

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

Newsletter for 11 October 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to this weekly update for the eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

We are all concerned about rising levels of Covid -19 infection in Exeter. The city clergy and churchwardens are meeting online with Bishop Robert and his senior staff on Tuesday for a briefing. We will let you know of any necessary changes as soon as possible.

Sunday Worship

This Sunday the 9.30am service from St David's will be live streamed on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/stdavidschurhexeter/>

Belinda Speed Andrews will be celebrating and Howard Friend will be preaching at St David's with Fr Dominic Cyrus celebrating and preaching at St Michael's.

Services this Week

This week opening times are:

St Michael and All Angels - Wednesday Morning Prayer at 9.30am followed by Mass at 10am and Sunday Mass at 11am

St David – Thursday 10.30am, Holy Communion, Sunday 9.30am Holy Communion

If you would like to come to a quiet and well spaced out service why not think about one of our midweek Holy Communion services? There is plenty of room!

Covid-19 Safe

These are the provisions we are making to keep worshippers as safe as possible.

After consultation we have decided to encourage people to use both exits to get out of church rather than having a one-way system which doesn't work that well in our buildings. Please avoid touching door handles and remember to sanitise your hands on the way out – Thank you.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

We should now wear face coverings in church. There are important exemptions which can be found at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/COVID%2019%20advice%20on%20face%20coverings%20v3.0.pdf>

and which include those with a hearing impairment.

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.

Seating will be distanced to approximately 2 metres. Please sit on the seats where service books are placed. Seating is also marked by white labels at St Michael's, with notices on the pews that should be kept clear.

Please observe appropriate distancing from others at all times.

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'; and congregational singing is still not permitted.

Toilet facilities will be available and please follow the instructions for use.

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.

Help with Track and Trace on Sundays

We would really appreciate a few more volunteers to help take names and numbers at the beginning of services at St David's. What it entails is being in Church from 9.05am and taking everyone's details as they arrive (including those already in the building) and then going to your seat as the service starts.

It would be good to share out the load over a month. **Please speak to one of our churchwardens or to Sue Wilson if you would be willing to help.**

Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel

Sadly we have not been able to run our Thursday soup evening since lock down in March due to the difficulty in physical distancing in the Parish Room. But from this Tuesday we will be providing light supper at 6pm for those (32 residents) at the Great Western Hotel as part of a rota of churches who are providing food on different evenings. This is being coordinated by St Petrocks who have moved most of their provision to being mobile around the city rather than based at Cathedral Green. We plan to provide a filled roll with crisps and an individually wrapped chocolate biscuit. Covid regulations and other practicalities limit what we can realistically

provide. If you would like to help make up the rolls at 5pm or provide small bags of crisps or individually wrapped chocolate bars towards this outreach work then please have a word with Phil and Moira Dale or Mary Quest, or me. This arrangement is likely to last until March and we may receive funding towards the food we provide.

Live Daily Prayers

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

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page: Tuesday and Friday at 9am. Compline (Night Prayer) in traditional language on Thursday 15th at 9pm.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page: Wednesday Mattins at 9.30am.

Psalms Bible Study by Zoom

Our Psalms Bible Study begins on Zoom this week and will run on the following **Tuesdays at 2pm:** 13 and 20 October and 3 and 10th November. This Tuesday we will be looking at psalm 90. Here is the Zoom link for you to join in:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

Harvest Festival

Thank you for the goods brought to St Michael's Church for our Harvest Festival last week for Exeter Foodbank. We are very grateful to Paula Lewis who regularly delivers our donations to the Foodbank and to Oliver Nicholson who keeps us up to date with the needs of the Foodbank through the virtual St Michael's sheet.

Cleaning Elves and Fairies for St David's

Would you be willing to help with cleaning at St David's Church? There is a merry band who generously give their time to this to make the church welcoming. If you would consider helping please contact Mollie Curry who coordinates the group. Mollie would be happy for you to ring her on 01392 966862. Thank you for considering this.

