

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

Newsletter for 30 August 2020

Dear Friends

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

Sunday Worship

Today our online service is on Youtube at this address:

<https://youtu.be/9kQ5oqQL0Is>

and both our churches will be open for worship.

Next Sunday, 6 September the 9.30am service from St David's will be live streamed on Facebook and Howard Friend will be preaching at both of our churches.

This will be the last of our regular Sunday Youtube services and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to them over recent months. I would like to thank especially Nigel Walsh who has edited the services together and added such beautiful and appropriate music to enhance them. We hope that the virtual choir he has formed will continue to record music to use in our services in church and online.

Churches Opening for public worship

This week opening times are:

St Michael and All Angels – 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.

Please remove face coverings carefully before receiving Holy Communion and replace them afterwards.

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.

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

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'; in practice that means about 45minutes.

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 or vulnerable. 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 short prayer services during the week on our Facebook pages:

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page: Tuesday, Friday and Saturday at 9am and Compline on Monday evening at 8pm.

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

Alison Whiting

This Sunday is Alison's last Sunday with us. Alison joined the parish in 2017 to complete her curacy and it has been a great pleasure to have her as a colleague since my arrival. Alison's curacy has now been 'signed off' by the Bishop of Exeter and she will be moving her church ministry in September to St Thomas parish where she is now living. Alison will be celebrating at the 9.30am service at St David's Church today and there will be a presentation to her. Please keep Alison in your prayers as she begins her new ministry 'over the river'.

Ash Leighton Plom

After several Covid-related changes Ash will now be ordained Deacon on Sunday 13 September at 3pm in Exeter Cathedral. Unfortunately the service won't be open to the public but I will be attending as training incumbent to represent the parish.

Hopefully the service will be live-streamed on the Cathedral's Facebook page. Please keep Ash in your prayers as he prepares for his ordination.

Reopening of Churches for public worship – a continuing process

Our churches are currently open for one midweek communion and one Sunday communion. This gives the chance for the churches to be 'quarantined' for 72 hours between times to minimize the risk of any infection. We are keeping this under review in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines. We would love to return to a fuller range of services but that is not yet feasible so please be patient as we need to do this as safely as possible! Thank you for keeping this process in your prayers.

Magazine

The September magazine should be available online and, hopefully, in print this week.

Phone Networks

I know that 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...

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. In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer** we give thanks for those who act as welcomers and sidespeople and pray for all who are working to make our churches as safe as possible.

We pray for those not yet able to return to church and all who are worshipping with us at home

Please also pray for:

the people of Lebanon and Belarus

those areas and countries suffering greatly from Covid-19, and those who are feeling lonely or isolated;

those who are facing unemployment;

schools preparing to reopen;

Exeter Food Bank and Exeter City Council;

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

Order of Service for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity on Youtube

Opening Prayers

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,

all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden:

cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,

that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name;

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Confession and Absolution

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,

we have sinned against you and against our neighbour

**in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past,
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

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 and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation of 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 Romans 12: 9-end

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are

thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Gospel Reading Matthew 16: 21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’

Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?’

‘For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.’

An Address by Nigel Guthrie for Trinity 12 Yr A

Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

If you wanted to attract people to follow you would you say “Take up your cross and follow me”? Probably not! And yet Jesus has had no shortage of followers and many of them have been prepared, in the last resort, to give up their lives for him. In today’s gospel reading Jesus explains to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed **and** rise again. If we had been there when Jesus spoke these words I wonder if we would have reacted with disbelief and horror like Peter? Peter really couldn’t deal with Jesus explaining the path of loss that lay ahead. Perhaps he didn’t even register the bit about rising again.

It is hard for any of us to accept loss yet Jesus teaches that its only when we let go of what seems to matter most to us that we can enter into the fullness of his life.

I have been reflecting on those words in the light of our experiences over the past six months when it feels to many of us as if we have lost quite a lot of life. There are many people who have suffered life-changing losses because they have become seriously ill or because they have lost loved ones or jobs. But even those of us who haven’t suffered quite so directly have experienced some degree of loss and I think most of have accepted that we needed to make sacrifices for the sake of our own health and for the common good. But some of those sacrifices proved to be very demanding, especially for those who were cut off from their families for many months, as some still are. And for people of faith very particular sacrifices have been demanded. We weren’t able to meet together to share in the Eucharist for several months, or indeed to celebrate Easter together. And through the interests of my family and friends I am aware of all the sport, and music and many other communal

activities that have been lost and of the colossal impact that this pandemic has had on the lives of many children and young people.

Of course we shouldn't just be dwelling on our losses. I'm well aware that many people have been counting their blessings, not least here in the south west where the virus has claimed relatively few casualties. And although the memory of the lovely spring and summer weather is beginning to fade, there has been much to appreciate and rejoice in. And even all that new technology, which can bring its own stresses, has been amazing in sustaining our relationships and indeed bringing people together in new ways.

When lockdown was first announced it seemed shocking that a virus which, only a few weeks earlier seemed like a very distant threat, could so quickly shut much of society and the economy down. I remember thinking back then that we might be getting back to normal by July! And many of us are rejoicing that at least we can meet again in church and, up to a point in other social settings.

But we are also aware now that we could be living with this virus for a long time to come and that we will face more losses as we learn to live with it. The initial energy which we summoned up to deal with the crisis has ebbed away, and we realize that the 'new normal', which we don't like all that much, is going to demand more of us. How long the distancing, the face coverings and the hand sanitizer? How long the lack of singing together and the restrictions on socializing? And how long the feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty which have come to the fore for many of us as the life we know has been dramatically impacted by this unseen enemy of Covid, so tiny and so hard to control?

The disciple Peter is really one of my favourite characters in the New Testament because he comes over as a passionate and flawed human being. He loses his cool and messes it up. He fails to understand what Jesus is getting at. But in the end he accepts that Jesus forgives him and has a very significant role of him.

And perhaps his failings in this passage can help us to see what is needed at the moment for ourselves and for our churches. Peter jumps straight in, as he sometimes does, and contradicts Jesus. But Jesus is trying to show his disciples the big picture, the longer view. It seems to me that God may be prompting us to be patient and to listen to his voice in these strange times. We would love to get back to things as they used to be, but in fact we have to wait patiently. Although it is not one of the best known of the themes in the psalms the faithful are often encouraged to wait as in the final verse of Psalm 27 *Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!* or in Psalm 37 *Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him;* and in Psalm 130 *I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;* and that psalm finishes *O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is*

steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. Treating ourselves and others with patience and waiting on God's word can bring hope.

It was hope that was missing from Peter's response to Jesus. He heard all about the suffering which lay ahead but missed the final few words 'and rise again'. It really is hard for us to imagine what a post-Covid world will look like. But one of the great strengths of our faith is that we know God holds us and all of creation in hands and that he will fulfil his purposes for us. The prospect of loss and restriction is never welcome but we must cling to the knowledge that God will bring new life from what has been lost. Let us pray that in letting go of what we cannot have we may receive, with joy, the new life which God has prepared for us.

Closing Prayers

Eternal God and Father, you create us by your power
and redeem us by your love:
guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves in love and service to one another and to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
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!

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