

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

Newsletter for 27 September 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to this weekly update for the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Sunday Worship

This Sunday the 9.30am service from St David's will be live streamed on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter/>

David James will be celebrating at St David's with Belinda Speed-Andrews preaching at St David's and Robin Eastoe will be celebrating and preaching at St Michael's.

Services this Week

This week opening times are:

St Michael and All Angels – Tuesday is **Michaelmas** and there will be a Mass with choir at 7.30pm. Ash Leighton Plom will be preaching. We regret that it is not possible to serve refreshments after the service this year.

Wednesday Morning Prayer at 9.30am followed by Mass at 10am and Sunday Mass at 11am

St David – Thursday 10.30am, Holy Communion, Sunday 9.30am Holy Communion

Covid-19 Safe

These are the provisions we are making to keep worshippers as safe as possible.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

We should now 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.

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.

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, with notices on the pews that should be kept clear.

Please observe appropriate distancing from others at all times and the one-way systems through the churches.

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'; and congregational singing is not permitted.

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.

Live Daily Prayers

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

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page: Tuesday and Friday at 9am. Compline (Night Prayer) on Wednesday 30th at 9pm.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page: Wednesday Angelus and Mass at **10am**.

If you would like an order of service please let me know.

Harvest Festival

Thank you for the great selection of gifts that you brought to St David's for the Esther Community. They were delivered this week and the staff and residents are very grateful for your support.

We will celebrate Harvest at St Michael's on October 4th (also St Francis' Day) with Mass at 11am and Choral Evensong at 6pm. Goods for Exeter Foodbank would be most welcome.

Annual Revision of the Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll revision has been delayed this year due to the Covid lockdown but it will now take place between Thursday September 24th and Thursday October April 8th 2020.

In order to be entitled to attend the annual parochial church meeting on Tuesday 27th October, and to take part in its proceedings, your name must be on the electoral roll. Similarly if you wish to stand for any office (other than Churchwarden) your name must be on the roll.

If you would like to have your name entered on the roll, please contact Sue Wilson at St David's or Paula Lewis at St Michael's, who will be happy to give you an application form and/or more details.

AS THIS IS A REVISION ANYONE WHOSE NAME IS ON THE CURRENT ELECTORAL ROLL NEED NOT APPLY – BUT PLEASE INFORM PAULA OR SUE OF ANY CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Sue Wilson, Electoral Roll Officer electoralrollofficer@stdavidschurhexeter.co.uk

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This important meeting in our church life has been set for Tuesday 27th October at 7.30pm in St David's Church. Please come along if you can. We do legally have to hold the meeting before the end of October so if government restrictions

change and we can't hold the meeting in church arrangements will be made, and advertised, for a Zoom meeting which has been authorised as a back-up plan by Bishop Robert.

Quiet Morning – Wednesday 14th October

We will have decided to hold our Parish Quiet Morning online. It will run from 10am to 12.30 on 14 October.

Penny Warren from the Community of Aidan and Hilda will be speaking on the meaning and implications of Celtic Spirituality. There will be two reflections offered with time between for reflection and prayer. We are suggesting a £5 donation which will all go the Community of Aidan and Hilda of which Penny is Members' Guardian. Please contact Howard Friend on hfriender@doctors.net.uk or 07733739453 and let him know if you would like to attend and give him your e-mail address and contribution. Nigel Guthrie will host the Zoom sessions and send out the invitations just beforehand.

Reopening of Churches for public worship – a continuing process

Our churches are currently open for one midweek communion and one Sunday communion. We are keeping this under review in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines. Thank you for keeping this process in your prayers.

The PCC has now agreed a Risk Assessment process to allow our buildings to be used by a small number of trusted groups. The Risk Assessment is available for scrutiny on the St David's Website.

Magazine

The deadline for offerings for the October is this weekend.

Phone Networks

Many of you have appreciated phone calls from other members of the church community. If would like to be phoned by someone and haven't had any contact please let me know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com or by ringing me on 01392 660226 or Ash on 07855305519.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Charles Argall, Janine, Charles 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, Anne Smith, Grace Tointon, Pam Smith and her family, James and Katy Tyler, Andrew Wakley, Rosemary Willcox and Maurice Wright, Dale.

