

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

Newsletter for 21 March 2021 — The Fifth Sunday of Lent, Passion Sunday

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for Passion Sunday, the Fifth Sunday of Lent. It was good to welcome many people back to church last Sunday and we hope that those who came felt safe. If you are feeling nervous about returning to main Sunday worship you might consider coming to one of our quieter weekday services. And we will continue to stream prayers and worship on Sundays and during the week.

Today's services are:

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's (live streamed) with celebrant Nigel Guthrie and preacher Belinda Speed-Andrews

11am Mass at St Michael's with Fr Robin Eastoe celebrating and preaching.

At 4pm **Thrive** will continue on Zoom with time for learning, discussion and prayer today. Please click here to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dlNCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289

Passcode: 159821

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 23 March, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer (from Common Worship). Please join us using this code <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

Wednesday 24 March, 9.30am at St Michael's Mattins followed by 10am Mass in church (also live streamed on St Michael's Facebook page)

Thursday 25 March, Feast of the Annunciation,

9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

10.30 Holy Communion at St David's in church

Thursday 25 March, 6pm Vespers for the Annunciation (public worship)

Friday 26 March, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 28 March - Palm Sunday

Although processions are not allowed under national restrictions palm crosses will still be blessed and distributed. Please take one for anyone you know who is at home.

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's (live streamed) with Belinda Speed-Andrews celebrating and Ash Leighton Plom preaching.

11am Mass at St Michael's with Nigel Guthrie celebrating and Ash Leighton Plom preaching.

Would you like to keep silence together this Lent?

Would you like the opportunity to put the week to rest and lay aside all that the week has brought so that you can really enjoy a time of sabbath? If you would like to, please join us for half hour of silence on Friday evenings from 5.30-6.00pm for the last two weeks of Lent. Here are the joining instructions:

The zoom link for each week is below. If you do lose it or can't find it please don't worry just email Belinda Speed-Andrews and she can send it out again.

Topic: Lenten Silence. Time: Mar 19, 2021 05:30 PM & Mar 26, 2021 05:30 PM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZ0lf-qvpz4tHdc3dl_8_og9LZwBpFyWM90B/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjMpHd2Qtx6ERpx5Goqgb-3xmCVagqdezvvpPHhsbQSvGthVEKJZCe_9

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89883795773?pwd=VHBLVmFRTXJqcUhET042dHY0YnVJZz09>

Meeting ID: 898 8379 5773

Passcode: z8ukpm

The Glenthorne Road Bomb

Following the discovery of a Second World War bomb near Glenthorne Road and the detonation of the device, many people were evacuated, including a number of members of our congregations and our curate, Ash Leighton Plom and his family. We thank God that no lives were lost and that most people are now back home. However significant damage has been done to our Curate's house amongst other properties.

The Diocesan property department has been proactive in assessing the house and making it safe. Ash, Deborah and Alfred are now back in temporarily, but they will need to move out (probably to a vacant vicarage) while substantial repairs are carried out. Exeter Diocese will cover housing and moving costs. A number of people have asked if they can offer gifts to Ash and his family and the Standing Committee agreed to receive donations this week (closing 21 March) which will be passed on to Ash and his family as a gift. Please forward any gifts to Barbara Allin, St David's treasurer, or

through our Churchwardens or Chapel Warden making clear who they are for. Barbara can provide account details if needed.

Covid-19 Safe for Public Worship

Please avoid touching door handles – Thank you.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

Please wear a face covering in church unless you are exempt.

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.

At St Michael's the priest will come to 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. Seating is also marked by white labels at St Michael's, with notices on the pews that should be kept clear.

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

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

Please avoid mingling inside church before or after services.

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.

Holy Week and Easter Services

Tuesday 30 March 7pm – Audio-visual Stations of the Cross at the **west end** of St Michael's Church. Recorded music of Scarlatti Stabat Mater.

Wednesday 31 March, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass at St Michael's **Lady Chapel**

Thursday 1 April, 7.30pm, Service of Institution of Holy Communion at St Michael's

Friday 2 April, 2pm, Reflection on the Passion of Christ with music at St David's

Saturday 3 April, 8pm, Easter Vigil and Mass at St Michael's

Sunday 4 April, 9.30am Easter Day Eucharist at St David's

Annual Parochial Church Meeting – could you contribute to our PCC?

We are planning to hold our APCM online on Wednesday 28th April 2021. Because of the continued uncertainty about meeting inside parishes are being encouraged to plan meetings to be held by Zoom. We will be looking for three new PCC members from St David's and one from St Michael's. Please think about whether you might

serve our parish community in this way. We will also be seeking to elect a Churchwarden for the parish and a Chapel warden for St Michael's.

