

St David's and St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter

Newsletter for 5 July 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to this weekly update for the fourth Sunday after Trinity. We also welcome our new curate, Ash Leighton Plom, and his family to our parish.

Today is the 72nd anniversary of the foundation of the NHS. We are invited to applaud at 5pm. And we thank God for the dedication of all those who have served sacrificially within the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sunday Worship

Today we will have a Youtube recorded service which is available through this link:

<https://youtu.be/jbnJge9jK0g>

Helen Friend is reading the lesson, Howard Friend is preaching and Ian Cartwright is leading the prayers. Thank you to them, and to Nigel Walsh for putting the service together.

Next week Belinda Speed-Andrews will be giving an address for our Youtube service.

Churches Opening for Individual Prayer

This week opening times are:

St Michael and All Angels – Wednesday from 9.30-10.30am

St David – Thursday 9.30-10.30am

You will be very welcome to come and pray in church at these times and to light a candle. Please observe appropriate distancing from others and the one way systems through the churches. Please use the sanitisers provided on entering and leaving church and put an "I sat here" notice on your seat so that others don't sit in the same place. I am sorry that the toilet facilities will not be available at the moment. Thank you to our church members who have helped with this process and with cleaning and preparing our churches for re-opening to the public, it is much appreciated.

Live Daily Prayers

Please join us, if you can, for our streamed short prayer services during the week on our Facebook pages:

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 9am and Compline on Monday evening at 8pm.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page: Wednesday Angelus and Mattins (BCP) at 9am.

Zoom Coffee

This Sunday we will hold a 'Zoom' coffee again at 10.30am for 40 minutes. We have been asked to extend this slightly but feel free to leave whenever you want to, of course. It has been lovely to see people from both our churches there. You don't need to have a Zoom account to join in – just click on this link:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Password: 196651

Once we have gathered and said hello we will break into virtual rooms so that we can chat more easily and then come back at the end to round up and say the Grace together. When you first 'arrive' you will have to wait for me to let you in. I hope to see you there!

Bible Study

This month we will be holding a bible study on the psalms. This will be held on Tuesdays afternoons for an hour from 2pm. This Tuesday, 7th July, I will be leading an introduction and study based on psalms 42 & 43. Please join us if you can by Zoom. Here is the link:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Password: 196651

or send me a phone message or email if you are not sure how to join.

Reopening of Churches for public worship

The PCC will be meeting on Tuesday evening this week to plan the restarting of services in church. We realise that many people would like to come back to church but that others will not be able to or feel comfortable returning to church yet. We need to keep in mind the needs of those who are still shielding so we are planning to continue our online provision of services as well as having services in our churches. Please keep this process in your prayers and I will be in touch as soon as we are able to open for public worship.

Raymond Ravenscroft

An obituary to Raymond, published in the Church Times, is attached to this email.

Phone Networks

I know that many of you have appreciated phone calls from other members of the church community. If you would like to be phoned by someone and haven't yet had any contact please let me know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com or by ringing me on 01392 660226 or Ash on 07855305519. Thank you to everyone who is helping to keep our church communities together by your care and concern.

Magazine

Our July magazine is available on our websites. I have a few printed copies which I would be happy to post to you if you are finding it hard to access the online magazine. If you would like one please let me know by phone or e-mail.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Charles Argall, Janine, Charles Speed-Andrews, Nicky Jarman and her husband Tim and their family, Jacqueline and her family, Joy and her family, Claude and Gillian Harbord, Elizabeth Hewitt, Grace Tointon, Pam Smith and her family, James and Katy Tyler, Andrew Wakley, Jill Wellbelove (recovering after receiving a pacemaker), Rosemary Willcox and Maurice Wright.

Thank you for your prayers for Nick and Karen Speed-Andrews. Nick is now very much better.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** we give thanks for the NHS and the great benefits it has brought to our nation. We remember those who have worked with great dedication during the recent pandemic and especially the NHS and care workers who have died from Covid-19.

We pray for the Mission to Seafarers, for all who clean and tend our church buildings and for Mary Quest, our verger

Please also pray for:

those areas and countries suffering from through Covid-19, and those who are feeling lonely or isolated;

those who are concerned about the future of their jobs;

children who are living in vulnerable settings

Exeter Food Bank;

May God keep you in peace and good health, Nigel Guthrie

Order of Service for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity (service on Youtube)

Greeting

Welcome to worship in the parish of St David and St Michael, Exeter on this fourth Sunday after Trinity.

We have been thinking in recent weeks about what it means to be a disciple of Christ. It can be a complex and demanding business. But there should also be a simplicity and joy to it which we can easily lose and which some of Jesus' originally hearers certainly missed.

Opening Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

We come in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Confession and Absolution

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

May your loving mercy come to us, O Lord,
and your salvation according to your word:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Your word is a lantern to my feet and a light to my path:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

O let your mercy come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

The priest pronounces the absolution.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Collect

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading - Zechariah 9: 9 – 12

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem;
and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his
dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Gospel Reading Matthew 11: 16 – 19 and 25 – end

Jesus said 'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the
market-places and calling to one another,
"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn."
For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; the Son
of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a
friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.'

‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

An Address by Howard Friend for Sunday 5th July 2020

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen

Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest – for my Yoke is easy and my Burden is Light.

I wonder what you make of that?

For many of us these words of Jesus are a great source of comfort, perhaps they have been particularly so for you during Lockdown.

For others, they just confirm the suspicion that – as Karl Marx said - Religion is the Opium of the People – or to put it another way God is only a crutch to keep you going when you’re crocked – God is for losers. Whatever your view – stay tuned – as they say – because I’m going to concentrate on these few verses this morning and – first take a look back to the circumstances during which they were spoken. What did it mean to Jesus’s listeners - and then have a look at what these words mean to us.

What’s their significance for our post Lockdown, post Truth, post whatever world.

I have to confess I couldn’t resist the idea that Jesus might say today not - My Yoke is easy - but - my Woke is easy.

Now if you’ve no idea what I’m talking about you’ll - be patient – all will be revealed. If you have heard of Woke and are wondering just where I’m going with it then I guess - you can cut to the chase and just fast forward. ‘O Brave New World – that has such facility in it! ‘

Won’t be able to do that when we go back to rock hard pews!

To the Gospel then - Remember - these words of Matthew were directed at first Century Jewish type Christians. Now – the bit we had read to us in our Gospel reading is easier to understand if we get the nub of Jesus’s argument that they – his Jewish audience - were trying to reach God by an excessively complicated rules based system whereas Jesus is offering essentially a relationship built on love.

I think it's fair to say that if they didn't get it then - quite a few of us still don't get it today. You can't get to know God by tick boxing a set of rules. Jesus's listeners were doing this to the nth degree. I'll give you just one example. Keep the Sabbath Day Holy, no 5 of the so called 10 Commandments. Don't work on that day, take a break. Over the many years since Moses had given the written law (Torah and 10 Commandments) , Jewish leaders had added thousands of supplementary clauses, the so-called oral law. And here's the important bit – those leaders gave equal weight to the written and oral law. So with the Sabbath Day law for instance - the sub clause said if you walked more than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile on the Sabbath you had worked, therefore broken the law.

That's the Burden, that's the heavy stuff Jesus was promising to relieve his followers of. Too many subclauses. Too much detail, as a result of which Jesus said - you've lost the plot. Do you know – he said to them, and he says to us today - there's only 2 commandments really: Love God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself. My yoke is easy and my burden is light.

It was revolutionary to his hearers then, and it's no less so today.

If you love God, and perhaps more importantly, allow him to love you. If you know you are a person of worth and treat others as God has treated you, you won't lie, kill, steal, pinch someone's partner, abuse people or destroy the natural world.

I found the 10 Commandments last week and - the ones on Dartmoor – on Buckland Beacon. They were carved on two slabs of granite there in the 1920's as some of you may know. I went walking (as part of my getting over Lockdown therapy) and came across a woman hiker having her picnic there.

If you've not been – let me tell you there are two slabs of granite - about 5' by 3' with their inscription – that lie slightly crookedly on the South Side of the Tor. In between is a grass gully, and she was very comfortably nestled there, out of the wind, eating her sandwiches . It made me laugh – and I said to her – That's the way to deal with the 10 Commandments get right in there, make yourself comfortable and enjoy the view, she chuckled too.

You see even today many of us view the 10 Commandments as a whole load of 'Thou Shalt Nots' placed imposingly high in austere churches, by certain Puritan types – instead of considering the essence, the 2 positives 'Thou Shalts' of Jesus – Love God and love your neighbour.

Like the hiker we need to get down and be at ease between those commandments. That's where we belong that's where we are most effective.

Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

There's a paradox and caveat here though isn't there? - because the way of love is often very difficult and demanding. To follow Christ is no walk in the park, something Karl Marx misunderstood completely.

And here's where I want to introduce the word Woke, slightly mischievously perhaps, but to make an important point.

What is Woke then – in short it's a modern idea, a descriptive term for a generation of people - similar to the idea behind Baby Boomers or Millennials. In the same way it started out as solely descriptive but morphed into being ridiculed by some. It was born out of Black consciousness. If you are Woke you're alert (awake / woke) to racial injustice. It has since come to encompass being alert to all sorts of social injustice as well.

In that sense you could argue very convincingly that Jesus is Woke.

Is his Woke easy – no not really. The commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves is incredibly hard. But it's the rule of love, not the legalistic nit-picking, tick-boxing law. Jesus's rule of love supercedes that.

Those of us who want to know God have the privilege and great joy of following Christ down that road of love.

Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. For my Yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Am I Woke? Are you Woke. Discuss - and I'll see you at Zoom coffee later.

Closing Prayers

Eternal God,
the light of the minds that know you,
the joy of the hearts that love you,
and the strength of the wills that serve you:
grant us so to know you
that we may truly love you,
so to love you that we may truly serve you,
whose service is perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you,
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you,
The Lord life us the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace,
and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**Do join us next week for our Youtube service and look out for announcements
about the start of public worship in church!**

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