

St David's with St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Newsletter for Sunday 3 October 2021 – Trinity 18

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this week's newsletter. Today we celebrate Harvest at St Michael's Church and see the return of our in-person evening services. There will be a weekly Sunday evening prayer at St David's at 6pm in the Lady Chapel and Monthly Choral Service at 6pm at St Michael's.

We are keeping our current guidance about social distancing and face coverings at the moment. So please wear a face covering in church if you can and be mindful of keeping a safe distance from others indoors. Please 'mingle' outside church after the service rather than inside. Please be mindful not only of your own wellbeing (especially if you're not vaccinated) but also of your neighbours' safety and make sure that you are not sitting directly behind other people especially if you would like to sing.

Remember: "space, face, grace"! Thank you for your consideration.

Our services today are:

9.30am Parish Communion (live streamed on St David's Church Exeter's Facebook Page) with celebrant, Ash Leighton Plom and preacher Nigel Guthrie

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher Nigel Guthrie

4pm Thrive - On Zoom – please see notice below

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?>

[pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09)

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

6pm Evening Prayer in St David's Lady Chapel led by Bill Pattison

6pm Evensong and Benediction at St Michael's for Harvest with officiant Nigel Guthrie

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 5 October, 9.30 Morning Prayer on Zoom. Please join us using this code:

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

(prayers are from Common Worship Book or Daily Prayer app which can be downloaded

here: [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB&gl=US)

[id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB&gl=US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB&gl=US))

Tuesday 5 October, 6pm, Sung Vespers at St Michael's

Wednesday 6 October, St Michael and All Angels, 9.30am Mattins and 10 Mass

Thursday 7 October, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church

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

Friday 8 October, 9.30 Morning Prayer at St David's Church (also live streamed on St David's Facebook Page)

Sunday 10 October – Trinity 19

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 and preacher, Dominic Cyrus

4pm Thrive on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09)

[pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09)

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

6pm Evening Prayer (said) at St David's

Covid-19 Safe for Public Worship

Please avoid touching door handles – Thank you.

Please use hand sanitizer on entering and leaving church.

Please wear a face covering in church unless you are exempt.

At St David's we are encouraging 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.

Seating will be distanced to approximately 2 metres. Please sit on the seats where service books are placed. Seating is also marked by white labels at St Michael's.

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'; congregational singing is being re-introduced.

Toilet facilities are available. Please follow the instructions for use.

Please avoid mingling inside church before or after services.

Please do not attend church if you are feeling ill or are shielding. Although we will do all we can to make the church safe you attend at your own risk.

Harvest Gifts at St Michael's

As we celebrate Harvest at St Michael's today gifts for Exeter Foodbank are invited. The following items would be appreciated:

UHT milk semi-skimmed 1 litre, Fruit juice long life 1 litre

Pasta sauce, Instant coffee, tea bags (smaller packs)

Tinned meat, tuna, vegetables, potatoes & fruit

Noodle/pasta packs, Rice 500g, sugar

Sponge puddings, custard in cartons or tins

Jams and spreads, rice pudding, fruit squash, biscuits, toiletries

Food for the Vulnerably housed in Exeter

Working through St Petrock's we are providing 16 packed suppers each week for people who are in transitional accommodation at the Crescent. Thank you to the small team which has convened to buy and make them. We don't need any additional support at the moment as there is a significant amount in our 'Soup Evening' kitty which can fund this for the time being.

Visit of Archdeacon for a consultation about the future patterns of ministry in Exeter City Centre

Archdeacon Andrew Beane will be leading a parish meeting for us on the morning of **Saturday October 16th**. It would be good to have as many people as possible from both churches at that meeting when Andrew will outline possibilities for the future organisation of ministry in Exeter city and listen to our hopes and plans.

In preparation for this Belinda is leading a study group based on the book 'A Future that's bigger than the past' (https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07YNTLDKB/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1) as we think and discern what God is calling us to for the next 5 years.

If you are interested in joining in the conversation please do email her directly at bspeedandrews@gmail.com The date for the next meeting at 7.30pm is: Thursday 14 October,

Alpha at Thrive

In partnership with Christians Together Across Exeter, we are among many churches running an Alpha Course, exploring life's big questions and examining the foundations of Christian belief, in a zero pressure environment. Here's a video promo, with some minor celebrity appearances(!):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fViYK_Xb3Wg

Please do share this video with others, join in on the course and invite family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, and more to explore this course together.

