

St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Parish Newsletter for 10 March 2024 – 4th Sunday of Lent/Mothering Sunday

Our services this week:

Sunday 10 March 2024 – 4th Sunday of Lent/Mothering Sunday

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

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's Church with celebrant and preacher, Hannah Alderson

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 12 March 9:30-10 am Morning Prayer on Zoom. Please join us using this link (*please note: different from last week*):

<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>

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

Wednesday 13 March 6 pm Stations of the Cross at St Michael's

Thursday 14 March (Perpetua, Felicity and companions, martyrs, 203) 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church

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

Sunday 17 March 2024 – 5th Sunday of Lent/start of Passiontide

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

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's Church with celebrant and preacher, Andrew Beane

4pm Thrive led by David Blundell

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

Message from the Churchwardens:

Parish Quiz: a very big 'thank you' to Maggie and Glynis and the team for a wonderful evening on Friday, and to Pete and Alice Francis for a fiendish quiz! Great fun was had by all.

Visit by Bishop Jackie Searle: on Sunday 24 March, Palm Sunday, we are delighted to be welcoming our bishop, Jackie Searle, who will be both presiding and preaching at our two churches. We look forward to making her very welcome.

Progress: there will be a PCC on 21 March at which the intention is to sign-off the parish profile. This also has to be agreed by both the Archdeacon and the Diocese so we are not there yet, but we are still hopeful that we can advertise soon and then interview.

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.

Parish Lunch – Thursday, 21 March 2024, 12 noon

Our next parish lunch will be on Thursday, 21 March. Details to follow.

Knit and Natter, Saturday, 23 March 2024

Knit and Natter will be changing its day of operation after Easter, as we will share time with the Tuesday cafe once a month. Until then it remains on a Saturday, the last being Saturday 23rd March. Subsequent dates are 16 April and 14 May.

Advance notice of the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting)

The APCM will take place on Thursday, 25 April at 7.30pm at St David's. Reports and accounts will be available before the meeting and will be displayed in both churches. Two places on the PCC from St David's congregation will become available as terms of office end – perhaps you might consider standing for election? Please speak with our churchwardens if you would like to explore this further, and do please come.

Other dates for your diary

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

Thursday, 25 April - APCM

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

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

Thrive – Sundays @4 at St David's Church

As well as music and food, we are doing the Romans Course. Get intrigued, here: www.biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-romans-course

New Leaves

All being well, the February/March issue of the magazine will be available in church early next week. 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.

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.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's breakfast will be announced shortly. Please contact Alan Baker if you would like a reminder alan.baker1963@outlook.com

Try Praying... this spring from 17 March 2024

TryPraying is a great resource for people with little or no church connection, but who are open to finding out about God. [The TryPraying booklet or smartphone app](#) is a 7-day prayer guide that can be shared with family and friends, or visitors and guests in your church. The guide encourages each person to try praying and to see what happens in their life as a result.

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 Burrige. 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.

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 14 March Jeremiah 31:31-4; John12:20-31

To book please contact Mary Keaney admin@parishofcentralexeter.co.uk

Green ideas from the Exeter Diocese Creation Care Team

Make a Hedgehog Cafe - [Make a Hedgehog cafe \(rspb.org.uk\)](http://rspb.org.uk)

Nestbox Guide - [Our ultimate guide to nest boxes \(rspb.org.uk\)](http://rspb.org.uk)

Here are some events in March you might like to participate in:

The Tree Council's Tree Care Campaign

The Spring Equinox Tues 19th March

The Great British Spring Clean 15th to 31st March

World Water Day - Friday 22nd March

Earth Hour - March 23rd at 8 p.m.

Your Prayers are asked for...

those who are suffering including:

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

those who have died recently including:

In our Parish Cycle of Prayer please pray for:

Esther Community (supporting young homeless people)

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, 10 March 2024, 4th Sunday of Lent

1st reading - Numbers 21.4-9

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.' Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.' So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

2nd reading - Ephesians 2.1-10

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Gospel Reading - John 3.14-21

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil

hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

Sermon notes by Sheila Swarbrick, 10 March 2024

Serpent/snake symbolism – evil – evolutionary theory poisonous snakes main predator for primates Genesis 3 story but also good – healing – Greek god of healing, symbol for medicine.

Numbers story – people wandering in desert, getting tired of diet of manna, ungrateful and complain. Punishment – poisonous snakes led to death. Confession of sin so Moses prayed to God who provided a solution – using symbol of snake that brought death on a pole – look to that, trust God's word, for healing – to live.

Hezekiah's reforms – 500 years later in **2 Kings 18:4** we read, 'Hezekiah removed the high places, broke down the pillars, and cut down the sacred pole. He broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it; it was called Nehushtan.'

Later - Wisdom 16:6 writing later what Christians call 'inter-testamental period' reflecting on Numbers story describes the serpent on the pole as a 'symbol of salvation' given to remind people of the law and that as people looked at it they were saved – not by the looking but because God is the saviour.

Sum up - Snake/serpents both something to avoid and be fearful of – and a way of healing by trusting God's word. People of Israel learn to trust God through the journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in promised land. We are on a similar journey to trust God – in good times and bad times, joy and sorrow.

John's gospel – Nicodemus conversation with Jesus commentary refers back to Numbers story with lifting up of serpent – symbol that which was destroying them compared with the Son of Man – Jesus – who would be lifted up – taking the place of God forsaken humanity – on the cross. The instrument of torture that would become a place of healing, reconciliation and source of eternal life through the resurrection. *Lifted up* is for both the cross and the resurrection and ascension. It is the first Passion prediction in John's gospel.

Similarities with Numbers story - Both point to the solution for sin, our rebellion, turning away from God's purposes for humanity. They show how God longs to forgive, to show mercy, to offer his protecting love. Both signs though require a response of faith. The Israelites had to trust God's word, there wasn't magic coming from a bronze serpent on a pole and they were not to worship it. Similarly we don't worship a dying man on a cross but believe in Jesus's life, death, resurrection and ascension as the way to receive forgiveness and enter eternal life.

Final verse of hymn 'Forgive us, God! Our lives betray our shallow, vague, response to grace; so help us walk your holy way, to make your world a better place.'

Collect for Mothering Sunday

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Post-Communion Prayer

Post Communion

Loving God,

as a mother feeds her children at the breast

you feed us in this sacrament with the food and drink of eternal life:

help us who have tasted your goodness

to grow in grace within the household of faith;

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))

