

## St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Newsletter for Mothering Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, 27 March 2022

Dear Friends,

Happy Mothering Sunday! It has been cheering to have some really beautiful weather this week, a real taste of spring. This season has felt heavy with the terrible war going on, but this Sunday, traditionally known as refreshment Sunday, is a good time to remind ourselves of the value of thanksgiving in the Christian life. Even as we pray for Ukraine we come to see more clearly the huge benefits of the peace and stability with which most of us have grown up - and all too easily take for granted. Let us pause and give thanks this weekend.

I'm also giving thanks for having tested negative after a week of Covid and will be getting back into circulation this weekend.

Face coverings in church are now voluntary in church, as elsewhere. But please stay aware of social distancing and use hand sanitizer on entering the building. We are pleased to be serving refreshments after our services and are grateful to those who are making this possible. 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, Ash Leighton Plom and preacher, David James (live-streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

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

4pm Thrive at St David's Church with Ash Leighton Plom

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

### **Services in church and online this week**

**Tuesday 29 March**, 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 30 March**, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass at St Michael's

**Thursday 31 March**, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church with address by Ian Cartwright

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

**Friday 1 April**, 9.30 Morning Prayer in St David's Lady Chapel and live streamed on St David's Facebook Page

**Saturday 2 April, 2pm** Wedding of Martyn Goodwin-Jones and Kristy-Lee Stickland at St David's Church

**Sunday 3 April March – The Fifth Sunday of Lent – Passion Sunday**

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

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

4pm Thrive at St David's

6pm Choral Evensong and Benediction led by Nigel Guthrie

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church led by Charlotte Townsend

**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.

**Please mingle with care before and after services** and be mindful not only of your own wellbeing but also of your neighbours' safety.

***Please do not attend church if you are feeling ill or have tested positive for Covid.***

### **Forthcoming elections for PCC and Deanery Synod**

At the annual parishioners' meeting on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April this year we are hoping that you will give consideration to seeking election to the PCC and/or Deanery Synod.

At St Michael's there will be two spaces on the PCC and at St David's there will be three.

There are two available spaces on Deanery Synod (successful election to Deanery Synod automatically confers a seat at the PCC).

Papers to complete for nomination will be available in church from early April or you can download a copy here: [PCC nomination form](#)

[Deanery Synod nomination form](#)

We will also be seeking to elect a new churchwarden, and a second chapel wardens for St Michael's. Again, there will be forms available in church in early April or you can download a copy here: [Church Warden nomination form](#)

Please pick up a copy of our parish prayer to use during Lent.

### **Knit and Natter**

We will meet again in April date to be confirmed. All are welcome to knit, natter or learn! Tea and coffee available.

### **Men's Breakfast**

The Men's Breakfast will be next **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April at 10am** at the Farmers' Union. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

### **Men's Walk for Hospiscare**

Thank you very much to everyone who sponsored our team effort. We have raised well over £1,800 which is fantastic. And the rain kept off!

### **Parish Quiz**

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the recent Quiz Evening on Friday evening and worked hard to make it happen. Great fun was had and very useful

funds were raised. We have sent half the proceeds, £268, to the DEC appeal for Ukraine.

### **An hour of music – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March**

Christabel would like to thank everyone who came to support her performance and make it a memorable and successful evening.

### **Tuesday Friendship Café**

Please let your local friends know that we are open on Tuesday mornings from 10.30am to 12noon as a drop-in for people to find a Christian welcome and company. There are flyers available for you to take as invitations.

Thank you to those who have already offered to help or to bake cakes. There is a rota at the back of church to sign up when you can help. And do just come along if you would like to and help us to welcome any visitors who come into church!

### **Lent Groups**

St David's church are offering 2 different courses

On Tuesday afternoons 2pm at 95 Howell Rd on 29 March and 5 April

York Course '**Caring for Creation**' Please email [nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com) to book a place.

On Tuesday evenings 7pm Venue TBC on 8, 15, 22, 29 March and 5 April

**Sanctuary Mental Health Course:** <https://www.sanctuarymentalhealth.org>

This will be led by Revd Belinda Speed-Andrews. If you would like to join or know more details, please contact her on [bspeedandrews@gmail.com](mailto:bspeedandrews@gmail.com)

On offer at St Michael's Church:

### **Lent Reading Group at St Michael's**

On Wednesdays 30 March and 6 April at 7 pm the **Lent Reading Group** will discuss Bede's *Historia* with Oliver Nicholson

### **St Michael's Survey**

A survey has been prepared following on from the Archdeacon's proposals for St Michael's Church. We invite all those who are regular worshippers or on the Electoral Roll for St Michael's or who use the church regularly for other activities to complete and return the survey **not later than today, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2022**. It is available on paper at St Michael's Church, and online from

[nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com)

### **Parish Lunch**

The next parish lunch will be on Thursday March 31st at 12 noon at Exeter College's @34 Restaurant. Menus and signing up sheets will be at the back of both churches from this Sunday and people will need to sign up by Sunday March 27th.

