

## St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Newsletter for the Second Sunday of Lent, 13 March 2022

Dear Friends,

Today we welcome a special Diocesan Service to St David's Church. The Bishop of Exeter will be commissioning 'Anna Chaplains' from across the Diocese. These are people from their congregations who have a special care for older people in their communities. Debbie Thrower, journalist and broadcaster and founder of the Anna Chaplaincy, will give the address. Everyone is welcome to the service which starts at 3pm.

The beginning of Lent has been dominated by invasion of Ukraine and by the barbaric actions which we are witnessing against the Ukrainian people and their country. We continue to pray for a reduction in harm and for the protection of life, for peace and for the refugees who are fleeing, and for the response of our country to the crisis.

Today our gospel reading not only mentions Herod, a ruthless ruler, but also brings us one of the most beautiful images of God's love. 'How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wing, and you were not willing!' Jesus shows us God's generous offer of love and protection in the knowledge that we may choose to reject it. Lent challenges us to choose life and love over death and separation from God.

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

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

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with celebrant, Nigel Guthrie and preacher Ash Leighton Plom. (live-streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

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

3pm Commissioning of Anna Chaplains by The Bishop of Exeter at St David's Church with address by Debbie Thrower

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

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

**Tuesday 15 March**, 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 16 March**, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass at St Michael's

**Thursday 17 March**, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church with address by Ash Leighton Plom

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

**Friday 18 March**, 9.30 Morning Prayer in St David's Lady Chapel and live streamed on St David's Facebook Page

### **Sunday 20 March – The Third Sunday of Lent**

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, Robin Eastoe

4pm Thrive at St Michael's Church

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 mingle with care before and after services** and be mindful not only of your own wellbeing but also of your neighbours' safety.

***Please do not attend church if you are feeling ill or have tested positive for Covid.***

### **Church Meeting about Churchwardens**

Thank you very much to Jeremy Lawford, Dave Allin, Sue Wilson and Emma White who spoke at the meeting at St David's last Sunday. Their contribution helped us to understand more of what it means to serve as a Churchwarden in our parish. We would like to establish a small group of people who would be willing to share in the work of churchwarden and who would be willing to take on the role for a year or two ... or more. Strong lay leadership is crucial for the well-being and future of our parish. Please continue in prayer and discernment for the right people to be called forward to represent our parish and her people. Please pick up a copy of our parish prayer for Lent to use.

With thanks, Nigel

### **Knit and Natter**

We will meet next on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> March at 10am** at the Farmers' Union. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

### **Men's Walk for Hospiscare**

Thank you very much to everyone who sponsored our team effort. Our Just Giving Page is still open if you would like to support the Men's Walk fundraising:

<http://www.justgiving.com/team/StDavidsExeter22>

### **Thrive**

Thrive is taking a break this week as we host the Anna Chaplaincy service and, next week, 20<sup>th</sup> March, will be at St Michael's Church at 4pm.

### **Parish Quiz – Tickets still available!**

St David's Social Committee is organising a Quiz on **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March** at 7.30pm in aid of St David's church funds. Tickets are now available for £10 including Ploughmans Supper and a drink. Under 16 tickets are £4. Please aim to make up teams between 6 and 8 people, although you are welcome to do this on the night, of course.

### **An hour of music – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30pm**

Christabel invites you to her assessed performance including music by Mendelssohn, Chopin and song arrangements - for piano, violin and string ensemble. The grand piano in St David's is on loan from Christabel and this is an opportunity to hear her play it as part of her music course assessment (no charge but donations to church are welcome).

### **Tuesday Friendship Café**

We got off to a good start last Tuesday. 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 now a rota at the back of church to sign up 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!

### **Lent Groups**

St David's church are offering 2 different courses

On Tuesday afternoons 2pm at 95 Howell Rd on 8, 15, 22, 29 March and 5 April  
York Course '**Caring for Creation**' Please email [nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com) to book a place or sign the list at the back of church. A course booklet will be available for £4.

On Tuesday evenings 7pm Venue TBC on 8, 15, 22, 29 March and 5 April

**Sanctuary Mental Health Course:** <https://www.sanctuarymentalhealth.org>

This will be led by Revd Belinda Speed-Andrews. If you would like to join or know more details, please contact her on [bspeedandrews@gmail.com](mailto:bspeedandrews@gmail.com)

Also on offer in the city churches churches:

Chris Bryan will be running a Lent course: on **Thursdays 3rd, 10th & 17th March** from 10.30am to 11.45am in St Petrock's church. 'Son of God': What does this term really mean? How is it used in the bible?

and....Clare Bryden from the Cathedral will lead a series of Compline services in St Olave's on Monday evenings at 8pm during Lent.

