

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

Parish Newsletter for 18 August 2024 - 11th Sunday after Trinity

Last week Jonathan finished his talk with St Paul's words, 'be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us'.

Our New Testament reading this week guides us in how to live as Christ loves us. This week St Paul says, be careful, be thankful, and he also instructs us to sing.

Catherine

Our services this week:

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

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 20 August (*no Morning Prayer this week*)

Thursday 22 August 10.30 Holy Communion at St David's (Lady Chapel)

Sunday 25 August 2024 - 13th Sunday after Trinity

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's Church with celebrant and preacher Andrew Beane

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's church with celebrant and preacher, Nigel Mason

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's led by Ian Cartwright

Message from the Churchwardens

1. Safeguarding Officer needed – Mary Kirkland, our long-serving Safeguarding Officer, would like to step down from the role

and we therefore need a replacement. If you feel this is something for you, please come and speak with us.

2. Thrive - After careful consideration, we (Mike Clark, Robert Mitchell and Hilary Todd) have concluded that the Sunday afternoon Thrive sessions should be discontinued. We know that the sessions have been valued by those who have attended, and we and they are grateful to those whose hard work and enthusiasm made them possible. We hope that, in the future, a way might be found for the church once again to offer an alternative worship space, building on the valuable components of Thrive, once there is a clear view as to its purpose and a guarantee that the resources necessary to run it and to minister effectively to the people who might come are available.

3. Clergy Vestry clean – following on the big church clean in March, a small team set about the clergy vestry last Monday and Tuesday which now looks hugely better – a big ‘thank you’ to them. Our next target is the boiler room once again, a bit later this month.

4. Conventional District Consultation: Sophie West ("Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Secretary") has produced consultation paperwork regarding the proposed "Conventional District" (CD) for St Michael's. We are asked to respond on behalf of "The Representatives of St David's Church on the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St David" by Monday, 9 September. The hope is that the CD paperwork can be signed during the week commencing 26th September with a view to enabling the CD of St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham to be celebrated at Michaelmas, on Sunday, 29 September. If you are interested in the detail, please speak to us or any member of the PCC.

5. Live-stream – apologies for the sound quality last Sunday. We were trying another phone but the microphone sadly proved inadequate for the job. We are still working on alternatives to my phone but are back with it this week.

5. 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.

Update - Licensing of Mike Clark - Thursday, 29 August, 10.30 am

Our Archdeacon will be licensing Mike 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.

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 today, Sunday, 18 August.

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:

The Welcome team and Sides people

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 18 August 2024 - 12th Sunday after Trinity

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.

1st reading - Ephesians 5.15-20

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading - John 6.51-58

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.'

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.'

Sermon by Catherine Blundell for Sunday, 18 August 2024 - Trinity 12

Once, when I walked through a large department store, I was so busy reading the sign that said, 'take care, three steps', I fell down all the whole flight and ended up in a rack of tennis skirts.

Take care, beware, how often do we see such a sign. Even in Ephesians, chapter 5, our first reading St Paul is telling the people in fledgling church in Ephesus to:

- Be careful

- and to be musical
- and be thankful

Verse 15 says, 'be careful how you live'. This is a recurring command over the ages, especially from those who think they know better. Alas, in the church there are those who will wag a finger and say, 'be careful, you ought to do this, or that, or worship like this, for your souls sake' and give advice that can be contradictory and jolly annoying.

To understand Paul means by 'be careful' we have to look back at last week's reading. There Paul warned his readers to have nothing to do with 'fruitless deeds of darkness,' or as Jonathan said last week, 'have a mind driven by lies and misinformation.'

Instead of mindlessness, Paul is telling the church in verse 16 to be mindful of every opportunity. Don't get side tracked with things that drag you down or befuddle your senses. Instead, grab each moment, don't let it rush by unnoticed.

See wonder and beauty, see God in the people with whom you share your lives, be careful you don't miss the things of faith.

Always remembering that for Paul, faith is not what you ought to do; faith is about what God, through Christ, has done.

So, have care with your life but Paul also says, sing. Which is a worrying thought for those of us who tend to heehaw like a donkey.

Our reading says, 'as you are filled with the Spirit sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The NIV version of the bible translates verse 19 as, 'speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Speak to one another with psalms? How does that work?

If I say, the 'Lord is my shepherd.' Do you reply, 'Aye, and he'll be wanting you to get on with it.'

So, why sing to one another, is music all that important? Here, I am indebted to Tom Wright's commentary on this passage. Tom says, 'Paul doesn't see hymns and songs as simply decorative, a pleasant aural embroidery around the Christian faith and practice. Singing,

whether aloud or in your heart, was, Paul thought, an excellent way of actually practising the faith.

In other words, singing helps us to be careful. Helps us to constantly open our hearts and minds to God and welcome his Spirit. Singing, and I would argue here for well thought out hymns and songs, helps us absorb the things of God in a way reading or hearing doesn't.

Paul implies if we keep our inner being awash with the music that is on God's heart, then the words that bubble up should keep us from foolishness and darkness.

This doesn't mean we live in a bubble of soppy optimism humming wishful thinking. Some psalms are full of anguish, worry, and anger at injustice and violence. However, even in the hardest and most painful psalms, the voice of God rings clear. We might walk through the valley of the shadow of death, but we don't go alone.

Isn't it amazing that Paul, who wrote the letter to the church in Ephesus from prison, would probably have sung the 23rd psalm? Not quite like we do, I don't think Crimond was around then, but surely, surely Paul sang, 'and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever,' from behind prison bars.

Music is though subjective, what one person loves, another is unmoved by. So, isn't it great that we have psalms, and hymns, and sacred songs? Nothing has to be uniform. There is no 'ought to' with music. For Paul the way to heaven is musical and, when we get there, the angels will already be singing.

So, Paul says, be careful, sing, and then he says, be thankful. He writes, 'make music in your heart, always giving thanks to God the father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Give thanks for everything? Everything? For war, disease, hunger?

Well, even in a war there are good people, and we can give thanks for them, and if someone battles a disease, we can give thanks for their courage, and in a time of famine, I'm thankful that aid agencies step in.

There is another way to look at thankfulness which I think is more in keeping with this passage. That is, to take our eyes off ourselves, our gaze away from the world as it is, and look directly at Jesus.

Remember, for Paul, faith is not about us and what we do, but about undeserved gift of God's son. It is exactly the same with thankfulness.

I finish with something that popped up on my Pinterest page. Amidst the instructions for patchwork cushions and homemade fleecy hairbands was this gem. It tells us of a man who looked directly at Jesus with simple faith and gratitude.

“How does the thief on the cross fit into your theology? No baptism, no communion, no confirmation, no speaking in tongues, no mission trip, no volunteerism, and no church clothes. He couldn't even bend his knees to pray. He didn't say the sinner's prayer and among other things, he was a thief.

Jesus didn't take away his pain, heal his body, or smite the scoffers. Yet it was a thief who walked into heaven the same hour as Jesus simply by believing. He had nothing more to offer other than his belief that Jesus was who he said he was.

No spin from brilliant theologians. No ego or arrogance. No shiny lights, skinny jeans, or crafty words. No haze machine, donuts, or coffee in the entrance. Just a naked dying man on a cross unable to even fold his hands to pray.”

Post Communion

God of all mercy,

in this Eucharist you have set aside our sins
and given us your healing:

grant that we who are made whole in Christ
may bring that healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Robert Mitchell and Hilary Todd

Church Wardens

(Wardens@stdavidschurchexeter.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))