

St David's with St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Newsletter for the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, 9 January 2022

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this week's newsletter as we celebrate the Baptism of Christ by John. On this Sunday it is good to reflect on our own baptism and on the words which came from heaven after Jesus' baptism 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' God is pleased to have us as his children even when we don't feel so pleased with ourselves.

In view of the continued Covid restrictions 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 have suspended the offering of refreshments after services for the time being, but otherwise we plan to go ahead with our services as advertised. 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 and preacher, Nigel Guthrie

4pm Thrive – on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

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

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 11 January, 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 12 January, 9.30am Mattins and Mass at St Michael's

Thursday 13 January, 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 14 January, 9.30 Morning Prayer live streamed on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 16 January – Epiphany 2

9.30am Morning Praise at St David's (no celebration of Holy Communion) led by Nigel Guthrie with talk by Doug Owen speaking about the work of ICE Charitable Trust in Exeter Schools. (live streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher Robin Eastoe

4pm Thrive – on Zoom

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church with Bill Pattinson

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. Services should be 'no longer than necessary'.

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.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be next Saturday 29th January at 10am at the Farmers' Union. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

NRSV bibles for St David's

Do you have an NRSV version of the bible at home which you don't use? If so we would be delighted to give it a home at St David's Church. We would like to have a few copies at the back of church for those who would like to follow the readings which will be written up on the white board at the back of church. Thank you.

Appeal for light-weight Folding Tables

Unfortunately I have to reopen our appeal for four folding tables as the price I was working on referred to small tables (even though the website illustrated large ones!) So, my apologies but we need to raise a further £230 if possible and any donations would be very much appreciated towards that. We are buying robust tables so that they should have a very long life and our existing tables will be used in the parish room. With thanks for your further consideration! Nigel

Thank you from Louise Tulloh

Dear friends at St David's

I would like to say a big **thank you** to you all for your welcome, kindness, hospitality and support during my placement with you.

I quickly felt settled and embraced into the life of the Church, both in person and on-line with Thrive, and am very thankful to have met so many lovely, inspiring people who help to make St David's the warm and welcoming Church community that it is.

With love and best wishes to you all, Louise

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

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** Those who have been baptized in our churches in the past year.

Please also pray for:

St Petrock's outreach work with rough sleepers in Exeter;
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;
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 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 Baptism of Christ, 9 January 2022

Collect

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus
revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;
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 43: 1-7

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my sight,
and honoured, and I love you,
I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
I will say to the north, 'Give them up',
and to the south, 'Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of the earth—
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.'

Gospel Reading – Luke 3: 15-17 & 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Address by Nigel Guthrie for the Baptism of Christ

In just under a month, on the 6th of February, her Majesty the Queen will celebrate the 70th anniversary of her accession to the throne. As you may well have gathered, the official celebrations will be at the beginning of June, and let's hope that by then Covid will allow us some celebratory parish and community events! But with my hat on as one of the Chaplains to Her Majesty I thought I should do some homework and found a little booklet which my mother must have bought before the 1953 coronation. I remember her telling me that her father had bought or rented a television for the first time so that the family could gather to watch the service together at home and she remembered the occasion well. The booklet reminded me that the central symbolic act of the coronation is not the placing of the crown on the sovereign's head but the anointing with holy oil. In fact it was only this part of the service that the Queen asked should not be televised, regarding it as the most solemn and sacred part of the ceremony.

As we know from the Old Testament kings were anointed with oil to show that they were chosen by God to be leaders of God's people. The titles 'Messiah' and 'Christ' both derive from words meaning 'the anointed one': 'Messiah' being from the Hebrew and 'Christ' from the Greek. So, words like 'Christening' and 'Christian' contain that reference to anointing which denotes being chosen and appointed by God.

As we heard in our Gospel the anointing of Jesus was not by oil but by water, and God's choice was emphasized by the appearance of a dove representing the Holy Spirit and a voice from heaven saying "You are my Son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased." This was the launch of Jesus' public ministry and it was a vocation which he saw through to the bitter end of the cross and beyond it to resurrection.

On this Feast of the Baptism of Christ it's good to reflect on our own baptism however long ago it was, and under whatever circumstances. Perhaps we were brought or Baptism by our parents or decided later in life for ourselves? But either

way it is good to pause and give thanks for those who have encouraged us on our Christian journey and helped us to make good use of the faith which is God's gift to us. Faith is not always the easiest gift to receive and sometimes we may not feel that comfortable with it, especially when the Church lets us, or other people, down. But I believe that if we receive this gift of faith God will use us to serve and bless others. When we do that, our faith will grow and we will fulfil the anointing we received at our Christening.

I was glad that the life and recent death of another long-lived leader, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was so widely reported. He was certainly someone who made the most of his Christian calling. Indeed, he is surely one of the Christian leaders who in our lifetimes has made a notable historic mark for good on his nation.

I was privileged to meet him in about 1990 when he visited Coventry Cathedral. As some of you who also met him have mentioned, it was an unforgettable experience. I remember three things about his visit. Firstly, he told us that even as Archbishop of Cape Town he didn't have the right to vote in national elections. This brought home to me in a fresh way the depth of injustice represented by apartheid. Secondly at the end of the service it came time for the procession to move to the west end and he took the hand of the Bishop of Coventry and danced up the aisle with him to considerable applause and the delight of all present. But at the end of the service he took time to greet many people and I remember him saying to me 'Hello Father, how are you getting on'. I was a young curate dressed in my clerical collar in the congregation and I felt both honoured but also humbled that this man, who truly had become a father to his people, should address me so kindly. But as you may know it was the simple greeting given by his local priest Trevor Huddleston to Tutu's mother which made such a profound impression on the young Desmond.

It was after he stood down as Archbishop that Desmond Tutu chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission finally presenting a large report to President Mandela. Tutu recognised that without a truthful reckoning with the past and reconciliation between former enemies there could be no good future for South Africa, although he also saw the shortcomings of the commission. But it was this aspect of his work that struck me most as I was thinking about our theme today.

Which of us cannot be concerned and sometimes dismayed at the rise of extremism and the promotion of false and damaging ideas which are passed off as truth. The

anniversary of the storming of the Capital has reminded us of the divisive leadership of Donald Trump and the power of Social Media in promoting half-truths and outright disinformation - as well as good knowledge and inspiration. There is a growing sense of division in society which is deeply harmful, and truth and reconciliation should be the top priorities not only for our politicians but for all of us. In December we saw that 61% of those admitted to critical care in the NHS with confirmed Covid were unvaccinated. Now we don't believe in forced vaccination in this country but when we look at the staggering waiting lists for other conditions we can only lament those who have spread poor information and scare stories about the vaccines helping, in the opinion of many of us, to fill up our hospital beds unnecessarily.

Part of our calling and anointing as Christians is to seek out the truth in every area of life and to be ready to question what we are told. We have grown up with a stable and generally functioning democracy in this country and it is something that we should truly treasure and never take for granted. As we celebrate the Baptism of Christ today let us rejoice in our calling as Christian people, beloved of God and well pleasing in his sight, ready to serve but also ready to dig out the truth.

Post-Communion Prayer

Lord of all time and eternity,
you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father
in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son:
by the power of your Spirit
complete the heavenly work of our rebirth
through the waters of the new creation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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