### **Lent Reading Group at St Michael's**

On Wednesdays 16, 30 March and 6 April at 7 pm the **Lent Reading Group** will discuss Bede's *Historia* with Oliver Nicholson

### **St Michael's Survey**

A survey has been prepared following on from the Archdeacon's proposals for St Michael's Church. We invite all those who are regular worshippers or on the Electoral Roll for St Michael's or who use the church regularly for other activities to complete and return the survey not later than 27<sup>th</sup> March 2022. It is available on paper at St Michael's Church, and online from [nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com)

### **Parish Lunch**

The next parish lunch will be on Thursday March 31st at 12 noon at Exeter College's @34 Restaurant. Menus and signing up sheets will be at the back of both churches from this Sunday and people will need to sign up by Sunday March 27th.

### **Church Electoral Roll**

The revision of the Church Electoral Roll is currently underway. If you are a regular worshipper but not already on the Roll please pick up a form from church. You need to be on the Roll to vote at the APCM or stand for election. Any queries please contact Sue Wilson at St David's or Paula Lewis at St Michael's.

### **Fairtrade Easter Eggs**

Richard Featherstone will be taking orders (cash on delivery) from this Sunday for "real" Easter eggs, to be delivered at the Traidcraft stall at St David's on March 27th?

### **New Leaves**

The March 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.

### **Green Team**

Thank you again to all those who donated the fruit trees. Those recently planted are 2 Cox apple, 2 Katy apple, 1 Scrumptious apple, 1 crab apple. We look forward to enjoying and sharing some fruit in due course!

Thank you also 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!

### **South West Prays – for peace in Ukraine**

Christians in the South West will be uniting to pray for the situation in Ukraine next Sunday, 20 March at 6pm. You can log in here:

<http://www.southwestprays.com/>

### **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...**

**Please remember those who are suffering including:** Marian Barnes, 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; Andy, Avis, Becky, Debs and Rob

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

Marion Barnes, Edward Hammond, Dave Stanley, Diane Susan Evans

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** Our Lent Groups and the St Michael's Reading Group

### **A Prayer for Ukraine**

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,  
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,  
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.  
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at-risk and in fear, that you would  
hold and protect them.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

**Please also pray for:**

the Anna Chaplains being commissioned for Exeter Diocese this afternoon at St  
David's Church;  
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 the leaders of Ukraine and NATO countries, and of Russia;  
members of our community to consider standing as church and chapel wardens or  
assistants;  
the consultation during March about future ministry at St Michael's;  
purposeful follow-up from the COP26 conference;  
those being impacted by rising costs of living in this country;  
those suffering in Afghanistan through lack of food and medical facilities;  
the people of Yemen and Ethiopia facing continued conflict and famine;  
those facing long waits for treatment in the NHS;  
those suffering from Covid and long-Covid around the world.

With every blessing,  
Nigel Guthrie

**Prayers, Readings and Address for the Second Sunday of Lent, 13 March 2022**

**Collect**

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,  
that they may return to the way of righteousness:  
grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion,  
that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession,  
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;  
through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### **First Reading Genesis 15: 1-12 & 17-18**

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Then he said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.' But he said, 'O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?' He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.' He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire-pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.'

### **Gospel Reading – Luke 13: 31-end**

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood

under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." '

### Address by Ash Leighton Plom for Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> 2022

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings!"

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your tender heart to gather us. Help us now as we gather to attend to your Word and prepare for your Sacrament, by your Spirit. Amen.

Good morning, friends, and for anyone new, my name's Ash.

I want to preach especially from the Genesis reading we had this morning, as this is key stuff for grasping God's work in the world and our lives. I know Genesis can be like a distant text for some of us, but it seems especially appropriate to give time to it today, as it's about a family's journey across a dangerous land, and about the personal promises from God speaking into their specific situation. So, let's get into God's word in Genesis, and make links especially as we cross the wild desert of Lent together this year.

