

## **St. David's Church Exeter and S. Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter.**

### **Newsletter for 20 September 2020**

Dear Friends

Welcome to this weekly update for the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

#### **Sunday Worship**

This Sunday the 9.30am Harvest Festival service from St David's will be live streamed on Facebook. Ash Leighton Plom will be preaching at St David's and Nigel Guthrie at St Michael's.

#### **Churches Opening for public worship**

This week opening times are:

St Michael and All Angels – Wednesday Morning Prayer at 9.30am followed by Mass at 10am and Sunday Mass at 11am

St David – Thursday 10.30am, Holy Communion, Sunday 9.30am Holy Communion

#### **Covid-19 Safe**

These are the provisions we are making to keep worshippers as safe as possible.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

We should now wear face coverings in church. There are important exemptions which can be found at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/COVID%2019%20advice%20on%20face%20coverings%20v3.0.pdf>

and which include those with a hearing impairment.

At St David's we are encouraging people to wear face coverings to come forward to receive Holy Communion and then to consume the host after moving away from the altar rail.

Seating will be distanced to approximately 2 metres. Please sit on the seats where service books are placed. Seating is also marked by white labels at St Michael's, with notices on the pews that should be kept clear.

Please observe appropriate distancing from others at all times and the one-way systems through the churches.

Services should be 'no longer than necessary'; and congregational singing is not permitted.

Toilet facilities will be available and please follow the instructions for use.

*Please do not attend church if you are feeling ill or are shielding or vulnerable.*

*Although we will do all we can to make the church safe you attend at your own risk.*

### **Live Daily Prayers**

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

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page: Tuesday and Friday at 9am.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page: Wednesday Angelus and Mass at 10am.

If you would like an order of service please let me know.

### **Traidcraft**

Richard Featherstone will be taking orders for Traidcraft goods this Sunday for delivery in church on the 27th. Many thanks for your continued support.

### **Ash Leighton Plom**

Ash was ordained last Sunday and I will be reading his licence to serve in our parish at today's services.

### **Harvest Festival**

Thank you for the gifts you have brought along for the Esther Community. I know that the staff and residents will be most grateful for your support.

We will celebrate Harvest at St Michael's on October 4<sup>th</sup> (also St Francis' Day) and goods for Exeter Foodbank would be most welcome.

### **Chaplain to HM the Queen**

I feel honoured to have been appointed as a Chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen. The role is an honorary one and most of the Chaplains hold full-time posts in parish churches and cathedrals. There are just over thirty Chaplains appointed from around the country and we usually each preach once a year at the Chapel Royal and attend a Garden Party – so the role is not really too onerous! The Chaplains are presented with a scarlet cassock and badge of office to wear.

### **Quiet Morning – Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October**

We will have decided to hold our Parish Quiet Morning online. It will run from 10am to 12.30 on 14 October.

Penny Warren from the Community of Aidan and Hilda will be speaking on the meaning and implications of Celtic Spirituality. There will be two reflections offered with time between for reflection and prayer. We are suggesting a £5 donation which will all go the Community of Aidan and Hilda of which Penny is Members' Guardian. Please contact Howard Friend on [hfriender@doctors.net.uk](mailto:hfriender@doctors.net.uk) or 07733739453 and let him know if you would like to attend and give him your e-mail address and contribution. Nigel Guthrie will host the Zoom sessions and send out the invitations just beforehand.

## **Reopening of Churches for public worship – a continuing process**

**Our churches are currently open for one midweek communion and one Sunday communion. This gives the chance for the churches to be ‘quarantined’ for 72 hours between times to minimize the risk of any infection. We are keeping this under review in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines. We would love to return to a fuller range of services but that is not yet feasible so please be patient as we do this as safely as possible! Thank you for keeping this process in your prayers.**

**The PCC has now agreed a Risk Assessment process to allow our buildings to be used by a small number of trusted groups. The Risk Assessment is available for scrutiny on the St David’s Website. The PCC will be meeting this week to review progress in the light of current circumstances.**

## **Magazine**

**The September magazine is now available online and in print. Please collect your copies if you kindly deliver them to others. Thank you again to our Magazine team for their hard work and creativity.**