Please remember Pam Stephens who died recently. Pam was a much loved member of the St David's congregation and was active in the pastoral care of others. We thank God for her life. May she rest in the peace of Christ.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** we pray for the people of St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham as they celebrate their patronal festival on Tuesday and give thanks for all those who serve there and for the groups who use the church building. Those being ordained as priests this weekend in Exeter Diocese.

Please also pray for:

those not able to return to church and all who are worshipping with us at home;

those places suffering the effects of a changing climate;

those areas and countries suffering most from Covid-19, and those who are feeling anxious or afraid;

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they have to make and implement, the police service

those working in care homes and hospitals

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

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

Collect, Readings and Address for Sunday 27th September
St David's Service will be live streamed on our Facebook page

Collect

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers

of your people who call upon you;

and grant that they may both perceive and know

what things they ought to do,

and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them;

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 – Philippians 2: 1-13

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the

same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 21: 23-32

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’ Jesus said to them, ‘I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?’ And they argued with one another, ‘If we say, “From heaven”, he will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “Of human origin”, we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And he said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ‘What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

An Address by Belinda Speed-Andrews at St David’s Church – 27th September 2020
May I speak in the name of the living God, father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.

‘Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus’. The mind of Christ. I don’t know about you, but I sometimes don’t know my own mind let alone anyone else’s and above all Christ. But then I don’t think Paul is asking us to know what is going in the mind of Christ but more to think, to regard, to have the same attitude as Christ. In Christ’s actions we have the perfect affirmation of love.

How do we know God? How do we know Jesus? Because in order for us to have the same mind that was in Jesus we need to know him first. God has been revealed to us through the scriptures. He has been revealed through the stories of the prophets, through Abraham, Moses Jacob, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nehemiah and many more. But we never really saw God because to see God was to encounter death. Remember how God told Moses to hide in the cleft of the cliff as God covered Moses with his hand until he passed by and as God removed his hand all Moses saw was the back of God as his glory passed by. God was with the Israelites in cloud by day and fire by night. He was with the Israelites as he spoke to them through his prophets, through Kings and through Judges.

And then something happened, something changed.

But what was the step change? The step change was in the Incarnation; God became man. He humbled himself and became obedient unto death. God walked among us, lived, ate drank, worked among us. God was with us in Jesus Christ. I want to suggest that Jesus spent 30 years in Nazareth just hanging out with his community, living learning and working as a carpenter. If we do the maths that is 90% of his life was just being with, being among his family, friends and community and doing what we do, living. The other 10% was healing teaching, admonishing (9%) and the last week of his life was suffering betrayal defeat and death (1%). So we know if we look at Jesus' life he lived just like us, he ate, drank, laughed cried, worked and learnt, just like us.

To know someone you have to be with them, really with them. I would want to argue that most of us have acquaintances and can probably count on our ten fingers those we really know. God created us out of the abundance of his love to be with Him, not for anything else. And all of us here perhaps know that it is our sinfulness that keeps us apart from our creator. But we are all working on that, that's why we are here today.

Our calling as Christians is to be with God and this is what Paul is saying to us today in the verses we heard from Philippians. To have the same love, to be in full accord, and of one mind with Christ, we need to be with God, that is all.

As Christians we are called to imitate the way God is. The purpose of creation was for God to be with us and for us to be God's companions, to accept this invitation to be with our creator, for this is how we shall spend eternity so why not spend our temporal existence being with God too.

How are we to be with God to imitate God? The answer is to follow the way God is with us in Christ. Christ's ministry had a time of abiding in Nazareth, a season of teaching, healing, training and debating in Galilee and a season of pain and suffering

in Jerusalem, and so we ourselves can and should, I want to suggest, expect to experience pain & suffering, but also the joy of exchange of experience and solidarity and controversy with others and a time of abiding, enjoying and sharing existence with one another.

