

A king unlike any other

Ricarda Witcombe *reflects on* John 18:33-37

Today the church year comes to an end – next Sunday it all begins again. For now, we turn our eyes to the kingdom and we gaze on Jesus our King, as he stands before Pontius Pilate, not robed in purple majesty and might, but wounded, abandoned and vulnerable. And yet, for all that, he is powerful beyond measure. He is Alpha and Omega, beginning and end. Kingship has been a thread all through the Gospels and it's never looked quite like people expected. From the wise men looking for a king and finding a baby, to Jesus riding on a donkey, to the soldiers sticking a crown of thorns on his head – Christ the King is not like any other king.

The disciples must have wept when they heard about Jesus' trial before Pilate. They felt let down by the authorities, and they knew that they had let Jesus down too. And yet the deeper truth is that even when everything failed, Jesus did not stop being king. Nothing is able to stop God's kingdom from growing. Pilate may have played his part in Jesus' journey to the cross, just as Judas and the other disciples did. But ultimately the love of God has more power than anything – and it is this powerful love at the heart of the kingship of Christ that we celebrate and acknowledge today. As the year turns, let us centre our lives once again on Christ the King. ☺



Eternal God, who is king for ever, open our eyes to the power of your love, that we may give our lives to the work of the kingdom, today and always. Amen.

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Well the ram has gone home for another year and I can now go into the sheep field to check the ewes and trim their feet. For most of November the field is pretty much

out of bounds for us as, being butted by a ram protecting his ewes can be rather uncomfortable. So now we begin the four months of watching and waiting, which is so much like the Advent season. God and the unborn lambs are in our midst, we respond to the gradual change but until the day of birthing it's easy to forget that slow movement to newness. Immanuel, God with us, is true all the time and in every season, but it takes watching and waiting to really live it and know its truth in our lives. Might it be far-fetched to say that this world is pregnant with God? ☺

“Your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. Psalm 139:10

National Parks Snowdonia

by Jo Jones

My visits to Snowdonia National Park are memorable for a failed attempt to reach the top of Snowdon, as stormy winds blew me sideways; for a delightful steam-train trip up through the hills, followed by a disastrous teashop stop, when my then toddlers tipped over drinks; and a

rain-drenched visit to Harlech Castle.

This dramatically stunning area is said to have been saved by erratic weather from mass tourism. Yet the views of the mountains – particularly when they open up through rainclouds and the sun beams through – never fail to make me catch my breath and shut me up, while at the same time opening up new spaces in my mind and heart. The views of the sea from the mountains, or from the coastal footpaths, bring with them the cry of choughs, kittiwakes and gulls. I am silenced, wrapped in this audiovisual psalm to our God. ☺

