

Connecting faith and daily life



Christ the King, the Alpha and Omega, Church of St Mary, New Trier, Minnesota

Love at the heart of kingship

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.

Fuel Poverty Part 2 – hope

by Lee Tulfer

Fuel poverty – not being able to afford enough energy to keep your home warm enough to stay healthy – has become a fact of life for millions of people over the past few years. Fuel debt is now the main type of debt that organisations such as Citizens Advice are seeing when people approach them for help and advice.

Being in fuel poverty creates fear – of debt, of health problems, of stigma – but a host of organisations are meeting that fear with hope. Charities and advice organisations, national and local, help people to deal with their energy suppliers, prevent disconnection, and manage fuel debt. Communities have come together to create warm spaces, where people who cannot heat their homes can find warmth, as well as a warm welcome.

As we look ahead to the season of Advent, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 🙏

People of the New Testament

Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42)

by Caroline Fletcher

Caroline explains what inspired her to write about one of the characters in her new book.

Many people feel uncomfortable with the common interpretation of the story of Mary and Martha, in which an angry Martha presses Jesus to tell Mary to give her a hand with preparing the meal, and Christ appears to have little sympathy with her.

Scholars have revisited this story, arguing that it is far more than a simple tale of sibling

rivalry or a petty disagreement over women's work. Ben Witherington III, for example, explains that sitting at a teacher's feet was normal for a disciple of a rabbi and describes this phrase as "a technical formula", indicating that Mary was a disciple of Jesus. These words, then, do not necessarily show that Mary was literally sitting at Jesus' feet, but suggest that she was a devoted disciple, as well as one of Christ's closest friends. 🙏

“The Lord sits enthroned as king for ever.”

Psalm 29:10