

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

Newsletter for 24 January 2021 — The Third Sunday of Epiphany

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this third Sunday of the Epiphany season.

As you should have heard by now the PCC took the hard decision that due to the present high level of Covid infections in Exeter we should not hold public worship at the moment. A notice of suspension has now been received from the Bishop of Exeter.

So please join us today for our online worship. The link to our **Youtube service** is here: <https://youtu.be/YyQdS9Q626s>

Our recorded service includes an address by me reflecting on the Wedding feast at Cana and the abundance of God's loving kindness. Prayers are led by Pete Francis and readings are by Steph Hills and Ash Leighton Plom.

At 10.30am we will hold a Zoom coffee for 40 minutes including an opportunity to chat in groups. Please join us, if you can, for a catch up. The link to click is here: [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

At 4pm **Thrive** will continue on Zoom with time for learning, discussion and prayer today on the theme of Christian Unity. Thrive is opening up our parish life to others and proving very enjoyable and rewarding so do give it a try! Please click here to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289

Passcode: 159821

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

If you would like to join fellow Christians in Exeter please join "Exeter Prays" at 7pm Sunday 24th, with a wonderful range of participants and encouragement for our prayer in the week of Christian Unity.

Watch on www.exeterprays.com, or search Exeter Prays on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube

Next Sunday is being kept as Candlemas Sunday

If you would like to join our Youtube service please have a candle at hand for the blessing of candles and which you might like to keep alight (safely!) during our worship.

Church Opening Times for Private Prayer

Thursdays: 10.30 – 11.30am at St David's Church

Sundays: 9.30-10.30am at St David's Church
11am-12noon at St Michael's Church (with exposition
of the Blessed Sacrament from 11.30am)

Covid-19 Safe for Private Prayer

These are the provisions we are making to keep you as safe as possible during Private Prayer.

Please avoid touching door handles.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

Please leave your name and contact details with Track and Trace.

We should wear face coverings in church. There are important exemptions which 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 take an 'I sat here' notice and leave it on your seat so that others who come later can sit elsewhere.

Please observe appropriate distancing from others at all times.

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

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.

Online Daily Prayers

Monday 25 January (Conversion of St Paul), 8pm Compline (Night Prayer) on St David's Facebook Page

Tuesday 26 January, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer. You are welcome to join using the code below:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

And a new offering for our online services....

Tuesday 26 January, 6pm Vespers from St Michael's on the Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page

Wednesday 27 January, 9.30am Prayer Book Mattins from St Michael's on the St Michael's Facebook Page

Thursday 28 January, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Friday 29 January, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Please note that our neighbours at Exeter Cathedral (also closed for public worship) are also offering daily morning and evening prayer by Zoom and daily Sung Compline on their Facebook Page. You can sign up for their weekly newsletter if you would like access to their Zoom services.

Worship Resources

The ministry team are very aware of those who are unable to access online worship and we hope that you are receiving this bulletin to keep you in touch. Many of you will already be aware of the resources available through the BBC which are accessible to anyone with a radio or television.

I have had a further recommendation this week:

Oliver Nicholson recommends the daily mass at noon from All Saint's, Margaret Street. This lasts about half an hour and is very beautifully offered with thoughtful words about the saint of the day or the gospel reading. This is the web address: <http://asms.uk/> You can just log to the website and then find the link for mass of the day under the appropriate heading.

If you have a favourite worship resource which you think others would appreciate, please let me know and I will advertise it here.

Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel

A big thank you for the help and donations that continue to arrive towards making our Tuesday packed suppers. The scheme is still set to continue until the end of March. We would still welcome donations of chocolate bars and crisps.

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 be able 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 the vicarage porch or elsewhere. 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, rather than delivery to church.

Thank you to everyone for your generosity in keeping these stalls going in difficult circumstances.

Magazine

It is the last day for submission of material for the February magazine. So please get writing if you would like to contribute something!

Phone Networks & local 'Walks with a friend'

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. **At our PCC this week it was suggested that there might be church members who would appreciate going for a local walk with someone else from church. If you would like a hand organising that for yourself or someone else please have a word with one of the clergy (as above) or with Howard Friend (07733739453).**

Your Prayers are asked for...

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** please pray for Refugee Support Devon; the hostels for Asylum seekers in the city; the vulnerable community housed in the Great Western Hotel; and those sleeping on the streets of Exeter.

A Prayer for hospital staff and medical researchers

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who are caring for the sick, and your wisdom to those developing and distributing vaccines and treatments.

Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please also pray for:

the new administration in The United States of America

people here, and around the world, suffering from Covid-19, and those who are feeling anxious, isolated or afraid;
our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they have to make and implement, our police service, those carrying the vaccination programme;
the staff, inmates and Val Atkinson, the Anglican chaplain at Exeter prison;
school, college and university staff delivering online and in person teaching;
those working in care homes and hospitals - giving thanks for their commitment and courage;
those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;
May God bless you and those you care for,
Nigel Guthrie

Order of Service for the Third Sunday of Epiphany, 24 January

Welcome to worship in the parish of St David and St Michael, Exeter on this third Sunday of the Epiphany season.

