

**St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter
Parish Newsletter for the Third Sunday of Epiphany, 23 January 2022**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this week's newsletter for the Third Sunday of Epiphany. We are in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and at St David's we warmly welcome the Rev Steve Santry as our Preacher. Steve is minister at the Mint Methodist Church and a valued colleague within Exeter City Centre.

Ash Leighton Plom is preaching at the Mint Methodist Church today as part of the pulpit swap.

In view of the continued Covid precautions we encourage you to wear face-coverings in church unless you are exempt, to maintain social distancing and to use hand sanitizer on entering the building. We have suspended the offering of refreshments after services for the time being, but otherwise we plan to go ahead with our services as advertised. Please be patient, kind and respect the personal space of other people if they don't wish to get too close!

Our services today are:

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with celebrant, Nigel Guthrie and preacher, Steve Santry. (live streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

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

4pm Thrive – on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:

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

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

6pm NO Evening Prayer at St David's Church

7pm United Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at Wonford Methodist Church. Led by Hannah Richards and Ash Leighton Plom

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 25 January, The Conversion of St Paul, 9.30 – 9.55am Morning Prayer on Zoom.

Please join us on this link:

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's (live streamed on Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page)

Wednesday 26 January, St Timothy and Titus, Companions of Paul, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass at St Michael's

Thursday 27 January, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church

6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's Church (live streamed on Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page)

Friday 28 January, 9.30 Morning Prayer in St David's Lady Chapel and live streamed on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 30 January – Sunday of the Presentation (Epiphany 4)

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's Church with celebrant, Ash Leighton Plom and preacher Belinda Speed-Andrews. (live streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher Dominic Cyrus

4pm Thrive – on Zoom

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church led by Robert Mitchell.

Covid-19 Safe for Public Worship

At St David's we encourage 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.

Please mingle with care before and after services and be mindful not only of your own wellbeing but also of your neighbours' safety and make sure that you are not sitting directly behind other people especially if you would like to sing.

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.

Knit and Natter

Thank you to everyone who came to an enjoyable session yesterday. We plan to meet again in February at St David's Church from 10.30am until 12noon. All are welcome to knit, natter or learn! Tea and coffee available.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be next Saturday 29th January at 10am at the Farmers' Union. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

There are two particular initiatives which we are invited to attend:

Exeter Prays: Collective city-wide prayer, around the week of prayer for Christian Unity. From 17th – 30th January 2022 we will have 14 leaders guiding a daily devotional video prayer being distributed online and through social media, such as Exeter Prays on YouTube and Facebook.

Sunday 23rd January, 7pm Week of Prayer for Christian Unity United Service at Wonford Methodist Church. This is a prayer evening to mark the global Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Gather with Christians from across the city to pray for the work of the Church in our communities.

Prayers for YMCA

Come to pray for the work of YMCA in Exeter on Thursday 27th January (and the last Thursday of every month) from 11.30am-12.30pm at St David's Church. Join others to pray for the work of YMCA Exeter across the city (from Broadclyst to Exwick, Sowton and the city centre, and much more), their staff, and the residents and young people they support. Email ctaxexeter@gmail.com for more info.

Brunch for Students

Hannah Alderson (Lazenby Chaplain at Exeter University) and Ash Leighton Plom are coordinating a brunch for students at the Imperial on Monday 7th February at 9.30am. Please contact Ash aescleal@gmail.com or Hannah H.Alderson@exeter.ac.uk if you would like to attend and do please pass this invitation on to any other students who might like to join in.

Thrive Onsite – moving into church

On Sunday 13th February we're bringing Thrive into the building with a session of music at 4pm, featuring church bands and musicians from across Exeter. We want this to be a gift and not an ask, so no pressure to contribute, but if you'd love to be involved, talk to Ash for more info or reply to these notices. Volunteers especially welcome in any of the following teams: core group, leafleting, welcomers, hospitality/catering, backstage/tech support, cleaners, and musicians and vocalists - talk to Ash for more info.

Funeral for John Darch

John sadly died at the end of December and his funeral will be on Friday 4 February at 2pm at St Michael's Church. John was involved at St Michael's Church for nearly 80 years and served and on our PCC. We extend our sincere sympathy to his wife Monica and their family.

New Leaves

The deadline for articles is today for the February edition of our Parish Magazine. Opinions, articles and book reviews are all very welcome! Thank you, as ever to our editorial team.

Appeal for light-weight Folding Tables – Thank you!

A huge thank you to everyone who responded to my appeal. The tables have been ordered and should be with us early in February.

NRSV bibles for St David's

Do you have an NRSV version of the bible at home which you don't use? If so we would be delighted to give it a home at St David's Church. We would like to have a few copies at the back of church for those who would like to follow the readings which will be written up on the white board at the back of church. Thank you.

Thank you from Sian Allen

Dear Nigel,

Just wanted to say I was very touched to receive my get-well card from so many of the congregation. It was totally unexpected and gave me a good boost. I am now learning to put best foot forward (going upstairs), and worst foot forward going down, which seems fantastic progress! With best wishes, Sian

Green Team

Don't miss the **Big Garden Birdwatch** run by the RSPB which is on 28th -30th January this year. You just have to:

1. Watch the birds around you for one hour
2. Count how many of each species of bird lands on your patch
3. Go online and tell the RSPB what you saw

The event helps to produce an accurate survey of British Birds which is invaluable for conservation planning.

