

## **St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Newsletter for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, 8 May 2022**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to worship on this Fourth Sunday of Eastertide. National Covid guidance has recently been updated in the Church of England so we will be discussing how to move forward, especially with the administration of Holy Communion in the coming weeks. I hope that we will come to decision about the next steps at our forthcoming PCC on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Face coverings in church are now voluntary in church, as elsewhere. But please keep aware of social distancing and use hand sanitizer on entering the building. We are delighted 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!

*Nigel is away, preaching at St James' Palace this Sunday.*

### **Our services today are:**

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with celebrant, Ash Leighton Plom and preacher, Howard Friend (live-streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)  
11am Sung Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher, Robin Eastoe

4pm Thrive at St David's Church with Ash Leighton Plom, also on St David's Church Facebook Page – see details below

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

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

**Tuesday 10 May** 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 11 May**, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass

**Thursday 12 May**, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church  
6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's (live streamed on Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page)

**Friday 13 May**, 9.30am Morning Prayer in St David's Lady Chapel and on St David's Church Facebook page

### **Sunday 15 May – Easter 5**

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

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher, Dominic Cyrus

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

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church led by Belinda Speed-Andrews

### **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.***

### **Thrive Acoustic: 8th May, 4pm at St David's Church**

Join local guitar celebrity Dan Rangel for a session of music and conversation across themes of spirituality, love, and deepest meaning.

### **TEA TIME CONCERT**

On Saturday 14th May at 4.00pm you are warmly invited to come to St David's to enjoy a short concert of light-hearted music for voices and instruments - performed by Tina and Nigel and other members of the church community - followed by a delicious cream tea!

The concert is raising funds to support Latin Link, a Christian charity with which one of our students, Jemima, is doing a placement in South America during the coming year. More information about this can be found in Jemima's fundraising page here:

<https://latinlink.org.uk/fundraiser-profile/jemima-firman/>

Tickets are priced £6 - inclusive of the cream tea (children free) and can be obtained from Tina at 07792188253 or on the door.

SOS... some more offers of cakes or scones would be gratefully received. Please contact Tina.

### **Service of Blessing for Exeter Pride**

Next Saturday there will be a service of blessing before the Exeter Pride parade at 10.30am (finishing at 11.15am) at St Petrock's Church in Exeter High Street. This is especially focussed on celebrating the inclusive love of God and will be attended by the Lord Mayor. This service is arranged in conjunction with Central Parish and with Exeter University Chaplaincy. All are welcome to attend.

### **St Michael's Lecture**

On Wednesday 11 May there will be a Lecture by Prof. Richard Seaford at 7.30 pm on *Animal Sacrifice: from Prehistory to Early Christianity*. Entry is free but donations towards St Michael's Church are encouraged.

### **Meeting postponed from 22 May**

We had been hoping to hold an open meeting after church at St David's on Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup> about future plans for the churches that we have been developing with Belinda. For several reasons this will have to be postponed, probably until early autumn.

### **Begin Well Antenatal**

The Right Reverend Jackie Searle, The Bishop of Crediton, invites you to help launch our Begin Well antenatal classes. Begin Well is a charity which works with churches to provide antenatal classes. Its evidence-based course is hosted and run by local churches and offers parents-to-be the starting blocks for family life. There are currently six churches running Begin Well in Devon. If you would like to help us offer this, please get in touch with Ash (07855305519, [aescleal@gmail.com](mailto:aescleal@gmail.com)). Begin Well offer excellent training, course materials, policies, procedures, booking systems and ongoing support throughout.

### **Fairtrade Stall**

There will be a Traidcraft stall in church on 22nd May, anyone wishing to make a pre-order of items from Traidcraft's Spring catalogue for delivery on 22nd May, should see Richard Featherstone after the service please..

### **Parish Fête – Saturday 25 June 11.30am -2pm**

The date of the Fête approaches. Please collect some tickets to sell from church. We will greatly appreciate donations of plants, jams, chutneys and cakes to sell on

the day. A list will soon appear in St David's Church for you to offer help, if you can, with stalls or refreshments and with setting up and clearing away. With many thanks!

### **Knit and Natter**

We will meet on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May from 10.30am until 12noon. All are welcome to knit, natter or learn! Tea and coffee available.

### **Men's Breakfast**

The Men's Breakfast will be going on tour around three venues! Our next breakfast will be on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May at 9.30am at the Imperial. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

### **St David's Church opening times**

After many years of general closure we are re-establishing regular opening times for St David's Church, usually having the church open from 9.30am to 5pm from Monday to Friday. So please do pop in if you are passing to pause and pray and to greet any visitors.

### **Tuesday Friendship Café**

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 for May and June 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!

### **Tea and Toast at St Michael's Church**

Tea and toast will be available at St Michael's Church from 9-10am on Wednesdays this term. Do come and join in if you are free!

