St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, November 22nd, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Christ is King
Reign of Christ The King
Colossians 1:15-20

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God.
All things were created through him and for him.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
People: He is the head of the church, our risen Lord and King.

Through his cross, God has made peace.
People: We come trusting in Christ alone, to praise his grace and follow his rule.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we adore you. You are holy, eternal, and faithful, the giver and sustainer of life. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, through whom and for whom all things were made. In him you have revealed your glory and drawn near to us in mercy. We thank you that our King has made peace through the blood of his cross and lives to lead his church. We come not trusting in our goodness, but in his finished work. By your Holy Spirit, turn our hearts from distraction and pride. Give us reverence, joy, and faith as we worship. Make your Word fruitful among us, and teach us to offer our whole lives to you. May Christ have first place in our praise and in our obedience. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Call to Confession

Christ is Lord over all creation and head of his church. Yet we have often lived as though we belonged only to ourselves. We have resisted his rule and failed to love our neighbors. Let us come before our holy and merciful God, confessing our sins without excuse and trusting not in our own righteousness, but in Jesus Christ, who made peace through his cross.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful Father, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. You made us for your Son, yet we have sought our own glory. We have trusted our strength more than your grace, guarded our preferences more than the unity of your church, and withheld love from those who needed our care. Forgive our pride, unbelief, resentment, and neglect. We cannot cleanse our hearts or earn your favor. For the sake of Jesus Christ, who bore our sin at the cross, have mercy upon us. By your Holy Spirit, turn us from sin and renew our faith. Teach us to forgive as we have been forgiven, to serve without seeking praise, and to follow our King with grateful hearts. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news: God has made peace through the blood of Christ's cross. Our hope rests not in the strength of our repentance or the merit of our works, but in the sufficiency of our Savior. To all who turn from sin and trust in Jesus Christ, the gospel announces forgiveness and peace with God. Rest in his grace, and go forward in grateful obedience.
Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord**!**

Puppets Presentation: "Coming King"

Children's Hymn: "Jesus Loves Even Me"

I am so glad that our Father in heav'n
Tells of His love in the Book He has given;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see;
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.

Refrain:
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me;
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves even me.

Though I forget Him and wander away,
Still He doth love me wherever I stray;
Back to His dear loving arms would I flee,
When I remember that Jesus loves me. (Refrain)

Oh, if there's only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song in eternity be:

"O what a wonder that Jesus loves me!" (Refrain)

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever, Amen.

Hymn #350: "To God Be the Glory"

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,
so loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Refrain:
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
and give Him the glory, great things He hath done.

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to ev'ry believer the promise of God;
the vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. [Refrain]

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. [Refrain]

Responsive Reading

Psalm 100:1–3
Leader: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!
People: Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

Leader: Know that the LORD, he is God!
People: It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Anthem (Music Ministry): "God Is So Good"

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Colossians 1:15–20

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Sermon

As we come to the end of another liturgical Church year, we need to pause and reflect on the one who stands at the center of our faith. Today we confess Jesus is King, not as an honorary title but as the Lord to whom we belong.

That is good news for all of us, especially when our lives feel unsettled. Today, some of us are carrying concerns about our families, are tired from work or worried about money, or face changes we did not choose.

We can believe that Jesus is King and still wonder why so much seems wrong. Faith does not require us to pretend the difficulties and challenges we face are small; it invites us to bring them to the One whose hands were pierced for us.

In Colossians 1:15–20, Paul helps us see who that One is. He moves from creation to the Church, and from the Church to the cross. The Lord who made all things is the Savior who makes peace. His greatness does not place him beyond our reach; it assures us that the One who comes near is able to save us. Let us listen with that hope.

Colossians 1:15

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Paul begins by saying that the Son makes the invisible God known. The Greek word for 'image' is *eikon*. It can describe a likeness, such as a portrait stamped on a coin, but Paul says far more than that Jesus resembles God. Read alongside his statement about God's fullness in verse 19, these words direct us to the perfect revelation of God in His Son.

Imagine standing in a great building, trying to view a masterful painting on the ceiling. Your neck aches and you cannot take it all in, yet a carefully placed mirror lets you see what is above by looking within your reach. That is a small picture of the invisible becoming visible. But Jesus is so much more than a mirror reflecting someone else's glory. He shares in the divine nature of the Father whom he reveals.

