

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

## Newsletter for 13 September 2020

Dear Friends

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

### Sunday Worship

This Sunday the 9.30am service from St David's will be live streamed on Facebook and Nigel Guthrie will be preaching at St David's and St Michael's.

### Churches Opening for public worship

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

### Covid-19 Safe

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

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 and the one-way systems through the churches.

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'; and congregational singing is 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 or vulnerable. Although we will do all we can to make the church safe you attend at your own risk.*

### **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.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page: Wednesday Angelus and Mass at **10am**.

If you would like an order of service please let me know.

### **Traidcraft**

Richard Featherstone will be taking orders for Traidcraft goods on Sundays 13th and 20th September for delivery in church on the 27th.

Many thanks for your continued support.

### **A Message from Alison Whiting**

Thank you everyone so, so much for your kindness and support over the past 3 years. It's hard to believe how quickly the time has gone - which is definitely a good sign!

Thank you too, St David's, for such a generous cheque, the gorgeous flowers and your lovely messages in my card. I have not yet decided what to spend the cheque on, but I will earmark it for something special, by which I can remember you all. I feel I have learnt and gained so much from being at St David's - such a friendly, accepting community - it has been incredibly valuable - not to mention, enjoyable - and I'm feeling well-prepared for the new challenges 'across the river'. My only real concern at this stage, is learning and remembering peoples' names, wearing facemasks!

### **Ash Leighton Plom**

After several Covid-related changes Ash will now be ordained Deacon this Sunday 13 September at 3pm in Exeter Cathedral. Unfortunately the service won't be open to the public but I will be attending as training incumbent to represent the parish. Hopefully the service will be live-streamed on the Cathedral's Facebook page. He will be on retreat this week from Wednesday this week. Please keep Ash in your prayers as he prepares for his ordination.

### **Harvest at St David's Church**

We will celebrate our Harvest Festival on September 20<sup>th</sup> at Parish Communion this year. Unfortunately we won't be able to hold a Harvest Supper but I have spoken to the Esther Community and they would really appreciate a collection of dried goods again. In fact Donna told me how useful last year's gifts had been, even helping out during lockdown. They would appreciate any tins, packets, noodles, tea, coffee, juice or breakfast cereals. But they don't really use soup – and expensive brands are not necessary. So it would be fantastic if we could have a really good collection for them. Do bring along what you can on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> and we will dedicate your gifts during our service. Thank you.

We will celebrate Harvest at St Michael's on October 4<sup>th</sup> (also St Francis' Day) and goods for Exeter Foodbank would be most welcome.

### **Quiet Morning – Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October**

After some consultation we have decided to hold our Parish Quiet Morning online. 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 contact Howard Friend on [hfriender@doctors.net.uk](mailto:hfriender@doctors.net.uk) or 07733739453 and let him know if you would like to attend and give him your e-mail address and contribution. Nigel Guthrie 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. This gives the chance for the churches to be 'quarantined' for 72 hours between times to minimize the risk of any infection. We are keeping this under review in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines. We would love to return to a fuller range of services but that is not yet feasible so please be patient as we do this as safely as possible! 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.

## **Magazine**

The September magazine is now available online and in print. Please collect your copies if you kindly deliver them to others. Thank you again to our Magazine team for their hard work and creativity.

## **Phone Networks**

I know that 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](mailto: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, 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 and Maurice Wright. Please remember Pam Stephens who has died this week after a short time in hospital. Pam was a much loved member of the St David's congregation and was active in the pastoral care of others. We thank God for her life. May she rest in the peace of Christ.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** we pray for Exeter University Staff and Students preparing for the new academic year and for Hannah Alderson and the Chaplaincy Team. Those being ordained as Deacons this weekend.

We pray for those not yet able to return to church and all who are worshipping with us at home

Please also pray for:

the people of Lebanon and Belarus and the areas of California with wild fires  
those areas and countries suffering greatly from Covid-19, and those who are feeling lonely or isolated;

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

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

**Collect, Readings and Address for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity**

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

**Collect**

Almighty God,  
whose only Son has opened for us  
a new and living way into your presence:  
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills  
to worship you in spirit and in truth;  
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 Genesis 50: 15-21 - Joseph Forgives His Brothers**

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?' So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died, "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

### **Gospel Reading Matthew 18: 21-35**

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all

that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, “You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?” And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.’