## **Phone Networks**

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

**or by ringing me on 01392 660226 or Ash on 07855305519.**

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

**Charles Argall, Janine, Charles Speed-Andrews, Phil and Moira Dale, Nicky Jarman and her husband Tim and their family, Jacqueline and her family, Joy and her family, Claude and Gillian Harbord, Elizabeth Hewitt, Anne Smith, Grace Tointon, Pam Smith and her family, James and Katy Tyler, Andrew Wakley, Rosemary Willcox and Maurice Wright.**

**Please remember Pam Stephens who died last week after a short time in hospital. Pam was a much loved member of the St David’s congregation and was active in the pastoral care of others. We thank God for her life. May she rest in the peace of Christ.**

**In the Parish Cycle of Prayer we pray for our Harvest Festivals and for the Esther Community. We thank God for our parish charities and overseas links and for the Edibles Stall and Bountiful Table and the lovely produce that is shared.**

**Please also pray for:**

**those not able to return to church and all who are worshipping with us at home.  
the people of Lebanon and Belarus and the areas of California with wild fires**

those areas and countries suffering greatly from Covid-19, and those who are feeling anxious or afraid;

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they have to make  
those working in care homes and hospitals

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

May God keep you in peace and good health, Nigel Guthrie

### **Collect, Readings and Address for Harvest Festival**

**St David's Service will be live streamed on our Facebook page**

#### **Collect**

Eternal God, you crown the year with your goodness

and give us the fruits of the earth in their season:

grant that we may use them to your glory,

for our own well-being, and for the relief of those in need;

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 - Deuteronomy 8: 7-18**

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you.

Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid waste-land with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have

gained me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

### **Gospel Reading Luke 12: 16-30**

Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.'

He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

### **An Address by Ash Leighton Plom at St David's Church – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020,**

**Father of all, give us ears to hear you, minds to meet you,  
and hearts to respond to your living presence. Amen**

**Well, hello everybody, and welcome once again to our Harvest festival here at St David's church, Exeter. For those of you that don't yet know me, My name's Ash, and I'm a trainee vicar here in this parish. Today, I want to do just three things, looking at the scriptures we've heard just now:**

**Firstly, I want to look at Jesus' words about worry for us this morning, and secondly I want to encourage giving thanks as a Biblical balm against worry. Then thirdly, I want to point you forward in Christian hope. So, here we go.**

**Some people say the phrase "do not worry" is written in the Bible 365 times - literally once for every day of the year. Now, admittedly, in practice**

**this varies depending on the translation you use - and some will have phrases like "don't be afraid", or traditional language like "be ye not afearred", but the point stands: The Bible tells us not to worry, all through scripture.**

**And I'm like, "Have you looked around Lord?"!**

**I mean, it's pretty worrying out there.**

**I'm honestly quite worried, most of the time.**

**But that reading from Luke's gospel has it as the words of Jesus himself: "Don't worry about the food you will eat or the clothes you will wear." He says, "There is more to life than food, more to your bodies than clothes."**

**He uses the examples of flora and fauna, both are unworried, and yet both flourish, clothed beautifully by God's provision.**

**Close your eyes a sec, visualise it... imagine it... birds flying free in a blue sky: they're not burdened with worries. They just fly, carefree, free, because of God's care for them.**

**And picture blades of grass or wildflowers wafting in the breeze, a whole field, just waving at you, looking gorgeous.**

**Okay, come on back... Let's think for a minute. The context for Luke 12 is that Jesus is giving this sermon of his own on greed and covetousness, and he uses a parable at the start about that rich man who was so full of himself and his success that he hadn't paused to thank God.**

**His eyes were on the harvest, not on the one who made the harvest grow.**

**So, Jesus is challenging us here, don't fix your eyes on stuff, because you can't take it with you. Jesus invites us: Don't be like that greedy, rich, doomed man, but be like the birds and the plants. Just receive from God his provision in your life.**

**We've got to shift our thoughts from wanting and worrying to thanking and flourishing. He wants us to move from worry to worship.**

