

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

Newsletter for 16th August 2020

Dear friends,

Welcome to this weekly update on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

This week, we have a recorded YouTube service available below, with many thanks to contributors for videos and to Nigel Walsh for editing them together:

https://youtu.be/VaW7gKfhl_I

Belinda Speed-Andrews will open the YouTube service, Charlotte Townsend will read the first lesson, Bill Pattinson will read the Gospel and preach, and Belinda Speed-Andrews will offer our *time of prayer* intercessions, and close the service.

Additionally, both our church buildings will be open for worship, St David's at 9.30am for Holy Communion and S. Michael's at 11am for Mass.

David James will preside at St David's, Charlotte Townsend will read the first lesson, Bill Pattinson will read the Gospel and preach, and Belinda Speed-Andrews will offer our *time of prayer* intercessions.

Nigel Mason will preside at S. Michael's, with Stephanie Aplin reading the lessons, and Nigel Mason preaching and interceding.

The service at St. David's will also be live-streamed on St David's Church Exeter's Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter>). If you're on Facebook, please do like and share it!

Covid Secure

- *Masks are mandatory when attending church to protect others, unless you have an exemption. We have masks available at the back of church if you don't have your own - donations welcome to help cover this cost. Children under 11 years old*

*don't have to wear one, and children under 3 years old **should not** wear face coverings because they could cause choking or suffocation. To find out more about exemptions etc., search here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>*

- *You must use the hand sanitiser provided on entering and leaving the church building.*
- *Please observe safe distancing from others at all times and the one-way systems in place.*
- *At St. David's, welcomers will direct you to available seating: family groups/households and bubbles can pull chairs together to sit at the back. There is overflow seating available in the South Transept (to the right of the altar as you come in) and in the Choir Stalls (between the service altar and the high altar). Belinda Speed-Andrews, Charlotte Townsend, and Glynis Harflett lead this week's designated officers to make sure you are seated safely. **They will politely help relocate you if they find you not safely distancing in a designated seat!***
- *Seating will be distanced to approximately 2 metres. Please sit only in the seats where Orders of Service booklets are placed. **Do not pick up an Order of Service booklet and take it to another seat.** The seats with Orders of Service booklets in them are safely distanced for your health and others'. Seating is also marked by white labels at St Michael's.*
- *At St. David's, please remain masked when you go up to receive Holy Communion, then walk a short distance towards your nearest side aisle, consume the wafer, and replace your mask. Return to your seat using your nearest side aisle where possible.*
- *At St Michael's, please remain masked and in your seat to receive communion, and wait for the priest to move on before removing your mask to consume the sacrament, if possible. The seating is spaced out in every other row to allow the priest access to all congregants, so again, please only sit in marked seats.*
- *Toilet facilities will be available at both churches: please follow the instructions provided for safe use.*
- *Government guidelines require that services should be 'no longer than necessary' (in practice that means about 45minutes), and that no refreshments be served.*
- *Please leave your Order of Service booklets where you found them so they can be quarantined and used as seat markers for next time.*

If you are feeling ill or otherwise have to stay home, please do not attend church. Although we will do all we can to make church safe, you attend at your own risk.

Please be reassured that we are undertaking ongoing dynamic risk assessment on how to do church safely in this pandemic. Thank you everyone for your help with this process, risk assessing, cleaning and preparing our churches, and sitting safely distanced and following all the rules. The people safely distanced next to you appreciate it!

Service Times in August:

Next Sunday, 23rd August, there will again be a recorded service on YouTube, services in both buildings (9.30am at St David's and 11am at S. Michael's), and St. David's will be live streamed on Facebook. The link to next week's YouTube service will be in next week's notices.

Service Pattern This Month:

Mondays: 8pm Compline (Night Prayer) live streamed at <https://www.facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter>

Tuesdays: 9am Morning Prayer live streamed at <https://www.facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter>

Wednesdays: 9.30am BCP Mattins Morning Prayer (Traditional English) at S. Michael's followed by 10am Mass (Traditional English) and Angelus, live streamed at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2227703237>

Thursdays: 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's

Fridays: 9am Morning Prayer live streamed at <https://www.facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter>

Saturdays: 9am Morning Prayer live streamed at <https://www.facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter>

Sundays:

9.30am Holy Communion at St David's, live streamed at <https://www.facebook.com/stdavidschurhexeter>

11am Mass at S. Michael's

Plus, a recorded Sunday service on YouTube each week until 30th August.

Bible Study

Our final Bible study by Zoom in August is this Tuesday, 18th. Whether you've been to all, some, or none of the earlier studies, you are so welcome to join us on Tuesday afternoon from 2 to 3pm.

The link to join is:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75466890146?pwd=a0RIZFBEWGdWTIFDNDgrQUdZR0hqZz09>

Call Ash on 07855 305519 or email him on aescleal@gmail.com for more info or if you have trouble joining the study.

