

St David with St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter Parish Newsletter for 16 June 2024 – 3rd Sunday after Trinity

I'm not going quite as far as Belinda did when she finished her time with us (Asia!) or indeed even as far as Nigel did when he retired (Crediton), but my curacy is ending, and this is my final Sunday as your curate. However, as I'm starting a post at YMCA Exeter, I do hope to be over from time to time, and continue building the valued links we have with residents and staff there, as a parish.

Our readings today are about planting, growing, and harvesting, and I'm so glad to have had this opportunity growing alongside you the last few years. As we meet with God together in worship today, I want to thank Him, and say thank you to you, for my time with you in this role. Bless you!

Ash

Our services this week:

Sunday 16 June 2024 – 3rd Sunday after Trinity

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's Church with celebrant and preacher, Ash Leighton Plom

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

4pm Thrive at St David's church led by Ash Leighton Plom

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

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 18 June (Bernard Mizeki, martyr, 1896) 9:30-10 am Morning Prayer on Zoom. Please join us using this link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75330401184?pwd=MIUTonKQK9bgFKV6lpn9rMbQUdYl8H.1>

Meeting ID: 753 3040 1184

Passcode: 5RWhXs

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

Thursday 20 June 10.30 Holy Communion at St David's

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

Sunday 23 June 2024 – 4th Sunday after Trinity

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

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's church with celebrant and preacher, Sue Astbury

4pm Thrive at St David's church led by David Blundell

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

Message from the Churchwardens

- 1. Ash's leaving do** – Ash leaves us this Sunday so do please stay for the Devon cream tea after the 9.30 service as we say farewell.
- 2. Celebration of the life of Clive Wilson** – following a private woodland burial, this will be at St David's at 2 pm on Tuesday, 25 June, followed by refreshments at the Citygate Hotel. All are welcome.
- 3. The coffee team** - is looking for new members to serve the coffees and teas after the Sunday morning service. It just involves serving coffee and biscuits to the congregation and clearing up afterwards. The commitment is around 45 minutes every other month (so only six times a year), but if there were enough additional volunteers, this frequency could be reduced. If you think this is something you could help with, please contact Jenny Baker.
- 4. Parish Fete, Saturday, 22 June, 11.30-2.00, St David's** - The church will be open from 3-6pm on Friday, 21 June for people to drop off any items for the fete the next day. We welcome cakes to sell on the cake stall and cakes that can be sold as refreshments, plants, bottles and bric-a-brac etc. The plant stall would also welcome donations of bouquets of home-grown flowers as these sold well last year. Please don't bring any electrical items as we're not allowed to sell them. Setting up will take place from 10am on the day and we need as many helpers as possible to put out tables and gazebos.

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.

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

Knit and Natter – Tuesday, 18 June, 10.30, St David's

Thanks to all who came to our first Tuesday Knit and Natter shared with the café which went really well. Do come on Tuesday to knit, sew or just chat. The next one will be 16 July. No K&N in August.

Gardeners Question Time – Tuesday, 18 June, 5-8 pm, St David's

YMCA Exeter, in collaboration with St David's Church and Little Silver, is delighted to be welcoming the Radio 4 show Gardeners' Question Time to Exeter on Tuesday 18th June. Please go

to: <https://www.ymcaexeter.org.uk/gqt/> and do read carefully what's involved. *Please note: The event is sold out and no tickets will be available on the door.*

We have also been asked if we can provide two stewards to help show people to their seats, 5 – 5.50 on the day. Please let Di Jacob know if you could help.

Tuesday Friendship Café

St David's Church is normally 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 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.

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

Parish Lunch

We've now enjoyed the last one at the College until they return in the autumn. We are thinking of holding a lunch at the Imperial over the summer, with a suggested date of 25 July and possibly one in August. Do let Jenny or Hilary know if you would be interested in coming.

