

# Meon Bridge Benefice

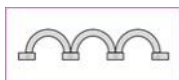
Corhampton & Meonstoke, Droxford, Exton with Preshaw



**The Eucharist**

**In Time of Pandemic**

**King Alfred the Great**



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our service of the Eucharist – our small sacrifice of thanksgiving on this, the Commemoration of King Alfred the Great -who shares a feast day with St Chad, a pupil of St Aidan and Abbot of Lastingham, then Bishop of Mercia and later Litchfield and St Cedd, also a pupil of St Aidan and Abbot of Lastingham, then Bishop of the East Saxons.

This is a fitting season for our service as it forms part of our celebration of the millennium of our Saxon Church in Corhampton.

## INTROIT HYMN King Alfred's Hymn

1. As the sun doth daily rise,  
Brightening all the morning skies,  
So to Thee with one accord  
Lift we up our hearts, O Lord.
2. Day by day provide us food,  
For from Thee come all things good;  
Strength unto our souls afford  
From Thy living bread, O Lord.
3. Be our guard in sin and strife;  
Be the leader of our life;  
Lest from Thee we stray abroad,  
Stay our wayward feet, O Lord.
4. Quickened by the Spirit's grace  
All Thy holy will to trace  
While we daily search Thy Word,  
Wisdom true impart, O Lord.
5. Praise we, with the heavenly host,  
Father, Son and Holy Ghost;  
Thee would we with one accord  
Praise and magnify, O Lord.

### **As the Sun Doth Daily Rise**

*Matutinus altiora*

Anon.

Original Latin text attributed to King Alfred

Adapted by Horatio Nelson

Source: Hymns for Saints' Days, and Other Hymns, 1864

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## COLLECT FOR King Alfred the Great

God, our maker and redeemer,  
we pray you of your great mercy  
and by the power of your holy cross  
to guide us by your will and to shield us from our foes:  
that, after the example of your servant Alfred,  
we may inwardly love you above all things;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING

*2 Samuel 23.1-5*

Now these are the last words of David:

The oracle of David, son of Jesse,  
the oracle of the man whom God exalted,  
the anointed of the God of Jacob,  
the favourite of the Strong One of Israel:

The spirit of the LORD speaks through me,  
his word is upon my tongue.  
The God of Israel has spoken,  
the Rock of Israel has said to me:  
One who rules over people justly,  
ruling in the fear of God,  
is like the light of morning,  
like the sun rising on a cloudless morning,  
gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

Is not my house like this with God?  
For he has made with me an everlasting covenant,  
ordered in all things and secure.  
Will he not cause to prosper  
all my help and my desire?

*At the end the reader may say*

This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

### SECOND READING

*1 John 4.13-16*

<sup>13</sup>We know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup>God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup>So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

*At the end the reader may say*

This is the word of the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

**GRADUAL HYMN** We bring you, Lord, our prayer and praise

- 1 We bring you, Lord, our prayer and praise  
that every child of earth  
should live and grow in freedom's ways,  
in dignity and worth.
- 2 We praise for such a task begun  
to serve each other's need,  
for every cause of justice won,  
for every fetter freed.
- 3 Our prayers are for a world in pain  
where force and fear prevail,

the plough becomes the sword again,  
and hope and harvests fail.

4 Alike our prayer and praise express  
the wants of humankind,  
that those in bondage and distress  
their larger freedoms find.

5 So may we still maintain the fight  
till earth's oppressions cease  
before the universal right  
to liberty and peace.

6 In Christ we learn to love and care  
and spread his truth abroad;  
and in his Name we lift our prayer:  
'Your kingdom come, O Lord.'

**We bring you, Lord, our prayer and praise**

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)

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## GOSPEL READING

*Please remain standing.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

I have called you friends, says the Lord,  
for all that I have heard from my Father  
I have made known to you.

**All Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

*When the Gospel is announced the reader says*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *Mark*. (✠)

**All** (✠)

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Mark 10.42-45*

<sup>42</sup>So Jesus called the disciples and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. <sup>43</sup>But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.' (✠)

*At the end:*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

**\*\*\*START\*\*\***

## SERMON

### Alfred the Great - King of the West Saxons and Scholar

Jesus and the disciples have arrived in Caesarea Philippi and St Mark is presenting three predictions about Jesus' passion in the verses that precede today's gospel. Each prediction is followed by clear evidence the disciples have failed to grasp the significance of what is to take place and James and John have even come forward to Jesus and asked him to grant their request that one of them might sit on his right hand and one on his left in his Glory - in other words in his Kingdom. James and John seem to have a notion of an earthly Kingdom and monarchy, whilst Jesus is talking about the Kingdom of God and servant leadership.