Pastoral Phone Networks

Many of you have appreciated phone calls from other members of the church community during lockdown. If you would like to be phoned by someone over the next couple of weeks and haven't had any contact, please let Ash know at aescleal@gmail.com or 07855 305519.

Magazine

Our August magazine is available on both our websites:

<https://stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk/>

<https://www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk/>

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, 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 pray for taxi and bus drivers working in our parish and all who travel with them.

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

Please also pray for:

Children and young people, especially students responding to A Level results or anticipating GCSE results;

Those areas and countries suffering through Covid-19, especially our neighbours France, the Netherlands, and many more besides;

Those who are lonely or isolated, and all seeking to care for them;

Those facing unemployment, and those seeking to help, especially Exeter's Foodbank, Christians Against Poverty, and other godly responses to this moment's deep need.

One another, as we emerge together into this new normal in the months ahead.

May God keep you in peace and good health,

Ash Leighton Plom

Licensed Lay Worker

You can follow along to this week's YouTube service using this order of service appended:

Opening Prayers

With grace, mercy & peace from God our Father

And the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Confession

Almighty god

Long-suffering and of great goodness:

I confess to you,

I confess with my whole heart

My neglect and forgetfulness of your commandments,

My wrong doing, thinking and speaking;

The hurts I have done to others,

And the good I have left undone.

O God, forgive me, for I have sinned against you;

And raise me to newness of life;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

May almighty God have mercy on you,

Forgive you your sins,

And bring you to everlasting life,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

First Reading

Isaiah 56:1,6-8

This is what the Lord says:

“Maintain justice

and do what is right,

for my salvation is close at hand

and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord
to minister to him,
to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations.”
The Sovereign Lord declares—
he who gathers the exiles of Israel:
“I will gather still others to them
besides those already gathered.”

Gospel Reading

Matthew 15:21-28

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

“Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Sermon

By Bill Pattinson

I’m not sure the saying, “May you live in interesting times” is indeed a Chinese curse. Perhaps it’s just another example of unconscious racist bias. Yet no one can deny that “We live in interesting times.” The Coronavirus pandemic arrived when Populist governments and beliefs were enjoying great support worldwide. Brexit, remember that, was high on our Government’s agenda in the belief that the result of the 2016 referendum supported the cry, “We want our country back.” The murder of George Floyd in America has highlighted the Black Lives Matter movement. We are being asked to re-examine our knowledge of the Slave Trade in the Empire’s history and in this country’s. Did you know that in the West Country during the 17th and 18th centuries there were slave ports in Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth and Bridport dealing with “black cattle.”?

At the moment I’m reading the journalist Renni Eddo-Lodge’s book “Why I’m no longer talking to White people about Race.” She argues strongly that, due to the hegemony of culture, white people are unable to empathise with “people of colour” - and that’s the term she prefers. Whether consciously or unconsciously, all white people are racists. Perhaps that’s why Bishop Robert in his letter to clergy and ministers, dated 9th July, read it all in August’s edition of *New Leaves*, announced that “from this autumn, in order to overcome racial stereotyping, unconscious bias training will be mandatory for every licensed clergy person and reader in the Diocese”. It would appear that we are going to need a “faith that moves mountains” if we are to achieve racial justice, equality and inclusion in our society, in our Church and in God’s Kingdom here on earth.

And why do I begin with this uncomfortable set of events and reports? Because this morning’s Gospel speaks to us today primarily about two things - inclusion and faith. We could call today “Inclusion Sunday”, as all the readings set for today repeatedly emphasise inclusion, to look beyond the expected, the stereotype; not to judge members of different groups, but to be non-judgemental. We hear the words of a Canaanite which lead to Jesus saying, “Woman, great is your faith!”

Jesus is once again seeking a place of quiet where he can find a little peace and an opportunity to pray. He’s been very busy in the area around the Sea of Galilee, healing people who have flocked to him because of his reputation. He’s been in dispute with the Pharisees and Scribes over some of their traditions. He seeks indeed a foreign holiday, going abroad to the district of Tyre and Sidon, near modern-day Lebanon. No peace, however. A Canaanite woman, who lives there, approaches Jesus shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David, my daughter is tormented by a demon.” Now this is where this passage

becomes uncomfortable because Jesus does not answer her. The disciples, who are completely out of their comfort zone in this foreign land, taking his silence as an understanding that Jesus wants nothing to do with her, urges him to send her away. Here, in the disciples' understanding, is a Gentile descended from Israel's original enemies, the Canaanites. To exacerbate matters she is a woman, making her doubly marginal. How dare she shout at Jesus with such persistence. Who does she think she is? We could say the disciples, as well as showing no compassion, were revealing their prejudices and racist behaviour. Yet in response to the disciples' request Jesus answers, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Does this mean that Jesus sees his mission as only for the Israelites, the Jews? Surely not!

