

St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter
Newsletter for the Fourth Sunday before Lent, The 70th anniversary of the
Accession of Her Majesty, 6 February 2022

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this week's newsletter. Today we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Accession of Her Majesty the Queen. On this fourth Sunday before Lent we reflect on the call of God to Isaiah, the call of Jesus to his disciples and God's call to us.

In view of the continued Covid precautions we encourage you to wear face-coverings in church unless you are exempt, to maintain social distancing and to use hand sanitizer on entering the building. We are pleased to be serving refreshments after our services and thank you 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 Nigel Guthrie. (live streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

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

4pm Thrive – on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dlNCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

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

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church led by Robert Mitchell

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 8 February, 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 9 February, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass at St Michael's

Thursday 10 February, Scholastica, Abbess, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church

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

Friday 11 February, 9.30 Morning Prayer in St David's Lady Chapel and live streamed on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 13 February – The Third Sunday before Lent

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 Nigel Guthrie and preacher Howard Friend

4pm Thrive Music Session **in St David's Church**

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

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. Seating will be distanced to approximately 2 metres. Please sit on the seats where service books are placed.

Please mingle with care before and after services and be mindful not only of your own wellbeing 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.

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.

Knit and Natter

We will meet again on 26th February and 26th March at St David's Church from 10.30am until 12noon. All are welcome to knit, natter or learn! Tea and coffee available.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be next Saturday 26th February at 10am at the Farmers' Union. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

Prayer after Church at St David's

Prayer will be available for you this Sunday, 6th February, after the 9.30 service at St David's - just head to the Lady Chapel, to the left of the altar, where our prayer team would love to pray with you or for you. We hope to offer this roughly every fortnight, and please let Nigel, Glynis, or Ash know if you are interested in joining the prayer team.

Parish Lunch Returns!

After a long break during the worst of the pandemic our Parish Lunch at Exeter College returns this month.

The first one will be at Exeter College's @34 restaurant on Thursday 17th Feb at 12noon.

Preorder sheets will be at the back of both churches this Sunday and next. All are welcome. Any queries to Sue Wilson on 01392 437571.

Tuesday Café

We are hoping to open the church for a Tuesday café time – as a drop-in for people to find a Christian welcome and company. This hope has been long delayed by the completion of works at the back of church and then..... Covid! Our initial hope would be to open St David's from 10am or 10.30am to 12noon on a Tuesday and we would like to recruit a team who would not only help to serve tea and coffee but

also to talk with people. We would plan that people would help about once a month. Is this something you would like to be involved with? If so please sign up on our "Tuesday Café" sheet at the back of church. If we get a good response we would hope to start in March.

Brunch for Students

Hannah Alderson (Lazenby Chaplain at Exeter University) and Ash Leighton Plom are coordinating a brunch for students at the Imperial on Monday 7th February at 9.30am. Please contact Ash aescleal@gmail.com or Hannah H.Alderson@exeter.ac.uk if you would like to attend and please pass this invitation on to any other students who might like to join in.

Thrive Onsite 13th February – moving into church

On Sunday 13th February we're bringing Thrive into the building with a session of music at 4pm, featuring church bands and musicians from across Exeter. We want this to be a gift and not an ask, so no pressure to contribute, but if you'd love to be involved, talk to Ash for more info or reply to these notices. Volunteers especially welcome in any of the following teams: core group, leafleting, welcomers, hospitality/catering, backstage/tech support, cleaners, and musicians and vocalists - talk to Ash for more info.

Lecture and Reading Group at St Michael's

Desmond Atkinson will give a **S. Michael's Lecture** at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 23rd February on *Canonsleigh Abbey: a Thriving Devon Nunnery*

On Wednesdays 16, 23 and 30 March at 7 pm the **Lent Reading Group** will discuss Bede's *Historia* with Oliver Nicholson

Funeral for John Darch

Thank you to all those who helped at John's funeral and supported Monica and her family.

Photographs from the funeral of Mollie Curry

Some lovely photos were taken after Mollie's funeral. If you would like to order them please have a look after church at St David's and tell Margaret Grimsey.

New Leaves

The February edition of our Parish Magazine with lots of great news and views is now available. Thank you to all our contributors and our editorial team.

Appeal for light-weight Folding Tables – Thank you!

A huge thank you to everyone who responded to my appeal. The tables have been delivered and are now in use.

Green Team

There will be a **Churchyard Morning** at St David's on **Saturday 5 March** from 10am until 12noon to: work on wild flower areas; remove unwanted saplings; plant the remaining fruit trees. Everyone is welcome and refreshments will be provided.

Thank you 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.

Museum of the Moon

This extraordinary artwork is coming to Exeter Cathedral from 3 February. Tickets are now available £5 for adults and free for children. Full details can be found on the cathedral website.

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...

Please remember those who are suffering

Please remember those who have died recently including:

John Darch, Liz Searle, Michael Hickmott

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** Her Majesty the Queen on the 70th anniversary of her Accession. 'Faith Space' at YMCA

Please also pray for:

preparations for 'Thrive' coming into church from February 13th;
ministry with university students and 'Faith Space' at YMCA;
purposeful follow-up from the COP26 conference;
those worried about the rising costs of energy and housing in this country;
for integrity and good leadership in our national life;
the people of Ukraine who are fearful in the current situation;
those suffering in Afghanistan through lack of food and medical facilities;
the people and animals of East Africa (N Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia) suffering from prolonged drought;
the people of Yemen facing continued conflict and famine;
the worldwide Covid vaccination programme, and the roll-out of booster vaccines;
those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices;
those suffering from Covid around the world.