Parish magazine

Don't forget to pick up your copy of the June parish magazine. A very big thank you to Sarah Rimmington for producing this. The *deadline for next month's edition is today, 16 June.*

Safeguarding Survey - please take part

The INEQE Safeguarding Group is an independent company of safeguarding professionals which has been asked to carry out Audits of the Church of England to make sure dioceses, cathedrals and palaces are doing all they can to create environments where everyone feels safe, valued and respected. Your

participation is critically important and you can help by taking part in an anonymous and confidential survey. We encourage you to be open and honest. We will only share information if what you tell us indicates a serious risk of harm.

<https://ineqe.com/churchofengland/exeter/>

General Election

There is a hustings being planned by Christians Together Across Exeter, details TBC. Contact ctaxexeter@gmail.com for updates. Christians in Politics have released this video, which they appreciate you viewing and helping to share: <https://youtu.be/bf-QD-2s9S4?si=rzUqEehpT56ADXTP>

Homelessness and Hardship Hustings, Thursday, 27 June, 7 pm, South Street Baptist church

Chaired by Acting Bishop of Exeter, Jackie Searle, this will be an opportunity for you to ask questions of candidates in the Exeter, and Exmouth and East Exeter Constituencies.

Paintings, Poetry and Pottery, Saturday, 6 July, 10-4, St Stephen's church, High Street, Exeter

A fund-raising event in aid of Exeter Community Initiatives – poster at the back of church.

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: 19 July, 13 September and 15 November.

Your Prayers are asked for...

those who are suffering including:

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

those who have died recently including:

Clive Wilson, Margaret Roberts, Simon Martyn

In our Parish Cycle of Prayer please pray for:

The Co-op shop and all shop workers

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 16 June 2024 – 3rd Sunday after Trinity

Collect

Almighty God,

you have broken the tyranny of sin

and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts

whereby we call you Father:

give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,

that we and all creation may be brought

to the glorious liberty of the children of God;

through 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 - Ezekiel 17.22–24

Thus says the Lord God:

I myself will take a sprig

from the lofty top of a cedar;

I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one

from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it

on a high and lofty mountain.

On the mountain height of Israel

I will plant it,

in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,

and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;

in the shade of its branches will nest

winged creatures of every kind.

All the trees of the field shall know

that I am the Lord.

I bring low the high tree,

I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree

and make the dry tree flourish.
I the Lord have spoken;
I will accomplish it.

Gospel Reading - Mark 4.26-34

He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Sermon by Ash Leighton Plom for Trinity 3, 16 June 2024

This month has had a few endings and beginnings for Deborah and me: she finished her time on placement at St Boniface Whipton & Holy Trinity Beacon Heath, she had her final theological college classes, and over the last couple of weeks I've led my last school assemblies, College Christian Union, midweek services, and so on. So, today is as you know my last day with you. And we're both starting new ministries, Deborah as curate in the Netherexe parishes just north of Exeter, and me chaplaining residents at the YMCA across the road.

I hope to be back from time to time, but meanwhile let me say this has been such a great curacy for me... other than that time several of us had our houses blown apart by Hitler. But seriously, thank you, for your care and support, alongside the rhythm of Sunday and midweek services, pastoral meetings, and so on. I've cherished this time with you.

Our Collect this morning stated that God has "broken the tyranny of sin" and "sent the Spirit" so that we can use our freedom from sin to serve God in bringing all creation "to the glorious liberty" we enjoy, freed from sin.

The opening line's words, "broken the tyranny of sin" hark principally to Easter. This long season of "ordinary time/after Trinity" in the Church calendar - week

3 of 22 this week - actually connects our faith journey from Easter basically all the way to Advent, when we restart with a focus on the incarnation of God at Christmas. So, today's Collect implies we're thinking about Easter, and the victory Jesus has won - 'freeing us from sin', so that we can join in liberating others from sin's tyranny.

Why not pause a moment, and ponder on or experience a sense of the faith as liberating - not a set of fusty old rules, but an ideology which believes that the ontological tyranny of the human condition has been fundamentally overturned by the work of Jesus, and we are liberated to liberate others, with the goodness of good news...

