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It has been quite a week.

And... Christ is King.

Most of you know from our email and from Facebook,
but just in case, I'll tell you:

I have accepted a job at Christ Church
in Charlotte, North Carolina.

With Thanksgiving and Christmas on the horizon,
Bishop Wright agreed
that our goodbyes should take a bit longer than normal.

My last Sunday here will be January 16.

We have some weeks to begin saying goodbye,
but also to focus on celebrating Christmas,
until January,
when we will turn our attention more fully
toward blessing our time together.

A big week for me.
And for this church.

We have been part of each other's lives for over eleven years.
That's more than a quarter of my life.

It's a bit less
when you consider the life of this church.
Eleven years out of 157.

Christ is King.
Christ is King of the big things
and the small things.
Christ has been king for all 157 years of this church,
and for these last eleven.
Christ is king of all creation
and has been
and will be
for all time.

Christ is King.
Thank God for that.

Our passage from Revelation this morning
contains all the things you might expect
from this last book of the Bible.

Alpha and Omega

*...who is and who was and who is to come,
the Almighty.*

*Look!
He is coming with clouds*

...So it is to be. Amen.

It's all the majesty and the mystery of this peculiar book,
right there in one reading.

This is from the beginning of chapter one.
It goes on for another twenty or so chapters like this.
Gates of pearl and streets of gold.
Horsemen and apocalypse.

But it starts with Grace and peace.

*Grace to you and peace
from him who is
and who was
and who is to come.*

Grace and peace from the Almighty one.

Is that the work we've been doing all these years?

This century and a half,
this decade and more?

Is that all we've been doing?
Preaching Grace and peace.

Me, from this pulpit,
preaching Grace and peace to you.
All of us, together,
preaching Grace and peace to this community.
All of us in our own way,
saying to all those we meet,
Grace to you and peace
from him who is
and who was
and who is to come.

I hope so.
I hope to God that's what we've been doing.

It would be a job worth our time,
a work worth all the effort,
and a vocation worthy of our lives.

To preach Grace and peace.
The kind that can only come from God.
The kind that passes all our understanding.

And we preach it anyway.

We believe it, whether we understand it...or not.
We accept it, whether we believe it...or not.

Because Grace and peace,
will always be more than we can believe,
...if they are big enough to make a difference.

Tucked away inside this reading
is a strange word about Jesus.

It says that he is the first born of the dead
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

But that's not strange at all.
It's a matter of faith.

It's up for interpretation what it means,
but we are here in a church dedicated to Jesus Christ,
celebrating the Lord's Supper for a century and a half.
Saying the Lord's prayer,
praying like Jesus for all that time
and going out from here to do the same,

preaching Grace and peace to all those we meet;
preaching Grace and peace into our own lives too.

No, it's not strange to call Jesus the firstborn of the dead.
That's all about resurrection.

What's strange is WHO Jesus is,
according to this passage.

I've never noticed it before.
Jesus Christ,
the faithful witness.

The Faithful witness.

What a thing to say.

If our job is to love like Jesus.
If our goal is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ,
what if that simply means,
being a *faithful witness*?

Christ is King.
Of all the earth,
of all the universe,
of all the worlds that are and all that are to be.
Christ is King of creation.

Normally we acknowledge today
how difficult it is to bend our knee to the king,
to any king but our own ego,
to any ruler but our own desires.

And that is good and right;
we must acknowledge how difficult it is
for us to relinquish our pretense of control

But today,

today we look and see what sort of king we kneel before.

He is the *faithful witness*.

When following Jesus feels like too much;
 when you can't believe in all the healing;
 when you can't understand what the point of the whole thing might be;
 when resurrection feels a million miles away;

can you be a *faithful witness*?

Can you faithfully witness to the truth?

Even the painful truth?

It's all too much;

and Christ is King.

Healing sometimes feels like a hoax;

and Christ is King.

Resurrection seems unlikely, if not impossible;

and Christ is King.

Being faithful doesn't mean always believing everything, all the time.

Thank God.

Who could manage that?

Being faithful means watching for God.

Jesus was faithful.

Not my own will, but yours.

I came to do not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

Jesus was, at times, impossibly faithful.

And he was always a *faithful witness*.

Even to the painful truth.

Jesus wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus.

Jesus cried out in anguish,

My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?

It has been quite a week.

And... Christ is King.

Christ is the *faithful witness*.

God is faithful.

Grace to you and peace,
from him who is and who was and who is to come.

God is faithful.

So it is to be.

Amen.