

**St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter
Newsletter for the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, 30 January 2022**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this week's newsletter. Today we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple otherwise known as Candlemas. **The feast is traditionally kept on 2nd February but in the Church of England it is now often marked on the nearest Sunday.** At this celebration candles were traditionally blessed for the year. But the occasion also reminds us the Jesus came as 'a light to lighten the gentiles' in the words of Simeon the old priest who, with his Anna, welcomed Jesus at his presentation.

In view of the continued Covid precautions we encourage you to wear face-coverings in church unless you are exempt, to maintain social distancing and to use hand sanitizer on entering the building. We have suspended the offering of refreshments after services for the time being, but we plan to return to offering refreshments next week. 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, Belinda Speed-Andrews. (live streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page)

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher, Dominic Cyrus

4pm Thrive – on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:

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

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

4pm Homelessness Sunday Service at St Petrock's Church

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

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 1 February, Brigid, Abbess, 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 2 February, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass at St Michael's

Thursday 3 February, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church

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

Friday 4 February, 9.30 Morning Prayer in St David's Lady Chapel and live streamed on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 6 February – The Fourth Sunday before Lent and the 70th anniversary of the Queen's Accession

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

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

4pm Thrive – on Zoom

6pm Choral Evensong at Benediction at St Michael's Church

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

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. Seating will be distanced to approximately 2 metres. Please sit on the seats where service books are placed.

Please mingle with care before and after services and be mindful not only of your own wellbeing but also of your neighbours' safety and make sure that you are not sitting directly behind other people especially if you would like to sing.

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.

Knit and Natter

We plan to meet again in February at St David's Church from 10.30am until 12noon. All are welcome to knit, natter or learn! Tea and coffee available.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be next Saturday 26th February at 10am at the Farmers' Union. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

Prayer after Church at St David's

Prayer will be available for you next Sunday 6th February after the 9.30 service at St David's - just head to the Lady Chapel, to the left of the altar, where our prayer team would love to pray with you or for you. We hope to offer this roughly every fortnight, and please let Nigel, Glynis, or Ash know if you are interested in joining the prayer team.

Tuesday Café

We are hoping to open the church for a Tuesday café time – as a drop-in for people to find a Christian welcome and company. This hope has been long delayed by the completion of works at the back of church and then..... Covid! Our initial hope would be to open St David's from 10am or 10.30am to 12noon on a Tuesday and we would like to recruit a team who would not only help to serve tea and coffee but also to talk with people. We would plan that people would help about once a month. Is this something you would like to be involved with? If so please sign up on our "Tuesday Café" sheet at the back of church. If we get a good response we would hope to start in March.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Exeter Prays: Collective city-wide prayer, around the week of prayer for Christian Unity. From 17th – 30th January 2022, 14 leaders will be offering a daily devotional video prayer being distributed online and through social media. Ash's video, filmed at St Michael's, should go live on Exeter Prays today (30th)!

Brunch for Students

Hannah Alderson (Lazenby Chaplain at Exeter University) and Ash Leighton Plom are coordinating a brunch for students at the Imperial on Monday 7th February at 9.30am. Please contact Ash aescleal@gmail.com or Hannah H.Alderson@exeter.ac.uk if you would like to attend and please pass this invitation on to any other students who might like to join in.

Thrive Onsite – moving into church

On Sunday 13th February we're bringing Thrive into the building with a session of music at 4pm, featuring church bands and musicians from across Exeter. We want this to be a gift and not an ask, so no pressure to contribute, but if you'd love to be involved, talk to Ash for more info or reply to these notices. Volunteers especially welcome in any of the following teams: core group, leafleting, welcomers, hospitality/catering, backstage/tech support, cleaners, and musicians and vocalists - talk to Ash for more info.

Funeral for John Darch

John sadly died at the end of December and his funeral will be on Friday 4 February at 2pm at St Michael's Church. John was involved at St Michael's Church for nearly 80 years and served and on our PCC. We extend our sincere sympathy to his wife Monica and their family.

New Leaves

The February edition of our Parish Magazine is available this weekend. A big thank you to our contributors and our editorial team.

Appeal for light-weight Folding Tables – Thank you!

A huge thank you to everyone who responded to my appeal. The tables have been ordered and should be with us this week.

Green Team

Don't miss the **Big Garden Birdwatch** run by the RSPB which is on 28th -30th January this year. You just have to:

1. Watch the birds around you for one hour
2. Count how many of each species of bird lands on your patch
3. Go online and tell the RSPB what you saw

The event helps to produce an accurate survey of British Birds which is invaluable for conservation planning.

There will be a **Churchyard Morning** at St David's on **Saturday 5 March** from 10am until 12noon to: work on wild flower areas; remove unwanted saplings; plant the remaining fruit trees. Everyone is welcome and refreshments will be provided.

Thank you 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.

Museum of the Moon

This extraordinary artwork is coming to Exeter Cathedral from 3 February. Tickets are now available £5 for adults and free for children. Full details can be found on the cathedral website.

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 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 and he can add you to that weekly mailing.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Please remember those who are suffering

Please remember those who have died recently including:

John Darch, Liz Searle, Michael Hickmott

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer**: The Samaritans (their local centre is on Richmond Road): Devon Learning Recovery Community (courses at St Michael's Church)

Please also pray for:

preparations for 'Thrive' coming into church from February 13th;
purposeful follow-up from the COP26 conference;
schools still dealing with Covid cases;
those worried about the rising costs of energy and housing in this country;
for integrity and good leadership in our national life;
the people of Ukraine who are fearful in the current situation;
those suffering in Afghanistan through lack of food and medical facilities;
the people and animals of East Africa (N Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia) suffering from prolonged drought;
the people of Yemen facing continued conflict and famine;
the worldwide Covid vaccination programme, and the roll-out of booster vaccines;
those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices;
those suffering from Covid around the world.