**Now, that reminds me, of another excellent scripture: Philippians 4:6-7, where St. Paul says, don't worry about a thing, but in every situation, by prayer, with thanksgiving, present your needs to God. And he says this prayerful thankfulness will fill your hearts with peace in Christ.**

**This brings me to my second point: thankfulness as a balm for fear. Now, like I said, I confess, I myself am a worrier. And even if you don't tend to worry, you can probably acknowledge that the times we're living through right now are worrying... For me, it's the uncertainty. I've got too much pencil in my diary and not enough ink: we make plans, but have to be**

ready to change them or cancel them, in case there's a spike, or government guidelines change, or we have a local lockdown or the like, and everything just feels very uncertain, unstable, and insecure. And this constant uncertainty, this lack of control, is attritional. I find it's wearing me down.

But Jesus reminds us, in the reading today, “no one can add even an hour to their life by worrying”. You can't live longer by worrying. However, you probably *can* live longer by acceptance: accepting that there's only so much you can control, and ultimately we're all, really quite powerless - like the man in Jesus' parable. That man thought he had control over his future, his harvest, but he didn't have control over the fact that he was going to die that very night, through some cause beyond his control...

And, on the other hand, God in his abundant goodness, lavishes generosity on the birds, even on the grass and flowers, and I want to say to you today: he takes an even greater pride in you. I guarantee you, there is no detail of your life that is beneath God's notice. And he wants to lavish his love on you.

So: he calls us to be people who are steeped in his providence, his *presence*, so that we can rejoice that *He*, the creator and sustainer of the universe calls us his friends, and abides with us in our lives. To activate this shift, then, in our thinking and our feeling, I want to suggest to you that *giving thanks kills fear*. Because fear is about fixation on what you lack, thanksgiving is about noticing what you have. If we open our eyes and see, God provides in every situation, if we have eyes to see it, hearts to receive it. Do you know how much it costs to give patients oxygen in the hospital? And yet God blesses us with an abundance of the stuff every day for free. If we relearn how see life, we can replace fear with thanks.

So Jesus says, Godless people run after *things*, like the doomed man in our parable, because they think they have to obtain them all by themselves. But the God is saying: be like the birds and the plants, who receive from God, who provides. One of my favourite sayings, from a very wise master is: “Your focus determines your reality.” I see this in myself all the time: if I let my focus cast around undisciplined, I worry. But if I keep my focus, mindful of what God has done for me, my entire reality can shift from worry to worship.

And this, really, is my final point. This is the Gospel. If we take our eyes off the things we lack and think about the things God has given us, we can move from fear to thanks, worry to worship. As Christians, we believe there is a good creator God, who made us, and has a good purpose for us.

**The incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ show to us that he has not abandoned creation, even though we've made a mess of it. No, he came from heaven to earth – imagine that – from *heaven* to this worrying quagmire of anxiety, sickness and death we call earth, and he blessed it with his very presence and said it's good. And he loves us and values us so much that he *died*, even on a cross, to make a way for you to get from earth to heaven.**

**He took into himself everything which could cause us worry, all the brokenness of the world, all the bad things we do to each other, he took them into himself and paid the price, so that he could reap a harvest of redeemed men and women and children, whose eyes need not be on the stuff of this world, but on the sure and certain hope our redeemer has given us.**

**God cares for you. He provides the very breath in your lungs, for free, he died so you don't have to, and he is risen and ascended to prove it. He is with you by his Spirit right now, especially as we come to him in Sunday worship.**

**So... let's keep giving thanks, by sensing his presence, and let's keep sharing the hope that we have in him, with those around us, and those we meet, so that we ourselves might be messengers in these times of worry, speaking thankfulness against fear, and hope in our Lord for our eternal futures. Amen.**

### **Closing Prayer**

**Lord of the harvest,  
with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your love in creation  
and have shared the bread and wine of the kingdom:  
by your grace plant within us a reverence for all that you give us  
and make us generous and wise stewards of the good things we enjoy;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Do join us next week for our services in church or on Facebook!**

Prebendary Nigel Guthrie  
95 Howell Road  
Exeter EX4 4LH  
[nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com)