Firstly, our Genesis reading started with the words, "*After these things*", which requires a quick summary for context. Abram had been introduced three short chapters earlier, in Genesis 12 – when God spoke to him and gave him a call and a promise - in his case namely to a Land, and that he would have many heirs. The specificity of these aren't meant to alienate us, but conversely reassure us that the God of the universe is also a God of personal promise in individuals' situations: as he was to Abram, so he can be for you.

Genesis 13 and 14, then, show that Abram was *open* to receive God's promise, *responding* to his call by leaving everything he knew behind, even though this must have been terrifying, but he *trusted* that God would be faithful in turn and fulfil his promises. I taught on this story to Key Stage 1 at St David's Primary this week, and we identified that as well as feeling sad about what he was leaving behind and scared about the journey, Abram could also have been feeling excited and hopeful about what lay ahead.

Later in Genesis, God changes Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of many nations", to connect with the promise. The addition of the "h" sound also symbolises the breath of God – or Spirit of God – breathing into Abraham's life (think of the "h" sounds in God's name "Jehovah" or "Yahweh"). The Spirit of God in his life transforms Abraham's situation.

Abraham is therefore one of the most important figures in both the Old Testament and the New. The Old Testament establishes that he's the father of the Jewish people, and St Matthew's Genealogy List names Jesus as a descendent of Abraham (Matt 1:17), but the New Testament also calls Abraham the father of Christians as well. For example, in St Luke's Gospel, we are called children of Abraham (Luke 13:16, Luke 19:9) and are given the promise that he will be there to meet us when we die (Luke 16:22).

New Testament authors offer significant commentaries on Abraham's life, including a powerful speech by St Stephen recorded in Acts (chapter 7), and exegesis in epistles like Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. If you're looking for Lenten reading, why not open Acts, Romans, Galatians, or Hebrews this week and explore more about Abraham's faith? I'd love to hear how you get on. A common point stands out in all of them: Abram set out in faith, trusting God enough to leave everything he knew, and God accounted this faith to him as righteousness.

That's some of the context for Genesis as background to that phrase "After these things": God called Abram to a new land, promising him many descendants, and Abram faithfully set off. So we come to the section our reading covered this morning.

Next, God said: "Do not be afraid" (v.1). I cherish that. God has called, Abram has responded, but God acknowledges that even with Abram's faithfulness, he may have fears to allay! So, even if we have faith, we may have fears to allay – the two aren't opposites which can't exist in the same heart. If you're feeling fearful at this time, don't think it means you lack faith – it's possible to have both simultaneously!

Abram and God have this prayer conversation where Abram is honest *with God* about his doubts and fears. I'm reminded of the time in St Mark's Gospel (9:24) when a man comes to Jesus asking for healing for his son, and says, "Lord, I believe, help me my unbelief", or "Lord I believe, help me believe more". This is about being willing to pray, to have some faith, while honestly saying to God that you have doubts and fears. It is commendable to *ask* God, "help me believe", "help me with my doubts", "help me with my fears". We don't have to hide them or suppress them. We can take them to God and ask for his help. God cares for anxious hearts: just as he calms Abram and breathes into his life, he longs to comfort our souls, if we ask him.

What's really awesome to reiterate is God accepts Abram's faith as "righteousness" (Genesis 15:6) immediately *after* Abram had shared with God his doubts and fears (in Genesis 15:2)! What I'm saying is you don't need to have some sort of unassailable, unflinching, unswerving faith that never doubts or fears – Abram's model shows it is okay to bring your doubts and fears to God and ask him for his help with your faith.

What an enormous relief as we navigate the Lenten desert this year, with war in Europe weighing on our minds, an awful cost of living crisis already biting, let alone ongoing covid risks, and all the usual pain we carry in everyday life. We are not expected to face these by God with an absurd cheerfulness. Instead, we are invited to pray for God's help to allay our fears and dissolve our doubts.

In this moment, Abram becomes the archetype for being accepted by God through faith, not by doing good works, being good enough, or avoiding doing too many bad things, but just by faith, and even that tinged with fear and doubt.

In a moment we can respond to God with faith, even if it is faith mixed with fear and doubt right now, when we pray the creed together. Why not pray like Abraham today, however faltering you may feel – ask God for *more* faith, and let God receive your willingness to pray as righteousness. Because he desires to gather you beneath the softness of his wings, like a mother hen her chicks.

### **Post-Communion Prayer**

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:  
keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls;  
that we may be defended from all adversities  
    which may happen to the body,  
and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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