

## St David's with St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Newsletter for Sunday 7 November 2021 – Third Sunday before Advent

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this week's newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting with Archdeacon Andrew yesterday. We had a good honest discussion and Andrew outlined some possible ways forward, especially concerning the status of St Michael's and the possibility of St David's being part of a wider Urban Partnership. There will now be a time of consultation followed by a further meeting with Andrew Beane.

**Today** we will hold our Requiem for All Soulstide at St Michael's at 6pm. If you would like someone remembered at the service please let Oliver Nicholson know.

In view of the continued high incidence of Covid infections 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' carefully after the service and chat outside rather than inside (weather permitting). 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.

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** (live streamed on St David's Church Exeter Facebook Page) with celebrant, Belinda Speed-Andrews, and preacher Ash Leighton Plom

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

**4pm Thrive Meeting – Alpha on Zoom**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTICcXFjK2ZlejROUT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289      Passcode: 159821

Please do join this session of Alpha at Thrive, and invite family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, and more. We'll be exploring whether faith is a blind leap, or a reasonable response based on good evidence.

**6pm Sung Requiem for All Soulstide** at St Michael's with celebrant, Nigel Guthrie

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

### **Services in church and online this week**

Tuesday 9 November, Margery Kempe, Mystic, 9.30am on Zoom

Please join us on this link:

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392      Passcode: 196651

Tuesday 9 November, 6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's

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

Thursday 11 November, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church followed by refreshments

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

Friday 12 November, 9.30 Morning Prayer at St David's Church (live streamed on St David's Facebook Page)

### **Sunday 14 November – Third Sunday before Advent**

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with laying of a Remembrance Wreath.

Celebrant and preacher, Nigel Guthrie (live streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's including an Act of remembrance with celebrant and preacher, Dominic Cyrus

4pm Thrive – Alpha Course - on Zoom

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

### **Covid-19 Safe for Public Worship**

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. Please do not sit too close to your neighbour unless invited to do so.

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'.

**Please mingle with care 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.***

### **Fairtrade at St David's**

This week and next week (7 & 14 November) Richard Featherstone will be taking orders for Fairtrade Advent Calendars. They will be available to collect in church on 21 November.

### **Angel Tree Collection at St David's**

We are delighted to be supporting the Angel Tree Project at Exeter Prison again this year. The collection will be **NEXT SUNDAY** on 14 November (also Remembrance Sunday) and the money enables inmates to give presents to their children helping to maintain vital family bonds during a time of separation. Thank you for your support.

### **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.

### **Men's Breakfast**

The next Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November 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**

It's not too late to volunteer to help on the coffee rota at St David's. If you would be willing to help with this ministry of hospitality please contact Jenny Baker.

### **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 and Christmas Draw at St Michael's**

This Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> November, the Bountiful Table will be running again at St Michael's and tickets will be available for the Christmas Draw. Your support will be much appreciated.

### **Help with Stained Glass**

The lovely stained glass panels in the south transept are usually changed with the season and John Wakley would like to instruct a few people on how to change them round safely. Please have a word with Nigel if you'd be willing to learn.

### **Green Team**

Thank you also to everyone who has sponsored a fruit tree for St David's Churchyard. These are being ordered and we hope to plant them on the morning of November 27<sup>th</sup> after Men's Breakfast.

### **Exeter Wildlife Gardening Award**

Could you contribute to biodiversity in Exeter by taking part in this award? There are many simple things we can do to give nature a better foothold in our city. Why not have a look at the award and see if you can adapt your garden?

<https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/take-action/garden-wildlife/exeter-wildlife-gardening-award>

### **Parish Magazine – New Leaves**

The magazines for November are now available. 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](mailto: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](mailto:virtualsaintmichaels@gmail.com) and he can add you to that weekly mailing.

### **Your Prayers are asked for...**

those participating in our Alpha Course on Zoom

**Please remember those who are suffering including:** all those suffering with Covid.

**Please remember those who have died recently including:**

Ian Watt, Will Shaman, Alan John Taylor, Adam Smethhurst

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer**: Charity Shops, Exeter Food Bank, St Petrock's, The Crescent

**Please also pray for:**

the COP26 conference in Glasgow - for far-sighted decisions and purposeful follow-up;  
those worried about the rising costs of energy and housing in this country;  
our Members of Parliament and those who monitor their conduct;  
those seeking to make social media platforms safer and more respectful places;  
the people of Afghanistan, especially girls being denied their right to schooling;  
the refugees from Afghanistan staying in Exmouth and Exeter;  
the people of Ethiopia facing severe food shortages due to the conflict there;  
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 Third Sunday before Advent, 7 November 2021**

**Collect**

Almighty Father,  
whose will is to restore all things  
in your beloved Son, the King of all:  
govern the hearts and minds of those in authority,  
and bring the families of the nations,  
divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin,  
to be subject to his just and gentle rule;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**First Reading – Jonah 3: 1-5 & 10**

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 'Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah set out and

went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

### **Gospel Reading – Mark 1: 14-20**

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.' As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

### **Address for 7 November by Ash Leighton Plom**

Call and response. Something we do quite a lot of in church. Call and response. I pray, you say, "Amen". I say, "The Lord be with you", you say...

Both our readings this morning involve call and response, and so I want to consider what God is calling us to do today, and how we can respond.

In the Gospel reading we've just had, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news, calling on people to believe.

He finds Simon and Andrew casting a net, calls to them, and they respond by following him. Then just about the same thing happens with two other brothers - James and John. Jesus calls them, and they respond, leaving their old way of life behind to follow Jesus.

Call, and response.

