

Pastoral Letter for Sunday 22 November

Ephesians 1:15-23

Dear Friends,

It seems that change is in the air. There has been: constant talk of a reset or relaunch of the inner workings of Downing Street, even as some of the MP's and the Prime Minister have to self-isolate; the anticipation of a second vaccine becoming available, eventually, with an even better rate of success; and the supermarket Christmas adverts have begun to appear on our screens.

In church, this Sunday also marks the last Sunday in the yearly cycle of bible readings (lectionary) that have focused primarily on Matthew's gospel. Later tradition refers to this Sunday as 'Christ the King', a time to recognise Christ in all his glory, with all power and authority given to him by God. What a contrast to the birth of baby, wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger or the bruised and broken figure on the cross. Neither of these convey an image of power and authority as the world would understand it, yet they too are an integral part of Jesus' journey.

So, at this time we are reminded of Christ, the King, with all the imagery of power that is given to us through scriptures, being seated on a throne, at God's right hand, administering judgment. In the letter to the Ephesians, we are shown how great God's power is by the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand, above absolutely everything and everyone throughout time. But before that, we are told that this immeasurable power is available to us! That we can ask and receive a spirit of wisdom that will help us to know the hope that we have been called to, the inheritance that awaits us.

Seeking and exerting power, in all its forms, has been and will continue to be a part of human life. The examples above are testament to that, the tussle for political power and influence, each nation's rush to acquire vaccines and therefore be amongst the first to be able to return to

'normal' and even the Christmas adverts are trying to convince us to spend money with them -mostly by offering empowering messages so we can feel better about it.

We are living in times where feeling powerless at some point is becoming part and parcel of our daily lives and yet it is through us, regardless of our perceived power status, as his church, that Christ is made known in the world and that includes Jesus Christ who has authority, power and dominion over all. When we pray, we pray and have faith in this power. A power that seeks to bring life in all fullness to us and to build us up no matter the situation. A power in which we can have hope.

Times may be changing, earthly power fluctuating but Christ is King.

Every blessing

Rev Karen