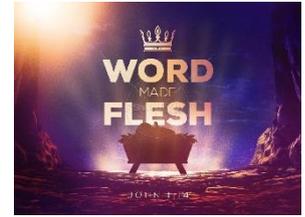


**Benefice of the Piddle Valley,
Hilton & Ansty, Melcombe Horsey
and Cheselbourne**



**7th February 2021 - 2nd before lent
(Altar Colour Green)**

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

Collect: Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, now and for ever. **Amen**

Prov. 8: 1, 22-31 (ESV) - The Blessings of Wisdom

Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice?

“The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world. When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.”

Colossians 1:15-20 (ESV) - The Pre-eminence of Christ

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

COMMENT: Colossians 1:15-20, is a beautiful poem used by Paul in the church at Colossae. It's possible that this was not only a masterful piece of prose, but that it might also have been a hymn sung by the Colossians, a small band of believers struggling to find their place as a new sect in the midst of a culture that was potentially dangerous for the young church. Paul was probably using this Christological hymn to offset several threats. Colossae was a cosmopolitan centre of religion, trade and culture. The Colossian Christians were confronted with Mid-Eastern astrology, lingering Jewish traditions, a plethora of Greek gods and

goddesses, and a Roman empire that impacted everyone. It appears that these prevailing ideologies and religions were influencing a set of teachers in this New Testament church. These false teachers were advocating for beliefs and practices that were not a part of the apostles' original Gospel.

John 1:1-14 (ESV) - The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 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. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

COMMENT: One must wonder if the choice of reading for the Gospel has been misplaced here. The reading for Christmas Day features this well-known passage. However the theme is creation and new creation. The threefold utterance in John 1:1 carries us into the depths of eternity, before time or creatures existed. Genesis and John both start from 'the beginning,' but, while Genesis works downwards from that point and tells what followed, John works upwards and tells what preceded – if we may use that term in speaking of what lies beyond time. Time and creatures came into being, and, when they began, the Word 'was.' Surely no form of speech could more emphatically declare absolute, uncreated being, outside the limits of time. Even the 'fall' is in the mind of the author, but it is a darkness that the coming of the Word has conquered. Whilst Matthew and Luke state the Virgin birth clearly, it is not absent from John. Given the right to become children of God, is a right by adoption, by the will of God. In contrast it is the Father's Son, who is 'μονογενής' – monogenēs (genes, 'of a kind'). Word is described as "The only Son from the father". This makes a clear distinction. In the literal translation, the Word is the only begotten of Father, i.e. the only one born of the Father. A few verses on (verse 18) this is further strengthened with a reference to the deity of the Word/Son; "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." Akin to the adopted sons and daughters, Jesus' birth was not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God, but unlike those who come to faith in Christ, it is not by adoption but by direct generation. It is a true filial (son, daughter) relationship. This phrase 'only son' (literal: only begotten) is stressed in John 3:16 & 18. John will be aware of the tradition of the Virgin Birth – but what he has chosen to do, is to state that those who receive Christ, and who believed in his name, are like Jesus, sons and daughters of God, and that a kindred miracle to that which begat the Son of God, as the only begotten, will give us the new birth of adoption, to make us, sons and daughters of God – part of the new creation of God.

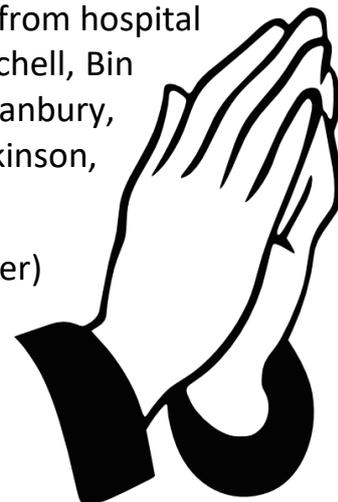
Post Communion: God our creator, by your gift the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise, and the bread of life at the heart of your Church: may we who have been nourished at your table on earth be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross and enjoy the delights of eternity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing: Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; 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.

We pray for those who are suffering from poor health, those recovering from hospital treatment or surgery, for the grieving and lonely; including: Richard Mitchell, Bin Roy, Frances Mallett, Ann Lambert, Gill Howell, Geoff Harris, Reg Hanbury, Hannah Parsons, June Kellaway, Robin Saunders, Anna Thomas, Cyril Atkinson, Joe Patterson, William, 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.



Requiescat in pace

Hamish Carron Brown (Haslemere)
Andrew Steven (Ireland)
Pat Hansford (formerly Piddlehinton)

School Work continues; this Week's Assembly presentation is on Living – copy the link to view

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeEsSbcvEa4>



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



Benefice Notices

THE
WEEK
AHEAD

Biosecurity of our church is of upmost importance: A reminder of our arrangements.

- The altar and chancel area which should only be accessed by officiants, especially Hilton and Piddletrenthide where regular live streaming takes place.
- Sign in and sanitise your hands each time you enter a church
- Where possible; flowers and cleaning should be carried out when the church is open for private prayer.
- Hymn books and Orders of service can be retained by a regular user for personal use, otherwise they are stored for 72hrs before they are used again.
- All churches are closed on both Friday and Saturday before a Sunday Service is to take place.

When attending a service please arrive in good time to ensure you can follow the Covid safety protocols set out in church.

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



Foodbank: On Friday donations were delivered from Alton Pancras, Piddlehinton and Hilton. 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. Thankyou

Sunday 14th February 2021 - Sunday before lent (Altar Colour – Green)

Readings: 2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalm 50: 1-6, 2 Cor 4: 3-6, Mark 9: 2-9

9.30am Communion Service at Piddletrenthide – Fr. Roger

11.00am Communion Service at Melcombe Horsey – Fr. Roger

6.00pm Evening Prayer at Piddlehinton – Fr. Roger

Rector - Fr. Roger J. Butcher SSC KSJ

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