

St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Newsletter for Passion Sunday, the Fifth Sunday of Lent, 3 April 2022

Dear Friends,

On Passion Sunday our thoughts turn towards the cross and the suffering that Jesus faced in his final hours. We have Saviour who is able to sympathise with us in our weakness because of the suffering and desolation he faced. Please look out for the opportunities for prayer offered in our churches this Passiontide and Holy Week. We especially continue to pray for an improvement in the situation in Ukraine. At St David's Church we invite you to write your prayers on the white card doves available at the back of church which will be made into a peace mobile.

Face coverings in church are now voluntary in church, as elsewhere. But please stay aware of social distancing and use hand sanitizer on entering the building. We are pleased to be serving refreshments after our services and are grateful to those who are making this possible. Please be patient, kind and respect the personal space of other people if they don't wish to get too close!

Our services today are:

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with celebrant, Belinda Speed-Andrews and preacher, Bill Pattinson (live-streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's with celebrant, Nigel Guthrie and preacher, Bill Pattinson

4pm Thrive at St David's Church with Ash Leighton Plom

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church led Ian Cartwright

6pm Choral Evensong and Benediction at St Michael's Church led by Nigel Guthrie

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 5 April, 9.30 – 9.55am Morning Prayer on Zoom. Please join us on this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's (live streamed on Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page)

Wednesday 6 April, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass at St Michael's

11.30am Funeral of Diane Evans at St David's Church

6pm Stations of the Cross at St Michael's Church

Thursday 7 April, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church with address by Nigel Guthrie

6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's Church (live streamed on Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page)

Friday 8 April, 9.30 Morning Prayer in St David's Lady Chapel and live streamed on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 10 April – Palm Sunday

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's Church with celebrant, Nigel Guthrie and preacher, Howard Friend (live streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher, Ash Leighton Plom

4pm Thrive at St David's

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church led by Nigel Guthrie

Covid-19 Safe for Public Worship

At St David's we encourage people to wear face coverings to come forward to receive Holy Communion and then to consume the host after moving away from the altar rail.

At St Michael's the priest will distribute Holy Communion to people in their seats.

Please do not attend church if you are feeling ill or have tested positive for Covid.

Forthcoming elections for PCC and Deanery Synod

At the annual parishioners' meeting on Thursday 28th April this year we are hoping that you will give consideration to seeking election to the PCC and/or Deanery Synod.

At St Michael's there will be two spaces on the PCC and at St David's there will be three.

There are two available spaces on Deanery Synod (successful election to Deanery Synod automatically confers a seat at the PCC).

Papers to complete for nomination will be available in church from early April or you can download a copy here: [PCC nomination form](#)

[Deanery Synod nomination form](#)

We will also be seeking to elect a new churchwarden, and a second chapel wardens for St Michael's. Again, there will be forms available in church in early April or you can download a copy here: [Church Warden nomination form](#)

Please pick up a copy of our parish prayer to use during Lent.

Thrive

Could you help with Thrive, even on a monthly basis? Ash would appreciate some more support with the running of Thrive in the coming weeks. Please have a word with him if you feel you could help in some way and see his article in the April magazine about what help is needed.

Knit and Natter

We will meet again in April date to be confirmed. All are welcome to knit, natter or learn! Tea and coffee available.

Men's Breakfast

The Men's Breakfast will be next **Saturday 30th April at 10am** at the Farmers' Union. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

Parish Quiz

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the recent Quiz Evening on Friday evening and worked hard to make it happen. Great fun was had and very useful funds were raised. We have sent half the proceeds, £268, to the DEC appeal for Ukraine.

St David's Church opening times

We are hoping, after many years of general closure to establish regular opening times for St David's Church in the near future, usually having the church open from 9.30am to 5pm from Tuesday to Friday. So please do pop in if you are passing to pause and pray and to greet any visitors.

Tuesday Friendship Café

This week Friendship Café will be in the Parish Room due to organ tuning.

Please let your local friends know that we are open on Tuesday mornings from 10.30am to 12noon as a drop-in for people to find a Christian welcome and company. There are flyers available for you to take as invitations.

Thank you to those who have already offered to help or to bake cakes. There is a rota at the back of church to sign up when you can help. And do just come along if you would like to and help us to welcome any visitors who come into church!

Lent Groups

St David's church are offering 2 different courses

On Tuesday afternoons 2pm at St David's Church on 5 April

York Course '**Caring for Creation**' Please email nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com to book a place.