Annual Revision of the Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll revision has now closed until the APCM but names can be added afterwards.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This important meeting in our church life has been set for Tuesday 27th October at 7.30pm in St David's Church. Please come along if you can. Nomination forms for churchwardens and PCC members are available in church. Please submit an activities report for your group as soon as you can to Helena Walker, our PCC secretary:
pccsecretary@stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk

We do legally have to hold the meeting before the end of October so if government restrictions change and we can't hold the meeting in church arrangements will be made, and advertised, for a Zoom meeting which has been authorised as a back-up plan by Bishop Robert.

Quiet Morning – Wednesday 14th October

We are holding our Parish Quiet Morning online this autumn. It will run from 10am to 12.30 on 14 October.

Penny Warren from the Community of Aidan and Hilda will be speaking on the meaning and implications of Celtic Spirituality. There will be two reflections offered with time between for reflection and prayer. We are suggesting a £5 donation which will all go the Community of Aidan and Hilda of which Penny is Members' Guardian. Please email me directly on nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com if you haven't already let Howard know you want to join. I will host the Zoom sessions and send out the invitations just beforehand.

Reopening of Churches for public worship – a continuing process

Our churches are currently open for one midweek communion and one Sunday communion. We are keeping this under review in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines. Thank you for keeping this process in your prayers.

The PCC has now agreed a Risk Assessment process to allow our buildings to be used by a small number of trusted groups. The Risk Assessment is available for scrutiny on the St David's Website.

Traidcraft Stall

Richard Featherstone will be taking Traidcraft orders this Sunday and on Sunday 18th for delivery on October 25th. Many thanks for supporting Fair Trade producers.

Magazine

The October magazine is ready for collection and is available through our websites. Thank you to our contributors, our editorial team and those who distribute the magazine.

Phone Networks

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 had any contact please let me know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com or by ringing me on 01392 660226 or Ash on 07855305519.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Charles Argall, Janine, Charles Speed-Andrews, Maggs Bedford, Nicky Jarman and her husband Tim and their family, Jacqueline and her family, Joy and her family, Claude and Gillian Harbord, Elizabeth Hewitt, Anne Smith, Grace Tointon, Pam Smith and her family, James and Katy Tyler, Andrew Wakley, Rosemary Willcox, Dale, David and Beryl.

Please remember Pam Stephens and Maurice Wright who have died recently. May they rest in the peace of Christ.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** we pray for students resident in our parish and especially those who are having to isolate.

Please also pray for:

those not able to return to church and all who are worshipping with us at home;

those places suffering the effects of a changing climate;

those areas and countries suffering most from Covid-19, and those who are feeling anxious or afraid;

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they have to make and implement, the police service

those working in care homes and hospitals

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

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

Collect, Readings and Address for Sunday 11th October

St David's Service will be live streamed on our Facebook page

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
increase in us your gift of faith
that, forsaking what lies behind
and reaching out to that which is before,
we may run the way of your commandments
and win the crown of everlasting joy;
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 25: 1-8

O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.
Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress,
a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.
When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,
the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of
clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.
And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever.
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 22: 1-22

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, “Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.” But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, “The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.” Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

‘But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen.’

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?’ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, ‘Whose head is this, and whose title?’ They answered, ‘The emperor’s.’ Then he said to them, ‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

An Address by Howard Friend at St David’s Church – 11th October 2020

Trinity 18, Isaiah 25 vs 1-8, Matthew 22 vs 1-22

Wedding invitations. Now there’s a dilemma for the unwary. Many a happy wedding has been preceeded by unholy arguments about who’s to be invited and who unfortunately must be left out. I’m sure many of you have a story to tell about this conundrum.

Our fourth and last born announced her engagement this summer. A highlight it has to be said in what has otherwise been a testing year. Especially as celebrations and a grand tour for our own 40th Wedding Anniversary went down the swanny. And we’re still trying to get our money back from Virgin Atlantic.

On the subject of money (and Weddings). One of my first thoughts on hearing Laura and Joe’s great news was - Well – at least it will be cheaper than the other 3 – if they get on with it.

Max 30 guests or is it 15 now. Don’t ask Boris cos he won’t know.

