

November 27, 2017
Last Sunday after Pentecost: Christ the King, Year A, RCL
The Rev. Keri T. Aubert
St. Thomas's Episcopal Church, New Haven, CT

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24
Psalm 100
Ephesians 1;15-23
Matthew 25:31-46

This past Thursday was a very special day: the day before Black Friday, sometimes also known as Thanksgiving.

Most mornings, one of the first things I do is open the New York Times app on my mobile phone. I scan the "Top Stories" to see whether any major disasters that I should know about have occurred overnight. On Friday morning, I opened the app, and the first thing I saw was a photo of a tightly packed crowd of people holding boxed Samsung flat TVs over their heads. I opened the story and found this photo caption: "Black Friday has become a phenomenon even in countries not marking a Thanksgiving holiday. These shoppers were competing to purchase television sets in São Paulo, Brazil." I'll add my own editorial comment: When it comes to American exports, Black Friday is not the one of we should be most proud.

The apocalyptic section of Matthew that we just heard isn't my favorite reading. Christ the King isn't my favorite Sunday observance. Generally, I find it hard to reconcile Christ the King with the Prince of Peace. That said, this year, I'm finding it a little easier, and that's due to economics.

There is a vast number of displaced persons across the globe right now. One might think that the "great migration" of our age would be a worldwide movement of human beings from less to more economically advantageous locales. But it's not. It's not even a migration of people.

Rather, it's the migration of wealth—the migration of wealth from the many to the few. As the weeks go by, it becomes ever more apparent that the borderless global kleptocracy is thriving. It's an exclusive club whose members take care of their own, and our national leaders seem willing to do what it takes to get in. It's beginning to seem as if a disruptive Christ the King is the world's only hope. And then I remember that *we* are Christ's disrupters.

The annual convention of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut was last weekend. Thank you Dawn Lorentson for representing St. Thomas's there. It was a pretty great gathering—the energy was good, some fine social resolutions passed, and Bishop Ian Douglas's annual "TED talk" was excellent. Part of its excellence was its shift in focus. Since his arrival, Ian has spoken repeatedly of the era of post-Christendom and our need to join in "God's mission in the neighborhood." That language left some people baffled.

This year, Ian drilled down to some specifics. He laid out three priorities for the entire Episcopal Church in Connecticut for the coming years: climate justice, the heroin epidemic, and economic justice. I wish he had included racial justice in that list. Still, racial justice is closely entwined with economic justice.

I'm pretty enthused about the idea that of leveraging the energies of all the Episcopal Churches in Connecticut toward shared goals. As a part of that effort, let's explore our personal experience with these issues by using an exercise called "one-on-ones." One-on-ones are structured conversations between two people. One person talks while the other listens, and then the two swap off. That's it. There's no reporting out. There's no follow-up. One-on-ones are good for relationship building and community organizing. A lower-attendance Sunday like the Sunday after Thanksgiving allows us enough physical space to do them.

We did one-on-ones once before, summer before last, around a general question about God's call to this congregation. This time the question is more specific. On the sheets we're handing out is a brief description of the process. [Review the process, below. Be sure to mention the story can be recent or far in the past; it can involve them personally or a friend or family member or something they heard about.] That's it! Your main role is to listen to your conversation partner. I will be the timekeeper.

[Do the one-on-ones. After everyone has reassembled, offer the prayer below.]

CLOSE with the Collect for Guidance from the Book of Common Prayer:

Heavenly Creator, in you we live and move and have our being:
We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit,
that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you,
but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight;
through Christ the King, our Prince of Peace. Amen.
[BCP, 100, adapted]

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One-on-One Conversations—November 26, 2017

Process:

1. Pair off with someone you don't know well.
 2. Reflect silently on the prompt below [2 minutes].
 3. Decide who will speak first.
 4. That person speaks while the other listens [4 minutes].
 - Speaker: Use "I" statements.
 - Listener: Listen, but invite the story ("Why?" "Tell me more about ...").
 5. The speaker and the listener switch roles [4 minutes].
- The timekeeper will tell you when each time segment is up.

Prompt: Tell a story about a personal experience you had, related to one of these issues:

- **Climate justice**
- **Heroin epidemic**
- **Economic justice**
- **Racial justice**

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Process:

6. Pair off with someone you don't know well.
 7. Reflect silently on the prompt below [2 minutes].
 8. Decide who will speak first.
 9. That person speaks while the other listens [4 minutes].
 - Speaker: Use "I" statements.
 - Listener: Listen, but invite the story ("Why?" "Tell me more about ...").
 10. The speaker and the listener switch roles [4 minutes].
- The timekeeper will tell you when each time segment is up.

Prompt: Tell a story about a personal experience you had, related to one of these issues:

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