These are essential roles for the health of our parish please pray for the right people to come forward. Please speak to Nigel or one of our existing church and chapel wardens if you might be willing to stand.

Electoral Roll Revision

Electoral Roll Revision: Between March 31st and April 13th we will be revising the electoral roll. If you would like to have your name added or if you have changed your address please let Sue Wilson know on electoralrollofficer@stdavidschurch.org.uk or in church.

Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel

A big thank you for the generous donations of food for our Tuesday packed suppers. The scheme is still set to continue until the end of March with reduced numbers as some of the residents are being re-housed. We are well provided with food at the moment, thank you! We have had a thank you message from St Petrocks which Roger Beer has passed on to me: *'Thank you all so much for the truly incredible energy, dedication and hard work you've poured in to keep this service running consistently for an entire year – it has been an absolute lifeline and had a transformative impact on many of the individuals there. Thank you!'*

Traidcraft Stall & St Michael's Bountiful Table

Unfortunately we are not able to run our regular stalls in church during the current lockdown but we hope to keep them going through orders. Richard Featherstone is happy to take orders through his email address:

r.w.featherstone@gmail.com

these will be available for collection from church. In addition Richard will be taking orders for Traidcraft's Christian easter eggs from now until Friday March 19th. They can be collected, cash on delivery, from St.David's church at private prayer time on Sunday March 28th. The usual milk chocolate ones are £5, dark chocolate £6, hens egg size £5 for six and mini eggs £4 for a bag of 17.

Richard is also able to supply catalogues giving a full range of Traidcraft items.

You can support St Michael's Virtual Bountiful Table by ordering baked goods from Elizabeth Hughes through her phone 01392 259878 or by Stephanie Aplin by email stephaniecaplin@yahoo.co.uk These will be for collection in church.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting these stalls.

Men's Breakfast

A dozen of us gathered for a successful online Men's Breakfast in February. We meet again by Zoom on Saturday 27 March at 9am. Do join us if you can and I will publish a Zoom link nearer the time.

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

The magazines for March are now available through our websites or in church.

Thank you to our fabulous magazine team for their hard work.

Green Team

Have you heard of 'Toilet Twinning'? If not do have look at their website. For a £60 donation they will fund a toilet for a family or community which lacks such facilities. Part of working towards eco-church accreditation at St David's is to have our church toilets 'twinned'. In return for the donation you receive a picture of the toilet you have funded with its GPS location. If you would be interested in supporting this project please have a word with Glynis Harflett.

Glynis would also like to source **some shade loving plants** for inside St David's Church. If you might be splitting some plants and have spares she would like to try spider plant, mother-in-laws tongue and peace lily.

The PCC agreed this week that the parish investment funds that are not already held in Ethical Investments should be moved into Ethically Managed Funds.

Thank you for your continued financial support

Although this past year has been difficult for many people in different ways members of our churches have continued with their regular giving. The PCC wishes to convey its sincere appreciation for the generous support that has been given to both of our churches in the past year to enable us to continue with our ministry and worship.

Lent Course - in partnership with Churches Together Central Exeter

These Are Our Stories: Lent in a Pandemic Year

Hosted by St David's Church Exeter on Tuesday afternoons at 2pm on Zoom from 23rd February to 23rd March

. Here is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

This Lent course is based on the pandemic stories of five people from across Devon and will encourage each of us to tell our own stories and reflect on where our faith fits into the experience of

the past 12 months. The teaching is based on the work of a group of clergy and lay people from across Devon thinking about Covid-19. The sessions use videos, worksheets with a bible passage for discussion, and illustrations, each week focussing on a different story and theme, with plenty of space for our own thoughts and feelings and discernment of God's activity in our lives.

Persecution and the Early Church

Thank you to Professor Oliver Nicholson for an excellent series of talks which gave an insight into the background and reality of martyrdom in the early centuries of the Christian Church.

Clewer Initiative Lent Group – Women in the Shadows

Belinda Speed-Andrews will be hosting this Tuesday evening Lent group from Tuesday 23rd February at 7.30pm for five weeks. If you would like to join here is the calendar link and recurring Zoom invitation which should work every week. Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZYvfuyqqDouHdL0H05Bx0li2LKbGxxaAWxj/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGqrDivGNKUtB6BRpwQAIr4Z-rwpm5bgqdxzDe1VgJLMg_ZM5pMJVnCNnx

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82295261476?pwd=TGJhbytHb0krQnBHOXR0eXpncnpBUT09>

Meeting ID: 822 9526 1476

Passcode: 6L6bzG

Here is an introduction to the course:

Worldwide women and girls account for 71% of the 40.3 million people living in modern slavery. In the UK it is harder to gather exact numbers, but we know that in 2018 a third of cases reported to the UK modern slavery helpline related to female victims.

