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22nd November, 2020

Sunday Next Before Advent

Collect for this 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. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings This week

Ezekiel 34:11—16, 20—24, Ephesians 1:15—end, Matthew 25 :31—end, Psalm 95:1—7

Psalm 95 has always had a special place in the worship of the Church. It was taken in to the first Book of Common Prayer (1549) and it is generally known as the 'Venite' - Latin for 'O come', which are the words of invitation in the first line of the Psalm. It becomes us to sing our praise to God and, eventually, we will delight to do this together when Morning Worship with singing returns. Mindful of this Psalm, we are called to praise God, 95:1–2, with both lowly reverence and joyous enthusiasm.

Our familiar order of service can be detected in the Psalm, which moves from a call to praise into a form of creed, 95:3—6, that gives the reason for praise. This profound statement of faith is true to the psalmist's insight of God but it is far surpassed by the creeds of the Church. Like the psalmist, we revere God as Creator and Sustainer of all, but we affirm our faith in Jesus Christ who, for our sake, was crucified yet rose again and promises to return in glory. We also believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who fills the people of God with the new life of God.

We join the psalmist as he moves from praise and the declaration of faith into personal response. In 95:6 we see how worship is different from praise. True worship happens when wills are bowed in submission, knees are bent in adoration and, in this attitude, the ancient Hebrew congregation, as well as ourselves, affirm their/our trust in the words of the succeeding verse, *For, he is our God.* In this attitude they and we come with expectancy to listen, 95:7, to the reading and application of Scripture, "O that today you would listen to his voice!"

Readings Next week, 29th November

Isaiah 64. 1-9, 1 Corinthians 1. 3-9

Mark 13. 24-end, Psalm 80. 1-8, 18-20