With every blessing,
Nigel Guthrie

Prayers, Readings and Address for The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, 30 January 2022

Collect

Almighty and ever-living God, clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

First Reading Malachi 3: 1-5

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom

you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Epistle – Hebrews 2: 14-end

Since the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Gospel Reading – Luke 2: 22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

according to your word;

for my eyes have seen your salvation,

which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Address by Belinda Speed Andrews (at St David's only) for 30 January 2022

The story we remember this morning is that of the baby Jesus being brought into the temple and being placed in the arms of an old man, a devout old man, Simeon. It is a beautiful & evocative story & I don't know about you, but I love this story. I love this story too perhaps because it reflects my experience as a Muslim. After each birth I had a period of 40 days confinement followed by ritual cleansing, the child is brought before the community and welcomed. Prayers are said for those who have gone before those still with us and for the future of the child and either a cow or a goat is slaughtered - a gift from the parents to the wider community - food is cooked communally and people come together to celebrate this new life over food and good conversation. I too was fulfilling the law just as Mary & Joseph were.

Today we are at the end of Christmas & Epiphany where Jesus comes among us and is revealed to us. We now have a period of Ordinary time, a breather if you will as we prepare for the holy season of Lent and onto the passion of Jesus and resurrection. The reading in Luke today is the final revelation to us in this season which answers the 'why has Jesus come among us?'

I want you for a moment to close your eyes and imagine you are in the temple and if it helps, you are surrounded by candles, and a young family walk in with their new

born baby and an old man greets them and with the child in his arms you hear the following: 'Now lord, you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for the glory to your people Israel'.

At this moment in time, in this precious moment you are standing on Holy ground; you are listening to the revelation that this baby in the arms of an old man, is 'the' Messiah and the answer to 'why has Jesus come among us?' He is to be the glory of your people Israel, but I think more importantly, at the beginning of his life with us, here on earth, is that he came as a light to lighten the gentiles; the Gentiles are included in this circle of light that is Jesus Christ. Jesus in this one moment in the temple where the Jews worshipped Yahweh, where ritual sacrifices were made to atone for the sins of the people, Simeon, an old devout man declares, through the Holy Spirit, that this baby is widening the circle of those who belong; widening it to the rest of humanity; everyone belongs, not just the Israelites, everyone.

May I dare to be provocative now? If this passage answers the 'why did Jesus come among us?', dare I ask us as a community, 'why are we here?' There may be many different reasons why each of us is here today and all of them valid; we are all here for one reason or another and this morning we come as a community to bring praise and worship to God who created heaven & earth. This morning we all, I hope are fed and watered spiritually through word, music, prayer, silence, and the sacraments and then in the final prayer we say, 'send us out into the world to live and work to your praise & glory'.

Before we say those final words, we pray; 'we whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world'. We have been called into the circle of light and in these few words are asking God, through the Spirit, to help us give light to the world as we go out into the world to live and work to God's praise & glory.

Are we as a community, widening that circle of light or are we keeping our circle of light here in this beautiful building?

As you know a group of us have been meeting over the last few months to discern, to discuss, to pray about & to discover where God might be calling us over the next few years. Part of those discussions are about how we as a community can widen the circle of light wider and deeper into the community; a meeting between church and the world and the light we carry as Christians is to shine into the world. We can

carry on as we are, and that is fine, there is much to be celebrated already in our community. But the verse of scripture that we have as the core of our discussions is from John 14:12 'Very truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father'.

In this one verse, Jesus promises that we will do what he does, but in fact better than that because he has gone to the Father. He has equipped us with all we need and more and he is now freeing us up, he lets go of us so that we can do more. It's just like Simeon; 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word'. Now I can go, my life has come to a point of fulfilment; I can let go. Jesus' life too at the point in the verse from John, has reached its fulfilment and at that point of fulfilment he has released us to go forward and do more.

So, what is that more and is it why we are here, in part? What are some of the ideas we have been mulling over in our conversations?

Do you dare to dream? Dream of what might be, of what can be? Dare you dream to be a part of God's Kingdom here and now; we pray most days don't we, 'thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'. So briefly, we are hoping to open the church more often and when it is open to serve tea & coffee - it may become a full grown cafe over time, but baby steps first; we want to provide internet so that students and people of all ages feel that they can come in here and rest, work, study, meet in a safe space; to work with offenders by providing a place where they can learn skills that will enable them to find employment; to create opportunities whereby people are empowered and affirmed in who they are and find a way to use the gifts God has given them; a place where music, art & theatre can come alive and all of this held in, surrounded by and within our worshipping community, because what we have here and now this morning is the basis that all of the above will rest.

Of course, none of this will happen overnight and to be able to do some or all of the above we have to be a viable worshipping community in the Church of England and that means the office of Church warden needs to be filled whether that is an individual or a group of people working together. I would encourage you all to read Glynis's article in the church magazine, New Leaves, either hard copy, available at the back of the church or on our website. It also means finding funding and the

creation of a permanent role within St David's of Church Manager/Chaplain. We are therefore looking for at least £200,000 in initial funding.

This may seem impossible but when I think about the possibility that we are enlarging the circle of light that is Jesus both in and outside these four walls I am excited. Jesus has promised us that we can do all of this and more. This though is not a one-man job, this is a community project, where those in the circle of light find a place to live and to flourish and as we extend this circle of light outwards, so too others may, by the grace of God live and flourish too. Amen.

Post-Communion Prayer

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,
who lived to welcome the Messiah:
may we, who have received these gifts beyond words,
prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes
to bring us to eternal life;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

--

Prebendary Nigel Guthrie
95 Howell Road
Exeter EX4 4LH
nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com