Our team will lead sessions online on the Sundays at 4pm Thrive Zoom slot. It's always good to get some Christians signed up as well as enquirers, so please do come, whether you've been to Thrive before or not, or have done Alpha before or not, and please bring friends if you can.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday 31st October at 10am at the Farmers' Union. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

Shoe Boxes for Moldova (advanced notice)

We will be sending Christmas Boxes to Moldova again this year. Things are extremely difficult there at the moment, and anything we can do to brighten life is greatly appreciated. The boxes need to be ready for collection from the church by

Sunday November 21st. All being well, Hugh Skudder from Christian Response to Eastern Europe, will be with us for the morning service on that day. Any questions, please speak to Ann Watts .

Coffee after Church

As long as the Covid situation remains stable we are hoping to reinstate refreshments after church before too long. At St David's we would like to start coffee after church in November and would still like a few more volunteers to help spread the load. If you would be willing to help with this ministry of hospitality would you contact Jenny Baker, please?

Piano free to good home

A good condition, compact, upright "Fazer" piano – is free to a good home (subject to cost of transport from Pewsey) - please contact Robert Mitchell.

Parent and Toddler Group

We are looking at the possibility of setting up a weekly drop-in session at St Michael's Church for parents and toddlers associated with St David's School. If you could help regularly or on a more occasional basis please have a word with Ash. It would be great to open up St Michael's and welcome families associated with our parish school. Thank you for considering this.

Help with Churchwarden tasks

Often Churchwardens pick up tasks which could be done by others. We have already had some kind offers but there are a number of jobs which we will advertise in the coming weeks.

Would you be willing to help with one of these, please, even if you can't do every week?

Opening and closing the church on Sunday (weekly)

Clearing up (if needed) the churchyard on Sunday mornings before the service (equipment provided). Thank you!

Bountiful Table

There will be a bountiful Table at St Michael's today.

Hospiscare 'Marathon in a month' challenge

Roger and Hilary have taken up the Hospiscare 'Marathon in a Month' challenge – which we will walk! We hope to complete more than one as we are endeavouring to

walk every day, and would very much appreciate your support in this venture. If you would like to sponsor us, Team Todber has a Justgiving page at: www.justgiving.com/Margaret-Hilary-Todd. Wish us luck!

Green Team

Thank you to those who have filled in the Survey on sustainable forms of transport. The results are now published and displayed on a board at the back of St David's Church.

Green Event

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard so make this a success, with organisation, setting up, the provision of stalls, activities and refreshments. There is now a display about the event on the boards at the back of St David's.

Ordination of Ash Leighton Plom

Thank you to everyone who helped with the ordination service last Sunday. Bishop Jackie has passed on her warm thanks to everyone from St David's and St Michael's who contributed to the service.

And thank you to those who helped with Ash's First Mass at St Michael's on Wednesday. Ash was presented with a purple stole from the parish and a gift of money (collected in excess of the cost of the stole) will follow shortly.

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

The magazine for October is now available for collection and distribution. Thank you to our dedicated magazine team for their hard work.

Phone Networks

If you would like to be phoned by someone from the church community or would just like to talk, 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...

Please remember those who have died recently including:

David Rabson

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** the farmers of Devon, giving thanks for their work in producing food and enhancing the environment;
St David's Vets and all who care for animals in the city

Please also pray for:

women and girls feeling unsafe on our streets;
our police service giving thanks for all good and caring officers;
the people of Afghanistan, especially girls being denied their right to schooling;
the humane and generous treatment of migrants and refugees arriving in this country;
those worried about the rising costs of energy and housing in this country;
the worldwide Covid vaccination programme, giving thanks for all those who have enabled a rapid roll-out in this country;
those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices;
those suffering from Covid around the world;
those working towards a more sustainable future;
the forthcoming COP26 conference.

With every blessing,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers and Readings for Trinity 18, 3 October 2021

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
increase in us your gift of faith
that, forsaking what lies behind
and reaching out to that which is before,
we may run the way of your commandments
and win the crown of everlasting joy;
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.

First Reading – Genesis 2: 18-24

Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.’ So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.’ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Gospel Reading – Mark 10: 2-16

Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?’ He answered them, ‘What did Moses command you?’ They said, ‘Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, “God made them male and female.” “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’

Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, ‘Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.’