Matthew's gospel opens with the angel's promise that the Messiah is to be called, Emmanuel, God with us. It ends with Jesus' promise to the church; 'remember that I am with you to the end of the age', and in the middle of Matthew, Jesus promises that 'Where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name , I am there with them'.

However, our default as a Christian community is not to be with but to do for, or work for. In other words we perceive a problem in society and we think we have all the tools to correct the problem. This in itself is not a problem and is sometimes the right action to take. But perhaps when this is our default, we see ourselves as having all the assets and the other as a deficit - lacking something that we can provide or a problem that only we can solve. In working for we create a them and us and we don't really get to know the other and in a sense we use them for our own means, to make us feel better about ourselves. This is not Christlike.

If as I suggest being with God, with one another and with creation we can learn how to have the mind of Christ, how do we do this. One theologian suggests the following: presence, attention, mystery, participation, delight, partnership, enjoyment & glory.

Let's take an extreme example and let's just imagine that you are aware there is a homeless person sitting, living, sleeping in a doorway on your road. Let's call him Brian. Perhaps our default is to try and help Brian by giving food, pointing him to a homeless charity, a place where he can sleep warm and sheltered from the weather. We do this out of compassion but I suggest we do this as it is the easiest way of helping but it is also seeing this person as lacking, as impoverished as a person full of deficit. We react this way because this is how we have been led to believe this is what discipleship is in part. We also believe that this is the way to solve a homeless persons problem. But how many times have we heard how homeless people are unable to re-adjust back to what we call normal living?

What if we decided then to spend time with Brian and not try to solve, repair or even encourage him to do what we think is the best for him?

To be present; to spend time just being with Brian, chatting with him, listening to his story over a cup of coffee, we may then begin to really see him as a person, a real person not just someone or a problem we can sort out.

Attention; this is hard. Attention is being with Brian as he shares perhaps his most deepest, painful experiences and for us not to try and heal or to solve his problems. We may feel anger, horror and disgust at the stories he shares but it is not about us this is about us being attentive to Brian.

Mystery; it is not for us to understand why, or even to try and explain why. It is for us to sit with Brian and know that we may ourselves be challenged to re-think our own assumptions and understandings. We may not understand their choices but that is just it, they are their choices and it is not for us to judge or to even solve.

Delight; there may be very little delight in this Brian's life but if we take time to just be with them, there may well be laughter in the absurdity of a situation. It may be in the journey of this relationship, perhaps Brian decides eventually to attend an Alcoholic Anonymous meeting. Perhaps it is just this act which creates the sense of enjoyment just because a positive step has been made.

Participation; there may be much better ways of spending time with someone but the life of a homeless person is chaotic and participation is that. It is being with them in their chaotic activities however crazy and absurd they may be. It is how you can genuinely be with that person.

Partnership; partnership flows from participation as you begin to work together; a greater understanding begins to emerge, a being with one another.

Enjoyment; to enjoy is to revel in the abundance of a given moment, to the here and now and all the hope and energy in the things that never run out. A homeless person is someone society has no use for but in truly being with we can learn and appreciate the abundance of this person created in god's image. This person may have no use in society but that doesn't mean we can't enjoy them, their company.

Glory; perhaps a homeless person is not somewhere we could look for glory but in the relationship that has grown, the trust and understanding of each other; in us seeing the whole person and not the label homeless, this itself is a glimpse of God's glory for we are truly with this person at this moment.

This may all seem like a lot of work but it is not. We can be with god as we are today in worship in prayer here or on our own, in hearing his word, but what happens when we leave this building. How are we going to translate all of that into the Nazareth of our lives? By being with each other whoever the other is and in recognising the 8 elements, participation, attention, delight, partnership, enjoyment, mystery and glory we begin to see Jesus in the other and therefore begin to be like Jesus. Not working for to relieve our sense of guilt or to make us feel better about ourselves but by truly

being with and recognising in ourselves our own deficits and that being with God in the other, we are truly complete and will have the mind of Christ. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Almighty God,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law:
grant that we may love you with our whole heart
and our neighbours as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do join us next week for our services in church or on Facebook!