

St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter

Parish Newsletter for 11 August 2024 - 11th Sunday after Trinity

Our services this week:

Sunday 11 August 2024 - 11th Sunday after Trinity

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's Church with celebrant and preacher, Jonathan Draper

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's church with celebrant and preacher, David Gunn-Johnson

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

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 13 August (Jeremy Taylor, bishop, teacher of the faith, 1667, Florence Nightingale, nurse, social reformer, 1910, Octavia Hill, social reformer, 1912) 9.00-9.30 am Morning Prayer on Zoom. Please join us using this link:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75330401184?pwd=MIUTonKQK9bgFKV6lpn9rMbQUdYl8H.1>

Meeting ID: 753 3040 1184

Passcode: 5RWhXs

We use this app for our prayers – details here or via a phone:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer/daily-prayer-app-and-podcast>

Thursday 15 August (The Blessed Virgin Mary) 10.30 Holy Communion at St David's (Lady Chapel)

Sunday 18 August 2024 - 12th Sunday after Trinity

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's Church with celebrant and preacher Catherine Blundell

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's church with celebrant and preacher, David Gunn-Johnson

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

Message from the Churchwardens

1. Update - as mentioned last week, Mike Clark is to be our part-time Interim Vicar who will be licensed by the Archdeacon at the 10.30 service on Thursday, 29 August at St David's. The official notice to that effect is now on the notice board in both churches. We look forward to welcoming Mike formally and to working with him more closely.

2. Covid - there's a lot of it about! So please, if you have cold-like symptoms/Covid, for the sake of your fellow parishioners, please do not come to church!

Visiting and home Communion

If you would like to be visited or phoned by someone from the church community, please let Howard Friend know by ringing him on 07733 739453; for Communion at home, either for yourself or someone you know, please contact Ian Cartwright on 07813 795616.

Tuesday Friendship Café

St David's Church is normally open on Tuesday mornings from 10.30 am to 12 noon as a drop-in for people to find a Christian welcome and company.

Wednesday Walks

Wednesday walkers meet and enjoy convivial conversation, gentle strolls, the changing of the seasons and a coffee together. Would you like to join us? We'd make you very welcome! We meet at 9am at the door at the west end of St David's and we leave promptly. If you'd like to join us please just turn up, or speak to Helena in church.

Parish Lunch - Thursday, 29 August, 12 noon, the Imperial

The next parish lunch will be at the Imperial on Thursday, 29 August, leaving St David's at 11.40. Do let Jenny Baker know if you would be interested in coming.

Men's Breakfast - Saturday, 7 September, 9 am, the Sylvania Community Store

The next Men's Breakfast will be on 7 *September*. Please contact Alan Baker if you would like a reminder alan.baker1963@outlook.com

Parish magazine

The July/August edition is now available. Our thanks to Sarah Rimmington and to all the contributors. Copy date for the September edition is Sunday, 18 August.

Lunchtime concert in St Stephen's, Thursday 15 August 1-2 pm

Please see poster at the back of church. Bee Harley and Richard Skinner.

Parish of Central Exeter Prayer Around the Cross - dates for 2024

During 2024, Prayer around the Cross will be held in St. Pancras Church, Guildhall Shopping Centre, at 7.00 pm, on the following Fridays: 13 September and 15 November.

Your Prayers are asked for...

those who are suffering including:

Caroline Speed-Andrews; Maggs Bedford; Delia Bloom; Libby Clapham; Lois Draper; Andrew Francis; Phoebe Goldsworth; Hazel Gowland; Roger Luscombe; Anne Smith; Sarah Wood; Clive and Jeanie; Beth; Charlotte, Paul and Grace;

those who have died recently including:

In our Parish Cycle of Prayer please pray for:

Taxi/bus drivers and all who travel with them

Please also pray for:

Our parish as we move forward

Our country and its leaders, both political and religious

Our world, for wisdom for its leaders and a wish for peace not war

Sunday 11 August 2024 - 11th Sunday after Trinity

Collect

O God, you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;
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.

1st reading - Ephesians 4.25 - 5.2

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Gospel Reading - John 6.35, 41-51

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?

How can he now say, “I have come down from heaven”?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, “And they shall all be taught by God.” Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.’

Sermon by Jonathan Draper for Trinity 11, 11 August 2024

My wife Maggie and I don't always want to see the same kind of films or even the same things on TV. She likes things that have some warm and decent human content, and I prefer explosions or sport. Remarkably, sport is one area where we at least share some interests: we both enjoy cricket and rugby, and have been glued to the Olympics – even if the terrestrial coverage isn't as good as it used to be. It has been great watching the achievement that arises from the sheer hard work and determination that these (mostly) young people show. It is both high quality sport - good for me – and deeply moving human stories – good for Maggie.

