

St David's with St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Newsletter for Sunday 22 August 2021 – Trinity 12

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this week's newsletter.

Standing Committee will meet this week to review our current #CovidSecure precautions, but for now please maintain safe distancing, wear a face covering if you can, and be gracious to one another as we each navigate our own circumstances – “space, face, grace”!

Our services today are:

9.30am Parish Communion (live streamed on St David's Church Exeter's Facebook Page) with celebrant Jonathan Draper and preacher Nigel Guthrie

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher, Nigel Guthrie

4pm Thrive on Zoom: a space to meet and chat about faith and life. Sessions in August are casual socials, no agenda, so why not join in, whether you're a regular, have never been before, or are somewhere in between!

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTIcCXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289

Passcode: 159821

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 24 August, 9.30 Morning Prayer on Zoom. Please join us using this code:

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

(prayers are from Common Worship Book or Daily Prayer app which can be downloaded here: [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB&gl=US)

[id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB&gl=US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB&gl=US)).

Wednesday 25 August, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass (live streamed) at St Michael's Church

Thursday 26 August, 10.30 Holy Communion at St David's Church

Friday 27 August, Monica, 9.30 Morning Prayer at St David's Church

Sunday 29 August – Trinity 13

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

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher, David Gunn-Johnson

4pm Thrive on Zoom: a space to meet and chat about faith and life. Sessions in August are casual socials, no agenda, so why not join in, whether you're a regular, have never been before, or are somewhere in between!

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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 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.

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'; and there will be no congregational singing 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.

Food for the Vulnerably housed in Exeter

Working through St Petrock's we are providing 16 packed suppers each week for people who are in transitional accommodation at the Crescent. Thank you to the small team which has convened to buy and make them. We don't need any additional support at the moment as there is a significant amount in our 'Soup Evening' kitty which can fund this for the time being.

Help with Churchwarden tasks

Often Churchwardens pick up tasks which could be done by others. We have already had some kind offers but there are a number of jobs which we will advertise in the coming weeks.

Would you be willing to help with one of these, please, even if you can't do every week?

Opening and closing the church on Sunday (weekly)

Clearing the churchyard on Sunday mornings before the service (equipment provided). Thank you!

August Open Church at St David's

St David's Church is open on Saturdays in August from 11am -12noon. Please have a word with Glynis if you would be willing to help staff one of these occasions so that we can have the church open with a stall or two.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be Saturday 25th September at 10am at the Farmers' Union. We may have to be on two separate tables depending on numbers on the day. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

The next 5 years - who are we and where are we going?

Belinda is leading a study group based on the book 'A Future that's bigger than the past' (https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07YNTLDKB/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1) as we think and discern what God is calling us to for the next 5 years.

If you are interested in joining in the conversation please do email her directly at bspeedandrews@gmail.com

The dates for the meetings at 7.30pm are: Thursday 26 August, Thursday 23 September and Thursday 14 October, before a parish meeting with Archdeacon Andrew Beane on Saturday October 16th. It would be good to have as many people as possible from both churches at that meeting when Andrew will outline possibilities for the future organisation of ministry in Exeter city and listen to our hopes and plans.

Grow Courses

The Diocese of Exeter offers courses to help *you* grow in prayer, make new disciples, and serve the people of Devon with joy. Sessions coming up include ‘Sharing Our Faith’, ‘Stewardship Advocates’, and ‘Pastoral Care’. For more information or to sign up, please see <https://exeter.anglican.org/ministry/lay-ministry/lay-learning/>

Thriving Communities Welcomers and Guides

Do you love the St David’s area of Exeter? Local charity *All’s Well St David’s* is offering the opportunity for people to become welcomers at Exeter Community Centre on St David’s Hill or guides for the brand new St David’s Walking Trail which swings by both our churches, to help people explore the history and stories of the people who have lived in this area in the past. If you’re interested, please get in touch with pippa.marriott@eccentre.org or 01392 420549

Chaplaincy

Volunteer mentors wanted to help people leaving prison

South West Community Chaplaincy have produced a new video, recruiting volunteer mentors in Exeter for prison leavers, here: <https://youtu.be/etTmRiFQXyE>

Can you provide support for men and women leaving prison to overcome whatever challenges they face to make a fresh start and build a positive future for themselves?

