

## **St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Parish Newsletter for 11 February 2024 – Sunday next before Lent**

The story of Christ's Transfiguration is traditionally the Gospel Reading for the Sunday next before Lent. It's an appropriate ending to the season of Epiphany and a strong bridge between Epiphany and Lent. Our mountain top experiences, what I refer to as "thin places" in my sermon, are there to help us through the valleys of despair. We must listen to Jesus, as God's voice says. God is not simply wanting to give us a spiritual thrill, he is wanting to transform us more into people who reflect his glory.

Bill

### **Our services this week:**

#### **Sunday 11 February 2024 – Sunday next before Lent**

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

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

4pm Thrive Ash Leighton Plom

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

### **Services in church and online this week**

**Tuesday 13 February** 9:30-10 am Morning Prayer on Zoom. Please join us using this link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79947675846?pwd=xwh2vwYTTGMF1t9RifaEBHQaOoMUWO.1>

Meeting ID: 799 4767 5846

Passcode: 4JyeYv

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>

6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's Church (live-streamed via Facebook [facebook.com/stmichaelsmtdinhamexeter](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsmtdinhamexeter) )

**Wednesday 14 February, Ash Wednesday, St David's**, 10.30 am and 7.00 pm with laying on of ashes

**Thursday 15 February** (Sigfrid, bishop, 1045; Thomas Bray, priest, founder of SPCK and SPG, 1730) 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church

6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's Church (live-streamed via Facebook)

#### **Sunday 18 February 2024 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent**

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

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's Church with celebrant and preacher, Sarah Cumming

4pm Thrive Ash Leighton Plom

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

### Message from the Churchwardens:

- 1. Pre-Lent Brunch:** this morning at St David's – do please stay
- 2. Tickets for the 8 March Parish Quiz:** are also available this morning at St David's (see below)
- 3. No café this Tuesday at St David's** – it is half term and Mary is away.
- 4. Ash Wednesday:** As some of you will have gathered, there has been a bit of a mess-up over Ash Wednesday starting with the inadvertent booking of a Fever concert on 14 February as Valentine's Day. Then, although the concert was booked for St David's, Fever was selling tickets as if it was to be at St Michaels, and by the time the mistake was picked up, it was too late to change it, so that meant there could not be an Ash Wednesday service at St Michael's. A 10.30 service at St David's had already been arranged, but now, thanks to Jonathan Draper, we are delighted to be able to offer a 7.00 pm service, also at St David's, as well. As you can imagine, a lot of effort has gone into sorting all of this out, and we greatly hope members of both congregations will support these parish services. So we have 10.30 am led by Ash Leighton Plom and 7 pm led by Jonathan Draper, both at St David's with laying on of ashes.
- 5. A Server for St Michael's:** Following the retirement of their long-standing server/thurifer, new people are being sought to take on this special role. If you, as a member of either of our churches, would be interested in helping, even on an occasional basis, please see one of the churchwardens, or deputy wardens at St M's.

### 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.

### Piano Recital

*\*In case this email arrives in time: just to let you know there will be a free piano recital at St Michael's, Saturday 10 February, 7-8 pm, by a young Japanese*

pianist known to a member of St M's choir. You can see her work, here: [https://www.youtube.com/@muffin\\_pf](https://www.youtube.com/@muffin_pf)

### **Parish Lunch – Thursday, 22 February 2024, 12 noon**

Our next parish lunch will be on Thursday, 22 February and after that on Thursday, 21 March. A sign-up sheet together with a revised menu is at the back of the church so please let me have your choices by *Sunday, 18 Feb*. A group will be walking over from St David's at 11.45.

### **Knit and Natter, Saturday 24 February 2024**

The next Knit and Natter will be on 24 February at 10.30 at St David's.

### **Funeral details for Hilary Elliott, 28 February 2024, 1 pm St David's**

Hilary's funeral will be at St David's on Wednesday, 28 February, at 1.00 pm (live-streamed via St David's church Facebook page), followed by a reception at the City Gate Hotel. The Requiem and Interment of her ashes will take place at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, at a later date.

### **Parish Quiz night, Friday, 8 March 2024, 7.30 pm, St David's**

Parish Quiz Night, all welcome, teams of 6-8 only, £10pp to include a ploughman's supper. Tickets available from Glynis 07775 752815 or Maggie 07957 990120. Always a fun evening!

### **Other dates for your diary**

Saturday, 23 March – deep clean of St David's – much help needed

Sunday, 12 May – proposed date for Christian Aid Week brunch

Saturday, Saturday, 22 June – Parish fete – much help needed

### **Men's Breakfast**

The next Men's breakfast will be advised shortly. Please contact Alan Baker if you would like a reminder [alan.baker1963@outlook.com](mailto:alan.baker1963@outlook.com)

### **Lent Observance this year:**

Quite a lot is on offer this year both in our parish and in the wider Exeter Christian community:

### **Churches Together in Central Exeter Lent 2024**

This year the Cathedral is hosting two different learning events in this season. There is a 7 week Epiphany/Lent study course on Mark's Gospel on Wednesday afternoons. This begins on 31 Jan and lasts until 13 March led by Richard

Burridge. There is also a series of Lent talks by women theologians about female theologians. These are on different days and times. Full details for both events can be found on the Cathedral website.

Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 6.30-8.00pm: St Macrina by Revd. Canon Prof. Morwenna Ludlow.

[Book here >](#)

Thursday 15 February 2024 at 2.30-4.00pm: Hildegard of Bingen by Canon Sue Wallace.

[Book here >](#)

Tuesday 20 February 2024 at 6.30-8.00pm: St Perpetua Revd. Canon Prof. Morwenna Ludlow.

[Book here >](#)

Monday 11 March 2024 at 2.30-4.00pm: Teresa of Avila by Revd Sue Astbury.

[Book here >](#)

The Parish of Central Exeter is hosting one group on Thursday mornings in St Petrock's church from 10.30am – 11.45am.

The topic will be 'Preparing for Sunday's Readings'. Chris Bryan will lead the group reflections on the readings so please read and reflect on the passages beforehand and bring a bible with you.

Thursday 22 February      Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Mark 8:31-38

Thursday 29 February      Exodus 20:1-17; John 2:13-22

Thursday 7 March              Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21

Thursday 14 March            Jeremiah 31:31-4; John 12:20-31

To book please contact Mary Keaney [admin@parishofcentralexeter.co.uk](mailto:admin@parishofcentralexeter.co.uk)

### **New Leaves**

Due to illness on the part of various team members, the next issue of the magazine will now be a combined issue for February and March. The deadline for copy for this issue is *Sunday, 18 February*. The editors are very grateful for the fantastic support of all contributors and readers.

### **Tuesday Friendship Café**

St David's Church is open on Tuesday mornings from 10.30am to 12 noon as a drop-in for people to find a Christian welcome and company – *but not this coming Tuesday, 13 February, as it is half term and Mary is away.*

### **Thrive – Sundays @4 at St David's Church**

As well as music and food, we are starting the Romans Course. Get intrigued, here: [www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-romans-course](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-romans-course)

### **Wednesday Walks**

Wednesday walkers have met all but two or three times during the past year and have enjoyed 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! Why not make Wednesday mornings with friends your new year's resolution? 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.

### **Your Prayers are asked for...**

#### **those who are suffering including:**

Margaret Roberts, Emma White, Caroline Speed-Andrews; Maggs Bedford, Nan Biles, Delia Bloom, Caroline Darch and family, Lois Draper, Andrew Francis, Phoebe Goldsworth, Hazel Gowland, Eileen Jarman, Roger Luscombe, Anne Smith; Pam Smith, Grace Tointon, Bill Warner, Tony Whitear, Sarah Wood; Clive and Jeanie; Beth; Charlotte, Paul and Grace; Will.

#### **those who have died recently including:**

Hilary Elliott, John Randall

#### **In our Parish Cycle of Prayer please pray for:**

The Dales and Barton Place Nursing Homes

#### **Please also pray for:**

Our parish as we seek a positive vision for the future  
Our country and all those affected by the recent storms  
Our world, for wisdom for its leaders and a wish for peace not war

### **Sunday, 11 February 2024, Sunday next before Lent**

#### **Collect**

Almighty Father,  
whose Son was revealed in majesty  
before he suffered death upon the cross:  
give us grace to perceive his glory,  
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him  
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;  
who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### **1st reading – 2 Kings 2: 1-12**

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.'

Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.'

Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

### **2nd reading – Mark 9: 2-9**

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach

them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

### **Sermon by Bill Pattinson for 11 February 2024**

#### Prayer

In moments of worry, concern, crisis, even desperation, you might find it valuable to visit a "thin place." Indeed at such moments, a thin place might find you. I've recently discovered a new thin place. Well, it's been there a long time and it would be more appropriate to say, "I've re-discovered a thin place I've known for many years."

Have you heard the term "thin place"? It's an ancient term going back to Celtic times. Heaven and Earth, the Celtic saying goes, are only three feet apart, but in "thin places" that distance is even shorter. Steve Wheeler describes "thin places" as

"where two worlds may collide  
where the ethereal and the material  
may tenderly kiss and coincide."

Thin places are places of energy and light. A place where the veil between this world and the eternal world is thin, where Heaven touches Earth. They are there to be inhabited for a time, if only we stop and notice them. Perhaps they are born of a moment - the crash of waves along a deserted shore; the kindness of a stranger's gentle smile; a carpet of snowdrops at this time of year; the peace of death as pulse and breath are stilled.

