

St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Parish Newsletter for 25 February 2024 – 2nd Sunday of Lent

In today's gospel reading, we hear Peter's reaction when Jesus tells the disciples, for the first time, that his Messiahship will involve suffering and death. Today we reflect on how Christ's suffering is part of the gospel we proclaim, and how the first followers were unable to grasp the truth of who Jesus really was until they had walked through the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Hannah

Our services this week:

Sunday 25 February 2024 – 2nd Sunday of Lent

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

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

4pm Thrive Ash Leighton Plom

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

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 27 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 28 February 6 pm Stations of the Cross at St Michael's

Thursday 29 February 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church

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

Sunday 3 March 2024 – 3rd Sunday of Lent

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

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 Robert Mitchell

Message from the Churchwardens:

- 1. Tickets for the 8 March Parish Quiz:** are available this morning at St David's from Glynis (see below for more details).
- 2. Advance notice of the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting):** just to give everyone advance notice that the St David's and St Michael's APCM will take place on Thursday, 25 April at 7.30pm, venue TBC. 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.

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.

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, £10 pp to include a ploughman's supper. Tickets available from Glynis 07775 752815 or Maggie 07957 990120. Always a fun evening!

Men's Breakfast, Saturday, 9 March

The next Men's breakfast will be Saturday 9 March at 9 am. Please contact Alan Baker if you would like a reminder alan.baker1963@outlook.com

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.

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

World Day of Prayer service, Friday 1 March, 11 am

There is to be a World Day of Prayer service at South Street Baptist church at 11am. All are welcome. Please see the poster in St David’s church for more details.

Hospiscare/Green church

Many thanks to everyone who tore their Christmas stamps off envelopes. I (Hilary) asked Hospiscare how much money the stamps raise, and was told that, in a good year, it could be as much as £4,000 – worth having so please continue to save any that you receive.

Also, what do you do with spent tea lights and candle ends? Hospiscare have partnered with the Recycled Candle Company, so please bring them to church so we can pass them on, something else not going in the bin!

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 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 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

New Leaves

The February/March issue of the magazine will be out shortly. 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.

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

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, 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 Thursday team making evening tea for the homeless

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, 25 February 2024, 2nd Sunday of Lent

Collect

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted
into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things
that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

1st reading - Genesis 17.1-7, 15-16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.' Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by

her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.'

2nd reading - Romans 4.13-end

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations', according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him', were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Gospel Reading - Mark 8.31-end

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it

profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Sermon by Hannah Alderson for 25 February 2024

In today's gospel reading, we hear Peter's reaction when Jesus tells the disciples, for the first time, that his Messiahship will involve suffering and death. Today we reflect on how Christ's suffering is part of the gospel we proclaim, and how the first followers were unable to grasp the truth of who Jesus really was until they had walked through the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

My favourite childhood film was, somewhat surprisingly, the 1964 Beatles' film 'A Hard Day's Night.' I mention this because, when I read the first 8 chapters of Mark's gospel, I'm struck by how their tone is a little reminiscent of the opening scenes of a Hard Day's Night. Let me explain why.

The film begins with a black screen and an iconic chord. F A C G, over the bass D, on a twelve-string guitar and piano. Then we are presented with a fast-paced succession of shots in which the Fab 4 are chased around a railway station by an enormous and quite terrifying crowd of screaming teenage girls, finding ingenious ways to throw them off the trail. At one point, the crowd rushes past a line of three phone boxes, and then the camera pans to reveal John, George and Ringo standing in the boxes, unnoticed by the fans. Then, we see the crowd running along the station platform, past a bench, and it is only when they have gone that the man sitting on the bench lowers his newspaper to reveal the face of Paul McCartney, wearing a fake moustache. At one point, the foursome pile through the driver-side door of a waiting car, which is quickly surrounded by fans. The camera zooms out to reveal that the band have run straight through the car and exited via the passenger-side door.

When I was about 9, I thought these scenes were great. On a subconscious level, a particularly enjoyable aspect of these sequences is how we the viewer aren't part of the screaming crowd, we're in the in-crowd. We see where they're hiding, and when they finally escape the fans and get onto the train, we follow John, Paul, George and Ringo and hear their conversation. We are in their inner circle.

It might seem astonishing to imagine the life of Jesus was at all like the life of a Beatle, but the first 8 chapters of Mark's gospel certainly come across like that. In Chapter 1, for example, Jesus is in a house in Capernaum "and the whole city was gathered around the door." In Chapter 3, Jesus tells the disciples "to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him." And in Chapter 6, Mark writes that there were so many coming and going to hear him teach, that Jesus "had no leisure even to eat."

In the first half of Mark's gospel there are over 40 scene changes as Jesus travels around the Northern territories pursued by crowds.

There is, however, a curious paradox about these chapters. Much of the time Jesus is described as ministering very openly. Preaching to huge crowds, miraculously healing all who are brought to him, feeding 5,000 people in one go. But on several occasions, when miracles are performed, Jesus tells witnesses to go away and to tell no-one.

What a curious feature. Why would someone who has already built such widespread admiration ask people not to share with others what he has done for them? It feels counter-intuitive.

Today's verses from Mark Chapter 8 give us a clue, particularly when we take into account the verse that come just before the section we heard. Which go like this.

"He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him."

And then he goes on to tell them, as we have heard today, that the Messiah will have to suffer and die, and rise again. And Peter rebukes him. And Jesus says to Peter 'get behind me Satan.'

So what's going on here?

Peter has grasped that Jesus is the Messiah. And he's just proclaimed that truth for the very first time. But what he has not yet grasped is that death is a fundamental part of Jesus' Messiahship. And, until he understands that, he's not yet ready to spread the word. Which is why Jesus rebukes him. In the next chapter, Peter will see Christ transfigured, and will again be told to keep silent about the events. But that time, a caveat will be given "he ordered them to tell

no-one about what they had seen until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.”

The life of Jesus in the first 8 chapters of Mark is a bit like the life of a Beatle. But at this point in the gospel nobody, not even the 5,000 he miraculously fed, not even Jairus whose daughter he raised from the dead, not even Peter, really understand who he is. It is only in the light of his suffering, death and resurrection that we really know who Jesus is.

So here’s an extraordinary thing. There are outsiders in the gospel, like the crowds, and there are insiders like Peter. And then there is us. We have an extraordinary privilege even over the Peter we meet in Mark Chapter 8. We know the end of the story. We are a post-Good Friday people who know that suffering was part of Christ’s mission. And we are a post-Easter people, who know that this suffering and death was followed by resurrection.

And the great thing is: That means we can tell people, and we can tell them the whole story.

George Harrison once said of BeatleMania “Beatle George is like a suit or shirt that I once wore on occasion, and until the end of my life, people may see that shirt and mistake it for me.”

There are lots of ways Jesus has been presented. Superhero. Nice moral guy who said nice moral things. Answer to all of life’s problems. All of these things are half-true, but none of them are the whole truth. The real message of Jesus, the depths of humanity, and divinity, and strength and vulnerability and love, can only be found in the thing he tried to tell Peter, and Peter wasn’t yet ready to hear or to speak of – the Son of man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

This is Christ’s story. This is our story. It is the story we as Christians reflect. And the story we tell.

Post-Communion Prayer

Almighty God,
you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,
and inwardly in our souls;

that we may be defended from all adversities
which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Robert Mitchell and Hilary Todd
Church Wardens
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(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))