

# **The Parish of St David with St Michael and All Angels, Exeter**

## **Dear Friends**

A warm welcome to our weekly update for the Fifth Sunday of Easter.

## **Sunday Worship**

Do join with us and pray with our Youtube service this Sunday, if you can. We will offer the same next week as well. I also hope to record a simplified version of the St Michael's Rogation Procession which would have happened next week. At Pentecost (31 May) I will celebrate the Eucharist at the Vicarage, as I did at Easter, with a live stream on Facebook, hopefully making the service available afterwards on Youtube.

Today's service on [Youtube.com](https://youtu.be/Pr-TTkF8MIU) is available here:

<https://youtu.be/Pr-TTkF8MIU>

Today our service includes a Bible reading by Hilary Todd, an address by Belinda Speed-Andrews and prayers led by Glynis Harflett. Words from the service are printed below so that you can read them even if you don't use Youtube or Facebook. I would like to say a special thank you to Nigel Walsh who has put the service together for us and to everyone who is contributing to our online worship.

Next week Bill Pattinson will be offering an address.

## **Phone Networks**

I know that many of you have appreciated phone calls from other members of the church community. If you would like to be phoned by someone and haven't yet had any contact please let me know at [nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com)

or by ringing me on 01392 660226.

Thank you to every one who is helping to keep our church communities together by your care and concern.

## **Live Prayers**

Please join us, if you can for our streamed short prayer services during the week on our Facebook pages:

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 9am.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page:

Wednesday Regina Coeli and Mattins (BCP) at 9am

**If you are not on Facebook you can still access the St David's Page by clicking on the Facebook 'f' symbol on the front page of St David's website.**

If you have any feedback about our services, or requests, please let me know.

### **Would you like to contribute to our online worship?**

I would love to include more members of our churches reading lessons (or otherwise contributing) during our Youtube services. If you would be willing to make a video of yourself reading for inclusion in our services please let me know, and don't be shy! Thank you to those who have already volunteered.

### **Telephone services**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched **Daily Hope**, which includes music, prayers, reflections and full worship services at the end of a telephone line. It is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** and has been set up to reach people unable to join online church services.

### **Magazine**

Our May magazine is now available on our websites and it is a great edition with experiences of lockdown from members of our churches.

If you would like to contribute to future editions please send all articles as Word documents to [newleavesnews@gmail.com](mailto:newleavesnews@gmail.com) or [billpattinson136@gmail.com](mailto:billpattinson136@gmail.com) Thank you.

### **Alleviation of Poverty**

#### **Christian Aid Week Zoom Breakfast**

Would you like to join us (virtually) in the Vicarage kitchen?

We were hoping to hold another Big Breakfast to raise some funds for Christian Aid again this year. We will try a Zoom breakfast instead on **Saturday 16 May at 9.30am**. You will have to make your own breakfast this year and then log in to the Zoom meeting to enjoy some company and make a suitable donation to Christian Aid. Like most charities Christian Aid will suffer a large fall in income due to the lack of fundraising possibilities at the moment. If you would like to join in please email me and I will send you an invitation to join the breakfast a few days before hand.

Christian Aid has create an e-envelope for donations which can be accessed here:

[https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/?\\_ga=2.253680257.929433277.1589020983-711791375.1589020983](https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/?_ga=2.253680257.929433277.1589020983-711791375.1589020983)

Meanwhile, closer to home **Christians against Poverty** are active in campaigning for and serving some of the poorest people in this country. If you would like to learn more about their work or support them the link to their website and newsletter is here: <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk>

### **Happy are those who consider the poor (Psalm 41)**

As the Covid-19 epidemic continues it is becoming very apparent that, as so often, it is the poorest people who suffer most. The London boroughs of Newham, Brent and Hackney are among the crowded inner city areas which have been most severely affected <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/52282844>

The economic consequences of the crisis are likely to be felt across society for many year to come. Once the main emergency aid from the government has finished there is likely to be more unemployment. Although the young are much less likely to suffer severe symptoms of Covid-19, they may well pay the price in disrupted education and opportunities.

Christian Aid Week might encourage us to look beyond the developed world to consider how Covid-19 will impact lie elsewhere. There is an interesting article here: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/why-sub-saharan-africa-needs-a-unique-response-to-covid-19/>

about some of the considerations. Many developing countries have a much younger population but are much less well equipped to deal with cases.

There is plenty here to inform our prayers and our charitable giving. The St David's Soup Evening has had to be suspended due to Government guidelines. We hope to get it back up and running as soon as allowed. But many community initiatives are operating in and around Exeter and if you here of particular cases of need in our parish please do let me know as I can provide referrals. We also have a modest parish fund which can help those in hardship.

