

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

Newsletter for 22 November 2020 – Christ the King

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our weekly update for 'stir –up' Sunday. Our online service this week is on Youtube at:

<https://youtu.be/XautcUc2kI4>

including a sermon by David James a reading by Ruth James and intercessions led by Ian Cartwright.

Next Sunday , 29th November, is Advent Sunday and we will be offering a Youtube service which will be shared through our Facebook pages and websites. The service will include the blessing of the (many) shoeboxes prepared for Moldova. In the afternoon there will be our first 'Thrive' on Zoom with the details shown below. Our daily online prayers are slightly different each week as we work around other schedules but they are fully listed below. We will hold a Zoom Morning Prayer on Tuesday at 9.30am this week and the order of service will be based on that in the Common Worship Daily Prayer book or on the corresponding 'Daily Prayer' app of the Church of England.

You are welcome to join us today for **virtual coffee time** on Zoom at 10.30am and the code can be found in the notices below.

Public Worship

Public Worship has been suspended until 2nd December. As soon as we get any definite news about the resumption of services we will let you know.

Churches Opening for Private Prayer

We are allowed to open our churches for private prayers only and I will publish the times each week when our churches will be open. These are the times for the current week:

St Michael and All Angels

Wednesday 25 November: 9.30 - 10.30am with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Sunday 29 November: 11am – 12noon

St David

Thursday 26 November: 10 - 11am

Sunday 29 November: 9.30 – 10.30am

No public prayers are allowed during this time and please observe the usual

Covid-19 Safe practices:

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

Your name must be recorded on the sheet when you enter church.

Face coverings should be worn in church. There are important exemptions that 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.

Please keep at least 2 metres away from others and leave an 'I sat here' notice on the pew or chair to warn others not to sit there in the same session.

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

Please do not come to Private Prayer if you are feeling ill or are shielding. We will do all we can to make the church safe but you attend at your own risk.

Thrive at St David's Church

Do join us for an informal gathering at St David's led by Ash Leighton Plom will give an opportunity for questions and prayer together.

Topic: The Advent Experience: Thrive at St David's Church Exeter

Time: Nov 29, 2020 04:00 PM London

Every week on Sun, until Dec 20, 2020, 4 occurrence(s)

Nov 29, 2020 04:00 PM

Dec 6, 2020 04:00 PM

Dec 13, 2020 04:00 PM

Dec 20, 2020 04:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289

Passcode: 159821

Zoom Coffee on Sundays

You will be very welcome to our virtual 'coffee time' on Zoom on Sundays from 10.30am during the current regime of restrictions. Anyone is welcome to join in for conversation and fellowship. If there are enough people we will split into groups for chat. Here is the link for today:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel

A huge thank you for the help and donations that have already been offered towards making our Tuesday packed suppers. The scheme is running well and if you would be willing to provide small bags of crisps or individually wrapped chocolate bars towards this outreach work then please leave them in church at Private Prayer times or in the Vicarage porch.

Exeter Hot Food Project

Set-up in May, the project is run by a team of volunteers who have provided hot nutritious meals to school children and families experiencing food poverty throughout the first 'lockdown' and during the school holidays. The meals are cooked at churches and community centres then delivered immediately.

We are recruiting volunteers to help across the Christmas holidays and in the New Year we plan to extend our 'emergency food' service to other groups vulnerable to food insecurity eg isolated elders and young carers and care leavers. Here is a link to our Volunteer Survey for anyone interested in contributing to this growing need as a volunteer or donor:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScPRvFH7CDHI_ZwWWBo2qKcwfX0WzRt8qSEq_Khu3rLDvZetQ/viewform

A member of St Michael's Church is already involved in this project.

Exeter Food Bank

Our collection point for the Food Bank is still open at St Michael's Church and goods can be brought in at times of Private Prayer along with papers for recycling.

Live Daily Prayers

Please join us, if you can, for our online prayer services during the week on our Facebook pages or Zoom:

Monday 23rd, 8pm Compline on 'St David's Church Exeter' page

Tuesday 24, 9.30am Morning Prayer by Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

Wednesday 25th, 9am Wednesday Angelus and Mattins on 'St Michael and all Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter' page

Thursday 26th 9.30am Morning Prayer on St David's page

Friday 26th, 9am Morning Prayer on St David's Page

Shoeboxes for Moldova

We are supporting CREE (Christian Response to Eastern Europe) again this year by sending Christmas Shoe Boxes to Moldova. Thank you to everyone who has already prepared and delivered a shoebox. We have a wonderful collection!