### **An Address by Nigel Guthrie – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**

When the bible teaches about forgiveness it is often through stories. Perhaps this is because forgiveness is not at all easy to define. It is easier to say what it is not. Forgiveness is not excusing wrongdoing or ignoring accountability. We are all accountable for what we do. And even if a victim of crime can forgive someone who has seriously hurt them, that perpetrator still needs to pay the legal penalty for their crime.

And forgiveness is not about denying or suppressing anger. Sometimes it is right to be angry, especially when we see injustice committed against other people. We have the example of Jesus overturning the tables of the moneychangers in the temple who were profiting from those who wished to come and worship.

And forgiveness is not forgetting what has happened.

That well known phrase ‘forgive and forget’ is really not a good guide. We need to remember what has happened so that we can learn from what has gone wrong in the past as well as what went well. That’s why it is so important that we keep some terrible and tangible reminders of our dark history such as the concentration camps. And there is also an argument for keeping statues of people whose legacy we might think of as rather dubious, although, personally, I think that there is a case for moving some of them! But statues do remind us of how attitudes change over the generations and how the today’s heroes might be seen in a very different light in the future.

And forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation although it may be part of the same process. Reconciliation must always be two-way, learning how to live peacefully with each other. Forgiveness, however can be offered from one person to another. Perhaps forgiveness is best seen as a change of heart towards another person, just as repentance might be said to be a change of heart within ourselves.

In the story of Joseph when his brothers first came to him as prime minister in Egypt he pretended not to know them. But his heart softened and he promised to provide for them and their families. This was quite a change of heart. How many of us could ever forgive our families if they threw us into a pit and then sold us into slavery? Many families have been permanently divided by less! But Joseph came to see his life in the bigger picture of God’s purpose for him. He wasn’t defined by the evil that

was done to him 'Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today.' It was that bigger vision of God's purpose that helped Joseph come a place of forgiveness. And it is often that desire to be free from what has happened that can prompt us to forgive. The other useful lesson which I take from the story of Joseph is that forgiveness was a process for him. It took time. Joseph needed to test his brothers to see that they would be true to their word and to see that they had faced up to the wrong they had done to him many years before. I remember very well one man who told me that he really couldn't forgive his brother for the way he had treated their parents. He wanted to forgive but there seemed to be no recognition from his brother that any wrong had been done. That made forgiveness very hard for him. Coming to a place where we can forgive others is often complicated and messy. Forgiveness is a journey that may take some time. But we should never give up on it!

When Jesus teaches about forgiveness he references the Old Testament. When asked how many times someone should forgive he says 'not seven times but seventy times seven'. Part of the point is that seventy times seven is simply a large number. But it is also a number which appears in Genesis chapter 4 where it illustrates the spiral of vengeance which can follow when there is no limit to retribution. The Old Testament phrase 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth', may to our ears suggest a lack of forgiveness, but to the people of those times it suggested a level of response which was appropriate, or equivalent, and which should prevent an unending and escalating cycle of violence and bloodshed.

Which must have made Jesus' own teaching all the more challenging to his original hearers! His parable of forgiveness appears to be told in exaggerated terms to make the point. Ten thousand talents would have been a staggeringly large amount of money as talents were the largest units of currency. To repay such a debt would be impossible and to be forgiven it would be quite unbelievable. So it is even more extraordinary that the servant who is released from his debt should deal so harshly with his fellow servant who owed him a mere 100 denarii, denarii being our equivalent of small change.

But Jesus isn't exaggerating because his story is a parable of how God treats us. We can never repay our debt to God for all that he has given us or make amends for what we have done wrong. But, as St Peter says about Jesus ' (1 Peter 2: 24) ***He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*** Where our faith and repentance meet the loving kindness of God in Jesus Christ we find forgiveness and mercy which is wider than we can imagine. Our response should always be to forgive those who sin against us, even when that is a steep and rugged road.

## Closing Prayer

Lord God, the source of truth and love,  
keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,  
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,  
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Prebendary Nigel Guthrie  
95 Howell Road  
Exeter EX4 4LH  
[nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com)