Perhaps the picture that James and John have in their mind is something like the rich palaces of the puppet-rulers in this part of the eastern Roman Empire. Perhaps they have visions of a glorious throne, fine robes, and a regal crown. Perhaps, the sounds they have in mind are those of courtly music playing in the background with the sweet smell of precious and costly perfumes wafting through the atmosphere. Perhaps, they envisage their feet walking upon marble floors. Their vision seems to have Jesus sitting like one of these eastern monarchs upon his sumptuous throne with two empty thrones one either side of the king's and they are seeking those seats of power for themselves.

However, Jesus is painting a different picture of kingship. At the centre of the narrative is the Passion, so Jesus's picture is not one of a sumptuous throne, but rather a cross on which his brutalised body is hanging. This rough wooden cross is far from being remotely like a velvet-covered and bejewelled throne. Any robes are simple and removed by soldiers as part of the humiliation or blood-stained scant coverings. The crown is a crown of thorns. The sounds of those of the rabble and the smell is one of death; and under foot there is no plush carpet or cool marble only stones and dust and tufts of parched coarse grass. Either side of the crucified Christ no favoured seat or stool is to be found, but two empty crosses with sharp nails at the foot awaiting any who will be raised up alongside the King of Peace. Jesus presents a model of kingship that is about service and sacrifice, it is the antithesis of personal worldly honour and self-indulgence.

We know that King Alfred's faith was strong, let us explore how the narrative of his life not only informs us about his faith but also how it informs us about the shaping of English justice and a model of law and government rooted in Judeo-Christian values and teaching.

Alfred was born in Wantage in 849, son of Aethelwulf, King of Wessex. Alfred became king at the age of 22 in 871, a most difficult and dangerous time for Wessex, engaged as it was in a struggle against the Danes who occupied most of north and east England. However he bought time and peace by paying 'Danegeld'. But from 875 the Danes went on the offensive again and much of Wessex was overrun. Alfred went into hiding at Athelney in the Somerset marshes, quietly gathered about him as many loyal Saxons as he could find in preparation for a counter-attack and, when he engaged the Danes at Edington in 878, won a famous victory. The Danes were obliged to withdraw to north and east England (the 'Danelaw') and their leaders were required to submit to baptism, probably in order to lessen the possibility of persecution of Christian English by pagan Danes in the Danelaw. In the south and west, Wessex, under Alfred, was now supreme since the successive Danish invasions had crushed out of existence most of the individual Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Alfred made Wessex a rallying point for all the Saxons and by freeing the country from the invaders unwittingly unified England and prepared the way for the eventual supremacy of his successors. Although there were further invasions, incursions and battles, Alfred was able to maintain his supremacy in the south and west and the Danes gradually settled down to peaceful occupations in the north and east.

Historically, great wartime leaders have not always proved so successful at peacetime government. Alfred, however, proved an able and farsighted ruler, though he suffered from an unknown chronic illness, possibly psychosomatic. A priority was defence: Alfred created the first English navy, improved the efficiency of military call-up and created a system of fortified

boroughs for defence in time of war. Religious, educational and legal matters were also important to him. Though brought up illiterate he learned to read and write in his late thirties and did much to encourage Anglo- Saxon scholarship, especially the translations of key religious texts into the vernacular. It was a source of some regret to Alfred that, having acquired a thirst for knowledge comparatively late in life, Wessex lacked scholars to teach him as much as he desired.

The only English monarch ever to be called 'the great', Alfred died on 26 October 899, and was buried in the Old Minster at Winchester, just a few miles from here. He was a man of rigorous and sincere personal spirituality unusual for a lay person in Anglo-Saxon England. He compiled a personal prayer book of psalms, readings and the daily office, much of which he learned by heart, and always carried it with him. Alfred also endowed a number of monasteries as key spiritual educational and social centres and he codified the English legal system, giving it a clear Christian basis.

As well as the emergence of a nascent Kingdom of England under Alfred, we can also see the growth of the Kingdom of God through his leadership and an approach to monarchy rooted in faithful service like that of our present Queen, Amen.