### **New Leaves – May Edition**

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

### **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!

### **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](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 who are suffering including:**

Charlotte, Paul and Grace; Maggs Bedford; Monica Darch; Andrew Francis; James Ibbetson, 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:**

Jack Savage, John Phelps

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** Travellers to St David's and Central Stations, all railway staff and Transport Police

#### **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;

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

the people of Somalia facing continued conflict and famine;

those elected to office this week as councillors in Exeter;

purposeful follow-up from the COP26 conference;

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

those in the NHS 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 the Fourth Sunday of Easter 8 May 2022**

### **Collect**

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life:  
raise us, who trust in him,  
from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,  
that we may seek those things which are above,  
where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### **First Reading – Acts 9: 36-end**

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, 'Please come to us without delay.' So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

### **Gospel - John 10: 22-30**

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and

they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

### **Address by Howard Friend for 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

In plain sight.

I wonder what that phrase conjures up for you ? One of its current popular usages has a very negative connotation: I'm sure I'm not the only one who immediately thinks of criminals like Harold Shipman and Jimmy Saville who break the law but are so brazen about it - that somehow we're taken in. There's almost an element of 'Catch me if you can' about such behaviour.

In plain sight. Base Criminality with a veneer of respectability.

In plain sight

Now – paradoxically - that's the phrase that came to my mind as I read our Gospel this week – except of course here it has a quite different, and positive interpretation.

In plain sight

Manifest goodness that was disbelieved.

Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, living and acting like the real deal, proclaiming the Kingdom of God, performing miracles, – Right in front of everybody's eyes - and still many wouldn't believe him.

And we get a glimpse of Jesus's frustration here – because this episode is just the culmination of an ongoing tussle between him and the Jewish leaders.

What's the truth of the matter. And how do you get at that truth?

That's my strapline this morning.

Think Pilate, for whom I've come to have some sympathy – What is truth?

Well - Appearances can be deceptive. Sometimes you have to dig deeper to find the truth.

Let's return to our two criminals momentarily.

(Joke)

Anyway – back to our serious subject – for a moment.

This respected GP was not rumbled despite the fact that deaths occurred amongst his patients 10 X more often than normal. The evidence was there for his colleagues to see – if they'd been more circumspect.

And in the case of Jimmy Saville – as I learned this week from an article in the Guardian - years before he was finally caught - a journalist had established credible evidence from some of his earliest victims but her newspaper didn't publish - for fear of being bankrupted by Saville's lawyers. Libel law in this country is heavily weighted in favour of the one being libelled. There is no effective Public Interest clause in the current legislation, as I understand it - which is what she was arguing is necessary.

How do we get at the truth? That's the big question that this Gospel reading throws at us. (The Jewish leaders were interested in finding the Messiah - let's give them credit - but they were blinded from seeing him because of their tradition and prejudice.) How do we get at the truth – well a simple test is:-

Truth is as truth does.

A caring GP doesn't kill his patients. A celebrity, charity fundraiser for children's causes doesn't violate them.

And in this Gospel passage Jesus, almost losing patience with his detractors, says in effect. I'm here 'IN PLAIN SIGHT' - the evidence is right in front of you if you would only open your eyes.

I was born in Bethlehem, of the lineage of David. They had overlooked this. And it's an important qualification for the Messiah. Yes - I come from Nazareth, Galilee, and yes I am only a carpenter's son and didn't go to Theological School. But put aside your prejudice, and your preconceived ideas.

Truth is as truth does.

(Look at the miracles)

Love is as love does.

Don't we all recognise that?

Don't just believe him if he says he loves you. Isn't that what we tell our daughters. To which we might add :- And be slightly suspicious of flowers!

So we get to know the truth - I suggest – in large part by examining the integrity of the person propounding that truth.

I've honed in on this subject of truth because of its huge importance in our internet / social media world today where we're bombarded with lies masquerading as truth.

If you murder civilians in your neighbouring country – you are not bringing them back into the fold of the motherland.

If you do not accept the result of an election verified by an independent body and judiciary and then attempt a coup d'état - it is a truth universally acknowledged that you are not fit to be a President in a democracy.

The evidence is there 'IN PLAIN SIGHT'

Now here's an interesting thing about truth - and our awareness of it - in this post Easter period - as Helen pointed this out to me after Ash's sermon last week. I get a lot of my original ideas from her. That's the truth.

It took Simon Peter three 'gos' to recognise and accept the Risen Lord – one for each denial perhaps?

And - we can be similarly slow to realise God's love for us. Truth very often does - just - dawn - on us. (No flashing lights)

But if we, like Simon Peter - dare to say - after the umpteenth time of God asking, Do you love me - Yes Lord - you know that I love you –

THEN :-

Truth and love must be evident in our lives

Not hidden

But (be) :-

'IN PLAIN SIGHT'

**Post-Communion Prayer**

Merciful Father,

you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd,  
and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again:  
keep us always under his protection,  
and give us grace to follow in his steps;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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