

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

Newsletter for 29 November 2020 – Advent Sunday

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our weekly update for Advent Sunday. Our online service this week is on Youtube at: <https://youtu.be/1VvHh636FhU>

including a sermon from me, a reading by Geoff Crockett and intercessions led by Richard Johnson. It also includes a blessing for the Advent Wreath and, at the end, a blessing for the Shoeboxes for Moldova.

Zoom Coffee on Sundays

You will be very welcome to our virtual 'coffee time' on Zoom today from 10.30am. Anyone is welcome to join in for conversation and fellowship. If there are enough people we will split into groups for chat. Here is the link for today:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Passcode: 196651

Thrive at St David's Church

This afternoon **Thrive** starts online on Zoom at 4pm. Ash has been interviewed about this new "Advent Experience" and he can be heard at 7.50am on BBC Radio Devon this morning, along with some great questions from pupils at St David's School. Do join us for this informal gathering led by Ash Leighton Plom which will give an opportunity for questions and prayer together.

Topic: The Advent Experience: Thrive at St David's Church Exeter

Time: Nov 29, 2020 04:00 PM London

Every week on Sun, until Dec 20, 2020, 4 occurrence(s)

Nov 29, 2020 04:00 PM

Dec 6, Dec 13, Dec 20 2020 04:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dlNCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289

Passcode: 159821

Public Worship Resumed

We are delighted that we will be able to offer public worship again from 3rd December. This week there will be a service of Holy Communion at St David's on Thursday 3rd at 10.30am with an Advent address by Bill Pattinson.

Next Sunday, 6th December, our main services will be: 9.30am Parish Communion at St David's and 11am Mass at St Michael's.

Churches Opening for Private Prayer

Our Churches are open for Private Prayer today: St David's from 9.30 -10.30am and St Michael's from 11am – 12 noon. St Michael's will also be open on Wednesday 2nd from 9.30 - 10.30am with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

No public prayers are allowed during this time and please observe the usual

Covid-19 Safe practices:

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

Your name must be recorded on the sheet when you enter church.

Face coverings should be worn in church. There are important exemptions that 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 keep at least 2 metres away from others and leave an 'I sat here' notice on the pew or chair to warn others not to sit there in the same session.

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

Please do not come to Private Prayer if you are feeling ill or are shielding. We will do all we can to make the church safe but you attend at your own risk.

Advent and Christmas Services

In addition to our regular weekday and Sunday services we are planning to offer the following:

At St David's: a Youtube Carol Service of readings and Christmas music; a Zoom Christingle on Christmas Eve at 4pm in which you make your own Christingle at home. Further details will follow! A Christmas Day Parish Communion at 9.30am (but no midnight mass).

At St Michael's: an Advent Procession with music by a small group of singers on Sunday 13th December at 6pm; Midnight Mass at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve (but no Christmas Day Mass); An evening Mass for Epiphany at 7.30pm on Wednesday 6 January.

Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel

A huge thank you for the help and donations that have already been offered towards making our Tuesday packed suppers. The scheme is running well and if you would be willing to provide small bags of crisps or individually wrapped chocolate bars towards this outreach work then please bring them to church or leave them in the Vicarage porch.

Exeter Hot Food Project

Set-up in May, the project is run by a team of volunteers who have provided hot nutritious meals to school children and families experiencing food poverty throughout the first 'lockdown' and during the school holidays. The meals are cooked at churches and community centres then delivered immediately.

They are recruiting volunteers to help across the Christmas holidays and in the New Year we plan to extend our 'emergency food' service to other groups vulnerable to food insecurity eg isolated elders and young carers and care leavers. Here is a link to their Volunteer Survey for anyone interested in contributing to this growing need as a volunteer or donor:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScPRvFH7CDHI_ZwWWBo2qKcwfx0WzRt8qSEq_Khu3rLDvZetQ/viewform

A member of St Michael's Church is already involved in this project.

