

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021

Christ The King

**Collect**

Eternal Father,  
whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven  
that he might rule over all things as Lord and King:  
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit  
and in the bond of peace,  
and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

**First reading**

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

As I watched,  
thrones were set in place,  
and an Ancient One took his throne,  
his clothing was white as snow,  
and the hair of his head like pure wool;  
his throne was fiery flames,  
and its wheels were burning fire.  
A stream of fire issued  
and flowed out from his presence.  
A thousand thousands served him,  
and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.  
The court sat in judgment,  
and the books were opened.  
As I watched in the night visions,  
I saw one like a human being  
coming with the clouds of heaven.

And he came to the Ancient One  
and was presented before him.  
To him was given dominion  
and glory and kingship,

that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
that shall not pass away,  
and his kingship is one  
that shall never be destroyed.

### **Psalm 93**

1 The Lord is King;

he has put on splendid apparel;  
the Lord has put on his apparel  
and girded himself with strength.

2 He has made the whole world so sure  
that it cannot be moved;

3 Ever since the world began, your throne has been established;  
you are from everlasting.

4 The waters have lifted up, O Lord,  
the waters have lifted up their voice;  
the waters have lifted up their pounding waves.

5 Mightier than the sound of many waters,  
mightier than the breakers of the sea,  
mightier is the Lord who dwells on high.

6 Your testimonies are very sure,  
and holiness adorns your house, O Lord,  
for ever and for evermore.

### **Second reading**

Revelation 1:4b-8

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to  
come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and  
from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and  
the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and  
made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him  
be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Look! He is coming with the clouds;  
every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him;  
and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.  
So it is to be. Amen.

'I am the Alpha and the Omega', says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

### **Gospel reading**

John 18:33-37

Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

### **Reflection – Christ the King**

The name Fred Kaan may seem familiar to you. Born in Haarlem in the Netherlands, in 1929 he went on to become a pastor in the Congregational Church in Britain in the 1950s. He served in various parts of Britain, including a spell as chair of the Council for World Mission, which sent him to Congregational churches worldwide. He also worked towards the uniting of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches to create the United Reform Church in the late 1960s. Returning to church-based ministry he served in the West Midlands until he retired in 1989 to Penrith in the Lake District, where he died in 2009.

His name may seem familiar to you, because, along with a very busy working life and ministry, and even in retirement, he wrote hymns. Believing strongly in the use of more understandable/modern wording he produced six collections of hymns, and received several awards for his work. The now familiar hymn "For the healing of the nations", was commissioned from him by Coventry Cathedral, to be used on Remembrance Sunday.

In the hymn book we now use there are seven of his hymns, and it is one of those that seems especially relevant today. Today we celebrate Christ the King. It is the last Sunday of the church's year, before we go into Advent and the time of preparation for Christ's return. It is today that we remind ourselves of the great glory of God, of His Kingship, and of what He sacrificed to come to earth as a baby, child and man to show us His infinite love. It is a timely reminder of His glory, as today's readings from Daniel and Revelation describe.

The hymn that Fred Kaan wrote in the late sixties describes this Kingdom. The very first line says it all: "We have a king who rides a donkey". I recall singing this with the Sunday School I taught then, with great gusto. The hymn has both the great advantage....and the great disadvantage!!....of being sung to the tune of "What shall we do with the drunken sailor?", even using the last line of the chorus "early in the morning"....only this refers to the resurrection. You can find it in our hymn book at no. 799.

In the simplest of words the first lines of three of the verses sum up the sort of king that Jesus is: "We have a king who rides a donkey", "We have a king who cares for people", "We have a King with a bowl and towel".

In His words to Pilate in today's gospel from John 18 Jesus tells him, and us, that His kingdom is not from this world, but something very different. He is a king unlike any one before or since. As Kaan's hymn reminds us, we have a King who is the humble, loving, servant of the people in His care.

Jesus, the King of Heaven, came into this world to create a kingdom that would conform to none of the expected norms. His kingdom is of the heart and of the soul. As we pray the Lord's Prayer in the service or at home, we pray "thy kingdom come". With those words we are asking that the hearts of all people may turn to love God and that the subjects of His kingdom may be just as humble, caring and loving as their King. Let us also pray that we may follow faithfully the example of our King in humility, love and service.

Alison