Our boxes need to be in church by the morning of **Sunday November 29th** for transport to Moldova. For further information about box preparation can be found at: www.cr2ee.org.uk

Please ring Ann Watts 01392 276948 for further information and look out for stories in the November magazine! Boxes can be left in St David's Church during times of Private Prayer or in the Vicarage porch.

Work at St David's Church

The work on the vestry roof is now almost complete with a further coat of waterproofing due to be added. Community Payback Volunteers are currently helping with maintenance in the churchyard on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Traidcraft Stall

If you have ordered a REAL advent calendar it will be possible to pick it up from the Vicarage porch. Thank you for supporting Fair Trade producers.

Magazine

Today is the deadline for our December and January edition – so please get writing! Thank you to our contributors and editorial team.

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 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...

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** please pray for Exeter College Staff and Students, especially those struggling with online learning. Our PCC meeting by Zoom on Wednesday Evening.

Please also pray for:

the people of USA as their election process concludes – and those recently elected to office;

the people of Nagorno-Karaback and Yemen

those people here, and around the world, suffering from Covid-19, and those who are feeling anxious or afraid;

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they have to make and implement, our police service, those planning the vaccination programme those working in care homes and hospitals - giving thanks for their commitment and courage

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

A Prayer for use during the Covid outbreak

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ came that we might have life and have it abundantly;

pour out your blessing upon our nation;

where there is illness, bring your healing touch;

where there is fear, strengthen us with the knowledge of your presence;

where there is uncertainty, build us up in faith;

where there is denial, lead us into truth;

where there is discord, may we know the harmony of your love;

this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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

Service for Second Sunday before Advent 22th November available on Youtube with links to our Facebook pages

Welcome to worship from the parish of St David and St Michael, Exeter on this Sunday before Advent which is kept as the Feast of Christ the King.

Opening Prayer

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

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So let us turn away from sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

The kingdom is yours, but we turn away from your just rule:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

The power is yours, but we trust in our own power and strength:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

The glory is yours, but we fall short of the glory of God:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

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

Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven
that he might rule over all things as Lord and King:
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace,
and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading – Ephesians 1: 15-end

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 25: 31-end

‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will

separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

An Address by David James, 22 November 2020 - CHRIST THE KING

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18 so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

The Letter to the Ephesians is a great one to hear at this particular moment, in the middle of a pandemic, nearly 2,000 years after it was first written. It is, as one commentator put it, ‘one of the most attractive documents in the NT and one to which many Christians turn when low in spirit’.

So that’s my first suggestion to you today, on this Feast of Christ the King; savour this Ephesian letter. Read it slowly, notice the sentences which stay in your mind, dwell on the encouragement that our Lord Jesus Christ offers you through them. Let it be an encounter in which ‘the eyes of your heart [are] enlightened.’ What a great

phrase that is to! It reminds us that our faith is a matter not just of intellect but also one that touches us at a deeper emotional level. As a French philosopher once said, 'The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing about'.

On a day which invites us to reflect on Christ's kingdom I want to suggest that something else we can do is look around us and simply notice its present reality. That's what will encourage us and give us hope and enable us to serve. So where do we look 'with the eyes of our heart'? What do we see?

Well I've been trying to do that lately, partly just as a counterbalance to depressing news items and general doom and gloom. There was for example a very cheerful article I came across which described how a new arrival in Cirencester had been exploring the surroundings with her small daughter when she came across a bench with a bunch of flowers left on it. With it there was a note which said, 'Hello stranger! If you find these flowers they were meant for you. Please take them home and enjoy them, you deserve it.'

I loved that last little phrase especially - 'you deserved it.' 'Amazing grace', said the slave owner, John Newton, 'that saved a wretch like me.' The amazing thing about God's grace is that he distributes it liberally to any and all who happen to come across it and are willing, as it were, to take it home with them. That's what grace is - an undeserved gift, which we've done nothing to earn, but is simply offered out of love and mercy. So to the eyes of the heart a bunch of flowers left on a bench for an unknown stranger to find is a sign of God's grace in the world.