With every blessing,
Nigel Guthrie

Prayers, Readings and Address for the Fourth Sunday before Lent, 6 February 2022

Collect

O God, you know us to be set
in the midst of so many and great dangers,
that by reason of the frailty of our nature
we cannot always stand upright:
grant to us such strength and protection
as may support us in all dangers
and carry us through all temptations;
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 6: 1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: ‘Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’

Gospel Reading – Luke 5: 1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’ Simon answered, ‘Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.’ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!’ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Address by Nigel Guthrie for 6 February 2022

Isaiah the son of Amoz was giving his message to the people of Judah and Jerusalem in the second half of the eighth century BC. In that period the northern Hebrew tribes were annexed to Assyria and it was the southern tribes whose life and religious practices are scrutinized in the visions and prophecies of Isaiah which are recorded in the first 39 chapters of our book of Isaiah. Isaiah holds in tension a vision of peace and justice against the reality of idolatry and haughty people who crush and grind the face of the poor, as he puts it. Tragically his prophecies still resonate strongly amongst the violence, injustice and poverty of our own world.

In chapter 5, just before the vision we heard today, we read the parable of the vineyard which God allows to be destroyed. It was a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of her people to Babylon. And why did God allow this? Isaiah gives this terse explanation of why God was so angry with Israel and Judah, “he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!”

It’s surprising that the vision which was described in today’s reading doesn’t come at the beginning of the book. But perhaps this vision was a renewing force of God in Isaiah’s life rather than an initial calling? It describes a vision of God in the setting of the Jerusalem temple. But it is anything but business as usual in the temple as Isaiah describes six winged seraphs calling out ‘Holy, holy, holy’: the basis of the hymn we call the Sanctus, which we say or sing at every celebration of Holy Communion. The shaking of the temple and the smoke seems to represent the shaking of Isaiah’s soul and even perhaps the shaking of the foundations of the Hebrew people. Then there is the symbol of purification, a live coal from the altar touching his lips and bringing an assurance of forgiveness. Then, finally, the voice of God not giving a command, but asking a question “Whom shall I send and who will go for us”?

It is a question which each of us faces when we come before God. This is why prayer is so often an uncomfortable experience! To pray for an individual poses the question, ‘what can I do for them?’. To pray for a situation or organisation poses the question ‘what can I do to improve things?’ To pray for the poor and suffering poses the question ‘how can I help to alleviate their needs?’. But prayer should not lead us into an unending guilt trip. That was surely the meaning of the coal touching Isaiah’s lips – the seraph told Isaiah “your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” It was not that Isaiah had sorted out the iniquity of the people. But he was being prepared to answer a call not to stand by while injustice and idolatry continued to blight his society.

In church we try to work together for common goals: to promote peace, justice and the integrity of creation. St Paul shows us how profoundly we need each other if we are to serve and worship God. And the disciples were a body of twelve – not a lot of people to bring in the Kingdom of God - and not always the best in attitude or understanding, but were called and chosen by Jesus. Our calling is individual but it is also corporate and although our own conscience must be alert and responsive to injustice so should our structures in church and society.

It is intriguing that Isaiah locates his great vision as being “in the year that King Uzziah died.” Was the King’s death in some way connected with the vision? Did it bring about an instability or crisis which provoked the vision?

It was the death of King George the sixth 70 years ago that brought his daughter Princess Elizabeth back from her visit to Kenya to take up the responsibility of being our Queen. We know that she shared a close and loving relationship with him so this has always been a quiet time of commemoration for Her Majesty. We hope that she will be in good health to enjoy some more exuberant celebrations later in the year.

Reflecting on her calling this week, I have been thinking how much of our lives are determined by factors outside our control. The abdication of her uncle and the relatively early death of her father and the fact that she was the elder of two sisters were the realities that constituted her calling as monarch 70 years ago. And those of us who do not agree with a constitutional monarchy will find that especially weird. But in reality a lot of our callings are determined in similar ways. The life and work of our parents, our education and early experience, our particular strengths and weaknesses, our singleness, partnership or marriage and our faith all profoundly affect our calling, or callings in life. Few of us have had such dramatic calls to service as Isaiah, and yet I suspect that many of us have had moments of revelation or decision where the course of our lives has been changed significantly. As Christians we look for the hand of God in this and indeed seek his words of inspiration and guidance as we look to clarify and follow our own calling. And as we age we realise that our calling changes as our circumstances change. As we leave youth behind we can accept commitment and responsibilities. As we finish paid employment we may have more time to give to voluntary roles. As our children leave home perhaps we

can use the space for new forms of service? As we become less physically able we can dedicate ourselves to friendship and to prayer.

Queen Elizabeth has adapted from being a popular young monarch travelling the world to being a relatively frail ninety-five year old mainly living quietly at home. But in her unwavering love for God and for her people in times of joy and sorrow, she continues to be a powerful example of Christian life and service which resonates with many around the world. We give thanks for her faithful service today and pray that in our own way each of us will say 'yes' to God's call in our lives.

Post-Communion Prayer

Go before us, Lord, in all we do
with your most gracious favour,
and guide us with your continual help,
that in all our works
begun, continued and ended in you,
we may glorify your holy name,
and finally by your mercy receive everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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