

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

Newsletter for 14 June 2020

Dear Friends

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

Sunday Worship

Today our Youtube recorded service available through this link:

https://youtu.be/aybKV_z6Dic

Graham Keitch is reading the lesson and Helen Friend is leading the prayers for us. Thank you to them and to Nigel Walsh for putting the service together.

Next week Bill Pattinson will be giving an address for our Youtube service.

You may like to know that I am sharing a video 'thought for the week' with St David's School at the moment and leading some assemblies by Zoom for St Wilfred's School.

Live Daily Prayers

This week Bill Pattinson will be leading Compline (Night Prayer) on Monday 18th at 8pm. This beautiful short service will be available through the St David's Facebook page. We hope to make this a regular slot and will let you know if we do.

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

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 9am.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page: Wednesday Angelus and Mattins (BCP) at 9am.

Zoom Coffee

This Sunday we will hold a 'Zoom' coffee again at 10.30am for half an hour. It has been lovely to see people from both our churches there. You don't need to have a Zoom account to join in – just click on this link:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Password: 196651

Once we have gathered and said hello we will break into virtual rooms so that we can chat more easily and then come back at the end to round up and say the Grace together. When you first 'arrive' you will have to wait for me to let you in. You can leave at any time, of course. I hope to see you there!

Phone Networks

I know that many of you have appreciated phone calls from other members of the church community. If would like to be phoned by someone and haven't yet had any contact please let me know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com

or by ringing me on 01392 660226. Thank you to everyone who is helping to keep our church communities together by your care and concern.

What can we do about modern Slavery?

There has been a great deal of talk about the pulling down of the statues of slave traders in this past week. The arguments about this are important but highly complex – perhaps something for our magazine? But one thing we can all agree on is the need to tackle slavery in today's world and we can start by learning about it. There is a good article here about the scope of modern forced labour:

<https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/slavery-in-global-supply-chains/>

and here is video about the important work of the Clewer Initiative which is part of the Church of England's response to modern slavery in Britain:

<https://youtu.be/I6OddIYjQ-E>

Fairtrade update

The Fairtrade Foundation have published this inspiring short video which you might like to watch. It gives an excellent account of the work of Fairtrade cocoa farmers in Sierra Leone from the perspective of one farming family.

<https://bit.ly/3790R9W>

Opening of Churches for Private Prayer

You may have heard that churches can be opened for private prayer from this week. Our churches haven't been open except for services and events in recent times and not at all for several months. We are now required to do a risk assessment and put safeguards in place before opening and are planning to do that this week with a view to opening for an hour a week at each church from next week. The proposed hours are St Michael's Church, Wednesdays 9.30 – 10.30am and St David's Church, Thursdays from 9.30-10.30am. If you would like to act as a steward for these times (and are not in a very vulnerable category) please let me know as we wish to keep the churches attended during these times.

Magazine

Our June magazine is still available on our websites. It is another fabulous edition with some thought provoking articles. I still have a few printed copies which I would be happy to post if you are finding it hard to access the online magazine. If you would like one please let me know by phone or e-mail.

If you would like to contribute to future editions please send all articles as Word documents to newleavesnews@gmail.com or billpattinson136@gmail.com

Unauthorised emails

I have had a couple of cases in recent weeks of people receiving emails appearing to be from me but which are definitely not from me. They usually ask for urgent or unspecified help and don't come from my email address. Please don't reply to these but delete them and if you are concerned please ring me on 01392 660226.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Charles Argall, Roger Beer, Janine, Charles Speed-Andrews and Nick & Karen 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, Grace Tointon, Pam Smith and her family, James and Katy Tyler, Andrew Wakley, Rosemary Willcox and Maurice Wright.

Please remember Raymond Ravenscroft and Joan Cheesman who have died, and their families.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** we pray for the Residents of Montpellier Court and John, the manager.

Please also pray for:

Ash Leighton Plom and his family as they prepare to move to the curate's house in Cowley View;

those suffering from the symptoms of Covid-19, and others whose treatment has been disrupted or delayed;

those working to reopen businesses, schools and churches and all who are concerned about the future of their jobs;

those working to eliminate modern slavery in this country and across the world.

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

Order of Service for first Sunday after Trinity (service on Youtube)

Opening Prayers

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,

all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden:

cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,

that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name;

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Confession and Absolution

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past,
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

The priest pronounces the absolution.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Collect

O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your commandments
we may please you both in will and deed;

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 – Romans 5: 1-8

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 9:35 – 10:8

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The

kingdom of heaven has come near.” Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

Address by Nigel Guthrie

We had rather alarming Whatsapp message from our elder son last weekend ‘Look what I’ve done!’ It was linked to a picture of the statue of Edward Colston being toppled from its plinth. We rang him pretty quickly but it turned out that, although he was in the crowd, he hadn’t actually been on the end of the rope that toppled Colston.