To help shine a light on the suffering of marginalised women the Clewer Initiative has launched 'Women in the Shadows', a new five-week course for Lent focusing on the different ways women and girls are exploited in the UK today. During the course you will discover how women are drawn into modern slavery and exploitative situations and what life can be like for them once they are rescued from exploitation including the many challenges they face as they recover from trauma. You will also find out more about sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and County lines and how to recognise signs of modern slavery. The course is predominantly about women but I would encourage men to join as this is a problem for all of us, men and women.

Hospiscare Men's Walk

A good team from St David's walked yesterday (two by two, of course!) and would like to thank everyone for their generous support. On our Team Just Giving page had raised over £1500 (including Gift Aid) which is really fantastic. Clive Wilson will provide a paper sponsor sheet today at St David's and if anyone would like to add to the total we would be delighted! And if you would still like to support Hospiscare through our Justgiving page we would be equally delighted!

<https://www.justgiving.com/team/StDavidsExeter>

We are so pleased to be able to support one of our key local charities in this way.

Cleaning at St Michael's Church

We would love to recruit some more volunteers to help clean at St Michael's Church, especially in the Chancel and Lady Chapel. Cleaners usually go in every other week and Elizabeth Hughes is usually in church once a fortnight on a Tuesday morning for this. We would also like to arrange an occasional cleaning party but this will have to wait until restrictions loosen. Please have a word with Stephanie Aplin or Elizabeth Hughes if you would be able to help. Thank you.

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, or would just like to talk, 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...

Please remember those who have died recently including:

Daniel and Kaylie Rudge, Iviee-May and Lilly who died in the house fire at Clayton Road.

Ken, Jeremy, Tony, Stella, Mike Newman and Elizabeth Hewitt
May they rest in peace.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** this week please pray, with thanksgiving, for our church choirs, directors of music and organists and the St David's Orchestra, remembering for all those who are missing corporate music making during Covid restrictions

A Prayer during Covid 19

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour,
And to care for those in need as if we were caring for you.

In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful,
To tend the sick and to assure the isolated of our love and your love,

For your name's sake. Amen.

Please also pray for:

those whose homes have been damaged by the detonation of the World War Two bomb found at Glenthorne Road, and those providing support for them;

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they must make and implement, wisdom in planning economic recovery which will consider the human and environmental costs and benefits;

those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices - giving thanks for their commitment and courage;

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

the people of Syria and Yemen longing for peace and security;

the people of Myanmar in their struggle for democracy;

Please give thank for:

the vaccination programme in this country and praying the equitable distribution of vaccine throughout the world and the Covax programme;

the falling Covid case numbers in this country;

May God bless you and those you care for,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers, Readings and Address for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, 14 March 2021

Collect

Most merciful God,

who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world:

grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross

we may triumph in the power of his victory;

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.

First Reading – Psalm 51: 1-12

To the leader. A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your steadfast love;

according to your abundant mercy

blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,

and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgement.
Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Gospel Reading – John 12: 20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.
‘Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—“Father, save me from this hour”? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken

to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Address from Belinda Speed-Andrews for Passion Sunday

May I speak in the name of God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen

You walk in and there he is crouched on the floor in a foetal position, trying to hide from this cruel world, behind the curtain, sobbing his heart out, deep heart-wrenching sobs; utterly broken and ashamed. Is that you? Has that ever been you?

Psalm 51 is a powerful psalm, a psalm that recognises our vulnerability, our sinfulness, our brokenness and the psalmist is on his knees, in the dust, seeking and begging for God's merciful forgiveness.

Interestingly this psalm is read on Ash Wednesday as well as today, the fifth Sunday of Lent or as it is commonly known, Passion Sunday.

On Ash Wednesday we began a journey of soul-searching, of re-discovering our relationship with God and begin a stripping away of all that takes us from God. Perhaps the repetition of Psalm 51 today is a reminder of that searching and seeking for God's face before we begin that final walk through Holy Week with Jesus towards the light of resurrection and new life. Perhaps too it is a time when we recognise our complicity in the brokenness of the world around us.

For want of being melancholic, the last 2 or 3 weeks have been tough weeks, here in this parish with the tragic fire, which took young lives, the discovery of a WWII bomb which has affected people in both material, & emotional ways and not least the cruel and violent death of a young girl walking home from a friend's house. At SWMTC where I work we too have had numerous cases of sadness, with deaths of family members, and serious illnesses and brokenness among our students. There are times for me as perhaps for you that I reach emotional saturation; there are no words, in fact words are no longer useful. We perhaps scream out why, why, how long O lord?

