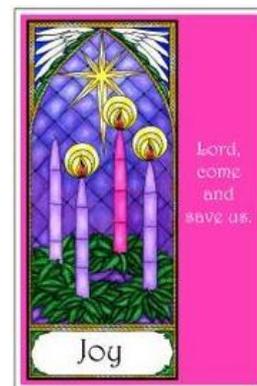


# Benefice of the Piddle Valley, Hilton & Ansty, Melcombe Horsey and Cheselbourne

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent  
(Altar Colour Purple)

**Readings:** Isa 61: 1-4, 8-end, Psalm 126, 1 Thess 5: 16-24, John 1: 6-8, 19-28



**Collect:** O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

## **Isaiah 61:1-4 (ESV) - The Year of the LORD's Favour**

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (ESV) Final Instructions and Benediction**

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

**Comment:** There is abundant cause for Christians to rejoice and to give thanks in all circumstances, Paul wrote in what may have been his earliest letter. With Silas and Timothy, Paul had visited Thessalonica during his second missionary journey and his first evangelistic foray into Macedonia (Acts 16-18). There they gained a few converts, probably both Jewish and Greek (Acts 17:4). Their chief opposition came from some of the Jewish population who forced them to leave hastily for Berea, Athens, and then Corinth. The main purpose of the letter was to give some instructions concerning the future advent of the Lord Jesus. Apparently the Thessalonians had not fully understood what Paul had taught them during his short stay there. 'How to live the Christian life' while 'waiting' for that anticipated Parousia also played a prominent part in the letter. What was to become the typical Pauline phrase, "in Christ," characterised much of Paul's teaching. This

reading commends genuine love among the Christian fellowship and encourages the application of spiritual gifts to their living with one another in circumstances which provided anything but a favourable milieu. Note the number of those spiritual gifts named in this short passage: respect and esteem for spiritual leaders, peace among themselves, patience with those who are fainthearted and weak, magnanimity toward one another, rejoicing in constant prayer and thanksgiving, abstinence from every form of evil. Again and again in his correspondence with other Christian communities, Paul would return to and expand upon these same virtues (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Galatians 5:16-6:10). Note also the counsel "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of the prophets (or alternatively, do not despise prophecies)" (vs.19-20). This may be a reference to the Jewish scriptures which were the central feature of every synagogue service. Because there were as yet no "Christian scriptures," those were the texts to which the earliest apostles and their converts turned to learn about the promised Messiah they believed Jesus of Nazareth to be.

Verse 23 contains a word which epitomizes what it means to be a Christian: "sanctify.", meaning 'Holy' or 'otherly'. It comes about, Paul made clear, not by our efforts, but by God's grace active in our lives. Here, it has profound implications of a spiritual and physical nature. To understand this we need only recall that the word holiness has the same Anglo-Saxon root as wholeness, healing and health. Jewish thought so familiar to Paul had no concept of any division between body and spirit. This is coupled with "blameless," free of guilt. Sound moral values, a holy and a healthy life come from being obedient to the Spirit, Paul said to the Thessalonians and to us. Holy living prepares us for the coming of Christ which the early Christians expected at any moment. Paul spoke of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as actively engaged in the daily lives of the believers (v 17, 18, 23). Then in verse 24, he made the simple statement: "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this." He did not identify whether he referred to one or other of the three persons of the Trinity, he would not. It never would have occurred to him to do so. All were involved in the dynamic spiritual process we call "sanctification" which place within the individual and within the faithful community, whereby loving relationships with God and with each other are paramount.

### **Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28 (ESV) - The Testimony of John the Baptist**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) They asked him, "Then why are you baptising, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptise with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptising.

**Comment:** The introductory paragraphs of John's Gospel takes us to the beginning of time using metaphors, such as Logos (Word), life, light, glory, plan and truth to describe God's full revelation in Jesus, the Word made flesh. The focus shifted immediately to John the Baptist and his ministry preparing the way for Jesus, the light of the world. These excerpts from John 1 deal exclusively with the role of the Baptist. The author of the gospel distinguished John the Baptist from Jesus as the one who is only a witness to the light. He set the stage for Jesus'

appearance by reiterating this distinction when challenged by the religious leaders of Israel. The particular concern of the Pharisees was ritual purity and total adherence to the law of Moses. Jews did not need to be baptised because they were already “sons of the covenant.” The forerunners of the Messiah would baptise only those who converted to the true faith and so became members of the elect people, Israel. Thus, John’s ministry of preaching repentance leading to baptism was an insult to the Pharisees as if he was saying - become proper Jews!

**Short Preface:** And now we give you thanks because you sent him to redeem us from sin and death and to make us inheritors of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may with joy behold his appearing, and in confidence may stand before him.

**Post Communion:** We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever. **Amen**

**Blessing:** Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

### **Benefice Prayer list.**



❖ Please pray for those who are suffering from poor health, those recovering from hospital treatment or surgery, for the grieving and lonely; including: Frances Mallett, Ann Lambert, Tim Jeanes, Geoff Harris, Robin Dibble, June Kellaway, Robin Saunders, Anna Thomas, Bernard & David. For all those in care homes, and the staff, including: Roger Gray (Dorchester) and June Smith (Warminster).

❖ Please pray for our friends, family and neighbours, as we prepare for the joy of Christmas to come, remembering those who find this season difficult.



#### **Requiescat in pace**

Valerie Moreton  
Stanley Calvert

### **Important information**

**Please be aware of the recent ‘Police telephone call scam’ trying to extort money over the telephone and via a courier. This happened in Bridport a few days ago and a resident in Hilton has been contacted by this scammer. Ginny**

## Benefice Notices

*Love God, Love thy neighbour  
and follow Covid safety protocols  
set out in church.*

THE  
**WEEK**  
AHEAD

### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Readings: 2 Sam 7: 1-11, 16, Psalm 89: 1-8, Rom 16: 25-End, Luke 1: 39-45

9.30am Communion at Hilton

11.00am Communion at Piddlehinton

11.00am Horsey Half Hour at Melcombe Horsey

6.00pm Evening Prayer at Piddletrenthide



### **Carol Services - Outdoor ½ hr - bring a brolly, chair or torch as required!**

*(Disposable carol sheets will be provided)*

#### **Wednesday 23rd December**

Melcombe Horsey - The Green Melcombe Bingham 5pm

Piddlehinton – Paynes Close 6.30pm

#### **Thursday 24th December – Christmas Eve**

Cheselbourne – With Christingles, Village Hall Christmas tree @ 3.30pm

Piddletrenthide – With Christingles, The Green Church Lane @ 5.00pm

Alton Pancras – Church Driveway Christmas Tree @ 6.00pm



### **Live Streaming**

*The daily offices will continue to be streamed daily via Facebook*



Monday @ 8am Morning Prayer

Tuesday @ 8am Morning Prayer & 8pm Compline

Wednesday @ 8am Morning Prayer & 6pm Evening Prayer

Thursday @ 9am Communion & 8pm Compline

Friday @ 6.00pm Compline

Saturday @ 6.00pm Devotions / Evening Prayer



Rector - Fr. Roger J. Butcher SSC KSJ

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