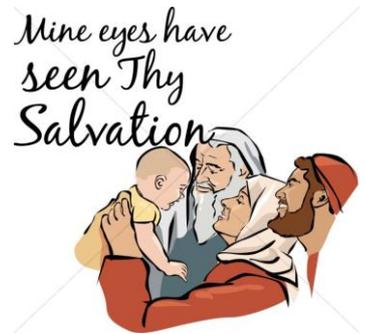


Benefice of the Piddle Valley, Hilton & Ansty, Melcombe Horsey and Cheselbourne

31st January 2021 – Candlemas
(Altar Colour White/Gold)



Readings: Malachi 3:1-5, Psalm 24:7-10, Hebrews 2:14-18, Luke 2:22-40

Introduction and Prayer of Blessing:

Forty days ago we celebrated the joyful feast of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today we recall the holy day on which Jesus is presented in the temple, fulfilling the Law of Moses and at the same time going to meet his faithful people. Led by the Spirit, Simeon and Anna came to the temple, recognised Christ as their Lord, and proclaimed him with joy. United by the Spirit, may we now go to the house of God to welcome Christ the Lord. There we shall recognise him in the breaking of bread until he comes again in glory.

Let us pray; God our Father, source of all light, today you revealed to Simeon your Light of revelation to the nations. Bless + these candles and make them holy, that we who observe their light in your temple may come with joy to the light of glory. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Collect: Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty, whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple, in substance of our flesh: grant that we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts, by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Malachi 3:1-5 (ESV) - The Messenger of the LORD

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.”

COMMENT: Malachi 3:1-5 is a passage often quoted in connection with John the Baptist (Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:17,76; 7:27). But the reference connecting with the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is the second rather than first part of 3:1: “And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.”

This of course is a connection utilised by the lectionary compilers and not one used by Luke. The passage in its own right is striking. The Lord is judge, is its theme. This judge is concerned to refine and purify 'the descendants of Levi' (verse 3b), that is, the priests who run the temple. Then the offering of the city and nation, 'Judah and Jerusalem' will please the Lord (verse 3c). Yet the judgment of God is not single focused, as though sorting out the temple is sufficient to please the Lord. Verse 5 is a challenging indictment of a range of wrong behaviours, with a very strong condemnation of those who treat others unjustly and without mercy. Between temple and community, religion and society, ancient Judah is forthrightly spoken to by God through his prophet.

Luke 2:22-40 (ESV) - Jesus Presented at the Temple

And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

The Return to Nazareth

And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favour of God was upon him.

COMMENT: When the infant Jesus is brought to the temple no one really knows or understands that 'the King of Glory', as described in the psalm, has come into the temple. Simeon and Anna have an understanding. They have prayerfully waited for 'the Lord's Messiah' (Luke 2: 26). What actually happened at 'the presentation of Jesus in the Temple'? The Mosaic Law does speak about 'sanctification of the first born to God's possession' (Exodus 13:2, 12, 15; 34:19; Numbers 3:13) but this was no longer taken literally, the tribe of Levi having been set aside for the LORD's permanent possession instead (Numbers 8:17 following). An alternative of paying five shekels to a priest existed, but there was no requirement that this was paid at the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke anchors this story in the Law (2:22-24,39) and it appears that Joseph and Mary were being devout upholding this cue from the law. Thus we read about a presentation which fits the circumstances of Jesus' conception and birth: an extraordinary beginning to his life and magnificent welcome

via angels and shepherds. What devout parents in such a situation would not take their child to the Temple of the Lord? It is always worth pondering the faithfulness of Simeon and Anna. Who among us can wait so patiently on the Lord for his will to be done and his word to be fulfilled?

Benefice Prayer list.

We 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, Gill Howell, Geoff Harris, Reg Hanbury, Hannah Parsons, 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), and Irene Butcher (Reading) who is currently suffering from Covid-19.

Please pray for those in the benefice (and the wider community) who are self-isolating or shielding, at this time.

Please pray for the work of the Foodbanks and homeless charities.

Please pray for all keyworkers, including clergy & funeral directors; and all critical care staff who are under much pressure.



Requiescat in pace

Hamish Carron Brown (Haslemere)
Andrew Steven (Ireland)

Foodbank: On Thursday, donations were delivered from Piddletrenthide, Hilton and Cheselbourne.

- *Donations can be left in any of the benefice churches when open for private prayer (Cheselbourne/Hilton - box in the porch).*
- *Donations can also be left at The Vicarage, Piddletrenthide (box in porch).*
- *Covid Safety: donations are quarantined for 48-72 hrs before delivering to Dorchester.*
- *Please ensure all donations are in date.*



A tin/packet a week added to your online shopping order can then be taken to church while you are out for your daily exercise.

Benefice Notices



Please arrive in good time to ensure you can follow the Covid safety protocols set out in church.

THE
**WEEK
AHEAD**

- *Wear a face-covering*
- *Sanitise Hands*
- *Sign in*
- *Find a seat allowing for 2m personal distancing from other households.*
- *Avoid mingling*

School Work continues; this Week's Assembly presentation is on Candlemas – copy the link to view <https://youtu.be/edNsOSXjFiY>



Sunday 7th February 2021

2nd Sunday before lent (Altar Colour – Green)

Readings: Prov. 8: 1, 22-31, Psalm 104: 26-37, Col. 1: 15-20, John 1: 1-14

9.30am Communion Service at Alton – Fr. Roger

11.00am Communion Service at Cheselbourne – Rev'd Helier

6.00pm Evening Prayer at Piddlehinton – Fr. Roger

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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