This matters whenever we wonder what God is like. We may imagine that the Father is reluctant to love us and that Jesus must persuade him to be kind. Paul will not let us separate them that way. In the Son we see the Father's heart: his holiness is real, and so is his mercy. When Jesus welcomes sinners, we do not see an exception to God's character but his grace coming toward people who cannot rescue themselves.

Paul then calls Jesus 'the firstborn of all creation.' Ordinarily, firstborn means the child born first, but in the biblical world the title also carried privilege, inheritance, and rank. Psalm 89:27 uses it of the king: 'I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.' The emphasis is not simply on the order of birth, but on the position of honor.

So, Paul is not placing Jesus at the front of a line of created beings. We do not worship an impressive teacher who eventually became important. We worship the eternal Son who entered our world to make the Father known and to bring us back to him.

That gives our faith a firm resting place. We do not build a picture of God from our changing feelings: a painful week does not mean his character has changed, nor does a good week mean we have earned his affection. We look to Jesus, the King, who reveals God is the King who invites weary sinners to trust him. If the Son reveals the Father so fully, what place does he hold over all the Father has made? Paul answers that next.

> **Colossians 1:16–17**
> **16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

Paul explains why Christ has this supreme place: all things were created by him. Nothing lies outside the Son's creative work; the things we can touch and the realities we cannot see all owe their existence to him. Then Paul adds, 'whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.' Even the powers that seem so great in this world are not independent of Christ.

This mattered for the Colossians, this letter addresses teachings that could draw believers from their dependence on Christ, including an interest in angels and additional religious requirements. We should be cautious about claiming to know every detail of that teaching.

But Paul's answer is clear: no spiritual power can offer something Jesus lacks. Those powers are not his partners in completing an unfinished salvation but creatures under his authority.

Notice the small words Paul uses. Creation is 'in' or 'by' Christ, 'through' Christ, and 'for' Christ. However the first expression is understood, Christ is central to creation's origin and purpose. Think of a house: someone plans it, someone builds it, and someone gives it its intended use. The universe is not without a Maker or a purpose.

And we are part of that creation, made for Christ rather than to use our lives however we please. That is not a threat to our happiness but its foundation. A musical instrument finds its purpose when it is played, not when it is left in its case. We begin to live as we were made to live when our gifts, relationships, and ordinary responsibilities are offered to the Lord.

Paul continues that in Christ all things hold together. Jesus did not create the world and then leave it to manage alone; its continuing existence depends upon him. The order science studies is itself dependent on the Creator; the world has no life apart from his sustaining power.

There is deep comfort here for all believers, but not a promise that nothing painful will happen. Paul is not saying that believers will escape illness, loss, or disappointment, but that suffering does not place us outside Christ's care. The hands that hold creation are the hands of our Savior. Even when we cannot understand what is happening, we know whom we are trusting. We are not asked to explain every mystery, only to rest in his faithful keeping. And the Christ who holds creation together also gathers a people to himself. Paul now turns from the Christ’s oversight of the universe to the church.

Colossians 1:18

18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn

from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Paul starts with something wonderfully personal: 'He is the head of the body, the church.' The Greek word translated 'church', *ekklesia*, means an assembly or gathering. Here it is the people who belong to Christ: not a building, program, or organization, but a people whose life is bound to their risen Lord.

As head, Christ gives the church both life and direction. A body cannot become healthy by declaring independence from its head. Neither can a congregation flourish spiritually while treating Jesus as a name we mention but a Lord we do not follow. By his Spirit he unites believers to himself, so that all he has accomplished and gives is ours in union with him. He ordinarily gives that life through the means he has appointed: the preaching of his Word, the sacraments, and prayer, in the fellowship of his church. The church exists not for its leaders or preferences but to receive from Christ and bear witness to him.

This helps us when the worldly church disappoints us. Congregations can be troubled by conflict, fear, and pride; we should not excuse these, for they call for repentance and patient care. Yet our hope rests not on finding a church without weakness but on a Savior without weakness. He has not surrendered his people to our limitations; he calls us back to himself, teaching us to serve one another rather than compete for importance.

Paul also calls him 'the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.' Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of the new creation. Others in Scripture were raised and later died again, but Christ rose to a life death cannot take away. He is not merely the first example of something we might achieve; he is the source and guarantee of the resurrection hope of those who belong to him.

