

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

**Sunday 20th December 2020 – 4th Sunday of Advent
(Altar Colour Purple)**

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



Collect: God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

2 Samuel 7:1-11 (ESV) - The LORD's Covenant with David

Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you." But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

Luke 1:39-45 (ESV) - Mary Visits Elizabeth

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy

Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

Commentary: Luke brings together the two mothers-to-be Mary and Elizabeth that both may praise God’s activity in their lives and that Elizabeth’s child is presented as the ‘precursor’ to Mary’s child. The context especially, verse 44 makes clear that by ‘leaping’ John recognises Jesus as Lord. Saint John Chrysostom comments: *“See how new and wonderful this mystery is. He [John] has not yet left the womb and speaks by leaping, he is not yet allowed to cry out but makes himself heard by his actions, he has not yet seen the light but points to the sun, he is not yet born but keen to act as precursor’.*

The new and wonderful mystery is tied to the creator’s fulfilment and promises. Biblical parallels abound with the leaping of the baby with that of Esau and Jacob in Rebecca’s womb (Gen 25:22).

Much modern thinking renders the resurrection as a metaphor to raising above life’s problems or just another myth, rather than the physical activity in the visibility of the wombs, of the two-women and the invisibility of the tomb or womb on Easter Sunday. Relating the activity of the Holy Spirit within the wombs of the two mothers-to-be, as the precursors to the tomb demonstrates the soteriological divine-plan of man’s redemption by his creator.

Such a divine-plan illustrates those who are highly favoured. St Bede comments that Elizabeth blesses Mary using the same words as the archangel, ‘to show that she should be honoured by angels and by men and why she should indeed be revered above all other women’.

Such a divine greeting is enshrined in the ‘Hail Mary’. A prayer of the model believer, trusting in her fidelity of God. When Christians say the Hail Mary they repeat the divine greetings, ‘rejoicing’ with Mary in her dignity as the mother and first Christian, thanking God for giving us Jesus through Mary.

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: Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **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 rest upon you now and forever. **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.



Benefice Notices

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

THE
WEEK
AHEAD

Sunday 27th December 2020

Christmas 1 – Altar Colour White / Gold

9.30 Communion at Alton Pancras. 6.00pm Evening Prayer at Hilton

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



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