It has been a tempestuous week and not just thanks to storm Christoph. We have witnessed our NHS under pressure as never before and a huge death toll from Covid. The grim weather has reflected that news all too accurately. But there has also been encouragement as we have also seen the vaccination programme progressing fast in this country and a peaceful handover of power in the United States.

The wonderful account of Jesus turning water into wine which is our gospel reading for this Sunday reminds us that with God nothing is impossible. We are in awe of his generous provision and the open invitation he gives us to know his love for us in this world and to share in his heavenly banquet.

Prayer of Preparation

**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

The grace of God has dawned upon the world through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own. Let us confess our sins.

God be gracious to us and bless us,
and make your face shine upon us:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May your ways be known upon earth,
your saving power among the nations:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,
and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:
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

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 – Revelation 19: 6-10

Revelation 19: 6-10

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out, 'Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready;
to her it has been granted to be clothed

with fine linen, bright and pure'—
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

Alleluia

Alleluia. Praise the Lord all ye angels of his: praise him all his host. Alleluia.

Gospel Reading – John 2: 1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

An Address by Nigel Guthrie for 24 January 2021, Epiphany 3: The Feast of God

In the past year many of us have missed celebrations. And I'm not talking about the wrapped chocolates in the red box! Many of us have missed the opportunity to celebrate significant milestones in our lives. Perhaps we have still been able to celebrate in a small way at home or even online? But most of those great celebratory gatherings for birthdays, weddings, graduations and anniversaries that we might have been anticipating, have been postponed or cancelled. I feel for those unfortunate people who had booked weddings with us for last year are now on their third possible date! And people of faith lost many of their annual festivals, as we did last Easter. It's natural to feel a sense of regret about what has been lost and to wonder when we will be able to meet together again.

We don't have to read far through the Gospels to notice that Jesus enjoyed a celebration and this account of the wedding at Cana in Galilee which comes so near the beginning of John's gospel, sets the tone. What Jesus does at this wedding, and the way John writes it up, tell us a lot about what God wants for us and what Jesus came to bring?

Firstly, we notice the sheer abundance that Jesus provides for the wedding feast. If we take the lower end of the estimated capacity of the stone water jars, Jesus turned a 120 gallons of water in to wine, which equates to around 540 litres of wine. Now even if it was a big wedding, that's a lot of wine! And that's really the point. The exact amount doesn't matter. What matters is that the provision which Jesus makes is abundant and generous. This first sign of Jesus in John's gospel speaks vividly of the abundant and generous provision which God makes for our lives.

And this isn't a one-off. The theme of God's abundant provision is one which we find elsewhere in the gospels. In the feeding of the 5,000 after everyone has had enough there are many baskets of food left over. And when Jesus teaches about giving in St Luke chapter 6 he says "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."

Many people have been pausing to count their blessings during this pandemic. It's easy to complain about what has been lost, and about the restrictions which we are enduring. But it's really much better for our souls and spirits to spend time in thankful prayer to God for all that we have received, and too easily take for granted.

Secondly, the story of the Cana wedding feast speaks of renewal. As always in St John's accounts there is a symbolic message in the telling of any story and in this passage the stone water jars give us a clue. They were used in the Jewish rites of purification. By turning the water into wine Jesus showed that the rites and ceremonies of the old covenant would be replaced by a new covenant. The relationship between God and humanity would no longer depend on repeated sacrifices and ceremonies but on 'grace and truth'. The covenant which once rested on obedience to the law, would now be based on love.

Simple slogans and simple rules are always popular, and their popularity is exploited by politicians and others who want to gather a following. Jesus took a wholly

different approach. His teaching shows us that loving others is complicated and often costly. As with the Woman taken in Adultery or the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan we are shown that the ones we need to love aren't always the most obvious. Sometimes they are those who have had real difficulties, those who have gone astray or those who are different from us. At least one aspect of the renewal we need is to see others through the eyes of Jesus in their humanity and brokenness and to find the image of God in them.

And thirdly and finally Jesus shows his followers that the best is yet to come. Perhaps, just at the moment, we can be tempted to think that the best is behind us? Perhaps our health is not as good as it was, or we have lost good friends or lost something our sense of purpose? Perhaps we are poorer than we were or feel diminished by the restrictions under which we are living? But Jesus assures the bridegroom that he has kept the good wine until now. John starts this account with the phrase 'on the third day' and perhaps that is there to remind us of the resurrection through which we are promised eternal life. The best is yet to come.

The promise of a future glorious banquet pervades scripture. The prophet Isaiah said 'On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines.' Jesus himself used the image of a wedding feast to portray the Kingdom of Heaven to which all people are invited. And in today's reading from Revelation we read 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

The central act of Christian worship, Holy Communion, the Eucharist, the Mass, is often described as a celebration. Its central prayer is one of thanksgiving. It sustains us now but is also a foretaste of what God promises us; a glorious feast which includes all people, and which never ends. Many of us will be missing that Eucharistic celebration at the moment, along with other celebrations we had planned, but this account of the Cana wedding reassures us that God is still with us, that his provision is generous and bountiful. In spite of our present restrictions and losses, God continues to prepare good things for us here and in the world to come.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

God of all mercy, your Son proclaimed good news to the poor,
release to the captives, and freedom to the oppressed:
anoint us with your Holy Spirit and set all your people free

to praise you in Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory
and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;
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 on Youtube and Facebook!

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