Think of the first light through the window after a long night: the room is not yet bright, but the darkness no longer has the final word. Christ's resurrection is more certain than that light. It declares that death has been defeated, even though we still grieve and wait. At the graveside we do not need to speak as though loss is painless. We can weep honestly while trusting that our living King will raise his people.

Paul says this is so 'that in everything he might be preeminent'. Christ must have first place in the church and in our lives. Not simply in our Sunday worship, but in our decisions, our conversations, and our treatment of difficult people. His authority is not separated from his goodness. To follow this King is to learn the way of the One who served us, loved us, and gave himself for us. But how does this King bring a people to himself? Paul answers by taking us to the cross.

Colossians 1:19–20

[19] For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, [20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Now we come to the heart of our hope: 'For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.' The Greek word for 'fullness' is *pleroma*. Nothing of God's fullness is missing in Christ. He is not partly divine, nor a temporary visitor pretending to be human. The eternal Son truly became one of us: in this one person, fully God and fully human, we have the Savior we need.

And notice that God was pleased to do this. Salvation begins in his gracious purpose, not in our effort to make ourselves acceptable. The Father did not discover something deserving in us and then decide to help. He came toward us in mercy, according to the purpose he formed before the foundation of the world, when he chose a people in Christ and gave them to the Son to redeem. We are saved by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone. Even our response gives no grounds for boasting; we come with empty hands, receiving what we could never provide. The Father planned this salvation, the Son accomplished it, and the Holy Spirit applies it to our hearts, so that every part of our rescue is God's work.

Why do we need such a Savior? Because our deepest problem is not that life is difficult but that we are sinners who need peace with God. We have wanted his gifts without his rule, loved our own way, hurt our neighbors, and withheld the gratitude we owe him. We often think our sin is personal, but the truth is that its consequences often reach out far beyond us. The creation that was made through Christ and for Christ is now marked by brokenness and rebellion.

Paul tells us how peace is made: through Christ, God reconciles all things to himself, 'making peace by the blood of his cross'. Reconciliation means bringing an estranged relationship back into harmony. Imagine a family divided by a serious wrong. Agreeing never to mention it does not put things right; the wrong must be faced. Forgiveness is not pretending that nothing happened. At the cross, God deals with sin rather than ignoring it.

The language of blood would remind readers familiar with Israel's Scriptures of sacrifice. Life was given, and a substitute bore what another deserved. Paul speaks not of blood as something magical but of the real, sacrificial death of Jesus. Our King took our place. He bore the judgment our sin deserved. In this he was the propitiation for our sins: God's

wrath against sin was satisfied, and Christ's righteousness is counted as ours. He laid down his life for his people, so that everyone who trusts him may be forgiven and received as a child of God.

Here the greatness of Christ and the sufficiency of his saving work belong together. Because he is the eternal Son, we need not fear that his sacrifice is too small for our guilt. Because he truly became human, he could stand in our place. There is nothing we must add to make his work complete. Good works are the fruit of salvation, not its purchase price. We obey because we have been loved, not to persuade God to begin loving us.

But what does Paul mean by reconciling 'all things'? He is showing us the wide reach of Christ's victory: the cross is not a small repair in one corner of creation, but embraces everything sin has damaged. This does not mean that every person will be saved regardless of repentance and faith. The letter also speaks of Christ's triumph over hostile powers. Evil will not forever disturb God's creation. The peace secured at the cross will finally be fully displayed.

We live between that accomplished victory and its final fulfillment. That is why we can be confident without becoming careless. We pray, serve, forgive, and seek what is right, knowing that our King will finish his work. We neither build his kingdom by our own strength nor withdraw from a hurting world; we bear witness to the reconciliation we have received, offering practical love while pointing people to its source.

So, having seen who Christ is and what he has done, the question is not only whether we can explain that Jesus is King. It is whether we are trusting him. If you have been trying to make yourself good enough for God, hear the invitation of the Gospel. Stop depending on your record. Turn from your sin and rest in Christ. The peace you need is not waiting for you to earn it. It has been made through his cross.