### **Church Electoral Roll**

The revision of the Church Electoral Roll is currently underway. If you are a regular worshipper but not already on the Roll please pick up a form from church. You need to be on the Roll to vote at the APCM or stand for election. Any queries please contact Sue Wilson at St David's or Paula Lewis at St Michael's.

### **Fairtrade Easter Eggs**

Richard Featherstone should have orders (cash on delivery) for "real" Easter eggs available for collection from the Traidcraft stall at St David's today.

### **New Leaves**

Today is the deadline for the April edition of our Parish Magazine. IS there something you would like to contribute?

### **Green Team**

Thank you again to all those who donated the fruit trees. Those recently planted are 2 Cox apple, 2 Katy apple, 1 Scrumptious apple, 1 crab apple. We look forward to enjoying and sharing some fruit in due course!

Thank you also 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!

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:virtualsaintmichaels@gmail.com) and he can add you to that weekly mailing.

### **Your Prayers are asked for...**

Martyn Goodwin-Jones and Kristy-Lee Stickland to be married at St David's Church next Saturday.

#### **Please remember those who are suffering including:**

Charlotte, Paul and Grace; Maggs Bedford; Monica Darch; Andrew Francis; James Ibbetson, Liz Rimmington; Anne Smith; Grace Tointon; Mary Tout; Pam Smith; Iris Sutton; Bessie Wilkins; Caroline, Cliff and Stephen, Andy, Avis, Becky, Kate, Debs and Rob

#### **Please remember those who have died recently including:**

Dave Stanley, Diane Susan Evans

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer:** Our Bellringers

#### **A Prayer for Ukraine**

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,  
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,  
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.  
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at-risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

#### **Please also pray for:**

the people of Ukraine and all those injured, bereaved and made homeless by the invasion;

refugees from Ukraine and elsewhere, and the response to their needs;  
for peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine to be productive;  
members of our community to consider standing as church and chapel wardens or assistants and PCC members;  
the consultation during March about future ministry at St Michael's;  
purposeful follow-up from the COP26 conference;  
those being severely impacted by rising costs of living in this country;  
the dismissed employees of P&O ferries;  
those suffering in Afghanistan through lack of food and medical facilities and the young women being denied education;  
the people of Yemen and Ethiopia facing continued conflict and famine;  
those in the NHS and education struggling to keep services going in the face of many Covid infections;  
those suffering from Covid and long-Covid around the world.

With every blessing,  
Nigel Guthrie

### **Prayers, Readings and Address for the Third Sunday of Lent, 27 March 2022**

#### **Collect**

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,  
shared the life of a home in Nazareth,  
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:  
strengthen us in our daily living  
that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence  
to bind together and to heal;  
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. Amen.

#### **First Reading – Exodus 2: 1-10**

A man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

### **Gospel Reading – John 19: 25b -27**

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

### **Address by David James at St David's Church, Exeter, for Lent 4 Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup> 2022**

Have any of you been watching *This is going to hurt*, the drama about the life of a junior doctor in the NHS? Millions of us have, it seems, and it is based on the diaries of Adam Kay who wrote the book of that name and also wrote the screenplay for the tv adaptation of it.

Anyway, there is a particular scene in which Adam, has arranged to meet his rather difficult mother for dinner to apologise for rather clumsily introducing the man he lives with to her the previous evening at the theatre. Until then he had never really spoken to her about the nature of this relationship. The exchange goes like this:

'Mother, I live with Harry and we only have one bedroom.'

'Do you want a deposit on a bigger flat? Is that what all this is about?'

'I live with Harry. We love each other and we're gay.'

‘Both of you?’

A rolling of the eyes.

‘What was wrong with Helen? You were so nice together.’

Families. Parental and other relationships. The scene taps in to some of the complexity of all that these days. Sexuality, identity, convention, generational difference, they’re all there. And the interesting thing too is that I’m pretty sure none of this is in the book. For the tv drama Adam Kay has felt the need to weave in to his story some of the emotional background to the more work-focussed narrative of his book.

The gospels are a bit like that. They’re focused mainly on Jesus’ ministry, his ‘work’ if you like and only in passing on the nature of his personal relationships with others. His relationship with his heavenly Father, of course, is the prime focus. But even so we do learn something of his emotional hinterland, not least his relationship with his mother.

Apart from the birth narratives, part of which we’ve had this morning, Luke gives us the incident of the family visit to Jerusalem for Passover when Jesus is twelve. He tells us of his being accidentally left behind on their return to Nazareth, the anxiety and the reprimand Mary gives him for making them so worried, and his reply when they eventually find him in the Temple, ‘Didn’t you know I was bound to be in my Father’s house?’

John in his gospel takes us with Mary, Jesus and his friends to a wedding in Cana where they run out of wine. There is a robust exchange between mother and son as she says to him,

‘There’s no wine left.’

