

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

Newsletter for 24 May 2020

Dear Friends

A warm welcome to our weekly update for the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

Sunday Worship

Please join in with our Youtube service this Sunday, if you can. Here is the link:

<https://youtu.be/br7zJXmC-Rw>

Today our service includes a bible reading by Ian Watt, an address by Alison Whiting and prayers led by Robert Mitchell. Words for the service can be found at the end of this email so that you can read them even if you don't use Youtube or Facebook. Thank you, once again, to Nigel Walsh who has put the service together for us and to everyone who is contributing to our online worship.

Next week, for Pentecost (31 May) I will celebrate the Eucharist at the Vicarage, as I did on Easter Day, with a live stream on Facebook, hopefully making the service available afterwards on Youtube.

Live Prayers

I will be off duty for several days this week for my post-Easter break so thank you to all those who will kindly be streaming our daily prayers. If you have any feedback about our services, or requests, please let me know.

Please join us, if you can, for our streamed short prayer services during the week on our Facebook pages:

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 9am.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page:

Wednesday Regina Coeli and Mattins (BCP) at 9am

Phone Networks

I know that 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 yet had any contact please let me know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com

or by ringing me on 01392 660226. Thank you to everyone who is helping to keep our church communities together by your care and concern.

Magazine

Our May magazine is still available on our websites and it is a great edition with experiences of lockdown from members of our churches.

If you would like to contribute to future editions please send all articles as Word documents to newleavesnews@gmail.com or billpattinson136@gmail.com Thank you.

Zoom Coffee

Next Sunday we will try a 'Zoom' coffee morning at 10.30am for half an hour. This will be open to anyone in the parish. You don't need to have a Zoom account to join in – just click on the link that I will send out next week. If there are more than a few people we will break into virtual rooms so that we can chat more easily and then come back at the end to round up and say the Grace together. When you first 'arrive' you will have to wait for me to let you in. We need to do that as there have been some unfortunate incidents of 'Zoom bombing' in which people arrive and disrupt such meetings. You will need to make your own cuppa in advance! Hope to see many of you there.

The Venerable Raymond Ravenscroft

We heard the sad news that Raymond died suddenly this week and will remember him, and his family, in our prayers.

Raymond arrived in our parish when he and his wife, Ann, were among the first residents to move into Montpelier Court next to St David's Church. Raymond was ordained in the mid 1950s and served the first part of his ministry before coming to Truro Diocese. He served in several parishes as Vicar and Rural Dean. Raymond finally became Archdeacon of Cornwall in 1988 and served in that role until 1996. He arrived here when John Henton was Vicar and gave considerable and regular help in the parish. Even in the last few years, with weakening eyesight, he would always come to Thursday morning Holy Communion at St David's and serve at the altar. He moved back to Cornwall last summer to live near his family and kept active and attended the Zoom service for his local parish last Sunday.

Raymond was an extraordinarily gracious and wise person who made many friends in St David's and at Montpelier Court. Hilary Elliot, from St David's and Montpelier has written this tribute:

'Raymond made me very welcome when I moved to Montpelier Court in 2017. Knowing my background we had 'churchy' conversations. He was a true gentle man, always very courteous. He greeted us ladies as "M' dear" and at first I thought it was just me! He enjoyed going to the College for lunch accompanied by a lady or two. He was responsible for drawing up a list of residents' birthdays at Montpelier so that everyone would receive a card on the day. He left us last August and is greatly missed. Hilary Elliott.'

Your Prayers are asked for...

Charles Argall, Roger Beer, Janine, Charles Speed-Andrews and Nick & Karen Speed-Andrews, Nicky Jarman and her husband Tim and their family, Jacqueline and her family, Joy and her family, Claude and Gillian Harbord, Elizabeth Hewitt, Grace Tointon, Pam Smith and her family, James and Katy Tyler, Andrew Wakley, Rosemary Willcox and Maurice Wright, Raymond (recovering after an operation).

Please remember Raymond Ravenscroft, Fred Wright and Elizabeth Burton who have died, and their families.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** we pray for the Youth Offender Service and all in Social Services, the criminal justice system and the voluntary sector who seek to support and guide young people.

Please also pray for:

those suffering from the symptoms of Covid-19, and those who are feeling lonely or afraid;

those who are homeless and will be asked to leave temporary accommodation;

those suffering domestic violence or abuse;

children and young people missing out as a result of school and college closure;

school staff planning for a return after half term;

Alison Whiting, Simon Harrison and the whole chaplaincy team at RDE;

all those working in the NHS, Social Care and in our emergency services.

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

Order of Service for the Seventh Sunday of Easter (service on Youtube)

<https://youtu.be/br7zJXmC-Rw>

Greeting

Welcome to worship in the parish of St David and St Michael, Exeter on this Sunday after the Ascension.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

In our worship today we hear the account of Jesus' Ascension from the Acts of the Apostles. Then in our gospel reading we hear part of the great priestly prayer that Jesus made before his passion. He assures his followers that they belong to him as surely as he belongs to his Father in heaven, and that assurance is for us just as much as for the original disciples.