On Tuesday evenings 7pm on 5 April

Sanctuary Mental Health Course: <https://www.sanctuarymentalhealth.org>

This will be led by Revd Belinda Speed-Andrews. If you would like to join or know more details, please contact her on bspeedandrews@gmail.com

On offer at St Michael's Church:

Lent Reading Group at St Michael's

On Wednesday 6 April at 7.15 pm the **Lent Reading Group** will discuss Bede's *Historia* with Oliver Nicholson

St Michael's Survey

Thank you to all those who completed the survey. The numerical results and comments will be shared with the Archdeacon, PCC and St Michael's Committee. The numerical results will also be shared, with a commentary to explain them, at an AGM at St Michael's after Mass on Sunday 1st May at approx. 12.15pm.

Church Electoral Roll

The revision of the Church Electoral Roll is currently underway. If you are a regular worshipper but not already on the Roll please pick up a form from church. You need

to be on the Roll to vote at the APCM or stand for election. Any queries please contact Sue Wilson at St David's or Paula Lewis at St Michael's.

New Leaves – April Edition

The April edition of our Parish Magazine is now available in our churches. Thank you to our editorial team for their hard work. Please collect your copy and share with any friends who might be interested in our life.

Green Team

It is great to see the new fruit trees coming into bud, and we are hopeful that at least some of our bird boxes will be well used. Please let us know if you spot any nesting activity in the churchyard!

Thank you also to the Community Payback Team from Probation who are continuing to weed around the church and clear rubbish from the churchyard most Saturdays. Do say hello to them if you are passing!

Phone Network and Home Communion

If you would like to be phoned by someone from the church community or know someone who would appreciate Communion at home, please let Nigel know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com or by ringing him on 01392 660226 or Ash on 07855305519.

St Michael's services and prayers

If you would like to access the service details and prayer list for St Michael's please contact Oliver Nicholson at virtualsaintmichaels@gmail.com and he can add you to that weekly mailing.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Martyn Goodwin-Jones and Kristy-Lee Stickland, married at St David's Church yesterday.

Please remember those who are suffering including:

Charlotte, Paul and Grace; Maggs Bedford; Monica Darch; Andrew Francis; James Ibbetson, Dan Newman, Liz Rimmington; Anne Smith; Grace Tointon; Mary Tout; Pam Smith; Iris Sutton; Bessie Wilkins; Caroline, Cliff and Stephen, Andy, Avis, Becky, Kate, Debs and Rob

Please remember those who have died recently including:

Diane Susan Evans

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** Our PCC, Church Committees, our Church and Chapel Wardens, Treasurers and Secretaries. Our Parish Administrator.

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at-risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

Please also pray for:

the people of Ukraine and all those injured, bereaved and made homeless by the invasion;

refugees from Ukraine and elsewhere, and the response to their needs;

for peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine to be productive;

members of our community to consider standing as church and chapel wardens or assistants and PCC members;

purposeful follow-up from the COP26 conference;

those being severely impacted by rising costs of living in this country;

those suffering in Afghanistan through lack of food and medical facilities and the young women being denied education;

the people of Yemen and Ethiopia facing continued conflict and famine;

those in the NHS and education struggling to keep services going in the face of many Covid infections;

those suffering from Covid and long-Covid around the world.

With every blessing,
Nigel Guthrie

Prayers, Readings and Address for Passion Sunday, the Fifth Sunday of Lent, 3 April 2022

Collect

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
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. Amen.

First Reading – Isaiah 43: 16-21

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Gospel Reading – John 12: 1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his

disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

Address by Bill Pattinson for Passion Sunday 2022

Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus, Anoints Jesus' Feet

As I get older, small acts can be very pleasurable. For example, every six weeks Avril and I visit our chiropodist, or should I use the more internationally recognised term, podiatrist? Always get confused with that and pediatriist, whom I certainly don't visit. Anyway, we have our feet done, and we leave with a new spring in our step. The final part of this procedure, when oil is rubbed on your feet, is especially enjoyable.

Today, the fifth Sunday of Lent, just two weeks before Easter Day, the Lectionary informs us that Passiontide begins. And it begins with the Gospel story of Mary of Bethany anointing the feet of Jesus "with a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard" before wiping them with her hair. I'm sure that this flagrant, yet fragrant, act gave Jesus much pleasure. But what has it to do with Jesus' passion? As we are informed that this act occurred "six days before the Passover" we are in the final week of Jesus' life. Indeed this same reading is always set for the Monday of Holy Week. Feet play a significant part during Christ's final days. Apart from this episode, just prior to their final meal together, Jesus washes the disciples' feet, before telling them they should wash each others' feet. Jesus' feet are then pierced, nailed to a cross, as he is cruelly crucified on Golgotha just outside Jerusalem, just four days after Mary had anointed them. And Jesus defends Mary's act of extravagant holiness saying, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial." Nard, or spikenard to give it its full name, was sweet smelling and not dissimilar to honeysuckle, and was used to anoint the dead. This excessive, costly and unrestrained act forms the perfect bridge to Holy Week and beyond. Passiontide begins.