Thin places are however more likely marked, a special location of pilgrimage, retreat or respite. My rediscovered thin place is the altar rail in St Mary the Virgin Church at Silverton. I first visited it almost 25 years ago. I can see the whole church from my study now as I tap away on my iPad. It remains open during the days, fortunately, so I can visit regularly. There I enter the silence of an empty church, what Philip Larkin referred to as "a tense, musty,

unignorable silence.” It must be empty. Churches are built to house people, but I find, ironically, they can be most moving and powerful when they are completely empty. At the altar rail I kneel and gaze on the East Window - colourful glass images of the crucifixion, the annunciation, the Last Supper and the presentation of Christ in the Temple. I kneel, I gaze and I pray.....in my thin place. I find I’m praying a lot recently. Of course, we do not leave these places unchanged. We are transformed and, I believe, our lives are full of the potential of these moments, these places.

This morning’s Gospel Reading of a rabbi standing on a mountain top with his friends and in a single moment being transfigured by brilliant light is a “thin place” story. The Transfiguration, along with his baptism, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension is one of the five outstanding events in Christ’s life. What is the Transfiguration? Well, as the schoolchild might reply, “That’s a hard question, sir.” I’m going to have a go at answering the question, but I make no apologies if you’re none the wiser after I’ve finished.

First of all, what it is not. It is not a summit meeting of three great leaders. It is not akin to nature’s form of metamorphosis. For example how a crawling caterpillar becomes a flying butterfly. It is not just a vision. Nor is it a transformation, but rather an unveiling of Jesus’ true identity. Peter, James and John, Jesus’ chosen disciples to witness this event, see Jesus’ glory - the glory that he had always possessed, but which had been veiled until this moment. It is a manifestation of God’s power and glory where Jesus demonstrates quite clearly that he is God. Some theologians see it as a preview of the resurrection, the glory of what God is capable of, full of truth, grace and love. The great Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote:  
“The world is charged with the wonder of God  
It will flame out, like shining from a shook foil.”

But it’s the modern poet Malcolm Guite who, for me, best answers the question in his poem simply entitled “Transfiguration”:  
“There were no angels full of eyes and wings  
Just living glory full of truth and grace.  
The love that dances at the heart of things  
Shone out upon us from a human face.”

Mark’s account of the Transfiguration comes at the half way point of his Gospel. There is real purpose in this positioning. Jesus has now completed his teaching and miracles in Galilee and is turning his face towards Jerusalem,



towards his death and resurrection, which He had recently told his disciples about, although they did not understand. As Jesus was transfigured we read that there appeared to Peter, James and John, Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Luke's account tells us what they were actually talking about. "They were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."

Why Elijah and Moses? Moses represented the Law, the bringer of the Commandments; while Elijah, perhaps the greatest prophet, represented the Prophets. Both had been involved in great departures. One of the great stories of the Old Testament is the Exodus of the Israelites, led by Moses, from Egypt. We heard in our first reading of the amazing departure of Elijah from this earth in a whirlwind accompanied by chariots of fire. Both had mountain top experiences. Moses on Mount Sinai when he received the famous tablets of stone; Elijah on Mount Horeb, where he waited for God who came not in the earthquake, nor in the wind, nor in the fire, but in the sound of sheer silence.

"Suddenly," we read, "when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus." The Transfiguration is not only about divine revelation, divine glory, divine presence, it is also about divine supremacy. Jesus is greater than Moses, greater than Elijah, he is the Chosen one, the Messiah. Jesus, only Jesus, is always with us.

To confirm who Jesus is, before Moses and Elijah leave the mountain, "a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to Him." This reminds us of God's voice at Jesus' baptism. "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." At his baptism God speaks to Jesus. At his transfiguration God speaks to the disciples, and so to us. And the important, outstanding word is "Listen." We can get convinced after a time that we've heard it all - we know who God is! And we listen to so many voices today - on the phone, on the television, on social media. They all may sound wise and attractive perhaps offering health, wealth and happiness, but seldom live up to their promises. Here on the mountain top of the Transfiguration we are told we must listen to Jesus. We must be touched by Jesus, get up and see no one except Jesus.

Where and how do we listen to Jesus? In the Gospel stories. In prayer. In our thin places. Christ is often revealed in crisis points in our lives - a light shining in the darkness. We must now leave our mountain of glory and, like Jesus, begin our journey to Golgotha, the mount of the Cross as we enter Lent this coming

Ash Wednesday. May our journeys be full of thin moments and places. May we listen to Jesus, pray and gaze on his glory. May we be even more transformed into people who reflect his glory

“We do not leave unchanged  
If change is to become ourselves  
Ahead: a thousand moments of transfiguration  
Each one a death and resurrection in itself  
As we are both transformed and transform  
Sacred moment by sacred moment.”

### **Post-Communion Prayer**

Holy God,  
we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:  
may we who are partakers at his table  
reflect his life in word and deed,  
that all the world may know his power to change and save.  
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

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

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