Jesus was uncompromising about our responsibilities towards the poor: *"Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Luke 12: 33-34.

We may not feel all that wealthy but it is always good to show our appreciation for what we have by setting aside something for those who have even less.

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

Charles Argall, Roger Beer, Janine, Charles Speed-Andrews and Nick & Karen Speed-Andrews, Peggy James (for continued recovery), 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 (for recovery after an operation) and Katy Tyler, Andrew Wakley, Rosemary Willcox and Maurice Wright, Raymond (recovering after an operation).

Please remember Eleanor Plom who has died, and her family in their loss.

In our **Parish Cycle of Prayer** we pray for the work of Christian Aid

Please also pray for:

those living in poverty in this country and around the world.

those suffering from the symptoms of Covid-19, and those who are feeling lonely or afraid.

those suffering domestic violence or abuse;

children and young people missing out as a result of school and college closure;

Alison Whiting, Simon Harrison and the whole chaplaincy team at RDE;

all those working in the NHS, Social Care and in our emergency services.

May God keep you in peace and good health,

Nigel Guthrie

## **Order of Service for the Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**(Service on YouTube)**

### **Greeting**

**Alleluia, Christ is risen!**

**All He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

### **Prayer of Preparation**

**Almighty God,**

**to whom all hearts are open,**

**all desires known,**

**and from whom no secrets are hidden:**

**cleanse the thoughts of our hearts**

**by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,**

**that we may perfectly love you,**

**and worthily magnify your holy name;**

**through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### **Prayers of Penitence**

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us. Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

Like Mary at the empty tomb, we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.

Lord, have mercy.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

Like the disciples behind locked doors, we are afraid to be seen as your followers.

Christ, have mercy.

**All Christ, have mercy.**

Like Thomas in the upper room, we are slow to believe.

Lord, have mercy.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

May the Father forgive *us*

by the death of his Son

and strengthen *us*

to live in the power of the Spirit

all *our* days.

**All Amen.**

## **Collect**

Almighty God,  
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ  
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:  
grant that, as by your grace going before us  
    you put into our minds good desires,  
so by your continual help  
we may bring them to good effect;  
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## **A reading from the Acts of the Apostles chapter 7: 55-60**

Standing before the high priest and the council, Stephen, filled with Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

## **Gospel Reading - John 14: 1-14**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my

name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.'

### **Address by Belinda Speed-Andrews**

#### **In the name of God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Wow! What an amazing Gospel reading. I guess it is a familiar reading from John's gospel for many of us in church life as it is one of the readings that families and friends choose when organising a funeral for a loved one. It also contains one of the most controversial phrases in the Bible and has been the cause of much discord: 'I am the way, and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me'. However, it was the very first verse, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled' that caught my attention, possibly because of where we all are at the moment; in the middle of a pandemic not allowed out of our homes, only to shop for necessities and an hours exercise a day in whatever shape or form that may take.

This whole section, chapters 14-16 are part of Jesus' farewell discourse and contains for me some of the most beautiful verses in the gospels. Jesus has just told his friends the disciples over an intimate meal where he washes their feet, that one of them will betray him, that he, Jesus will only be with them a little while longer and when Peter asks Jesus where he is going, Jesus tells him that where he is going Peter cannot follow. This is the man, your best friend with whom you have just spent the last 3 years. You have watched him heal, cast out evil spirits, raise his best friend from the dead, confront the Pharisees, not a sensible move unless you are Jesus, and now he says I'm going away and you can't come. And to top it all he announces to Peter that he will betray Jesus. How then can their hearts not be troubled? If that was me I would be beside myself with worry, with unanswered questions, fearful for the future. Troubled, of course I'm troubled.

So what about us. We are perhaps troubled too, troubled by the current situation. We are in a liminal space, a space between what was and what is to come. It's like a doorway between two rooms. We know one intimately, we know all it's secrets, it's joys & heartaches, the could have been but we don't know what the new room has to offer. For some people they have no job to go back to; for others they are scared what will happen if they step out into the big wide world and for us in Church what is it going to look like? Don't let your hearts be troubled. Troubled, of course I'm troubled. We need a companion to help us navigate this possible loss of the familiar and walk with us as we move forward into what we don't know.

Well that was a bit of doom and gloom, but actually it's just getting the facts out there. Bear with me though because perhaps Jesus is right, don't let your hearts be troubled. This phrase is not a sentimental, ah there don't worry all will be well. It's more like a prep talk from your football coach during half time when the score is 2-1 against. It's your teacher motivating her students as they approach their exams it's a rallying cry in the face of adversity. So what will free the troubled heart of the disciples? What will free our troubled hearts? The world peddles many things supposedly to soothe our troubled hearts and perhaps we are hoping for answers to all our questions from the government about how we eventually exit lockdown safely. But Jesus has only one answer; 'Believe in God, believe also in me'.