The woman then comes and kneels at Jesus's feet and in her anguish, desperately pleads with him, "Lord, help me!" His answer appears unkind. "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." This seems to be rubbing dirt into the wound. "The children" are those from the house of Israel and "the dogs" is a pejorative term for Gentiles, non-Jews, outsiders. How can we view this humiliating reply? Some theologians believe Jesus is testing the woman's faith. Well, it's a cruel test. She has already referred to Jesus as "Lord, Son of David", recognising him as the Messiah for whom the Jews have been waiting, which is more than many Jews had. However other theologians argue that Jesus is reflecting his humanity. He was a person of his time, a first century Jew born into a world of boundaries, discrimination and exclusion. It can be so easy to idealise him in an unrealistic way. Perhaps, like us, he had unconscious racial bias.

The Canaanite woman accepts the abusive term "dogs" and comes back at Jesus with the feisty reply, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." She knows that Jesus' redemption is not just for the children of Israel, but for all. Her reply reminds us of Jesus' miracle of feeding the 5000 when twelve baskets of crumbs were collected after all had been fed. There is certainly enough to go round for all. What a woman – you have to admire her. Persistent, tenacious and with a faith that recognises Jesus for who he is, the Saviour of the whole world - everyone is included. She knows that Jesus can work miracles and cure her daughter. Jan Richardson, artist, writer and ordained minister interprets the Canaanite woman's response to Jesus with these words:

"I am saying

I know what you

can do with crumbs

and I am claiming mine,

every morsel and scrap

you have up your sleeve.

Unclench your hand,

your heart.

Let the scraps fall

like manna,

like mercy

for the life

of my child,

the life of

the world.

Don't you tell me no"

Here is the faith that moves mountains, an example to us all. Things might not always go as you expect with God - he can spring surprises, even knock you down. So Jesus can turn round to his disciples and say, "Look at this woman's faith. Don't pre-judge her. We can learn from outsiders, those on the margins of life. Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done as you wish." He knew what he was doing, what he was saying.

There is a clear message here about the abundance of God's mercy that transcends all racial boundaries and gender issues. The abundance of God's riches cannot be contained or fenced in - there is more than enough to go round. "For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples", Isaiah writes in our first reading. Believe, have faith, all are welcome in God's kingdom. All things are possible with God - yes, even racial justice and equality. As R.S Thomas says of the Kingdom:

It's a long way off, but to get

There takes no time and admission

Is free, if you purge yourself

of desire

And present yourself with

Your need only and the simple offering

Of your faith, as green as a leaf.

Bill Pattinson

10.08.2020

Intercessions

By Belinda Speed-Andrews

Lord, we give thanks that you have called us by name and that you hold us fast.

Father, we pray for the Church across the world. Help us members of the body of Christ, to examine our assumptions about the world and about people. Lead us to recognise the failings of the Church, whether through ignorance or through our inability to understand the other. Guide us the Church, to make right decisions that enable humankind in all its diversity to flourish.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father of all, we pray for the leaders of this country and across the world, to be persistent in the pursuit of justice and truth and to be tenacious in the pursuit of justice and of peace with and for all peoples and in their decision making to transcend racial boundaries and gender issues We are all made in their age of the one true God; therefore help us to recognise the face of Jesus in the face of friend, of foe or of the stranger.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father of all, we pray for a world that feels as if it is breaking apart, through human complacency and carelessness. You called us to care for your world, and we together with those who have gone before us, have failed. We remember especially today the people of Lebanon as they continue to make sense of the destruction and death caused by the explosion that killed so many and injured more; for families destroyed and children left without parents; for businesses destroyed and homes flattened without trace. Lord, here in our comfortable homes we struggle to understand this kind of destruction, the feelings and emotions of those in and near the tragedy; help us therefore to learn the compassion that is needed so that we can walk alongside those distraught and broken by human failings.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father of all, we pray for those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit. Be with them today and may they know you love them for who they are; may they know your presence as you hold them in the hands scarred by human destruction, and know that through your resurrection love they will be brought to wholeness and healing. In a moments silence, let us lift before God those for whom we are worried or concerned....

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father of all, be gracious to us, make your face shine upon us, that as we go out into the world this week, through us your ways may be known and those we meet may be drawn to you.

**Merciful father, accept these prayers for the sake of your father, our Lord Jesus Christ,
Amen.**

Final prayer

God of power,
May the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
May the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
May the gifts of your Spirit
Equip us to serve and worship you
Now and always.
Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face to shine on you,
And be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you
And give you peace.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit
Be with you all and all whom you love now and forever more.
Amen.

Do join us in church or on Facebook or YouTube for our service next week!