

St David's and St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter

Newsletter & Service for Sun 17 May 2020

Dear Friends

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

Sunday Worship

Please join in with our Youtube service this Sunday, if you can. Here is the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qapPTV5NXwU>

Today our service includes a bible reading by Avril Pattison, an address by Bill Pattinson and prayers led by Belinda Speed-Andrews. Words for the service can be found at the end of this email so that you can read them even if you don't use Youtube or Facebook. Thank you, once again, to Nigel Walsh who has put the service together for us and to everyone who is contributing to our online worship.

We are also offering today a virtual version of the St Michael's Rogation Procession on Youtube and the 'Friends of St Michael's' Facebook page:

<https://youtu.be/4cIkNEvt9fE>

Next week Alison Whiting will be offering an address for our online service.

At Pentecost (31 May) I will celebrate the Eucharist at the Vicarage, as I did on Easter Day, with a live stream on Facebook, hopefully making the service available afterwards on Youtube.

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

or by ringing me on 01392 660226. Thank you to everyone 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

As you may have heard, clergy are now allowed back into church for prayers alone or with members of their household. I'm not sure how streaming will work from our churches so please be patient if I don't appear at the allotted time!

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.

Magazine

Our May magazine is still 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 or billpattinson136@gmail.com Thank you.

Alleviation of Poverty

Christian Aid Week

Thank you to those who joined in our Zoom Christian Aid breakfast. If you would like to make a donation to Christian Aid you can do so through their online envelope, which can be accessed here:

https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/?_ga=2.111370436.1963935276.1589491466-711791375.1589020983

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>

Concern for the Environment

On Rogation Sunday traditionally we pray for our farms and farmers. But these days the festival often has added, broader environmental concern. You may wish to pray along with the virtual procession from St Michael's, Mount Dinham which I recorded this week with Richard Parker.

If you haven't read the Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si" by Pope Francis I would recommend it. It is closely written but contains valuable Christian teaching about the present ecological crisis and our response to it. It is easily available online.

It has been wonderful to witness this beautiful spring with less noise and pollution in the city. I hope that you have found some moments to watch the birds and bees at work! Can we all pray that good things will come out of this

present crisis for our world and all its plant and animal life as well as new wholeness and sense of community for our human family?

Your Prayers are asked for...

Charles Argall, Roger Beer, Janine, Charles Speed-Andrews and Nick & Karen Speed-Andrews, Peggy James (giving thank for her return home), 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 Fred Wright and Elizabeth Burton who have died and their families.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer we pray for travellers and staff at St. David's and Central railway stations and the British Transport Police especially at this time of heightened risk for transport workers.

Please also pray for:

those living in poverty in this country and around the world and the work of Christian Aid;

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

those who are homeless and about to be asked to leave temporary accommodation;

those suffering domestic violence or abuse;

children and young people missing out as a result of school and college closure;
school staff planning for a return after half term;

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 Sixth Sunday of Easter

(Service on YouTube)

Greeting

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

In our worship today we hear Paul's inspiring speech to the Athenians in which he proclaims the reality of God the creator. We also hear the words of Jesus in which he points to the coming of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth who is with us forever.

Opening Prayer

We come in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Confession and Absolution

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength,
and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us.

All Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us.

All Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone,
and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us.

All Lord, hear us and help us.

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

God our redeemer,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy;
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. Amen

First Reading - Acts 17: 22-31

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ‘Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him— though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are his offspring.”

Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.’

Gospel Reading - John 14: 15-21

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’

An Address by Bill Pattinson for the 6th Sunday of Easter

Theme: Hope. Acts 17:22-31; John14:15-21

It has and continues to be a glorious spring, sunny, warm, well most of the time, verdant, full of flower, full of hope for a blazing June and a magnificent summer. For those of us who have gardens or allotments, we have had the time to tend them carefully and fully like never before, locked down and staying at home as we are.