But while this great, diverse, and inclusive Olympic sporting event has been taking place, there have also been some profoundly disturbing scenes on our streets of xenophobic hate, racism, violence. The contrast couldn't be greater. It's really vile, and I'm not sure what purpose is served by trashing and burning a library, as happened the other day in Liverpool. People speak of it as 'mindless', but I don't think so. I think there is a kind of mind behind it, a mind driven by lies and misinformation, stoked by irresponsible politicians and others sowing division, and who want to see our country purged of people who don't look like us: this is what the 'evil talk' St Paul writes about in Ephesians looks like. Even the now Trump-loving Elon Musk has been adding fuel to the fire. The anger,

violence, lies, and destruction form an ugly façade to our summer of discontent.

Our reading from St Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus has a bit to say about all that, and his admonition to them starts where our life together in our communities, country, and world is in most danger: speaking the truth. The current spate of violence on our streets is first and foremost driven by a complete disregard for truth, and is stoked further by building lie upon lie until truth is completely buried.

At the time of St Paul's ministry there (in the early 60s, about 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus), Ephesus was one of the great cities of the Roman empire. It was a centre of trade, was more cosmopolitan and diverse than almost anywhere else, it was a meeting point between east and west, and was extremely wealthy. Interestingly, and in a counter-cultural sort of way, after Paul founded the church there, he left it in the hands of two capable and faithful women called Aquila and Priscilla. But Paul found his ministry there very difficult. He challenged the very source of the Ephesians wealth - the cult of Artemis - and found that some Christians wanted to be able to compromise with other religious practices. It also seems to have been a place where some, at least, were questioning the full legitimacy of these Gentile, i.e. non-Jewish, Christians. There may also have been some growing tensions within the Christian community, and a large focus of his letter is about how they should live together in their community, set as they were in a challenging context.

St Paul is, as you might imagine, robust in his defence of these Gentile Christians and their full inclusion in the body of Christ, declaring that they are a part of a new humanity, a new humanity forged through the cross of Christ. 'Christ' he declares, 'has broken down the dividing wall', 'the hostility' between Gentiles and Jews - they are all one in Christ. These Gentile Christians are no longer 'strangers and aliens' in the economy of God, but are 'citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God', 'sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel'. This was a battle St Paul fought throughout his entire ministry, sometimes with a degree

of bitterness and anger that can be quite shocking: just have a look at his letter to the Galatians to see the full extent.

St Paul could be quite forceful, even angry, when putting his views to his new churches, and he acknowledges a place for anger in his guidance to the Ephesians: 'be angry' he writes, 'but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil'. But he also realises that anger does not always achieve the best results, and urges his readers to put away anger, and malice, and slander, and bitterness, and be forgiving of one another; forgiving each other as they have been forgiven by God. This is the foundation of their life together.

It is quite ironic that those on our streets and in the television studios who shout the loudest about making ours a Christian nation once again – by which they mean, I think, white, northern European, and Protestant – seem all too willing to forego these Christian virtues, and instead revel in the anger, malice, slander, and bitterness that St Paul so forcefully and eloquently challenges. We are, St Paul writes, 'to live in love as Christ loved us'. That, together with acknowledging that we have been forgiven, is the basis of our life together.

The answer to the troubles and difficult questions of our world is not breaking things, as if we perpetually petulant children. Letting your anger bubble up into hate and then into violence won't accomplish anything good, worthwhile, or lasting. St Paul would have us speak 'only what is useful for building up' our communities. I guess that if really want to make a contribution to making the world a better place that is a pretty good place to start.

Our faith does offer solutions to the difficult things we face in our lives and our communities. But that faith is the hard road to follow. The easy way of self-regard, anger and violence is challenging competition to a faithful life. But the alternative to the hard road is self-destruction rather than the peace and plenty, the mutual flourishing, and the lasting benefits that we are offered in Christ. Therefore, St Paul writes, 'be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us'.

Post Communion

Lord of all mercy,
we your faithful people have celebrated that one true sacrifice
which takes away our sins and brings pardon and peace:
by our communion
keep us firm on the foundation of the gospel
and preserve us from all sin;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Robert Mitchell and Hilary Todd

Church Wardens

(Wardens@stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk)

(Please send notices/content to Hilary on
todd.stdandm@gmail.com)

(All readings can be found via Oremus Bible Browser:
<https://bible.oremus.org/> in the New Revised Standard Version
(anglicized edition))