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.’ And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Address for 3 October by Nigel Guthrie

I was rather puzzled when I arrived as curate in my first parish to find that the Vicar, who was a lovely man, wouldn’t remarry those who had been divorced, but would

offer a service of blessing. I couldn't quite work out why, if a couple were suitable to bless in church, they weren't suitable to marry in church? But I soon discovered that there were quite a few clergy who operated the same policy. It seemed unfair to me that remarriage should not be generally offered to couples, not least because often one of the couple was getting married for the first time. And then there were plenty of people who lived together with a partner without marrying but then split up and eventually wanted to marry someone else. There was no bar to them getting married in church!

So, when I became a Vicar myself I agreed with the PCC that we should generally allow those who had been divorced to remarry in church, subject to them falling within the scope of the Bishop's guidelines which insisted that matters such as the maintenance of any children from a previous marriage were resolved before new marriage could happen.

Over the years matters have moved on and the remarriage of divorcees in church has become much more accepted, though not by everybody. And now people can get married almost anywhere and city parishes like our own are little used for weddings, although for me it heightens the joy and privilege of officiating at them when they do come around.

Of course my training vicar, and the many other clergy who wouldn't have married a divorcee in church, had a pretty clear steer on what to do from the gospel reading we heard today. The pharisees were, as usual, trying to trick Jesus into saying something that would contradict the Jewish law. But instead Jesus pointed out that it was only because of their hardness of heart that a man was allowed to divorce a woman. In the Jewish law only men were allowed to divorce their wives. Wives were not allowed to divorce their husbands.

So, if you listened carefully to the gospel reading, you might be wondering why Jesus said 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. Professor Morna Hooker suggests that this verse has been added in a society where Roman law gave the woman this right. In other words this verse was very likely added to the gospel after the time of Jesus to bring his teaching 'up to date' for a new context. Which is very interesting because it means that, as we know from other additions to what we believe to be Jesus' words, interpretation of his teaching started almost as soon as his words had been uttered.

Which you would have thought would be a problem for those who feel that the words of the bible must always be interpreted the same for all time! But in fact many people do take a literalistic view of the words of the bible and not least when it comes to matters of relationships and marriage.

There is no doubt that Jesus believed divorce was a last resort. But don't we all? I've never met a couple who set out in marriage wanting to get divorced. But we can't avoid the reality that for people who end up in unloving or worse, abusive and violent relationships divorce is much better than remaining married. We are called to make loving and enduring relationships in our lives, whether these are marriages, partnerships or friendships. And those of us who have had the amazing blessing of being happily married can only want the same for those around us.

But when we look at other fundamental elements of Christian teaching about our relationships we realise that the church has not (to put it mildly) always got it right in its teaching and practice. The central idea that Christ has died for our sins so that we might be forgiven means that we must always hold out the possibility of a new start for those whose relationships have gone wrong. And then there is Jesus' teaching about not judging others and his merciful treatment of the woman caught in the act of adultery. In contrast to the teaching and practice of Jesus all too often the church has been quick to pass judgment and to cast the first metaphorical stone. Our judgement must always be tempered with mercy because God treats us all with his mercy which is inexhaustibly great. Yes, we are called to repentance for the hurts we have done to others but we are not condemned.

So the Church, or at least the Church of England, has been on quite a journey in discovering how it should minister to those who are divorced and wishing to remarry in church. What journey might God now be leading us on in learning how we should minister to those who wish to have same sex relationships blessed? A number of us engaged with the 'Living in Love and Faith' course which the Bishops are encouraging us to study this year and to feed back our thoughts. The process will then continue next year hopefully leading to a new statement of Anglican teaching in the sphere of sexuality and relationships. If you haven't looked at the material it is well worth while, especially the story videos which can all be accessed free. And a kind parishioner has donated her copy of the Living in Love and Faith book so that someone else can use it! Do ask me if you would like it.

Many of us believe that it is time that same sex couples should be able to have their faithful relationships blessed in church. But we're also realistic in knowing that there will not be unanimity in this. We need to find a way forward that allows us to express the love which God has for them as much as for anyone and to affirm their desire to live in faithful and loving partnership. The journey we have travelled in our teaching about remarriage after divorce has not been quick or easy but it has led us to a place in which people are better respected and in which the realities of failure and the possibility of rebirth are recognised and celebrated. Perhaps such a process can soon begin which will allow us to find a more holistic and humane way to treat all those who deeply desire to affirm their loving commitment in God's church?

Closing Prayer

We praise and thank you, O Christ, for this sacred feast:
for here we receive you,
here the memory of your passion is renewed,
here our minds are filled with grace,
and here a pledge of future glory is given,
when we shall feast at that table where you reign
with all your saints for ever.

Do join us next week for our services in church and online!

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