

Sunday November 20th, 2020.

Due to this second lockdown, church services are again suspended until further notice. We are beginning to put some plans together for Christmas services, but cannot be sure at this stage what it may be possible to offer.

This week's You Tube video has the theme of Christ the King and Annette is joined by organist Stuart McCarthy in Little Paxton Church.

The link will be found on the benefice Facebook page:

@thePaxtonsBenefice

Or on You Tube, search for Annette Reed and you should find it.

Both Southoe Church and Diddington churches will remain open during the pandemic for private prayer.

Great Paxton Church will be shut during November due to building work.

A Prayer

Lord of creation, as this painful year grows old:

renew our vision of life's essentials

re-awaken our concern for each other

re-energise our desire to build community

recreate a childlike trust within us

reconcile and heal all you have made

and let your Kingdom come.

Amen.

Rev Margaret Marshall.



FOUR

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe

Sunday November 22nd, 2020

"Keeping in Touch" Edition 35



Christ The King Sunday

The last Sunday in the Church's year before the season of Advent commences on November 29th

Annette writes:

Greetings everyone and I truly hope you are staying well and as cheerful as possible. I have met several people today who aren't exactly feeling fed up but are finding this second lockdown very tedious. We know why we have to do it and accept how important it is to protect lives and the NHS, but we mustn't feel guilty if we find ourselves missing our friends or leisure, work and social activities.

We have heard this week of new vaccines which are predicted to come on stream before the end of the year. There won't be an immediate improvement in the situation, but there is hope that as 2021 progresses, we may begin to come out of the pandemic's grip.

As his public ministry gained ground 2,000 years ago, many of Jesus' followers had the great hope that he would emerge as their new king, a powerful figure who would overthrow Roman rule in Judea and give the Jewish people the rights and liberties they longed for. Their hopes were dashed initially when instead of wearing a royal crown, he bore a crown of thorns and instead of carrying symbols of power, he carried a cross to his place of crucifixion. He told them he was a servant king, one who came to serve, not to be served. But how their hopes were realised beyond measure when he overcame death on the first Easter day and offered a royal pathway home to God for ever.

I will reflect more on Christ the King on page 3, but now I wish you all a safe and content week as we all offer to God our fervent hopes for the wellbeing of ourselves, those we know and love and all peoples who on earth do dwell.

With love and prayers, Annette. 01480 211048

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ONE

**A Reading for Christ the King Sunday.
John Chapter 18 v 33-37.**

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, " You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

**Collects for Christ the King Sunday
and the last Sunday before Advent.**

God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory. Amen.

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people, that they, bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be richly rewarded: through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.



In an act of will, O God, I place myself in your presence. In an act of faith, I open myself to your light. In an act of silence, O Lord, I rest in your glory. In an act of love, O Lord, I put myself in your hands.

Dorothy Kerin, 1889-1963

TWO

Reflections from Annette.

This Sunday is a special one, and the last Sunday of the Church year. Next week we begin a new cycle of themes and readings with the four Sundays of Advent. An old prayer book collect for today reminds us that it is 'Stir Up Sunday' a Sunday synonymous with Christmas puddings.

The great cry 'stir up' (from the Collect for the day) also reminded congregations to get the seasonal pudding made in plenty of time to mature before Christmas. An important addition to the mixture is a coin, whoever gets it on their plate on Christmas Day should apparently get worldly riches heaped upon them.

However, the prayer is actually asking God for something much more important. We are praying that God will stir up our wills, so that we might get on with doing the good works that he has planned for us to do.

Celebrating Christ the King is a relatively new addition to the church calendar, being introduced in the wake of WW1 and the rise of secular teachings and political movements. Its aim was to remind people that their ultimate loyalty wasn't to new dictators, but the true king of heaven, Jesus Christ. Though originating in the Roman Catholic church, it became popular in other denominations too.

But what can it mean for us today? How can we relate to Jesus as a king?

For some, the images of "king" may conjure up ideas of power and wealth and control, even of kings riding into battle.

But Jesus did not wear royal robes or seek political power. He hadn't come to set off an uprising and overthrow the ruling powers of his day as Pilate had suspected. Jesus is a king – but a king of love, love which he offers to us freely. A king of sacrifice, who takes all our wrongdoing to the cross and offers us forgiveness and a fresh start day by day. Jesus wants to be the king of our hearts and our lives. Not by coercion and threat, but by the sheer attractiveness of his love for us, his precious children. A king who offers us eternal life. His kingdom wasn't a particular place, but the love of God in people's lives. He called himself a servant king – and calls us to follow him likewise in the daily business of serving others.

Good luck with the Christmas puddings and may the love of Christ the King journey with you throughout Advent as it fast approaches.

THREE