

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

Newsletter for Sunday 25 July 2021 – St James the Apostle

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for St James' Day.

Following our recent PCC meeting we are keeping all Covid precautions in place for the time being. This will be reviewed by our Standing Committee in the second half of August. The alarming rise in cases and hospitalisations with Covid across the country means that many businesses and organisations are having to take responsibility in the absence of legal restrictions. The Bishop of London, who is heading up the church response has said "We all must exercise personal responsibility and carefully manage the risks from Covid-19. As Christians, called to love our neighbour as ourselves, we must also exercise collective responsibility and continue to take appropriate precautions to protect others."

So our existing Covid precautions (outlined below) will continue for the time being – sadly with no congregational singing. Face coverings will not be a legal requirement but continue to be recommended (except for those exempt, of course). In the meantime, thank you for helping to keep everyone as well as we can be during this time of continued uncertainty.

Our services today are:

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

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

4pm Thrive Online for St James' Day

Zoom Meeting:

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

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289

Passcode: 159821

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 27 July, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer. 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?id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB&gl=US).

Wednesday 28 July, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass (live streamed) at St Michael's Church

Thursday 29 July, 10.30 Holy Communion at St David's Church
11.30am Prayers for YMCA in Lady Chapel at St David's Church
6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's Church (live streamed at Friends of St Michael's Facebook page)

Friday 30 July, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 1 August – Trinity 9

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with celebrant, Belinda Speed-Andrews, and preacher, Bill Pattinson

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

4pm Thrive is on a summer break

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.

Congratulations!

We would like to offer our sincere congratulations to Ruth and David James who will be celebrating their Golden Wedding next weekend.

Food for the Vulnerably housed in Exeter

Working through St Petrocks 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.

Time for Quiet Reflection

Belinda will be leading a time of corporate Silent Reflection on Friday 6 August at 5.30pm in person and on Zoom. Please email her for further details and joining link at bspeedandrews@gmail.com

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!

Prize Draw – thank you!

Thank you very much for your support of our Prize Draw, both those of you who donated prizes and everyone who bought tickets or helped on the day. We will announce how much it raised in due course!

August Open Church at St David's

We plan to open St David's Church from 11am -12noon on Saturdays during August. 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 and perhaps have a small stall, too.

Refugee and Migrant Concern

Several people in our congregations have expressed their concern about how the proposed Nationality and Borders Bill will affect the rights and prospects of those seeking asylum in this country. If you are concerned and would like to learn more about the arguments you could visit the Refugee Council website refugeecouncil.org.uk

The humane and fair treatment of those who are 'strangers in the land' is a theme which goes back to Old Testament times and should certainly concern us now as political, economic and climate change pressures add to the reasons for people to move around the world. I have added a prayer below which you might like to use.

St David's Women's Group

We are planning to get together at 2pm on Tuesday 3 August at the Imperial. If you are not happy to walk into the pub on your own then meet Helena at the St David's Church east-end notice-boards at 1:45 and you can walk over together. Please bring some cash. If you are on the St David's Women's Group email list you will know about this already. If you don't get the Women's Group emails then please let Helena or Mollie know if you would like to be added to that mailing.

Men's Breakfast

We have booked the next Men's Breakfast for Saturday August 21st at 10am at the Farmers' Union. We may have to be on two separate tables depending on numbers on the day.

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

Belinda is leading us in a group study 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.

Heritage Open Days at St Michael's

We are planning these days for Saturday 11th September from 9am until 6pm and Open Church on Sunday 12th afternoon with Cream Teas. 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.

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

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

Green Team

Survey on travel to St David's Church

St David's Church is seeking to encourage the most sustainable forms of transport where possible. We hope to achieve Eco church status. This survey will help identify better ways of travelling to church. Car parking near the church is already difficult and unlikely to improve, so we need to consider and seek other solutions.

Please help by completing the survey (which takes about one minute) online at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TJY7SHP>

Paper forms are also available in church. The Survey will run until 15th August. Best wishes, Clive

The Green Team are planning an event focussed on the environment, with lunch of locally sourced food, for 11th September 2021. Please keep the date!

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

Ordination of Ash Leighton Plom – could you be the official photographer?

We will be hosting Ash's ordination at St David's Church on Sunday 26th September at 3pm. The Diocese would appreciate it if we could provide a photographer for the occasion – someone to take some reasonable quality pictures that could be used on Social Media. The Communications Dept would be able to give further advise on what was needed. If you would be willing to share your photographic skill on this occasion, please have a word with Nigel Guthrie.

Phone Networks

Many of you appreciate 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.

St Michael's services and prayers

If you would like to access the services details and prayer list for St Michael's please contact Oliver Nicholson at virtualsaintmichaels@gmail.com and he can add you to their weekly mailing.

A Prayer for Refugees from Christian Aid

Merciful God,

We pray for all whose desperation leads them to the sea,
to undertake perilous voyages,
often following dangerous journeys over land:
those escaping brutal wars,
those fleeing religious persecution,
those escaping climate disasters and economic ruin,
those looking for hope in a hopeless situation.

May we look beyond our own fears and concerns
to the needs of those who have nothing,
risk everything and depend on the kindness of strangers.
May our hearts be opened,
our leaders be challenged
and our self-interest be called out,
in Jesus' name. Amen.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Please remember those who have died recently including:

James Tyler

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** The Almshouses in New North Road and Mount Dinham. All those making pilgrimage.
Our neighbouring parish of St James, Exeter.