When Tina and I were at Bristol University 40 years ago the name of Colston wasn’t the subject of much conversation. The Colston Hall was where the main choral society concert was held every year. If we had stopped to think about it we would have realized that several streets and schools were named after Colston but we really knew nothing about him. So I spent a little time this week reading up about him and his place in 17th century England. Colston was from an old Bristol family and became a successful merchant. But it was his time from 1680 to 1692 as a member and then governor of the Royal African Company that has led to the recent reappraisal of his status. During the time of his involvement in the company more than 80,000 men, women and children were traded as slaves. It is estimated that 19,000 of them died on the journey over the Atlantic in the appalling conditions of the slave ships.

Colston died without any heirs and left an enormous fortune to charitable causes, endowing hospitals, schools, almshouses and churches in Bristol, London and elsewhere. He specified that beneficiaries should share his religious views as a high church Anglican. Nonetheless at a time when there was no welfare state many poor people benefitted from the money he left. Interestingly Colston himself wished to have simple burial without ceremony but he was denied this and was buried in All Saint’s Bristol with a fine stone memorial. His legacy has been celebrated in the city in the succeeding centuries. There are significant windows in St Mary Redcliffe and Bristol Cathedral dedicated to his memory, not to mention the ill-fated statue of 1895 which was pulled off its plinth last week.

The person whose death indirectly led to the pulling down of Colston's statue could hardly have had a more different life. George Floyd was born in 1973 and as we know from some of the tributes that have been paid to him was an excellent sportsman in his youth, known as a gentle giant. He contributed to the development of hip-hop and was an informal community leader. But his life took a darker turn and he was arrested several times for drug possession and theft and served a four-year sentence for taking part in a serious armed robbery.

After his release he became involved with Resurrection Houston Christian community where he was a mentor to young men. Since 2014 he had lived and worked in Minneapolis which is where on May 25th he was detained for using a fake \$20 note at a store and then died shortly afterwards as a result of violent mistreatment by the police. The public nature of his death and the sharing of the footage led to the deep outrage and the huge protests that have spread across the many countries in the past two weeks asserting that 'Black Lives Matter.'

Three times in today's gospel Jesus associates the good news of the kingdom with healing. Matthew tells us that Jesus went about 'curing every disease and sickness'. He then gives his disciples authority to cast out unclean spirits and cure disease and sickness. And thirdly he says 'The kingdom of God has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. The evils of racism and discrimination are a deep sickness in our world. And even though our own country now has laws to support equal rights the figures show us that the lives of many black people are harder than they should be here. There is no doubt that the healing of such divisions and discriminations is part of Jesus' call to us to live in justice, truth and peace with our neighbours.

But the moral complexity of the two lives I have briefly described is a reminder of how hard it is to live out the Christian life faithfully with respect for those around us. The uncomfortable truth is that both Colston and Floyd tried to live out their faith within their understanding and life experiences. A significant proportion of Colston's wealth was undoubtedly built on the evil exploitation of others. And yet he was not unusual in his time in regarding slave ownership

as an acceptable part of life. So his legacy is deeply tainted. George Floyd's life was certainly not all good and yet he had clearly tried to redeem it in various ways. If his death leads to a reduction in systemic racism and abuse of black people then it will be a truly wonderful legacy.

It can be very hard to know exactly how we should live and bring healing to those around us. As a small example most of us have increased our reliance on modern technology during this pandemic lockdown. But what the unseen and serious consequences of this? What about the enormous amount of power used to run the internet? What about the working conditions of those who assemble our mobile phones, tablets and computers? What about the huge quantities of water used to extract the lithium which goes into our rechargeable batteries and the human and environmental consequences of that?

The stories of Colston and Floyd leave me knowing that we must live out our faith in humility. Yes, we must do whatever we can to bring healing to society and encouragement to those around us; but always with a sharp awareness that our lives and actions may be hurting others in ways we can't fully understand. The truly good news is that God always continues to offer healing and redemption even when we go wrong. There was only one truly blameless life, that of Jesus, the rest of us must always rely on the mercy of God.

Closing Prayers

Eternal God and Father,
you create us by your power
and redeem us by your love:
guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves in love and service to one another and to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The peace of God,

which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

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