Then there was the news of a possible vaccine for Covid 19 last week and another one more recently. Even the stock market noticed it, with a phenomenal rise in value based on the hope of a return to a more normal way of life. Many of the big pharmaceutical companies involved in developing vaccines have announced that they will make the vaccines as widely available as possible so that they're not just accessible to the rich who can afford them. Indeed the husband and wife team, Ugur Sahin and Oziem Tureci, who led the research are dedicated scientists who have explained their drive to find a vaccine was because they 'felt a moral imperative to help the world... there is so much need.'

What does looking at that with the eyes of our heart reveal? Well let's just remind ourselves of the gospel reading for today, probably one of the most influential in the whole Bible because it completely changed the way people regarded one another. In the ancient world, the one Jesus inhabited, it wasn't like that.

In that world the gods were capricious and ruthless, the weak and the poor then were scorned. As Tom Holland in his fascinating book *Dominion* says, '*The starving deserved no sympathy. Beggars were best rounded up and deported. Pity risked undermining a wise man's self-control...Across the Roman world, wailing at the sides of roads or on rubbish tips, babies abandoned by their parents were a common sight. Others might be dropped down drains, there to perish in their hundreds... few had ever queried this practice. Girls in particular were liable to be winnowed ruthlessly.*' Pp121, 125.

'I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was sick and you took care of me.'

Particularly as a result of this one passage Christian congregations in the ancient world became known for the way in which they cared for one another, and even for those who weren't of their number - for he said, 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me.' They built up caring networks so different in character from the world around them that others paid attention and wondered at what - who - motivated them to become so concerned about the welfare of those who had no call upon them by kinship but only through their common humanity.

The great monastic houses of Europe practised this hospitality of welcome and care - '*All guests are to be welcomed as Christ*' says St Benedict in his Rule which governed the majority of them. And he quotes this passage from Matthew as a back-up to that instruction. Travellers knew they'd be welcomed, given a bed, some food and shelter. People could travel. Trade developed. Not for nothing is St Benedict the patron saint of Europe.

So, looking around, what else do we see? Well there's Children in Need, of course which, when I last looked had raised well over £37 million. Then, different in scale but not in character are the shoe boxes we at St David's are sending to people in Moldova who have so much less than us.

We're inclined to think this is normal, but with the eyes of our hearts enlightened by faith in Jesus Christ we can see God's grace at work. As Jesus' own world shows us, what we now take for granted was once extraordinary behaviour, because it is not as obvious as at first it seems.

Black Lives Matter. You'd have thought that was obvious too, but it clearly isn't. If you were to watch just the first of a series of films called *Small Axe* you'd catch a glimpse of what Britain was like in the 1970s as it follows the protest of West Indian

Londoners against prejudice and harassment by the police in a case that became known as 'The Mangrove Nine' after name of the restaurant where they used to gather in community simply to socialise. You don't need to cross to the US to find prejudice. But it was a drama which also revealed the progress we have made in tackling it. I say that without any complacency about much that is still to do in combatting prejudice against any who are different from us or who even simply hold a different view.

But my point is that, looking at others with the eye of the heart enlightened by faith, enables us to change ourselves and to change our world and to see more clearly what mars it. We have recently commemorated once again the turmoil of conflict in two world wars and in conflicts since. But on Sunday, for the first time since 1945 a member of the British Royal Family, the Prince of Wales, joined the President of Germany in laying a wreath of remembrance on that country's special day, in an act of reconciliation. 'God reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us a ministry of reconciliation.' To see that with the eye of our heart enlightened may also invite the question of who, perhaps, do we need to be reconciled to?

In the recent Parish Quiet Day we were led by Penny Warren to think about Celtic spirituality and what it had to offer. And she spoke movingly of 'the love that welcomes, includes, heals, encompasses everything. The light that shines in the darkness and is never overcome.' We are led out to the edge where we can give ourselves in love and service to creation, to people, to places.

And this thought of hers particularly struck me and I offer it to you again now - 'Dwell on the light not the darkness. Think of God's love in creation not the darkness of humanity's inability to receive it.'

To do that is to look with the eyes of our heart enlightened and know the hope to which we are called.

Or as St Paul tells the Philippians:

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Closing Prayers

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people;
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works,
may by you be plenteously rewarded;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Amen.

Christ our King make you faithful and strong to do his will,
that you may reign with him in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Do join us next week for our services online on Facebook, Youtube or Zoom!

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