



Episcopal Church of the Resurrection

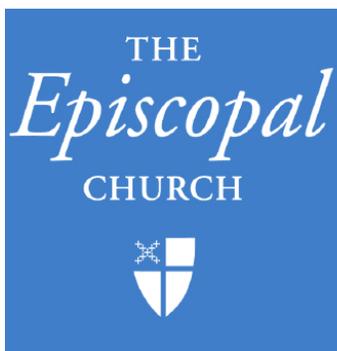
Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Second Sunday in Lent

March 1, 2026 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

917 Pond Road, Loudon, TN 37774
865.986.2390

www.episcopalloudon.com



GLORIFYING GOD BY

REFRESHING SOULS | BRIDGING COMMUNITIES | ENGAGING PEOPLE IN SERVICE

Good morning! We're so glad you chose to be here at Resurrection today. Whether you're here for the first time, or are a life-long member, Resurrection is a hopeful, healing, transformation-minded kind of place, a place where everyone is welcome and can grow their relationship with God and with one another.

If you are here for the first time (or if you just haven't gotten around to it yet), please fill out a pew card and put it in the offering plate to let us know you were here. To receive our weekly email bulletin, be sure to include your email address. And let us know if you would like to connect with our parish life and

Our services follow The Book of Common Prayer, the red book in your pew rack. If you'd like to use the book to follow the service, instead of this order of service booklet, we begin on page 355. Unless otherwise marked, our hymns are from the blue Hymnal 1982. A hymn noted "S-xxx" is part of the service music, found at the front of the hymnal, appearing before the regular congregational hymns begin. For example, S-280 (The Gloria) is found before hymn 1.

To learn more about Resurrection, check out www.episcopalloudon.com,
email us at office@episcopalloudon.com, or
find us on Facebook or Instagram.

Fill out a visitor card or email office@episcopalloudon.com to subscribe to our weekly church email, the Parish Tidings, for all the latest information from Resurrection.

If you can't make it here in person, join us at 10:30, live on Facebook:
facebook.com/episcopalloudon.

Holy Eucharist, Rite II

The Word of God

Prelude *In the cross of Christ I glory*

arr. Wilbur Held

Entrance Hymn

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord

Please stand as able.

Hymnal 636

Opening Acclamation

BCP 355

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

Collect for Purity

All **Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Kyrie (Spoken at 8:00. Sung at 10:30.)

Hymnal S-91

**Lord, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lessons

The First Lesson: Genesis 12: 1-4a

Lector A reading from the Book of Genesis.

The LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 121 *Levavi oculos*

BCP 779

Lector We will read the Psalm responsively.

Congregation reads the bold lines.

I lift up my eyes to the hills; *

from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the LORD, *

the maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved *

and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *

shall neither slumber nor sleep;

The LORD himself watches over you; *

the LORD is your shade at your right hand,

So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *

nor the moon by night.

The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *

it is he who shall keep you safe.

The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming in, *

from this time forth for evermore.

Lector and People

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.

The Second Lesson: Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17

Lector A reading from the Letter to the Romans.

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”) —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Sequence Hymn

Please stand as able.

And now, O Father, mindful of the love (verses 1-3)

Hymnal 337

The Gospel: John 3:1-17

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”

Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sequence Hymn

And now, O Father, mindful of the love (verse 4)

Hymnal 337

Sermon

The Rev. Mary Davis

The Nicene Creed

BCP 358

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Common Worship, Intercessions for Lent

Please assume a posture of prayer, whether standing, kneeling, or sitting as able.