Today, the address will be given by Alison Whiting one of our self-supporting curates, and the prayers will be led by Robert Mitchell. If you receive our parish e-mail you will find the texts for this service there.

Now I will offer an opening prayer and then lead the confession and read the Collect for this Sunday

Opening Prayer

We come in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Confession and Absolution

Lord Jesus, you suffered a cruel death on the cross for our redemption,
yet we have forgotten your pain
and stayed in the realm of the evil you defeated.

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you were raised from death to bring us to new life,
yet we preferred the comfort of the familiar,
and the empty promises of a sinful world.

Christ, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you have ascended to your Father and our Father,
your God and our God:

plead there at the right hand of the God for our forgiveness and entry into the
fullness of your presence.

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

May the Father forgive *us* by the death of his Son
and strengthen *us* to live in the power of the Spirit all *our* days.

All Amen.

Collect

O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

New Testament Reading – Acts 1: 6-14

The Ascension of Jesus

So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Gospel Reading - John 17: 1-11

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you

have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

An Address by Alison Whiting for Sunday 24th May 2020 - 7th Sunday of Easter

The disciples had been through it, in those last few weeks leading up to our reading from Acts; an emotional roller coaster of Good Friday – and the feelings of profound loss and desolation, followed by rumours that Jesus was alive and that there was hope...and then Jesus was back with them again.

At the beginning of this reading we heard, the disciples seem to be expecting life to go on as normal – if not better than before. Jesus appears happy to give them his full and undivided attention – with no preaching, teaching or outside commitments. He listens to them and answers their questions patiently.

But then suddenly, they find out that Jesus isn't actually going to be staying with them - and that he expects them to carry on without him.

Trudging back to Jerusalem, back to the upper room, we can perhaps imagine how flat they're all feeling... poor disciples, one minute they're in the 'inner circle' - the next, they're leaderless. Jesus refuses point blank to tell them what's happening ('It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority...'). And they have been left an extremely daunting job, being Jesus' 'witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth'.

But in all this, they would have learnt 2 things in particular; to stick together no matter what, and the importance of keeping on praying...

In our Gospel reading from John, these themes of community and of prayer, are also present.

Jesus knows that the disciples will feel bereft after his ascension, so he prays to his Father for protection for them – he really intercedes for them. They will need the strength and encouragement from each other too, in order to continue.

Right here and now, for us too, the themes of community and of prayer are perhaps more vital than ever.

While lots of people are living in isolation, in fear, uncertainty, loneliness or anxiety, now is the time for church communities to be creative and really live out what we're about, within the current restrictions.

My current work in the RD&E Chaplaincy has made me very aware of the impact of some of the restrictions at present; patients are not allowed any friends or family to visit them, unless they have come to the very end of their lives. How long the days must seem for them. I have seen several patients though, who have told me that they have felt incredibly supported by their church communities; through cards and messages, and assurance of prayers, even though they are not able to physically *see* the people they love.

Although we cannot yet enter our places of worship and meet together, we can still offer worship and meet with God wherever we are, so now, more than ever, 'the Church' means the body of people, rather than mere bricks and mortar. After all the journey of faith is to be travelled in fellowship with others, forming a community from which we can both give and receive encouragement, support, teaching and love; and in this way, and by the Holy Spirit, the Church becomes so much greater than the sum of its parts.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus prays for his own mission, then for his immediate disciples, and finally for *all* who will become his disciples down the ages – which includes us. Hearing his prayer, we share a privileged moment; as Jesus speaks directly to his Father. It is the night before his arrest and crucifixion. How might Jesus have been feeling?

So we stand on holy ground, if you like, as we hear his prayer. You might like to re-read this prayer of Jesus later on today; not necessarily trying to understand or analyse it, but letting the words and the overall feeling they create, sink into your heart. Then you may gain a glimpse into the relationship between Jesus and his Father – a relationship that is also available to us.

Our Gospel reading ends with Jesus praying for unity amongst his followers, that 'they (ie we) may be one, as we are one'.

Unity does not mean becoming mindless clones of one another, thank goodness. Rather, it means being our true, full selves, whilst embracing and respecting differences, not letting petty disagreements or resentments grow and fester, but working together towards furthering God's kingdom in our everyday lives, as well as in our church communities.

So let us pray; Lord, may we be aware of your presence through these uncertain times. Help us to be faithful in prayer, and strong in community.
Amen

Prayers led by Robert Mitchell

The Closing Prayer and Blessing

Thank you for joining in worship with us today.

Although we can't be together in one building we can pray united in the power of God's Spirit. It is the coming of the Spirit that we celebrate next week and for Pentecost I will be celebrating the Eucharist at home. We will live stream the service through the St David's, Exeter Facebook page but I also plan to post it on Youtube afterwards. Please join us if you can for that and for our daily morning prayers.

Now I would like to offer a closing prayer and blessing.

Eternal God, giver of love and power,
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:
confirm us in this mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth,
give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God;
and the blessing...

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