

**Christ the King,
Sunday, 21st November 2021**



Revd Jax is on leave this week, so Alastair Barron has kindly allowed me to send out his Reflection on 'Hope'.

I started supporting the Scottish rugby union side when I was about 13. There is a pretty loose Scottish connection within my family but it is pretty loose – we have a family tartan, though, and my Father used to play the bagpipes - actually pretty well. Mostly, to be truthful, I supported Scotland because everyone else supported England at my school – a minor boarding school in deepest Somerset.

We have had some successes, a triple crown or two and certainly we've had some world class players - Andy Irvine, Ian McLaughlin, the Hastings brothers. Mostly though I've just had to hope that the results would go our way – hope

It's a funny old time of year isn't it – in the aftermath of All Souls and Remembrance. Easy perhaps to feel it all weighing heavily on our shoulders – some great memories hopefully but essentially all about death, loss, mourning, missing people. We have the funeral of an uncle of Caroline's on 24th. He died 10 days ago after a relatively short illness. Predictable but still shocking. A blessed relief frankly, but still sad.

But then, in those moments of darkness, of sadness, our faith hits us squarely between the eyes and lifts us up to the better, happier future we hope for. There are a myriad of texts talking about hope and I chose Paul's words to the Romans for our reading today

‘May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing’ ‘The God of hope’. Paul’s words take us directly to the character of our God, directly to His ability to change us and our circumstances no matter how bad we might think they are, acting within us to take us forward - positively, purposefully.

Hope is an amazing force within us individually and as a group – transformative, empowering. It is what the military would call a ‘force multiplier’. That is something that enables us to achieve a greater result through some endeavour than might have been expected, a sort of 2 plus 2 equals 6 situation. It enables us to see beyond current difficulties and to aspire to something better, perhaps something happier, but more than that, it then also enables us to act and achieve that aspiration, that greater goal.

That’s all wonderful for us but yet there’s even more!!

Advent starts in a couple of weeks – advent, the ‘Coming’, the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of man as he often called himself. We have that 4-week period when we prepare ourselves for the arrival of a child; the child; the child who grew into adulthood in an apparently normal Jewish household, sharing all the frailties of the human condition, the joys, the sorrows, the anxieties, the hopes. Apparently one of us.

Except he was not one of us. He was God’s gift to us, a symbol of hope, a living manifestation of God’s hopes for us and our hopes for us and our lives. This child grew up to be a man, to walk the earth amongst us and then, as an adult and after 3 years of radical ministry, telling us of God’s love for us, showing us God’s power through His presence, his words, his miracles, he made the ultimate sacrifice, to atone for our sins and fulfil God’s promise through him and so to carry all our hopes. Extraordinary.

So, I’ll continue to hope that Scotland will win a major tournament: a 6-nations, the world cup even. Also, frankly more importantly and because our faith tells me I can and should, I’ll continue to hope, in those dark, crowded moments when things seem pretty bleak but when, most of all, I know that our God is with me; that things will be better; that my efforts can change things.

Jeremiah (Ch 29 vs 11) records God’s words ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’

Alastair Barron



Collect Prayer for Christ the King

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.



‘Christ The King’ Painting, by Mary Fuhrmann

This was a common idea in medieval times. Known as “Christ in Majesty,” it was often found on portals of Cathedrals, stained glass windows and in paintings such as the Book of Kells. In 1925 the idea became a feast day known as “Christ the King.”

The close of the church year shows Christ the King dressed in royal purple, hand held in the gesture of teacher and as the fulfilment of the Law. He is enthroned over a rainbow, symbol of the old covenant, and the world is His footstool.

Christ is surrounded by the four canonical gospels symbolized by four living creatures that surround God's throne as described in Ezekiel 1: 1-15 and Revelation 4:7.

- Matthew: a winged man; starts with the genealogy of Jesus and His participation in humanity;
- Mark: a winged lion; starts with John the Baptist crying in the wilderness pointing to Christ as courageous and royal;
- Luke: a winged ox or bull; a figure of sacrifice, bearer of burdens, service and strength;
- John: eagle; soaring, mystical, connected more with the Ascension and heaven.

The bottom scene depicts the Last Judgment. The King is also a shepherd/ King of mercy and love. Each of us is irreplaceable and non-transferable. The door to faith is open to join the sheep.

John 18: 33-37 – Jesus before Pilate

Then Pilate entered the headquarters[a] 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."

Schedule of Services

This schedule is correct at this time but may be subject to future alterations – please check on our website for the most up-to-date information.

All services start at 10am, unless marked differently on the table below

Please could you continue to book to attend services by contacting the Benefice Office on 01962 880 845 or office@downsbenefice.org.uk

Please would you also continue to wear masks until we are advised otherwise.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>21st Nov</i>		Morning Prayer		8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	
<i>24th Nov (Wed)</i>			Mid-Week Holy Communion		
<i>28th Nov</i>	4pm – Advent Compline		Patronal Festival	Morning Prayer and Baptism	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
<i>5th Dec</i>	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	4pm – Posada		6pm – Autumn Mediations – Maximillian Kolbe
<i>12th Dec</i>	4pm – Advent Compline (tbc)	6pm – Carol Service	Holy Communion	6pm – Carol Service	10am - Carol Service
<i>19th Dec</i>	4pm – Carol Service	Holy Communion	6pm – Carol Service		
<i>22nd Dec (Wed)</i>			Mid-Week Holy Communion		
<i>24th Dec</i>	4pm – Crib Service	4.30pm – Nativity in the Barn	4pm – Crib service	4pm – Crib Service and 11.30pm – Midnight Service	2.30pm – Carol Service
<i>25th Dec</i>	Family Service	Family Service	Holy Communion	Family Service	Family Service
<i>26th Dec</i>	No Services				
<i>2nd Jan</i>	Morning Prayer		4pm – Café Church	10am – Patronal Festival - BCP Sung Eucharist	