The parables from today's reading also celebrate this work of God, in various ways. The first can be interpreted like this:

The "seed" of the Gospel is scattered around, and over time, it produces believers who are fruitful. It's similar to another of Jesus' parables, the one where a farmer scatters seeds, and some falls on good soil and so grow and are fruitful, although some fail to grow, and instead die. Jesus actively interprets this parable for his disciples, naming the seed as the gospel, the fruitful crops as faithful believers.

But there's something else at play in our readings today, presaged by the Collect's acknowledgement that God has "sent the Spirit" into our hearts, so we can use our freedom to liberate others. This focus on the Spirit means we're connecting also with Pentecost, the giving of the Spirit after Easter.

Thus, the second parable envisions a mustard seed, "sown upon the ground... the smallest of all the seeds on earth", yet growing up to become "the greatest of all shrubs", sprouting such large branches that birds make nests in its shade. We usually interpret this parable to mean that even small amounts of faith can make a big difference in the world, just as the small mustard seed grows into a vast plant.

But notice the passivity or receptivity of the seed, in both parables. If someone scatters seed on the ground, they then actually sleep and rise night and day, and the seed sprouts almost magically, with the planter simply enjoying the growth. The link can only be the Holy Spirit: Saint Paul uses a similar analogy (in 1 Corinthians 3.6-9), when he says he "planted" the seed of faith in the

believers in Corinth, and a colleague "watered" it, but it was "God who made it grow."

We "plant" seeds of the Kingdom by prayer, sharing the faith, and humble service, but God is the one who brings these to fruition. Why not pause another moment and ponder on or experience a sense of God's presence, by his Spirit. Ask him to help if you're not feeling much, just ask and wait, and I'm asking with you...

The reading we had before the parables, from Ezekiel, also refers to a humble tree that God exalts. This is a prophecy of the Cross, planted in order that it produce boughs and bears fruit, becoming the global shelter that is the Church.

We are "planted" to provide, just as the plant in these readings provide shade for birds to nest. Last week, Catherine spoke and Bill prayed about bringing in those who are "standing outside". The demographics outside this building provide us ample opportunity to do exactly that. For example, 90% of local residents are under the age of 65. More than half of the 15,000 people who live nearby are young adults. (2011 Census data 2011, from CUF)

They're underrepresented in our congregations, and going forward you know I'd encourage you to direct proportional time and energy towards them. Other churches in our bit of Exeter encouragingly attract hundreds of students, and current research shows people aged 18-24 are more open to faith than any other age group. (Whitestone Insight, 2024)

For instance, whereas only 47% of people over 65 say faith significantly impacts their lives, 72% of people aged 18-24 are open to it. I'm not suggesting we do this to the exclusion of other age groups, but I am saying that diversity and inclusion of youth, students, and young families in our parish is perhaps our most pressing social justice issue based on our demographics.

Nationally, the average weekly attendance at Church of England services rose (by 5%) last year, which marks the third year of consecutive growth. Weekly attendance by children was up by almost 6% last year. The Archbishop of Canterbury said, "This is very welcome news and I hope it encourages churches across the country. I want to thank our clergy and congregations who have shown such faith, hope and confidence over recent years to share the gospel with their communities."

So, with our culture of welcome and inclusivity, we are uniquely well-placed in this context, to see those outside come to “nest” here and find shelter, like the birds of the parable, as we sow seeds of the Kingdom and partner with God in his gospel work of liberation.

In a few moments, after a short pause for silence, we're going to have an opportunity to declare this good news, to pray together, and share bread and wine and blessing. I don't think it'll be my last time here full stop, but it will be my last time in this role. So, until then: for the glorious liberty I've enjoyed in serving as your curate, to be part of planting and growing alongside you, even if only for a few years: thank you.

Post Communion

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen

Robert Mitchell and Hilary Todd
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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))