In our first reading, God calls Jonah. He says, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah sets out to Nineveh, in response to God's call.

Jonah then dutifully calls on the people of Nineveh to turn from their old way of life, and how wonderfully they respond: they repent, proclaiming a fast, and God shows mercy to them. Call and response - and result!

Jonah is one of my favourite prophets, only four short chapters, perhaps four pages in your bible depending on print and page size, and well worth the maybe 10 minutes it takes to read these 1,000 or so words.

Many of you will know "Jonah's whale" pretty well, and so it won't surprise you to note our reading said, "The word of the Lord came to Jonah *a second time*, saying, 'Get up, go to Nineveh,'" - a second time because this second call happened *after* the whale incident.

Perhaps, as we're thinking about call and response, and for those of you who don't know it yet, it'll be worth reviewing when the call of the Lord came to Jonah the first time, and what he did in response then. Chapter 1 verse 1 of Jonah says, "the word of the Lord came to Jonah saying, 'Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.'"

Note it said, "Go *at once*". But Jonah instead tried to flee to Tarshish [which is now Spain], finding a ship, paying his fare, and going on board to sail away...

So chapter 1 verse 4 says, "But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up." Now, that escalated fast, in just four verses! "The mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo into the sea," to lighten the ship, and Jonah clocks that the storm has arisen because he has failed in his response to God's call. Instead of going to Nineveh, he's legging it to Spain.

Redemptively, to save the others, Jonah voluntarily consents to be thrown overboard - giving his life for the sailors, a foreshadowing of Christ giving his life for us.

And so Jonah sinks, and actually goes right down even to the ocean floor, to what he poetically describes as "the roots of the mountains", "the waters closing in" over

him, the deep surrounding him, weeds wrapping around his head. And as he sinks, he prays. He recalls in chapter 2 verse 2:

*"I called out to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of the Pit I cried, and you heard my voice. You brought up my life from the grave, O Lord my God."*

Jonah called and God responded, even though Jonah's own failure to respond to God's call is what had put Jonah in this deadly predicament.

Many of you know about the whale, which is coming soon, but most people don't notice that Jonah experiences a resurrection miracle. Jonah died when he sank, I mean there's no way he could have survived what he's describing, sinking to the ocean floor below the crushing weight of the sea, and he specifically states that God restored him "to life from the grave" (Jonah 2.6). And so understandably Jonah declares when he is saved, "with shouts of grateful praise... Salvation comes from the Lord!" (~2.9)

It is then that the Lord provided "a large fish to swallow Jonah up; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights", another sign of Christ, of course, (see, for example, Mark 8.12) as Jesus was in the grave for three days and Jonah is again a foreshadowing of this.

But back to call and response: in Jonah 2.10, "the Lord spoke to the fish," and it responds by propelling Jonah out onto the dry land. It is finally now, after being "spewed" up onto the land by the whale, that "the word of the Lord comes to Jonah *a second time*, saying, "Go to Nineveh, and proclaim to it the message," which was where our set reading for this morning kicked off.

Scholars debate Jonah's motivation for refusing God's call in chapter 1, and it's not really until chapter 4 that we hear Jonah's own explanation. At the start of chapter 4, Jonah moans that God's mercy to Nineveh seems to him "very wrong", and he prays despairingly, "this is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love". It seems Jonah's fear was that he would call on the Ninevites to change their evil ways or face destruction, and they might respond with faith and action, and as a result God would show them mercy.

At first, it can be a little hard for us to understand why Jonah would think of mercy as a bad thing. But the context is in chapters 1 and 3, when we learn Jonah is an Israelite, whereas Nineveh is a "great city" - as in a superpower - where the people do "evil things". Jonah, as a person from Israel, feared, perhaps resented, and apparently even hated the Ninevites, and would have preferred God to destroy them than show them mercy.

I want to say, partly this rests on his arrogance and sense of holiness and righteousness. He hadn't noticed how desperately *he* needs God's mercy, as we all do (Romans 3.23). Whereas, when we're humble enough to confess that we are ourselves sinners in need of God's mercy, I think it follows that we treat others with more mercy, instead of wanting them to suffer "justice".

So, to bring this together and come in to land, I want to ask: who are you in these readings? We have, juxtaposed, Simon et al on the one hand who respond immediately to Jesus, vs. Jonah on the other who takes some persuading!

And who is God calling you to fish? Like he said to the first disciples, he says also to you - I will make you fish for people. We have opportunities onsite and online, Sundays and throughout the week, to hook our friends and family, colleagues, classmates, neighbours, to catch them with an invite – a call, and to pray for their response. They may surprise you with a yes, and I anticipate the result.

And one final question: who are the Ninevites to you? Who are the people or what is the thing that God might be calling you towards, to view more mercifully, to be more kind to, people or things that you'd rather avoid?

In our parish life, especially in our Next Steps and diocesan commitments to pray, grow, and serve, we have a moment, an opening, to recalibrate our attitude towards "Others" who might feel in a way like Ninevites to us – a kind of alien, different culture – and to consider them afresh with God's perspective of mercy in superabundance, mindful of how great a mercy He has shown us in calling us, and offering us opportunity to respond.

So please let's not miss this chance, and need asking again like Jonah. Let's pattern ourselves instead more on the models of St Peter, St Andrew, St James, and St John, who responded at once to follow Jesus.

So, who are you fishing for this week, and who is God calling you towards, to be merciful to, and to share the good news with, that he has proclaimed?

### **Closing Prayer**

God of peace,  
whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom  
and restored the broken to wholeness of life:  
look with compassion on the anguish of the world,  
and by your healing power  
make whole both people and nations;  
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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

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