SWCC are looking for new volunteer mentors to join our team in Devon and are offering full training for the role in September. If you are interested, please contact Managing Community Chaplain Cathy Jerrard on cathy@southwestcc.org.uk or 01392 284285 / 07816 428 470.

No experience needed, full training provided.

Youth Ministry

You don’t need to be a young person to train to offer youth ministry in church!

SWYM recruit people of all ages to train and minister to our region’s youth, so whether you’re a student, or mid-career considering a change, or retired and interested in study and serving in youth work, why not find out more, here:

<https://swym.org.uk/if-not-now-when/>

Heritage Open Days at St Michael's

Saturday 11th September: St Michael's will be open from 9am – 6pm

Refreshments served all day

2pm Guided Tour of the Church by Dr Richard Parker

3pm Informal Organ Recital

Sunday 12th September: St Michael's will be open 10am – 6pm

11am Sunday Service

Refreshments will be served from 12.30pm

3 – 5pm Cream Tea with singing from Boys of the Old Brigade

We plan to run a bookstall at these days so please hold on to your books so that they can be sold in aid of church! We can store them in church if it would help.

Green Team

Thank you to those who have filled in the Survey on sustainable forms of transport.

We will publish the results in due course!

Green Event: Ideas for how we can live more sustainably

Saturday 11th September 2021, 10am to 2pm

Vegetarian Lunch £5

With:

Co Cars and Bikes, Wildlife talk, Eco church, Churchyard tours

Mending & making things, Tea, coffee, cake

Traidcraft stall, Harvest produce

Participation table - bring your own ideas, Children's activities... and much more

The team would like to invite volunteers to staff stalls at the event especially for 'home and handicrafts' and 'harvest'. Tickets for the local produce lunch will be available in the second half of August. If you have green photos of local wildlife and plants or environmental projects that could be part of display on the day please send them to Neil: mrpragnell@gmail.com

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

Please pick up your magazine for July & August. Thank you to our magazine team and distributors.

Phone Networks

If you would like to be phoned by someone from the church community or would just like to talk, please let Nigel know at 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 and he can add you to that weekly mailing.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Please remember those who have died recently including:

James Tyler, Dorothy Guthrie, Sylvia Pritchard

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** our sidespeople and all who welcome others in our churches. May we all be ready to welcome newcomers, visitors and occasional worshippers.

Please also pray for:

The people of Haiti following the devastating earthquake and floods there;
all those affected by the tragic shooting in Plymouth;
those held captive in modern forms of slavery in this country and around the world;
for our own continued awareness of their plight;
the people of Afghanistan;
the humane and fair treatment of migrants and refugees arriving in this country;
the worldwide vaccination programme, giving thanks for all those who have enabled a rapid roll-out in this country;
those working under pressure in the hospitality industry in the South West;
school leavers and those seeking direction and employment at this time;
those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices;
those suffering from Covid around the world; for those anxious about the lifting of restrictions and for wisdom for those making arrangements for worship.

Peace and blessings to you, those you love, and those you are learning to love,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers and Readings for Trinity 12, 22 August 2021

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things
 which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of 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 – Joshua 24: 1-2a & 14-18

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God.

And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.’

Then the people answered, ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.’

Gospel Reading – John 6: 56-69

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live

because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.’ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, ‘This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?’ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, ‘Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, ‘For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.’ Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, ‘Do you also wish to go away?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’

Address for 22 August 2021 by Nigel Guthrie

“This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.”

Little did I know when I drew up the preaching rota that today would be just two days after my mother’s funeral. Dorothy died on 27th July after more than three years at The Dales Nursing Home in Howell Road where she was wonderfully cared for. We were due to go away three days later but we realized that if we cancelled our holiday we wouldn’t be able to rebook it this year due to school term times so we quickly made arrangements for her funeral and then went away for two weeks coming back last Sunday.

So we’ve had time to reflect on her long life and prepare for her funeral. But, as many of you will know, it is a moment of profound reflection when the person who gave birth to you lies still in a coffin before you. Dorothy wasn’t a young mother, indeed at 36 she was apparently described as an ‘elderly primate’ in the hospital! But she has been a constant presence in my life for the past 61 years. None of us, especially her, expected her to live to be nearly 97! So, we had her with us for longer than might reasonably have been expected. But that moment of final farewell still feels very significant, and is an inescapable reminder of our own mortality.