Please also pray for:

those held captive in modern forms of slavery in this country and around the world;
for our own continued awareness of their plight;

those who have lost homes and loved ones in the floods in Germany and western
Europe and in China;

the people of Ethiopia and Southern Sudan facing conflict and famine;

the humane and fair treatment of migrants and refugees arriving in this country;

the Olympic Games, that they will go peacefully and safely for all involved;

the worldwide vaccination programme, giving thanks for all those who have enabled
a rapid roll-out in this country;

school leavers and those seeking direction and employment at this time;

those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices - giving thanks for their
commitment and courage;

those suffering from Covid around the world, especially in India and Brazil; for those
anxious about the lifting of restrictions and for wisdom for those making
arrangements for worship under the new regime;

May God bless you and those you care for,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers and Readings for the Feast of James the Apostle, 25 July 2021

Collect

Merciful God,

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—'I believed, and so I spoke'—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 20: 20-28

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Address on the Feast of St James 2021 by Nigel Guthrie

The Tokyo Olympics have finally started, albeit a year late. So, over the next few weeks athletes will be tested to see who is strongest, fastest and most skilful; their endurance and team work will be on show and medals will be awarded for the winners. The very best will have gold, silver or bronze hung around their necks in a moment of pride that will stay with them forever and cheer the hearts of their teammates and supporters. Athletics and sport can bring out the very best of discipline and achievement in people.

But the Christian faith gives the greatest prize to other qualities, as we read in today's gospel. Jesus said 'whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Today we celebrate the life and witness of St James, or St James the Great, apostle and martyr as he is sometimes known. Not that we really know very much his life. His father was Zebedee and he and his brother John were fishermen whom Jesus called to follow him while they in their boat mending the nets. From today's reading from Matthew we might assume that James and John had an ambitious, not to say pushy, mother because she asked Jesus if her sons could sit at his right hand and left hand in his kingdom. But in fact this is a rewriting of the same passage in Mark in which James and John ask the same for themselves. It seems that Matthew thought it rather embarrassing to suggest that these great apostles should have been quite so self-seeking. But then they were called 'sons of thunder' in Mark's gospel which suggest that they were pretty feisty and perhaps even hot tempered. This is borne out by a short passage in Luke's gospel where they want to call down fire on a town that had not received Jesus well. But Jesus rebuked them. On the other hand James and John were among only three disciples, along with Peter, who were privileged to be present on the mountain when Jesus was transfigured.

Perhaps it was James' outspoken and fiery nature that led to his death by the sword in Jerusalem during the persecution of Christians by Herod Agrippa recorded in Acts chapter 12. This is widely thought to have taken place in AD 44 making James the first of the Apostles to be martyred. So today's gospel reading is especially poignant as the words of Jesus about giving up his own life as a ransom for many seems to find an echo in the death of his feisty but faithful follower, James.

It was a later tradition that associated James with Spain and led to the widespread recognition of Santiago de Compostela as his place of burial and one of the foremost places of Pilgrimage in medieval Europe. I know that at least some of our own parishioners have walked the pilgrimage routes, as I have myself. And today, when St James' Day falls on a Sunday it is declared a Holy Year in Compostela and on this day a special door in the East End of the Cathedral is opened in celebration. So, if you see a saint's image carved in Europe in the past 1000 years who has a walking stick, a pilgrim hat and a scallop shell you can be sure it is meant to represent St James.

The Epistle which is set for this special day is a wonderful passage which starts with St Paul saying ‘We have this treasure in clay jars (or earthenware vessels – as it is sometimes translated), so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and not to us.’ Paul goes on to describe how we are afflicted but not crushed, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

Here Paul seems vividly aware of his own weakness. The clay jar is fragile. It can easily be smashed or just accidentally dropped. Yet in the ancient world it was also the best vessel to contain things of great value, things which were essential to a good life, olive oil, water and wine. These could be best looked after in a clay jar but it was not without risk.

So, I believe that Paul is telling us something profound about God’s call to us, and something that reflects the life and ministry of James, Apostle and Martyr. God knows that we are fragile, he knows that we can be easily broken, he knows that we have our limitations and our failings, he knows that if we’ve lived at all we carry damage and hurt. Yet he still trusts us with the most precious gift of the Gospel of Christ so that we can preserve it and share it in as best we can. Paul is very aware of just how his own weakness contrasts with the extraordinary power of God. And when in chapter 12 of the same letter he complains about his thorn in the flesh the Lord gives him this amazing assurance ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’

For ourselves, for our church, for the great apostle James the same is true ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ It is not easy to hear because we want to live and minister from a position of strength and to be filled with confidence and assurance. But when James spoke with self-confidence and assurance, he got it wrong. His confidence was in his own judgement and not in the power of God. But ultimately, he was given grace to know that in laying down his own life in martyrdom he would take it up again in resurrection.

We may not know a great deal about St James, but we do know that was faithful in spite of his failings and courageous in accepting the cup of suffering which was offered to him. He ran the race and received the prize that was beyond value and that is offered to us all through the grace of Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

Closing Prayer

Lord God, the source of truth and love,
Keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
United in prayer and the breaking of bread,
And one in joy and simplicity of heart,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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