But it turns out they want to wait till Covid is over and then have a proper (by which they mean) a big wedding.

Who to invite – well now - we’ve learnt a trick or two from the three times we’ve been around this particular block. One - set a budget, which is the same for all. Two - most importantly – do something along these lines - organise a smaller lunch time drinks do a week or so after the big day to satisfy all YOUR friends and the OLDER relations, who surprise, surprise don’t mind missing the all day marathon of the main event one bit. And for the icing on the cake, ask the bride to wear her dress at that do

as a sort of encore. As our other daughter pointed out. It reduces the cost of the dress per view Dad by 50%.

So - Wedding invitations and how to keep everyone happy. I've given you a few tips for the modern age - But - what exactly was Jesus getting at in this Parable from our Gospel Reading.

Well this is a Parable directed at the Pharisees and other Jewish religious leaders about who gets invited and who gets into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our first reading, from Isaiah, with its references to great food, vintage wine, an end to death and tears and ALL people being in on the feast had been disregarded by the religious elite in the intervening years. By Jesus's time it was sort of understood that only they would get an invite to the Messianic Wedding Feast and the riff raff – every one else - didn't get a look in. They would get in because of what they had done in keeping the letter of the law.

But Jesus actually had the same view as the prophet Isaiah. The Kingdom of God is open to all. (There is no budget here) – but you have to accept the invitation. You don't get in on merit, you get in because you recognise that Jesus is the true Messiah – the only one who can restore the broken relationship with a God who has always loved us whether we're A listers or way down the list alongside - shall we say the Godparents who never remembered any birthdays despite being Hedge Fund managers. You know the sort.

This generous, open invitation is a serious point which needs emphasising. God's invitation to be part of this feast celebrating the Kingdom of God is open to all. You and me however undeserving we think we are.

Now the second and last point in this Parable interpretation concerns the guy who got in but didn't have the right clothes.

What's that all about? – His treatment seems harsh by modern standards

On this matter of what to wear at a wedding – I was reminded of our most recent family wedding – that of my nephew Harry (and his lovely Emily)

The guests were an eclectic mix – as they say. At one stage I found myself next to one of Harry's fashionable London friends at the bar. We eyed each other with bemusement. I was in my morning suit whilst he had more modern gear, what I can best describe as a Peaky Blinder outfit, a loud check with trousers that showed at least 2 inches of hairy leg.

Each of us was thinking - Wrong gear – No idea. But the point is - allowing for age difference - we had each made an effort to dress in proper wedding gear.

And this man hadn't – he'd turned up in the biblical equivalent of dirty tracky bottoms and a sweaty teashirt. Disrespectful, and I think he knew it, because he had no answer when challenged, and that led to an unfortunate consequence.

Now the explanation of this small piece of the passage is rather tricky I think - but having consulted the commentaries and the counsel of some of my very helpful colleagues - here's my take.

It's Paul in Colossians, and who sheds some light on this. He talks about putting off the old nature: greed, anger, malice, lust, bad language and the rest - like you take off old clothes and by the power of the Holy Spirit putting on new clothes befitting a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven: of compassion, kindness, humility, justice, patience and so on.

So you see God's invitation to his Kingdom is inclusive. But we have a responsibility as invited guests to be open to the influence of the Holy Spirit in changing us to be more like Jesus. We need to discard the old and put on the new.

This guy was not serious about being part of the Kingdom of God. (Wrong gear no idea)

A last word about a possible misinterpretation of this Parable – in my view. This putting off the old and putting on the new in terms of our spiritual nature is a process – it doesn't happen overnight. Common sense tells us that and plenty of other scriptures attest that this is so.

Some of us try to put on the new clothes before shedding the old. It doesn't work.

Anyone can tell – you look ridiculous.

So folks – we're all invited to the party

What are you going to wear?

Closing Prayer

We praise and thank you, O Christ, for this sacred feast:

for here we receive you,

here the memory of your passion is renewed,

here our minds are filled with grace,

and here a pledge of future glory is given,

when we shall feast at that table where you reign

with all your saints for ever.

Do join us next week for our services in church or on Facebook!

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