My father became ill with Parkinson's Disease and a related dementia and Tina and I offered that we would support them if they wanted to. They moved to Crediton in 2007. My father was hospitalized soon afterwards and was then very well cared for at Barton Place for 18 months or so until his death. I remember that he appreciated joining in a communion service led by Maria Hearl when she was curate here!

My mother had some good years at Crediton, making friends and joining in church life, supported by us and latterly by carers coming into her home. But a few months after we moved to Exeter in 2018 she had a fall which led to a spell in hospital and it became clear that she wouldn't be able to live at home any more. So, it was a blessing that a room came up at The Dales just up the road from us. The last 18 months have been a massive challenge for all our residential and nursing homes and my almost daily visits to her were drastically curtailed. Indeed, for many months we weren't able to visit at all. And then visits were much more sparse, booked in advance, and accompanied by Covid tests and the wearing of protective gowns, masks and gloves.

My mother had been brought up as a Welsh Presbyterian but she always valued the communion service and church music, so she accommodated herself well to the church in Crediton. And in her final years at the Dales she asked that I should take communion in for her at Christmas and Easter.

I think for her it was part of her preparations for her death which she frequently anticipated. Indeed we became very used to her predictions that she wouldn't be here at the next birthday or new year – and to her confounding them for so long!

It was very moving to share Holy Communion with her propped up in her bed at The Dales. This sharing of the bread was undoubtedly a sign for her of God's love for her and of the promise of eternal life – “those who eat this bread will live forever”. Although she faced considerable difficulties of various sorts, she remained faithful to God throughout her life and valued this tangible sign of communion with God and with fellow Christians. She was certainly a good and faithful servant.

Today we have heard that some of Jesus' disciples deserted him. Jesus realized that others would find the challenge of following him to his death too much to bear. In today's gospel we hear him ask the disciples “Do you also wish to go away?”. But Simon Peter replies “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God”.

And perhaps, like Simon Peter, we feel *compelled* to believe because we have seen for ourselves the Truth revealed in the person of Jesus. So, in spite of our doubts, in spite of the failings of the church, in spite of the disasters that happen in the world, we choose to follow Jesus; the one who offers the love of God unconditionally to all who are willing to hear and receive. The sign of this unconditional love is the sacrifice which Jesus makes on the cross for us and for our salvation. And, Jesus left us the sacrament of holy communion that we would have a constant tangible reminder of his love for us, his sacrifice on the cross and his promise of eternal life ‘this is my body, given for you, do this in remembrance of me.’ We are reminded of all this every time we hear the words ‘the body of Christ keep you in eternal life.’

Today’s gospel reading is the final one in a series from St John that we have in this second-year cycle of readings. Most of the readings in year B come from Mark’s gospel – and we will be back with Mark next week. But because Mark is the shortest gospel significant passages of John’s gospel are added into this year’s readings. The ‘Bread of life’ discourse which follows John’s account of the feeding of the five thousand is the most extended of these and builds on the symbolism which is already inherent in that story. Jesus is seen as the new Moses come to feed his people. The bread in the story is a reminder of the manna which was given to the Hebrew people in the wilderness and which came to symbolise the word of God which always nourishes his people. And for St John, Jesus is The Word made flesh, who comes from the Father and gives himself for the life of the world. We are invited to become one with that life, to feed on it and to be part of it. Discovering how we do that is a significant part of our calling as Christians.

In his fabulous book ‘The Meaning in the Miracles’ Jeffery John quotes Saint Augustine’s commentary on John and I would like to finish with that quotation:

‘I am the living bread which comes down from heaven’. It is ‘living’ because it was Jesus who came down from heaven. The manna also came down from heaven, but the manna was only a shadow of the reality. Those who heard were terrified at this. It was too much for them, they thought it was impossible. But believers know they are the body of Christ, provided they do not neglect to *be* the body of Christ. One must *be* the body of Christ if one is to live by the Spirit of Christ. So whoever wants to live, must live as part of the body.

Augustine of Hippo, Homilies on the Gospel of John 26: 13

Closing Prayer

God of all mercy,
in this eucharist you have set aside our sins
and given us your healing:
grant that we who are made whole in Christ
may bring that healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

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