Exeter Food Bank

Our collection point for the Food Bank is still open at St Michael's Church and goods can be brought in at times of Private Prayer or services along with papers for recycling.

Live Daily Prayers

Why not join our virtual community of prayer? We will hold a Zoom Morning Prayer on Tuesday at 9.30am this week and the order of service will be based on that in the Common Worship Daily Prayer book or on the corresponding 'Daily Prayer' app of the Church of England.

Monday 30th, 8pm Compline on 'St David's Church Exeter' page

Tuesday 1st, 9.30am Morning Prayer by Zoom.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

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

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Wednesday 2nd, 9am Wednesday Angelus and Mattins on 'St Michael and all Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter' page

Thursday 3rd 9.30am Morning Prayer on St David's page

Friday 4th, 9am Morning Prayer on St David's Page

Shoeboxes for Moldova

Thank you to everyone who has donated a shoebox or other goods for the appeal by CREE (Christian Response to Eastern Europe) for Moldova. We have a wonderful collection of nearly 60 boxes and several other bags of gifts as well as generous donations of Winter Fuel Allowance. The gifts are blessed in our Youtube service today. Thank you to Ann Watts, our parish organiser for liaising with CREE and sorting out our offerings with Mary Quest.

Work at St David's Church

The work is now almost complete with a further coat of waterproofing due to be added. Community Payback Volunteers are currently helping with maintenance in the churchyard on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Traidcraft Stall & Bountiful Table

On Sunday 6th December there will be Traidcraft Stall at St David's where a seasonal products will be available as well as the more usual items.

At St Michael's there will be a Bountiful Table including Christmas cards featuring photographs by Matt Clark.

At our stalls please just approach one by one, keeping safely distanced, and do not touch products before buying. If at all possible please bring notes and coins that can be handed over without needing lots of change. Thank you for your support and for taking care!

Magazine

Our magazine for December and January is now published, and it's a fabulous bumper edition to keep you interested and entertained. There will be paper copies available in church and it is available through both our websites. A massive thank you to our contributors and editorial team for their creativity and hard work.

Phone Networks

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 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...

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** please pray for our Parish Magazine team, our websites and social media pages and our recently formed Communications Group.

Please also pray for:

the people of Ethiopia, Nagorno-Karaback and Yemen; all refugees;
those people here, and around the world, suffering 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, our police service, those planning the vaccination programme;

Those negotiating a trade deal with the EU;

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

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

A Prayer for use during the Covid outbreak

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ came that we might have life and have it abundantly;

pour out your blessing upon our nation;

where there is illness, bring your healing touch;

where there is fear, strengthen us with the knowledge of your presence;

where there is uncertainty, build us up in faith;

where there is denial, lead us into truth;

where there is discord, may we know the harmony of your love;

this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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

Service for Advent Sunday, 29th November available on Youtube with links to our Facebook pages

Welcome to worship from the parish of St David and St Michael, Exeter on this Advent Sunday.

Blessing of the Advent Crown

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors:
to you be praise and glory for ever.

You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith
and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment.

May we be obedient to your call

and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ,

a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;
for you are our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God forever.

Confession and sung Kyrie

When the Lord comes he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins. (Sung Kyries)

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, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading – Isaiah 64: 1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
 and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
 and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter;
 we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity for ever.
 Now consider, we are all your people.

Gospel Reading – Mark 13: 24-37

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

‘But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
 and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
 and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory.
Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the
ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth
its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking
place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will
not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass
away, but my words will not pass away.

‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son,
but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will
come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in
charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.
Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will
come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find

you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

An Address by Nigel Guthrie, 29 November 2020 – Advent Sunday

I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth.

Those evocative words are often sung by church choirs at the beginning of Advent as part of a Matin Responsory. They pick up on the theme of watching for the coming of Christ which is the central focus of Advent. We are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas but at the same time looking forward to his coming in glory and judgement at the end of time.