‘What’s that got to do with me?’

One imagines a rolling of Mary’s eyes.

‘Just do what he says’, she tells the MC. And the water becomes wine as Jesus’ commands are carried out.

It's John too who gives us the touching moment at the crucifixion when Jesus commends the beloved disciple into Mary's care and her into the disciple's care. Here are the hints of mutual relationship when at the point of death Jesus' love for her and his friend is given tender practical expression.

Tradition has it that Luke was the first to give a picture of Mary in the form of a representation of her relationship with Jesus. So Luke is traditionally known as the first icon-writer.

However that may be, the tradition of icons certainly has its roots in the East, and has become embedded in the Orthodox Christian tradition. They speak of icon writers, not painters, because the icon tells a story about relationship, written in the lines the eye follows as the icon is contemplated.

Let's look at one. Here is the icon of Tikhvinskaya, after the Russian Orthodox monastery where it is now kept. It's a particular style of icon called *Hodegetria*, a Greek word meaning pointing the way. You can see why: Mary is looking directly at us while cradling her baby in the crook of her left arm. But the gesture of her right hand is pointing us towards Jesus and when our eye follows the line between her hand and his face we notice that he is looking up towards his mother.

*the icon can be viewed here:*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theotokos\\_of\\_Tikhvin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theotokos_of_Tikhvin)

What's the storyline here? Well it might be something like this.

Mary, the mother, looks out at us and engages our attention, as one human being to another and having drawn us in our eye moves naturally to her gesture, her nose in line with her thumb takes our gaze downwards. Her hand is pointing us towards the baby she holds in her arms and the fingers lead us naturally back up towards his face. This face doesn't look out at us but turns towards his mother's, whilst his hand makes the Orthodox sign of blessing. He blesses her - and us too. In his other hand he holds his life - the gospel scroll.

The storyline seems then to speak about a circular relationship of love. It's a little journey of relationship. This is not a portrait of Mary alone, it's the story of her relationship with her son and ours with them both as she draws us into the intimate

circle. She looks out invitingly to us whilst Jesus is completely absorbed in her. As Rowan Williams (to whom I'm indebted for these thoughts in his marvellous book *Ponder these Things*) says,

*'It is not only that we cannot understand Mary without seeing her as pointing to Christ: we cannot understand Christ without seeing his attention to Mary. Jesus does not appear to us as a solitary monarch, enthroned far off, but as someone whose being and living is always engaged, already directed towards humanity.'* (p7)

The icon is the opposite of the modern 'selfie' with its obsession with me: me at the Tower of London; me with my friends having a good time; me at the top of Mont Blanc; me swimming in Thailand etc. As well as pointing away from me it also points away from obsessions with things, with wealth, with my job, with how well I'm doing, with how I measure up to what other people are like or the standards the world sets.

It tells us something too about another modern obsession: identity.

Mary points away from herself and towards Jesus because her identity is to be found in him. He is the explanation and purpose of her life. You can only really know Mary if you understand who she truly is - the mother of Jesus, the God-bearer because of her 'yes' to God's messenger, Gabriel, when he tells her she's going to have a child. Her identity is found in that child. St Paul realises this is true of all Christians. We are 'in Christ', part of him and who he is. We live because we are loved by him, for no other reason. Our whole life, its purpose and its meaning can only truly be found by looking at him - and reading the gospels which he holds.

And then, like Mary, we shall be able to point others to Christ so that they too can find out who they really are and what their life is about - love in relationship. The way to life is the path away from self-contemplation and self-presentation and towards Jesus who in turn reflects us back to others. So we come to the understanding that we find who we are in relation only to Christ and to other people. I am who I am because of him, but also because of you. His love makes me who I am but so does yours.

Reflecting this truth John Donne will famously say, 'No man is an island entire of itself...Any man's death diminishes me,  
Because I am involved in mankind'

So Mary in this icon shows her longing to engage us in this circle of love, to find ourselves as found in him. It's a dynamic call; there's no sense of finding and standing still, the truth is to be found in the constant renewal of the circle, gradually revealing more about ourselves and Christ.

So this is the image to keep before us as we move closer towards Christ's Passion and death and as we look in sorrow not only at ourselves but also at the world we live in and see the image of God's love for us in Christ so marred as to be sometimes unrecognisable. This icon points us away from all that to be the reminder of the amazing circle of love God longs to create for all that he has made - and its redemption through Christ. Here things earthly and heavenly are joined in human relationship. Jesus, who lived and suffered and died as we do, is always lovingly engaged with us - all of us, both people we like and people we don't.

Here, says Mary, the Mother of God, here is the way to be, here is the way to life, here is the key to who you are as she points us to her son. Come and be with us.

### **Post-Communion Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us  
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters  
we do also for you:  
give us the will to be the servant of others  
as you were the servant of all,  
and gave up your life and died for us,  
but are alive and reign, now and for ever. Amen.

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