We are still in Easter, a period of great joy and more than anything hope because we know in Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross we can and will still be with God. And I want to argue that in spite of all the doom and gloom that the media peddle every day

there is hope all around us, to strengthen and encourage us as we move through that doorway into a new room, a room prepared by Jesus for you and for me, for all people.

Both Thomas & Philip are still struggling to really understand what Jesus is talking about and maybe there are some of you listening to this who are struggling right now and can resonate with Philip's plea, 'Lord show us the Father and we will be satisfied'. I feel for Thomas & Philip struggling to get to grips with everything that is happening around them; a sense of fear and abandonment. Don't we feel this and many other feelings that trouble us? But Jesus doesn't give up and he goes on to tell them to just trust in God, trust in Him. He also implicitly tells them to trust in themselves & in the relationship that they have built with Jesus over the last 3 years. He says 'You do know the way; I am the way & you know me you know the Father. Trust yourself to know what you know; keep doing what you have been doing & if it is still too hard "believe me because of the works themselves"'

If you are finding it hard to trust in God in all that is going on around you at the moment, if you feel like you are clinging on to the hem of Jesus' robe by your finger tips, take a look at what's going on around us in our community in our church families, locally and nationally. Communities have come together in way not seen since the end of WWII. People now know who their neighbours are and who is vulnerable and who is lonely. Groups of people have come together to cook on a large scale to feed our courageous workers in the NHS and people who work in retail, drive lorries, deliver goods, collect the rubbish are now no longer the rejected they are the celebrated; 8 weeks ago this was not the case. The homeless are safe in doors and are warm and fed and possibly the healthiest they have been for years and the most wonderful thing is, the world is now breathing again. This is Easter, this is resurrection this is God with us. Let us use the best from the old room but let us move forward into the new room full of hope, full of courage and know that goodness and mercy surely will follow us all the days of our lives. Am I troubled? No, are you?

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**Prayers by Glynis Harflett for May 10<sup>th</sup> 2020 Based on a Poem by Hannah Mead from St James Church, Devizes**

**I cried today when I read an email from my son's teacher about the work he's done today**

We pray for all teachers and lecturers who are working hard to offer their expertise and knowledge in new formats, on a learning curve themselves.

We pray too for the children and young people who are learning to manage their education with a different timetable, level of support and resources. Give them resilience, energy, joy and fun for their learning path, so this peculiar time may be one they remember with affection.

We hold in mind Lord, in particular, those children who are vulnerable, neglected and abused. They are at great risk at the moment when no outside agencies are involved daily in their care.

Keep them close.

**I cried today when I stood still for a minute and thought, trying not to let fear and loss of hope engulf me**

We pray for those doctors, nurses and carers who have expressed such feelings over the past weeks, and yet return to their wards and units working unstintingly on behalf of the very sick and dying. The emotional journey is heavy and wearying, bring them heart and a knowledge of your presence alongside every task they do.

We pray too for all those staff who are holding together the everyday health care needs of all individuals, both in the community and hospitals. Father we pray for those we know personally today.

**I cried today when my mind tried to process the numbers of days we might be confined for**

Lord God we ask you to support and enable all the scientists, members of our government and the banks and financial institutions, as they work to bring about an end to the lockdown. The task of transitioning our society back to a functioning and healthy one is enormous, and each person will need to bring knowledge, skill and patience. Be with them at this time, enable their thoughts and decisions so that a respectful and more equitable society may grow out of this situation.

**I cried today after my children went to bed and I was alone with my thoughts, drowning in negativity**

We pray for all of us who are struggling with the atmosphere of otherness and threat, which the enforced isolation amplifies. Bring your loving comfort to all who are isolated, fearful and whose mental health difficulties have become worse. We ask that you bring comfort and healing to them, letting them know of your ever-present love and care.

**I cried today when you smiled at me, the stranger out for a stroll in the sunshine, it lifted my spirits more than you know.**

We pray to you lord that the new found, growing sense of community and collectivity embeds itself within us all, that it takes root strongly so that it may continue into the transition, the new society and be held by many generations to come. Bring your love to those whose hearts still struggle to share and trust.

We pray especially today for the work of Christian Aid and all that it does around the world. Pray too for our Zoom breakfast this coming Saturday, which will bring us some much needed fellowship and fun.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen



## **Closing Prayer and Blessing**

Eternal God,  
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:  
grant us to walk in his way,  
to rejoice in his truth,  
and to share his risen life;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.

The God of peace,  
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
that great shepherd of the sheep,  
through the blood of the eternal covenant,  
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,  
working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight;  
and the blessing...

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