Intercessor We pray to the Lord for courage to give up other things and to give ourselves to him this Lent. Give your Church the courage to give up her preoccupation with herself and to give more time to your mission in the world. May the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus bring forgiveness to your people and help us to face the cost of proclaiming salvation.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

People **give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Give your world the courage to give up war, bitterness and hatred, and to seek peace. We pray for the leaders of our nation and our world, especially for the President of the United States and cabinet officials, members of Congress, and Supreme Court justices, as well as the Tennessee governor and state legislators, that they may lead with mercy, wisdom, integrity, and compassion. May the shoulders of the risen Jesus, once scourged by soldiers, bear the burden of political and military conflict in our world.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

People **give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy in our families, neighborhoods and communities. We pray especially for our neighbors here in Loudon County and our state of Tennessee. May the presence of the risen Jesus, his body once broken and now made whole, bring peace and direction as we live with one another.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

People **give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Give us the courage to give up our selfishness as we live for others, and to give time, care and comfort to the sick. We pray for

People **Jim N., Walter, The Mott family, Vicky & Dave, Carolyn, Lee R., the McAfee family, Diane & Cal, Jim, Tom, Marshall S., Jackie C., David H., and all who are in pain or distress; and all who are suffering due to oppression, war, gun violence, or natural disasters.**

Intercessor May the wounded hands of Jesus bring his healing touch, and the light of his presence fill their rooms.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

People **give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Give us the courage to give up our fear of death and to rejoice with those who have died in faith. Especially we hold Tammy in our minds. May the feet of the risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross, walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony, and walk with us and all your Church through death to the gate of glory.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

People **give us strength and hear our prayer, here and in eternity. Amen.**

Hold a moment of silence.

Celebrant God our Father, in your love and goodness you have taught us to come close to you in penitence with prayer, fasting and generosity; accept our Lenten discipline, and when we fall by our weakness, raise us up by your unfailing mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

BCP 360

Continuing in a posture of prayer, we will hold a moment of silence for individual, silent confessions before the priest leads us into the words of corporate confession.

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Celebrant and People

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Absolution of Sin

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sin through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

The Peace

Please stand as able.

Celebrant May the peace of Christ be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us show one another a sign of God's peace.

Brief Announcements

The Holy Communion

Celebrant Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2a

Offertory Music

How firm a foundation

arr. David P. Dahl

Doxology (sung together)

Hymnal 380, verse 3 only

**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. Amen.**

Celebrant For all things come from you, O Lord;

People **and of your own have we given you.**

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer 2

Enriching Our Worship

Sursum Corda (Lift Up Your Hearts)

Spoken at 8:00. Sung at 10:30.

Celebrant The Lord be with you,

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Celebrant We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant. From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing.

You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us. Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love. And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing (say):

Sanctus (Spoken at 8:00. Sung at 10:30.)

Hymnal S-124

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The people stand or kneel.

Celebrant Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God.

Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love. Then, the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

Celebrant On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice. Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ.

Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made. In the fullness of time bring us, with [_____ and] all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever.

AMEN. (Spoken at 8:00. Sung at 10:30.)

Hymnal S-146

Celebrant And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

All **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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated bread and a period of silence is kept.

Celebrant Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People **Therefore, let us keep the feast.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: Grant us peace.**

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Communion Music *Solemn prelude on a theme of Thomas Tallis* arr. Gerald Near

We encourage you to come forward to receive Holy Communion as you feel comfortable.

Remain seated, until the usher directs you forward to the communion rail.

After receiving communion, return to your seat by the side aisle. so that traffic flows one way.

If you would prefer communion be brought to you at your seat, please let an usher know and, as always, we will be happy to do so. If you prefer not to receive communion, you may come forward to the altar rail along with those receiving communion.

Please cross your arms over your chest to indicate that you prefer a blessing.

Post-Communion Prayer

Enriching Our Worship

Celebrant Let us pray.

All **Loving God,
we give you thanks
for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.
Now send us forth a people,
forgiven, healed, renewed;
that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Birthday and Anniversary Blessings

The Blessing

Celebrant The Wisdom of God, the Love of God, and the Grace of God strengthen you to be Christ's hands and heart in this world, in the name of the Holy Trinity. Amen.

Recessional Hymn

Lift high the cross

Hymnal 473

The Dismissal

Celebrant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Fugue in G minor

J.S. Bach

Art & Scripture Lenten Reflection

Pieter Bruegel, *The Adoration of the Kings* (1564, oil on wood). The National Gallery, London. <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/pieter-bruegel-the-elder-the-adoration-of-the-kings>

Matthew 2.1-5, 7-11

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea...'