There will be a **Churchyard Morning** at St David's on Saturday 5 February from 10am until 12noon to: work on wild flower areas; remove unwanted saplings; plant the remaining fruit trees. Everyone is welcome and refreshments will be provided.

Thank you to the Community Payback Team from Probation who are continuing to weed around the church and clear rubbish from the churchyard most Saturdays. Do say hello to them if you are passing.

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Phone Network and Home Communion

If you would like to be phoned by someone from the church community or know someone who would appreciate Communion at home, 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 are suffering

Please remember those who have died recently including:

John Darch, Liz Searle

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer: Christian Unity**: all churches in our parish and in Exeter

Please also pray for:

purposeful follow-up from the COP26 conference;

those worried about the rising costs of energy and housing in this country;

for integrity and good leadership in our national life;

the people of Tonga affected by the tsunami;

those suffering in Afghanistan through lack of food and medical facilities;

the people and animals of East Africa (N Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia) suffering from prolonged drought;

the people of Yemen facing continued conflict and famine;

the worldwide Covid vaccination programme, and the roll-out of booster vaccines;

those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices;

those suffering from Covid around the world.

With every blessing,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers and Readings for Epiphany 3, 23 January 2022

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles

the wonder of your saving presence:

renew your people with your heavenly grace,

and in all our weakness

sustain us by your mighty power;

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 (St David's) – Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6 & 8 -10

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from

early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

First Reading (St Michael's) – 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Gospel Reading – Luke 4: 14-21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

Address by Nigel Guthrie (at St Michael’s only) for 23 January 2022

When Jesus returned to his home town of Nazareth he attracted a lot of attention. The scene depicted in today’s gospel reading happens immediately after Jesus has been baptized in the river Jordan and then tempted in the wilderness. He is returning to Nazareth not as a celebrity, but certainly as someone who is recognized as a local boy who has spread his wings.

He stood up to read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and then sat down, as was the custom, to give his teaching. The passage he chose would have been well known to his hearers. “The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to their captives

and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Then after he sat down he said "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. Those in the synagogue initially viewed his words favourably. We read 'all spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth'. But if we read on another seven verses we hear that the people were ready to drive him out of the town and even wanted to throw him from the cliff.

The claims that Jesus was making to be the fulfillment of that prophecy were simply too outrageous for people to accept. But as chapter four of St Luke's Gospel continues we read that Jesus started straightaway to release people from demons and to heal them from illnesses, just as the prophecy had foretold. For us, this is all part of the Epiphany of Jesus in its widest sense. Through these actions people saw that Jesus was bringing good news to the poor, healing from sickness and disability and freedom. These actions bore witness to a divine power. They showed that the Spirit of God was truly with Jesus, as had been showed at his baptism.

It's often said that the church has inherited the ministry of Jesus and we, as baptized Christians, should be the hands, feet, ears and eyes of Jesus in this world. And however unworthy or inadequate we may feel, we can be sure that God has given us the gifts we need to share his ministry of love, healing and liberation among our family, neighbours and colleagues and within our community and world. Every act of kindness or encouragement that we bring to others can be a sign of the Kingdom. Every time we stand up against bad behaviour or dishonest practice we are helping to bring the Kingdom a little closer.

In chapter 12 of St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians he paints a picture of the Church as the Body of Christ. We who are baptized into the life and death of Jesus are now called by God to live out his mission.

And we might think that is a pretty tall order: proclaiming release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and letting the oppressed go free.

But Paul also reassures us that it is not just our own personal responsibility. Because we are part of the body of Christ we share this mission with all other members of the body and more than that, it is only when the members of the Church all function together that it can be an effective body fulfilling the mission of Jesus in the world.

Paul is showing us that to be a disciple of Jesus is not just about getting our own faith and actions right, it is also about using our own faith to build up that of others and find ways in which our own particular gifts can add to the sum of what the church can offer. We only have to think about the local church to realize that it couldn't and shouldn't be a one-person band. We need many people to step forward as church or chapel wardens, Lay Readers, deacons and priests, PCC or committee members, people offering refreshments (when we can!), cleaners, servers, musicians and welcomers. We all have particular roles to which we are called. And whatever role we accept we must, St Paul says, consider how we can best work together and help to foster and build up the gifts of others so that the church can be as effective as possible. Not only do we need to see that the other members of the body have different and complementary gifts, but we must also recognize that without others we can't exercise and develop our own gifts.

And one of the results of this interdependence is that the members of the body should feel real sympathy with each other. As St Paul puts it 'God has so arranged the body, that there may be no dissension with in it, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it'.

This is a beautiful picture of the church - and one which we may or may not actually recognize! But it certainly sets our aspirations high and teaches us that if we are to fulfil the Ministry of Jesus we continually find ways – and new ways - of doing it together. This is a particularly timely during this Week of Prayer for Christian unity. But it is always true within our churches and between them that to be the best disciples we must learn to work and pray together for God's glory and for the well-being of those around us.

Post-Communion Prayer

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments,
shine with the radiance of his glory,
that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed
to the ends of the earth;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

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