



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

25th April 2021 – Easter 4
(Altar Colour Gold/White)

Readings: Acts 4: 5-12, Psalm 23, 1 John 3: 16-end, John 10: 11-18

(During Easter Acts is read as the first reading, then the Gospel for the day.)

Collect: Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life: raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that we may seek those things which are above, where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Acts 4:5-12 (ESV) - Peter and John Before the Council

On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

COMMENT: This is another of the sermons intended to show how Peter and the other apostles preached during the early days of the church. The kerygma of the early Church (= proclamation) sought to show how the Christian tradition grew out of the Jewish tradition and yet also clearly defined the distinction between them. While this passage appears to present a keen eyewitness account, as did the synoptic Gospels, it represents the views of the Apostolic Church in its continuing conflict with Jewish authorities. Most probably this conflict was particularly severe in Jerusalem in the years immediately after the resurrection. It outlasted the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 69-70 and reached its height in the early 80s, when Jewish Christians were banned from all synagogues. By that time, the Apostolic Church had become predominantly a Gentile community. In many respects, this passage reflects the Gentile hostility toward Jewish authorities and clearly defines the discontinuity of the two traditions. In this sermon Peter declared the fact and the power of Christ’s resurrection before the same supreme council of religious leaders, the Sanhedrin, who had condemned Jesus and brought about his death. If we assume the scholarly consensus that Luke-Acts was written for the Christians in Rome circa AD 80, the courage of the Apostles would have had a very positive influence of the Christian community still reeling from

Nero's persecution in the 60s when Peter, Paul and James had been martyred. The healing of the man at the gate of temple had a wider meaning than giving strength to crippled legs. As in Jesus' own healing miracles, to be fully healed meant to be brought into a right relationship with God through faith. Thus healing and salvation were one and the same spiritual experience. Luke underlines this emphasis by quoting a favourite New Testament reinterpretation of (Psalm 118:22) and reiterating the unique salvation found in Jesus alone (v 11- 12).

John 10:11-18 (ESV) - I Am the Good Shepherd

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

COMMENT: It may be helpful to read this passage from the beginning at verse 1 and then to read Ezekiel 34 immediately after. There seems little doubt that Jesus made that Old Testament passage the basis for his own ministry as Messiah. There are numerous other Old Testament references to the way the LORD, like the shepherds of biblical times, guided, cared for and rescued Israel, "the sheep of his flock." For some of these, read also (Isaiah 40:11; 49:9-10; 63:14; Psalms 23; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3.) One of the enduring images of Jesus is that of the good shepherd. Romantic art and poetry, however, may well have robbed us of the truth about this passage. Its startlingly different view of how the shepherd performed his duties is the willingness of the shepherd to lay down his life for the sheep. It also challenges the traditional rabbinic attitude toward shepherds. In his Jerusalem in the time of Jesus, shepherds were regarded as completely untrustworthy, more likely to steal from their master than faithfully perform their task of caring for the sheep. Frequently shepherds were ostracized from their community. Yet this reading reflects exactly how the Apostolic Church regarded Jesus as they had known him. They also recognized that he had not been the victim, in the same way as the lamb without blemish was the victim used for the Passover sacrifice, because he fulfilled the role of sacrifice, by taking charge of his own life and death in the way he gave himself into the hands of his enemies (v 17-18). This is far from the sentimental pictures of the shepherd with his flock of sheep and lambs we see in church art and stained glass windows. Rather, it is a brutally honest discernment of who Jesus is and what he had done for us.

Short Preface: But chiefly are we bound to praise you because you raised him gloriously from the dead. For he is the true paschal lamb who was offered for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has restored to us everlasting life.

Post Communion: Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd, and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again: keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing: The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; 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 illness, recovering from surgery or hospital treatment, for those who are grieving, anxious or lonely.



Please pray for those who have asked our prayer including:, Pat Kenwick, Richard Drake, Richard Mitchell, Ann Lambert, Gill Howell, Geoff Harris, Reg Hanbury, Hannah Parsons, June Kellaway, Robin Saunders, Anna Thomas.

For all those in care homes, and the staff, including: Roger Gray (Dorchester) and June Smith (Warminster)



Requiescat in pace

Iain Gregory - Ansty
Ann Sutton - Melcombe Bingham

Please pray for our couples who are preparing for marriage over the coming months:

Stuart & Jade	21 st May 2021	Piddlehinton
David & Victoria	23 rd July 2021	Piddlehinton
Nick & Ruth	31 st July 2021	Piddlehinton
Jonathan & Susan	14 th August 2021	Cheselbourne
Simon & Paula	28 th August 2021	Piddletrenthide



Foodbank: A tin/packet a week, dropped into church while out on your exercise helps supply the Dorchester Foodbank with supplies to feed those in need in the Dorchester and surrounding areas.

I have delivered donations from Piddletrenthide this week – Thank you

Benefice Notices

National restrictions are still in place for all church services; this includes marriages and funerals which have limited attendance.

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 inside church*
- *Marriage maximum of 15 in attendance by invitation only*
- *Funeral maximum of 30 in attendance by invitation only*

THE
WEEK
AHEAD



Thursday 29th April 2021 – Catherine of Siena (Altar Colour – White/Gold)

Readings: Acts 13: 13-25, John 13: 16-20

9.00am Communion Service at Piddletrenthide (Fr. Roger)

All Welcome to attend in person

Sunday 2nd May 2021 – Easter 5 (Altar Colour – White/Gold)

Readings: Acts 8: 26-end, Psalm 22: 25-end, 1 John 4: 7-end, John 15: 1-8

9.30am Communion Service at Alton Pancras (Fr. Roger)

11.00am Communion Service at Cheselbourne (Rev'd Helier)

6.00pm Evening Prayer at Hilton (Fr. Roger)

All Welcome to attend in person

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

Sunday All services streamed except at those Melcombe Horsey



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