### **OFFERTORY HYMN** Rejoice, O land, in God thy might

1. Rejoice, O land, in God thy might,  
His will obey, Him serve aright;  
For Thee the saints uplift their voice:  
Fear not, O land, in God rejoice.
2. Glad shalt thou be, with blessing crowned,  
With joy and peace thou shalt abound;  
Yea, Love with thee shall make His home  
Until thou see God's kingdom come.
3. He shall forgive thy sins untold:  
Remember thou His love of old;  
Walk in His way, His word adore,  
And keep His truth for evermore.

Rejoice, O land, in God thy might  
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### **PRAYER AT THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE**

Eternal God,  
we give you thanks for the triumph of Christ  
in the life of your servant *King Alfred the Great*.  
Accept this sacrifice of thanks and praise  
and give us grace to run our course with faith,  
that we may come with all your saints  
to the eternal banquet in heaven,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

## POST-COMMUNION HYMN At the Lamb's high feast we sing

- 1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing  
Praise to our victorious King,  
Who has washed us in the tide  
Flowing from his pierced side;  
Praise we him whose love divine  
Gives his sacred blood for wine,  
Gives his body for the feast,  
Christ the victim, Christ the priest.
- 2 Where the paschal blood is poured,  
Death's dark angel sheathes his sword;  
Israel's hosts triumphant go  
Through the wave that drowns the foe.  
Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed,  
Paschal victim, paschal bread;  
With sincerity and love  
Eat we manna from above.
- 3 Mighty victim from the sky,  
Pow'rs of hell beneath thee lie;  
Death is conquered in the fight,  
Thou hast brought us life and light:  
Hymns of glory and of praise,  
Risen Lord, to thee we raise;  
Holy Father, praise to thee,  
With the Spirit, ever be.
- 4 Easter triumph, Easter joy,  
Nothing now can this destroy;  
From sin's pow'r do thou set free  
Souls new-born, O Lord, in thee.  
Hymns of glory and of praise,  
Risen Lord, to thee we raise;  
Holy Father, praise to thee,  
With the Spirit, ever be.

### At the Lamb's high feast we sing

Anon.

Ad regias Agni dapes (7th Century)

Tr. Robert Campbell (1814 – 1868)

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## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION Alfred

*Silence is kept.*

God our redeemer,  
who inspired Alfred to witness to your love  
and to work for the coming of your kingdom:  
may we, who in this sacrament share the bread of heaven,  
be fired by your Spirit to proclaim the gospel in our daily living  
and never to rest content until your kingdom come,  
on earth as it is in heaven;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**RECESSIONAL HYMN** Judge eternal, throned in splendour

- 1 Judge eternal, throned in splendour,  
Lord of lords and King of kings,  
with thy living fire of judgment  
purge this realm of bitter things:  
solace all its wide dominion  
with the healing of thy wings.
- 2 Still the weary folk are pining  
for the hour that brings release:  
and the city's crowded clangour  
cries aloud for sin to cease;  
and the homesteads and the woodlands  
plead in silence for their peace.
- 3 Crown, O Lord, thine own endeavour;  
cleave our darkness with thy sword;  
cheer the faint and feed the hungry  
with the richness of thy word;  
cleanse the body of this nation  
through the glory of the Lord.

**Judge eternal, throned in splendour**  
Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918)

RHUDDLAN  
Source: Welsh

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Darch, J.H. and Burns, S.K. (2004) *Saints on Earth*, London: Church House Publishing

**HYMNS**

**As the Sun Doth Daily Rise**

Matutinus altiora

Anon.

Original Latin text attributed to King Alfred

Adapted by Horatio Nelson

Source: Hymns for Saints' Days, and Other Hymns, 1864

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Deus Tuorum Militum

Anon.

Source: The Grenoble Antiphoner (1753).

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**We bring you, Lord, our prayer and praise**

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)

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**WILTSHIRE**

George Thomas Smart (1776 – 1867)

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**Rejoice, O land, in God thy might**

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**TALLIS' CANON**

Thomas Tallis (c.1505 – 1585).

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**At the Lamb's high feast we sing**

Anon.

Ad regias Agni dapes (7th Century)

Tr. Robert Campbell (1814 – 1868)

**SALZBURG**

Jakob Hintze (1622 – 1702)

Harm. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750).

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**Judge eternal, throned in splendour**

Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918)

**RHUDDLAN**

Source: Welsh traditional melody

in Musical Relics of Welsh Bards, 1800

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**Mass Setting**

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