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.'

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Reflection on the painting and the passage continues on the back cover.

Parish Announcements, Prayers & Thanksgivings

Book Conversation with the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers March 9 at 7 p.m. at St. John's Cathedral

Bishop Brian Cole and St. John's Cathedral host this inspiring gathering with the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, whose new book—*Church Tomorrow?: What the 'Nones' and 'Dones' Teach Us About the Future of Faith*—wrestles with the decline of traditional religion and the voices of nonreligious Millennials and Gen Zs.

Spellers traveled America to ask young 'Nones' and 'Dones': Why are they saying "no" to church? Where are they experiencing the sacred and belonging? What would they tell churches? And where do we go from here? If you're wondering about church tomorrow, let's listen today.

Spring Clean-Up Days

Spring clean up will be a bit extended this year to get our campus ready for Easter and the Care of Creation events in April. Please mark the following on your calendars so you can lend a hand to the efforts.

Mid-March: We will be cleaning and repainting of the picnic tables and benches.

Fri., Mar. 27: Flower Bed Friday!

A day for sprucing up all of our flower beds, shrubs, and garden areas, including weeding, trimming, mulching, planting, splitting, etc.

Sat., Mar. 28: Spic-n-Span Saturday!

A day for cleaning, sweeping, dusting, window washing, power washing, etc.

Questions? Contact Mark Hennes,
juniorwarden@episcopalloudon.com

Our parish prayer list

Jim N., Walter, the Mott family, Vicky & Dave, Carolyn, Lee R., the McAfee family, Diane & Cal, Jim, Tom, Marshall S., Jackie C., David H.

Continuing prayers for

Brian E., Jim; Daphne; Rosemary O.; the Hentchel family; Pat; Claire; Sandy; Rob & Sherry; Cheri; Jane; Shannon; Jim; Mel; Wayne; Diana N.; Jack; Ashley; Raynella; Ed & Jean; Kim E.; Joe; Beverly; Grace; Virginia; Betty Anne; Janey; Johnny; and Karen H.

Pray for our vestry leaders

Class of 2026: Alice A., Dianna S., Jenny L.
Class of 2027: Bev B., Karen B., Mark H.
Class of 2028: Holly P., Tom R., Bonnie S.
Wardens: Bonnie S. and Mark H.;
Treasurer: Sally Leonhard

March Birthdays

Cal Van Koughnett March 1
Jon Berg March 2
Tim Grindstaff March 2
Sally Leonhard March 8
Garry Lucas March 12
Donna Bye March 17
Rodney Hentchel March 18
Jeanette Fiebke March 19
Jan Sampson March 24
Chip Parker March 27

March Anniversaries

Virginia & Bill Perry March 1
Monty Ross & Art Stewart March 5
Ginny & Wayne Tolbert March 11

For Your Calendars

THIS WEEK

Mar. 1	8:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.		
Acolyte	Judy Hadjian	Mark Smith	Altar Guild	Donna Jackson
Euch. Minister	Mark Hennes	Bonnie Smith	Flower Guild	Lent/no flowers
Lector	Jack Lefler	Bill Perry	Organist	Kate Lee
Ushers	Jen Hennes	Garry Lucas & Art Stewart		
Coffee Hour	Linda Lefler	Virginia & Bill Perry	Celebrant/Preacher	Mary Davis
Video	n/a	Bob Cantine	Offering Counters	Jean Cardwell & Monty Ross
Chancellor	Peggy Rogers	Nelda Griffith		

NEXT WEEK

Mar. 8	8:00 a.m.	10:30 a.m.		
Acolyte	Donna Bye	Holly Pate	Altar Guild	Bev Baumgardner & Jan Hanna
Euch. Minister	TBD	Jane Mocilac	Flower Guild	Lent/no flowers
Lector	Diane Van Koughnett	Jackie Buttinelli	Accompanist	Jedediah Dahl
Ushers	Carl Bye	Keytha Graves & Drew Hawley		
Coffee Hour	Cal Van Koughnett	Monty Ross	Celebrant/Preacher	Mary Davis
Video	n/a	Ann Murphy	Offering Counters	Ginny Tolbert Alice Anderson
Chancellor	Diane Van Koughnett	David Baumgardner		