And if you already belong to him, consider where you need to yield to his care and authority today. Perhaps there is a resentment you need to bring to him, a responsibility you have avoided, a sin you still cling too, or a fear you have carried alone. You do not face those things without help. The Holy Spirit is already at work in you, convicting you of sin, turning your heart toward obedience, and giving you strength to yield what you cannot surrender alone. The King who commands you is also the Savior who sustains you. His grace trains us to live differently, one faithful step at a time.

As we prepare to begin another church year, we do not know everything that lies ahead. But we know the One who goes with us. He makes the Father known, holds creation together, gives his church life, and brings sinners home through his cross. Let us entrust

ourselves to him with gratitude and hope. Because we belong to him, the Holy Spirit is at work in us, setting us apart and making us more like Christ. In his strength, let us be Salt and Light in the places he has put us—serving our neighbors, speaking with grace, and showing his love through ordinary acts of kindness. We do not do this to earn his love, but because we have received it, and because the Spirit who began this work in us will bring it to completion. Christ is King, and we are safe in his keeping.

Let us pray,

Great and gracious God, you made us for yourself, and our restless hearts find their home in you. Awaken in us delight in your praise. Teach us to seek you with the faith that you yourself give, and to rest in the Son who has made you known. Lord Jesus Christ, free us from the vain hope that we can save ourselves. Let your cross quiet our guilt, your resurrection strengthen our hope, and your lordship direct our lives. When fear troubles us, remind us that you hold all things together. When pride divides us, draw us back to you, the head of your church. By your Spirit, make us humble, grateful, and ready to love our neighbors. receive our lives as an offering of thanks, for you alone are our Savior and King. Amen.

Based upon Augustine's Confessions

Invitation to Offering

As an act of worship and gratitude to God, you are invited to place your offering in the offering box at the back of the church, as you leave today. We now offer our thanks to the Lord for His abundant grace and faithful provision through song and prayer.

Offering Prayer

Offering Hymn #830: "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below:
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Closing Hymn #293: "Come Thou Almighty King" (V 1,2,4)

Come, Thou Almighty King,
help us Thy name to sing;
help us to praise:
Father, all glorious,
o'er all victorious,

come, and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

Come, Thou Incarnate Word,
gird on Thy mighty sword,
our pray'r attend:
come, and Thy people bless,
and give Thy Word success:
Spirit of holiness,
on us descend.

To Thee, great One in Three,
eternal praises be
hence, evermore.
His sov'reign majesty
may we in glory see,
and to eternity
love and adore!

Pastoral Prayer

Sovereign and merciful Father, we come to you through Jesus Christ, our risen King. Thank you that the world is not beyond his authority and that your people are never beyond his care. We bring you our needs, trusting your wisdom even when we cannot understand your ways.

Comfort those who grieve. Sustain those who are ill, in pain, or waiting for treatment. Give wisdom and compassion to those who care for them. Strengthen those who are anxious, lonely, or discouraged. Provide for those facing financial hardship, and make us attentive to practical ways we can help.

Bless our homes and families. Protect children, guide young people, and sustain older members of our community. Bring repentance where relationships have been wounded, and give grace for forgiveness and patient love. Teach us to honor Christ in our work, our responsibilities, and our rest.

Renew your church by your Word and Spirit. Keep us faithful to the gospel of grace, united in truth, and generous in service. Strengthen those who proclaim Christ, especially where doing so brings hardship. Draw those who do not yet know him to repentance and faith. Make our congregation a people who welcome others with humility and bear witness to our Savior.

We pray for those who govern and exercise authority. Give them wisdom to pursue

justice, protect the vulnerable, and serve the common good. Restrain violence and cruelty. Bring relief to those suffering through war, displacement, hunger, and disaster. Raise up peacemakers, and teach us to love our neighbors rather than turn away from their suffering.

As we gather for food and fellowship after worship, bless the meal and those who have prepared it. We thank you for your faithful provision. Make our conversation gracious, our welcome warm, and our table a place of friendship and care. Remember those who lack daily bread, and move us to share your gifts.

Receive these prayers, not because we are worthy, but because Jesus Christ is our Savior. Keep us in his peace and lead us in his ways, until faith becomes sight and his reign is fully revealed. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Benediction

May Jesus Christ, the Lord of all creation and the head of his church, sustain you in his grace. May the peace he has made through his cross assure your hearts, and may his Spirit strengthen you to serve him with gratitude and love. Go in peace, trusting your risen King. **Amen.**