing – as if our own historic tradition isn’t quite good enough – and the celebration of *Christ the King Sunday* is one of the Roman Catholic things that many of our own churches have aped. Here is what I mean by that.

Way back in 1925, Pope Pius XI declared the last Sunday in October to be *Christ the King Sunday* in order to commemorate the fact that Jesus Christ is now “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” over all creation, meaning that he now has dominion over *everything* that is. Which is what it means to be a king in the first place: a king has dominion over a realm; and the realm that Jesus Christ has dominion over is *everything* that is. And, of course, many of the churches in the Anglican tradition have followed suit (cf. various Anglican missals).

Then in October of 1969, Pope Paul VI moved the observation of *Christ the King Sunday* to the last Sunday in the liturgical year – which to us is Sunday Next Before Advent – because, as he put it, it makes the “the eschatological importance of this Sunday” even more clear (cf. CL/RCL). And again, many of the churches in the Anglican tradition have followed suit.

But this idea of designating a Sunday late in the liturgical year as *Christ the King Sunday* in order to make the “eschatological importance of that Sunday even more clear” does anything but. I mean, think about it for a minute: the whole point of our Lord’s ascension back into heaven – back into the realm where God dwells – was, among other things, to be enthroned on his heavenly throne and recognized as King of King and Lord of Lords over *all* of creation: a creation that he redeemed by his life, and by his death, and by his resurrection from the dead. That is why those of us who are still “Prayer Book Anglicans” still celebrate the *Feast of the Ascension*, forty days after Easter, as the *true* feast day of Christ our King. Our God, Jesus Christ, truly does reign, and he reigns *right now*.

*Message from the Rector - Continued*

But do you know something? Regardless of where it is in the liturgical year that we celebrate that fact, sometimes that fact is also very hard for us to believe. I mean, sometimes when we look around us and see everything that is going on all around us right now, it is very hard to believe that Jesus Christ really is King of Kings and Lord of Lords over *all* of his creation, and that he truly is – *right now* – reigning from his throne. Sometimes that fact is simply hard for us to believe.

Well, while it is true that Jesus Christ truly is King, and that he still continues to reign over *everything* today, it is also true that just like any other king, Jesus Christ reigns through his people; only in this case our King is much closer to his people than any other king ever has been or ever could be.

Don't forget what St Paul tells us: St Paul reminds us that we – the Church – are our Lord's body, which means that in a very real sense we are now his eyes, and now his hands, and now his feet; and which also means that it is now *we* who are now expected to continue the ministry of redemption that he himself inaugurated, and then left to his disciples to continue as he himself ascended back into heaven. And, by extension, that also means that it is now *us* who are to continue doing the very same things that Jesus Christ himself did: things like defending the poor, the fatherless, and the widows, and people like that; showing compassion to the weak, the helpless, and to those who suffer; feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, befriending the lonely, tending to the sick, caring for creation (there's one that far too many of us seem to miss): the list goes on and on and on. These are the things that Jesus Christ did during his time here on earth, and they are the things that he now expects *us* – his body, his Church – to continue to be doing as well.

And for quite a long time the Church actually did those very things, and it did them pretty well. As Fr. Russell mentioned in his Ascension Day homily, it was the Church that started hospitals to tend to the sick; it was the Church that took in orphans to raise; it was the Church that started the education system that is so familiar to us today; it was the Church that fed the hungry and sheltered the homeless and cared for the poor and the widows and people like that. It was the Church that did all these things and many, many more. Jesus Christ, our reigning King, was redeeming the world – and the culture that is in it – through his Body; he was redeeming it through his Church.

But somehow, far too many of us seem to have forgotten that somewhere along the way. Maybe we have just spiritualized things to that point that we have relegated Jesus's kingship to the eternal realm while turning our backs on the temporal realm that he is reigning over too. Or maybe we are just waiting for Jesus to just go ahead and do everything himself since "he is God and I am not." Or maybe if we haven't become totally passive about the world around us, what we have instead done is become more or less complacent about the state of the world in which we live, and are more than happy to just live off the last remaining fumes of our nation's "cultural Christian capital." Besides, isn't it just far simpler to become complacent than to actually roll up our sleeves and do something about it?

Or maybe what we have done is just become spectators to it all, perhaps giving lip-service to being followers of Jesus, but then when it comes right down to it being far happier to just sit on the sidelines and watch while others do the work. Remember the old "80-20 Rule"? Eighty percent of the work is done by twenty percent of the people; eighty percent of the budget is given by twenty percent of the people; eighty percent of just about everything is done by twenty percent of the people: that old "80-20 Rule" is just as true in the Church as it is just about everywhere else.

But it isn't supposed to be that way. I mean, how healthy would your body be if only twenty-percent of your organs were actually doing the things that they were originally intended to do? How healthy is the Body of Christ when that ratio is just the same?