Psalm 51 is a passionate admission that life is a mess; it is a yearning for a return to all that is holy and good. The psalm dares to imagine that this is possible. It is the best known psalm of confession, written it is thought as a prayer from David after his

episode with Bathsheba and the subsequent death of Uriah. But in reality it could be a prayer of any of us. We are all guilty of sin, a distancing of ourselves from God, either consciously or unconsciously. Our unconscious independence as if we are in no need of God. What David realised was, he needed to start again and to do that he pleaded with God to 'create in me a clean heart, O God; and put a new and right spirit within me'.

David recognises that for this to happen he has no control over it; he recognises that only God can do this; 'Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit'. And in order for this transformation to happen the psalmist approaches God empty-handed, not proudly, not making demands, not setting conditions and no self-sufficiency; he comes with a broken spirit and a contrite heart. This is the man broken and ashamed crouched in the dust full of shame and self-loathing. None of us really want to go there if we're honest.

A few years ago a lady was sitting on the edge of her daughter's bed. Her daughter was 17 maybe 18 years old and she had just failed her AS levels the previous June and now she was faced a few months later with her trial exams for her re-sits. Panic had taken over; she was sobbing her heart out petrified that she would fail again although her Mum had always told her that what you put in you got out - that hadn't worked though the first and there was no guarantee it would work this time either. The daughter was almost paralysed with fear. Her Mum didn't know what to say and there was no easy way to alleviate the fear if at all. The pain her Mum felt was unbearable because she had no idea where to go from here. And then her Mum remembered; and she said to her daughter, if I could take away all your pain and fear I would do it in a heart beat but I can't, but I really want to. And so her Mum laid out her daughter's options got up and walked out of the room and burst into tears.

It not only costs us to bear our souls, to open the very inner core of who we are before God to seek the forgiveness as the psalmist did, it also costs the one who forgives. Just like the Mum with her daughter. It wasn't only the daughter who was suffering it was her Mum too. God enters into our pain and our guilt, our hurt and our yearning. It costs God to forgive us. One of the other readings for today is Hebrews 5 and the writer tells us that 'Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears' and in our pain and our yearning God begins to work a newness. Forgiveness is not easy, it is not casual and that is why the cross is at the centre of the gospel, the reality of Jesus suffering, and God suffering in the life of Jesus, for our new life.

God's ability to make new is not like a bulldozer though, crashing through and shoving everything aside. It is like the painful suffering of the mother in my story just now, as she suffers together the hurt of her daughter, in order that that her daughter may be restored to hope and joy. Walter Bruggeman argues that, God has in Jesus, in the cross, in the gospel experienced the brokenness that must happen in order that we can have a new change. The cost is never easy, never casual. It costs God, God's own self and God is ready to answer our prayer with God's own self-giving. It is as though God in Christ hears our prayer, 'create in me a clean heart' and God answers yes, but it is not as simple as you think. I cannot act as if your wrongness does not exist, but I will take the wrongness into myself, and you need not be burdened with it.

I wonder at times how the world has come to this. There is so much beauty, in people, in creation, in art, in music, but there is also immense cruelty and depravity and when we look at the topics we have been learning about in our lent group; county lines, sexual and labour exploitation all in the name of money and power I know I long for us to be able to start again. These are big issues, perhaps beyond our comprehension And I am constantly challenged by where we begin. I don't have the answer but perhaps the answer is to begin with myself and yearn for new & clean heart, for a right spirit.

And the message I hope we can all take from the readings this morning is that we can start again; the cycle of discrimination, the cycle of war and depravity can be broken. God, in Christ offers us a new chance, a new beginning. But it is demanding. We have to let go of our ultra-egos, it is a broken heart, and end to self-sufficiency and any pretence to being right. The Gospel is not advice it is assurance and that assurance is that what we cannot do for ourselves is given us.

If it had been possible I would have had all the readings this morning, so may I encourage you to delve into them as I hope you ponder on my words this morning. I want to finish by reading from Jeremiah 31: 31-34. The sin of the world need not go on, the cycle can be broken, we have been assured of that in Jesus. Let us together then seek the joy we are promised this coming Easter as break the ache and turn it into joy; to be forgiven is to receive new energy for life.

'Behold the days are coming....I will make a new covenant, a new set of relations, a new community, and a new communion. It will not be like the old covenant which you broke. In the new covenant I will put my Torah, my requirements, my expectations, in your heart, and everyone shall know what I require. They shall know

me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.'

Amen.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.

Christ crucified draw you to himself,
to find in him a sure ground for faith,
a firm support for hope,
and the assurance of sins forgiven;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father,
the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon us and remain
with us always. **Amen.**

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