I'd like to suggest that this beautiful, intimate story reflects our own life stories of faith, concentrating, as it does, on love, death and resurrection. The story is set in Bethany, just two miles from Jerusalem. It's a perfect place for Jesus to stay before

setting of on the trials and tribulations of his final week. He is in the home of Lazarus, whom Jesus had recently raised from the dead. This event had caused quite a stir, arousing great interest and excitement among the local residents, but despair and anger among the Chief Priests of the Temple, who were now plotting to not only kill Jesus, but also Lazarus. Quite understandably, Lazarus, along with his two sisters, was celebrating his resurrection from the dead, entertaining his Lord and wonderful life-giver, Jesus, with a sumptuous meal. Jesus knows the house well. We hear of three visits in the Gospels. One in Luke where Martha is busy with all the preparations for their special visitor, while Mary sits at Jesus' feet, listening to what he has to say. The other two occasions are recounted in John. Firstly, when Lazarus is raised from the dead, where Mary is again kneeling at Jesus' feet, weeping and saying to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Secondly on this occasion of the celebratory resurrection feast, when for a third time we see Mary at Jesus' feet, wiping them after she had anointed them with costly perfume.

Andrea Skevington in her third poem entitled "Mary at your feet" writes:

"She kneels at your feet again,
pours out extravagant nard,
scandalous anointing of your warm, living feet,
unbinds her hair and let's it flow like water
over them, wiping them with such reckless
and tender thanksgiving."

Well, there are times when we all want to let our hair down, dance in the rain, get a little wild. After all life is too short not to colour outside the lines every once in a while. Well Mary would certainly have caused a few jaws to drop by behaving so shamelessly. There were only two occasions in those days when women would let down their hair - one during a sexual act of intimacy, the other when in mourning. Jesus, you notice, quickly defends Mary by making reference to his burial. It's almost as though Mary knows Jesus is about to die. Mary was willing to humiliate herself with her body for the sake of bringing glory to God. This is an out pouring of gratitude, a beautiful, humble act of love. This is the love Jesus wants us to give to him - to love him as he loves us. To worship him, to honour him, to make him the centre of our lives, as Mary did. And notice, as Mary wipes Jesus' feet with her hair,

it's as if she is anointing herself. The oil that she offered Jesus is now on her head. If we give ourselves to Jesus with no holding back, then we ourselves will be blessed.

Of course, there's always the party pooper. Often a man concerned about the financial cost of things. Enter Judas. In the middle of all the celebrations, the feasting and Mary's amazing act of love, Judas has to complain. "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor? Now this shows how expensive this perfume which Mary poured onto Jesus' feet really was. Three hundred denarii represents a year's wages at that time - that's a lot of money. Judas' criticism has indeed an economic and charitable logic. He would have heard many times Jesus making reference to loving those who were disadvantaged, those who were poor. But this criticism by Judas also resembles a rigorous unyielding piety that cannot stand a wild act of love like Mary's.

Yet, despite all the loving and celebrating, death is in the air. Quite literally as the smell of nard, used to anoint corpses, was the smell of death. Had Mary let down her hair as an act of mourning? Was she anointing Jesus in preparation for his burial in a few days time? Was she revealing to all present that here was the Messiah, which means the anointed one, the one who is to come? Death in life is a constant companion and we have to prepare for it. But this feast is also about resurrection from the dead. Lazarus was dead, but is alive again. This resurrection feast foreshadows all those banquet feasts - banquets with long tables, set wide with good things, with room enough for all to be welcome in God's kingdom. Shall we not also celebrate our Lord's resurrection in two week's time - our Easter feast? And we have the promise of resurrection ourselves. Yet more celebrating because life in the name of Jesus has overcome death. What resurrection joy! Love, death and resurrection. What are your thoughts?

As Malcolm Guite writes in his poem "The Anointing at Bethany":

"The whole room fills to feast the senses
With all the yearning such a fragrance brings
The heart is mourning, but the spirit dances,
Here at the very centre of all things,
Here at the meeting place of love and loss
We all foresee, and see beyond the cross."

Post-Communion Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever. Amen.

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Prebendary Nigel Guthrie
95 Howell Road
Exeter EX4 4LH
nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com