All this is very pertinent in our present Christian season. Today is Rogation Sunday when traditionally we pray for farmers and their crops, for full barns and a rich harvest. Processions would have been held, at our own St Michael’s for instance, and boundaries beaten, not so common these days. The three days before Ascension Day,

this coming Thursday, were days of fasting. I won't hold you to that. Certainly our crop growers and farmers need our prayers at this moment, not so much for a successful harvest, although I'm sure that would be welcome, but for workers to pick the crops and open shops in which to sell them. Let's hope our prayers are answered.

As well as Rogation Sunday today is the sixth Sunday of Easter, the season when hope is given a name, the name of a person, Jesus Christ. Hope of new life, of eternal life, of a resurrected life. He has defeated death and is with us now to walk with us through our present struggles. If you believe, you hope. And because we have hope, this time, this place, this "now" matters infinitely. All that exists is caught up in the love of Christ. "In him we live and move and have our being," Paul says to the Athenians in his sermon in front of the Areopagus, a prominent rock near the Acropolis in Athens.

In our previous secularised culture, the one I'll call BP, before the Pandemic, we often struggled to find hope, except on the next distraction - hope for a relaxing holiday, a good night out, a pay rise, a new car. Now these perspectives have changed. The Coronavirus pandemic has made us wish for new hopes - hope to sit at table again with relatives and friends, to have freedom in our comings and goings, to go to the theatre, or the football, to see a new transformed NHS, to value those who care for us, to maintain a less polluted world. Nothing however replaces the promise and hope that Jesus offers to his disciples, and that means us, in the gospel Reading, the hope, indeed the promise, of the Holy Spirit.

It is at this time we look forward to Jesus' Ascension, this coming Thursday, and to Pentecost in two weeks time, when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is telling his disciples at the Last Supper that "In a little while the world will no longer see me.." This is because he is ascending to his rightful place to be at the right hand of his Father in Heaven. But the absence of Jesus does not mean the absence of God. He is not going to leave his disciples orphaned. Rather he will be with them in a different form, that of the Holy Spirit. So it is for us. At the beginning of the prayer before Holy Communion we hear the words:

"The Lord is here. His Spirit is with us."

God is here today, he is ever-present, in our lives through his Holy Spirit. "You know him," Jesus says, "because he abides with you, and he will be in you."

The Holy Spirit is called by more than one name. He is known as "helper". He comes to give to God's people strength and energy to do what they have to do, to live for God, witnessing to his world of love. He is known as "comforter" supporting us in times of disaster and tragedy, in times of isolation and loneliness. He is known as the "Advocate", speaking on our behalf in times of trouble. He is known as the "Spirit of Truth" so that we can live lives that do justice as far as we are able.

With the Holy Spirit in us, with Jesus' own breath, his own inner life within us, with God in us, our hopes can become our realities. The fruits of the Holy Spirit - those of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control - are flourishing at this moment as richly as the plants, flowers and crops are in the gardens we tender. If ever you required proof of the existence of the Holy Spirit at work, look no further than how so many people are behaving during this pandemic. You don't need me to point to the evidence of the Spirit's fruits prospering. The hope is that in AP time, after the pandemic, these fruits will continue to flourish and grow and the richest of harvests might be harnessed.

I am encouraged by the wealth of poetry found on the website at the moment, recognising some of the blessings of the lockdown and hoping for a future which maintains and develops these blessings. From the many, I have chosen the closing lines of a Franciscan Irish priest, Richard Hendrick, who wrote his poem, simply entitled "Lockdown" in mid-March. I've added two lines at the end - I don't think he'll mind:

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic

The birds are singing again

The sky is clearing,

Spring is coming,

And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul

And though you may not be able

to touch across the empty square,

Sing

"The Lord is here

His Spirit is with us"

The Closing Prayer and Blessing

Eternal God and Father;

you create us by your power

and redeem us by your love:

guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,

that we may give ourselves in love and service

to one another and to you;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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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