

Prayer Pause

We give thanks to Jesus, whose first miracle was turning water into wine,
renewing the joy of the guests and allowing the party to continue.

We give thanks to Jesus, who enters into every place in our life
the joyful
the painful
the trivial
the fearful
the anxious
the hopeful

and the beautiful places of love.

He longs to meet our need to be renewed, refreshed and sustained.

May we always depend on God for our deepest needs.

Amen.



Our churches remain closed for public worship, but we are able to offer
funerals services with limited numbers.

DAILY HOPE is a free telephone service which offers daily hymns, prayers
and reflections. The number is 0800 804 8044.

You Tube services continue to be produced every Sunday for the benefice
and any others who tune in! Mel Eyeons will be offering a mid-week You
Tube service with readings, hymns and prayers for January 27th, 2021

On our Facebook page @thePaxtonsBenefice you can find links to all our
You Tube services. Anita Bailey also emails out the links and can always
add names to her email database – you can contact her via Annette.

Would you like to be part of an on-line Bible Study Group with Mel? This
may be at a different date or time than previously mentioned. If you would
like more information about this, please email Mel

at meleyeons@hotmail.com

A Blessing.

May the love of the Father,
the tenderness of the Son
and the presence of the Spirit,
gladden your heart
and bring peace to your soul,
this day and all days. Amen.

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe

January 24th 2021

“Keeping in Touch” Edition 44

Greetings to all of our readers near and far.

How are you all?

One very pleasant pastime I enjoy is looking through photographs on my
iPhone. Sometimes they strike me as rather strange when they depict
groups of people having fun in close contact with no worries about social
distancing. It seems such a lot of time has passed by since we could
enjoy close human contact without having concerns about the welfare of
others and ourselves.

Some of my favourite pictures are of the many weddings that have taken
place in our benefice churches. Four did take place in 2020 between
lockdowns and several couples are booked in for weddings later this
year. We all hope that they can go ahead easily.

In our bible story this week, Jesus attends a wedding with his mother
and his disciples, in a village called Cana. Weddings in biblical times
typically extended over a period of five to seven days. Autumn was the
best time, as harvest was in and there would have been plenty of wine
available.

You can read more on Page 3 about the first miracle which Jesus
performed when he had to respond to the fact that the precious wine
had run out. His actions turned what would have been disaster and huge
embarrassment into a joyful celebration.

How understandably easy it is for each of us sometimes to feel we are
running out. Running out of patience, running out of energy, running out
of hope and running out of the will to keep going. These last months
have been so difficult to deal with and although the vaccination now
gives us light at the end of the tunnel, we still have to persevere with
many restrictions.

The risen Lord longs to be an ever-constant presence in our lives. If we
feel we have run out of resources in any sense, he longs to comfort us,
longs to transform our emptiness and offers his peace and inner healing.

If you turn to Page 4 you will find a prayer you might like to use in the
coming days.

God Bless you all, keep well and keep safe. Annette.

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The Gospel for the Third Sunday of Epiphany: John 2 v 1-11 Jesus turns water into wine

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So, they took it.

When the steward tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.



A Collect for The Third Sunday of Epiphany

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Annette reflects on the wedding at Cana.



It was a huge pleasure and privilege to officiate at the wedding of my son Mike and his wife Sarah in 2017. I was very grateful to be assisted by the vicar of Great Staughton and now Rural Dean of St Neots, Rev Nicki Bland. She kept me calm at what was such an emotional occasion. Biblical weddings were full of merry making and celebrations, the various stages lasting several days, and wine played an important part in the proceedings. If it ran out, which it did at the wedding Jesus attended, it would have meant that the family hosting the wedding would have been publicly shamed as they wouldn't have met their obligation of hospitality.

Jesus' mother Mary steps in and clearly expects her son to do something about it. At first, he hesitates, implying his time has not yet come, but he does show compassion for the plight the family are in. He performs his first miracle, or "sign" as gospel writer John phrases it, turning water into wine and revealing his divine glory.

Jesus demonstrates his concern for people and their everyday lives.

It is also a fascinating cameo of his relationship with his mother. Did Mary force Jesus' hand?

Of interest too is the fact that the main steward of the feast, the man no doubt paid well to make sure everything went smoothly, didn't pick up that it was Jesus who had somehow caused such an amazing change in the water – though the so-called humble servants had realised.

Do we always notice signs of God at work in the world and in our lives?

We can understand on many levels, the account of this first sign which Jesus performed; and I will finish with a thought you might like to engage with in your prayer time this week.

He turns our water into wine.

We offer ourselves and he makes of us what we never thought possible.