Throughout the bible clouds are a symbol of the glory of God, a sign of God's presence amongst people. It was a pillar of cloud that led the ancient Hebrew people by day on their journeys through the wilderness. And in the life of Jesus, he is hidden in a cloud at his transfiguration and then is taken up into the clouds at his ascension. In this morning's gospel we hear how his second coming in power and glory will also be 'in clouds'.

But the thing about clouds is that they obscure what is behind them. We don't always appreciate them when we are trying to enjoy some winter sun and top up our vitamin D! But they also bless the earth when they release their moisture as rain. So when clouds are used as a symbol of God's presence they remind us that in this world God can't be seen directly, but only with the eye of faith. What do we see when we 'look from afar'? I wonder if we see the power of God being revealed, because we should be looking for it and rejoicing in it even amongst the clouds.

I've been reflecting on the election in the United States this week. It's been a massively expensive and divisive election. And yet that tortuous process did achieve the biggest voter turn out in history which must be good for democracy in that country. And whatever our political views it has to be good news that the incoming president is firmly committed to being part of the Paris Climate Agreement. And even the individuals elected can give reasons for hope. Joe Biden is the oldest ever President elect. But isn't that good news for those of us who are getting on a bit - showing that we can still be useful! And Kamala Harris has broken a glass ceiling for women in becoming the first female vice president elect as well as the first black and Asian American in the office showing that these groups can be represented at the highest levels of Government. Amongst the clouds of division there are signs of hope and positive change.

And in our own nation where the dark clouds of Covid are at last being lightened by the promise of effective vaccinations, the pandemic has also brought unexpected good things in its wake. Many people record an enhanced appreciation of nature and green spaces and perhaps this will sharpen our commitment towards tackling climate change. Some are benefitting from spending less time commuting to work.

Applications for nursing training have risen significantly, which is good news as I believe that there are more than 40,000 unfilled nursing vacancies across the country! (Although for all the praise that has been heaped on the profession, the long shifts required of many nurses still lead to many leaving the profession early.) Even in this destructive and testing crisis God has been at work bringing good things to pass. *I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth.*

But even the people who met Jesus in person didn't always recognise the glory of God in him. Yet some definitely did! Indeed in his birth and baptism, his miracles and teaching and in his death and resurrection there were many who saw the power and glory of God in Jesus. His life revealed and yet also, to some extent, concealed the glory of his Father. His earthly body was rather like a cloud. God was present in it yet God could not be seen directly through it.

And St Paul was aware of a similar paradox in his own life. His unspecified 'thorn in the flesh' gave him great anguish and he received a word from the Lord about it: *'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.'* So, *I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12: 9-10)*

As we approach our celebrations of God made flesh in a vulnerable child it is good to reflect that it's in our weaknesses as well as our strengths that God can work. Our weaknesses can make us more sympathetic to others who have similar struggles but nevertheless most of us would rather feel strong and capable. But feeling otherwise; feeling vulnerable, fearful or in pain doesn't prevent **us** from knowing God's presence with us or prevent **God** from working in and through us. After all, as Isaiah reminds us, we are the clay from which God the potter has fashioned us for his service. Our lives might not dazzle others with the glory of God every day, but our love and service, our constancy and kindness, our desire for justice and courage in the face of bullying will point towards the love of God we know in Jesus.

So when we see clouds ahead for our world, or for our own lives, let's not fail to search for the glory they can reveal.

I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth.

Blessing of the Gifts for Moldova

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the provision you make for our lives and for these shoeboxes that have been prepared with love for people we will never see.

We pray that they may bring comfort and joy to those who will receive them and help those, young and old who live in poverty in Moldova.

We dedicate them now with thanksgiving in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Prayers

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful

as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;

that, when he shall appear,

he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service

and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,

scatter the darkness from before your path,

and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;

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 in church or on Facebook!

Prebendary Nigel Guthrie

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