This week at Resurrection

Sunday, March 1

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (spoken), Nave
 9:30 a.m. Lent Reflection, Parish Hall
 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (choral), Nave

Monday, March 2

10:30 a.m. Companions group, classroom

Tuesday, March 3

1 p.m. Education for Ministry, Library

Sunday, March 8

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (spoken), Nave
 9:30 a.m. Lent Reflection, Parish Hall
 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (choral), Nave

Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events

Monday, March 9

Bishop Brian Cole & Canon Stephanie Spellers
 book conversation, St. John's Cathedral, 7 p.m.

Sunday, March 22

Four Paws Sunday (pet food/supply ministry)

Friday, March 27

Flower Bed Friday

Saturday, March 28

Spic-n-Span Saturday

Saturday, April 4

Holy Hike at Aspire Recreation Area, 10 a.m.

Email Priest-in-Charge: The Rev. Dr. Becky Bridges:
 rector@episcopalloudon.com or (865) 986-2390.

For urgent pastoral needs after hours: (865) 242-9240

Email Senior Warden Bonnie Smith:

seniorwarden@episcopalloudon.com

Email Junior Warden Mark Hennes:

juniorwarden@episcopalloudon.com

Art & Scripture Lenten Reflection

Pieter Bruegel, *The Adoration of the Kings* (1564, oil on wood). The National Gallery, London. <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/pieter-bruegel-the-elder-the-adoration-of-the-kings>

Note: The text of the corresponding scripture passage, Matthew 2.1-5, 7-11, is found on page 11.

I find this perhaps the most troubling painting in the National Gallery, and without question, the most disturbing Christ Child.

What we see is a long way from Matthew's text. His magi/wise men/astronomers from the east are shown as richly dressed kings - two European, one African - travelling with an armed retinue. They certainly do not appear to be 'overwhelmed with joy'. Equally clearly, the child does not seem at all pleased to see them.

Early church scholars, on the strength of a verse in Isaiah (60.3), had turned Matthew's magi into kings. The Christian Roman emperors in Constantinople, understandably, liked the implication that rulers had early, privileged access to the saviour. Powerful church patrons promoted the idea in mosaic and painting; as you walk to this picture, you will pass others, where, in defiance of any textual basis, a smiling royal Christ Child welcomes or blesses three fellow monarchs.

Not here. Bruegel shows the infant recoiling as he sees the sheer ugliness of the kingdoms of this world kneeling before him. The opulent royals come protected by soldiers dressed and armed like the hated mercenaries at large in Bruegel's Flanders. The Prince of Peace has come to a world where European Christian kings make war in his name. Most paintings of the subject show the offering of gold: here, it is the bitter gift of myrrh. Bruegel has not painted the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as the church usually describes this moment. It seems to me that he shows us instead Jesus's first understanding that his gospel of love, confronted by the violence of power, must end in suffering and death.

—Neil MacGregor

Wonderings for Further Reflection

- Look at Bruegel's painting. How does it speak to you, unsettle or challenge you?
 - *I wonder what this picture says about the language the church uses when it celebrates Christ the King?*
 - *I wonder why the church transformed the wise men/magi into political rulers/kings.*
 - *And I wonder if Bruegel's painting still speaks to you, our world, and the church today.*
- How do you understand Bruegel's very different, more sympathetic treatment of the African king?
 - *I wonder how you would portray the magi and their significance.*

During the Season of Lent, we are featuring paintings from the National Gallery, London accompanied by Lent reflections by art historian Neil MacGregor. A link to the complete Lent Course Study Guide PDF (for all seven weeks of Lent) is included in our weekly Tidings email. We thank the clergy and staff of the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields for sharing these Lenten reflections. Weekly video reflections are found on their church YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@stmartin-in-the-fields1726/streams>