Our God reigns – Jesus Christ reigns – but he reigns through us. Jesus Christ is King, but his kingdom is spread by us. Jesus Christ is Lord of everything that there is, but we are the stewards of it all. Jesus Christ is King, but we are his Body. May we all truly be his eyes, and his hands, and his feet in the world in which we live. May we all work to be co-redeemers with him, and once more be a blessing to the world in which we live. May we all truly *be* his Body; may we all truly *be* the Church. Amen.

## Music Notes

Kathleen Knott, Music Director / Organist

### *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People / #67 1982 Hymnal*

On the last Sunday in June we will celebrate St. John the Baptist, and this will give us an opportunity to revisit one of the most famous Advent hymns in the hymn book. The text of “Comfort, Comfort Ye My People” is a paraphrase of Isaiah 40: 1-5 and the prophecy refers to the hope that Judah’s exile in Babylon is almost over. In addition to hope the scriptures speak of preparation and repentance. The coming of the forerunner of Christ is foretold. We immediately think of John the Baptist when we sing verse two: “Hark, the voice of one that crieth in the desert far and near, calling us to new repentance since the kingdom now is here...”

The German words for this hymn were first penned by Johannes Olearius in honor of St. John the Baptist day. He was a 17<sup>th</sup> century court preacher and private chaplain in Halle and he eventually became a Superintendent in Halle and Weissenfels. In addition to writing a commentary on the Bible, Olearius was known as a contributor to the largest collection of hymns available at the time (Geistliche Singe-Kunst 1671). “Comfort, Comfort Ye My People” was first published in this collection.

Almost two hundred years later the noted translator Catherine Winkworth reworked many German hymn texts for the English speaking world. “Comfort, Comfort Ye My People” was first published in her 1863 collection of translations entitled Chorale Book for England.

The tune is attributed to the French composer Claude Goudimel (1514-1572) and is called Psalm 42. He is most famous for his setting of the psalms in the Genevan Psalter. His musical style is homophonic with syncopated rhythms.



## Curate's Corner

Fr. Randall Russell

Among all the beautiful stained glass windows that can be seen at St. Mark’s, there are four windows that are each dedicated to one of the four evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But how can we tell one evangelist from another? Well, that’s easy! We know which evangelist is which by his specific Gospel symbol. For example, St. Mark’s Gospel symbol is a lion and we know that the picture of the stained glass window on the left is of the evangelist St. Mark because a lion can be seen at the bottom left hand corner. St. Mark’s Gospel begins with a quote from the book of Isaiah; the evangelist writes: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare the way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord.’” The voice of one crying in the wilderness is, of course, a reference to John the Baptist whose voice in this case is thought to be similar to that of a roaring lion. “Repent!” roars John the Baptist in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord!” Mark’s Gospel is also the shortest of all four Gospels in that he constantly keeps his Gospel narrative moving. No other gospel writer uses the word “immediately” quite as much as St. Mark. Therefore, we could also think of St. Mark’s Gospel as a lion quickly pouncing upon its prey. The Gospel of Mark is short, fast, and to the point and so it is often depicted as a lion. In our church the stained glass window of the evangelist St. Mark may be found on the south side of the altar over by the credence table. Beneath the window is found the Latin phrase “Arduus ad Deum” which means “Striving for God”. This particular window was purchased for St. Mark’s by Fleurette and David Deverell.

## *Roof Capital Campaign Update*

Thanks to the many contributions made by its members, St. Mark's has reached its goal for our roof replacement. We have total pledge of \$719,020.00. Of this amount, \$350,000.00 came from an anonymous donor and the rest from our wonderful members. Of the total amount there only remains \$8,200.00 in outstanding pledges. The rest we have in cash to make payment to our contractors as construction progresses. St Mark's hopes to receive these remaining pledge payments shortly. St. Mark's has 105 families on its rolls. Of those, 72 members contributed some amount to our cause. St. Mark's has now signed a contract for the roof renovation with the Hill Group. The slate has been ordered and we anticipate construction to commence shortly. As a side note, the parish hall roof will be done with shingles. The long range plans call for an extension of the parish hall making it impractical for slate to be installed on this building at this time. Thanks to all the many members who helped with this campaign. It was truly a joint effort and fortifies the commitment that so many of our members have for the glory of God.

-Cal Brown  
Chairman of the Campaign Committee

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## *Upcoming Holy Days*

### June/July/August/September Holy Days

June 11 (noon) – Feast of St Barnabas the Apostle  
June 29 (noon) – Feast of St Peter the Apostle  
July 4 (10 a.m.) – Independence Day  
July 25 (noon) – Feast of St James the Apostle  
August 6 (noon) – Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord  
August 24 (noon) – Feast of St Bartholomew the Apostle  
September 21 (noon) – Feast of St Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist  
September 29 (10 a.m.) – Feast of St Michael and All Angels

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## **St. Mark's Anglican Church**

**Rev. Canon Michael L. Ward, SSA**  
**Rector**

**Rev. Randall S. Russell**  
**Curate**

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