

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SPARTA, NC  
LAST PENTECOST [CHRIST THE KING] (B), November 22, 2009  
The Rev. J. Barry Kramer  
"Christ The King!"

Today we celebrate Christ the King Sunday. It is the last Sunday in our church year calendar. On this day Christ is praised and honored as the "ruler of the kings of the earth" and the cosmic ruler of our world and the universe. It is the day to honor the king of all creation and to remind our self just what it means to serve Jesus the King.

Many times we talk to each other about living "day by day", or one day at a time. At this time of year when many churches are asking for a pledge of money we also talk about how Christ challenges us to give up our dependence on riches and modern things. We have discussed how Christ asks us to "travel lighter," freed from the need to *have* and instead working with the need to *give!* A recent experience might help to explain.

A few years ago some of our clergy were sitting around a table sharing goals for the coming year. When we came to David, a priest in a small church in this Diocese, he looked down for a moment, and then quietly announced: "My wife and I have been talking about this

a lot recently and we've decided to look for an opportunity to serve for a few years in a third-world country like Haiti, or Central America."

It was so quiet even a deaf person could have heard a "pin" drop! While most of us were thinking we'd like to take the next step up the ladder of our careers (oh, yes, clergy do think about stuff like that!), David was truly investigating how to serve his God. Later, David and his whole family went to Belize and committed themselves to a very rugged ministry among poverty-stricken Central Americans who were recovering from a hurricane. How many of us would be willing to give such a gift to Christ our King?

Today we are bringing a small child into the church through baptism. I wonder what this child will learn from other church members as he grows up? Will he be encouraged to learn so that he can advance his career? Or will someone show him how to serve Christ the King? Surely he will be taught to trust his parents and his friends. But will he learn to trust his friend Jesus?

To truly allow Christ to rule in our hearts requires a very deep trust. Jesus' kingdom may indeed be already here, but it will not be realized

without sacrifice, without letting go of our own plans, without submitting our wills to the will of Jesus who died that we might live forever with our God.

This Christ the King Sunday, along with this small child, we celebrate the reign of one who also loves us enough to tell us when we could be headed in the wrong direction. This is a king who will challenge us to change our values and turn toward a new life under his rule.

The challenge is for all of us, and especially for this child. Can we serve *this* king?