

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

Newsletter for 4 October 2020

Dear Friends

Welcome to this weekly update for the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity which is also the feast day of St Francis of Assisi and Harvest Festival at St Michael's.

Sunday Worship

This Sunday the 9.30am service from St David's will be live streamed on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/stdavidschurchexeter/>

Bill Pattinson will be preaching at St David's with Nigel Guthrie celebrating and preaching at St Michael's.

Choral Evensong will be sung at 6pm this evening at St Michael's.

Services this Week

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. 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. Compline (Night Prayer) on Thursday 8th at 9pm.

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.

Harvest Festival

Thank you for the great selection of gifts that you brought to St David's for the Esther Community. The staff and residents are very grateful for your support.

We will celebrate Harvest at St Michael's today (also St Francis' Day) with Mass at 11am and Choral Evensong at 6pm. Goods for Exeter Foodbank would be most welcome.

Cleaning Elves and Fairies for St David's

Would you be willing to take a turn in helping to keep St David's Church clean? We could really do with some more helpers and often a time a fixed so that people can be in church together to do some cleaning (in a suitably distanced way, of course!). If you would be willing to help would you contact Mary Quest please on 07792 062403?

Annual Revision of the Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll revision has been delayed this year due to the Covid lockdown but it will now take place between Thursday September 24th and Thursday October 8th 2020.

In order to be entitled to attend the annual parochial church meeting on Tuesday 27th October, and to take part in its proceedings, your name must be on the electoral roll. Similarly if you wish to stand for any office (other than Churchwarden) your name must be on the roll.

If you would like to have your name entered on the roll, please contact Sue Wilson at St David's or Paula Lewis at St Michael's, who will be happy to give you an application form and/or more details.

AS THIS IS A REVISION ANYONE WHOSE NAME IS ON THE CURRENT ELECTORAL ROLL NEED NOT APPLY – BUT PLEASE INFORM PAULA OR SUE OF ANY CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Sue Wilson, Electoral Roll Officer
electoralrollofficer@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

This important meeting in our church life has been set for Tuesday 27th October at 7.30pm in St David's Church. Please come along if you can. We do legally have to hold the meeting before the end of October so if government restrictions change and we can't hold the meeting in church arrangements will be made, and advertised, for a Zoom meeting which has been authorised as a back-up plan by Bishop Robert.

Quiet Morning – Wednesday 14th 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 hfriend@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.

Psalms Study by Zoom

In the end we held seven study sessions looking at various psalms over the summer months. I think it was the first time in our parish that an online Bible Study had been held and it was much appreciated. As there are so many psalms we have yet to explore we will be offering some more sessions this autumn on 13 and 20 October and 3 and 10th November. I will publish the Zoom link in our notices next week, and you will be very welcome to join in.

Reopening of Churches for public worship – a continuing process

Our churches are currently open for one midweek communion and one Sunday communion. We are keeping this under review in accordance with national and diocesan guidelines. 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.

Magazine

“New Leaves’ for October is now available. Please collect your copies for church or find the magazine on our websites. Thank you to the magazine team for another great edition!

Phone Networks

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 had any contact please let me know at 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, 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 Dale.

Please remember Maurice Wright and Pam Stephens who died recently. Pam was a much loved member of the St David's congregation and was active in the pastoral care of others. Maurice was also a long time worshipper at St David's and a member of the serving team as well as a lifelong supporter of Exeter City. May they rest in the peace of Christ.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer we pray for Exeter Prison, the inmates, Prison Staff, the Chaplaincy and visitors. We give thanks for the ministry of our licensed readers Charlotte Townsend and Howard Friend who renewed their licenses yesterday and the ministry of our readers who hold the Bishop's 'Permission to Officiate' Bill Pattinson and Ian Cartwright.

Please also pray for:

those not able to return to church and all who are worshipping with us at home;

those places suffering the effects of a changing climate;

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

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they have to make and implement, the police service

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 Sunday 4th October

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

Collect

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself,

and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:

pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,

and so bring us at last to your heavenly city
where we shall see you face to face;
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 – Isaiah 5: 1-7

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.
He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watch-tower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.
And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?
And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.
For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice, but saw bloodshed;
righteousness, but heard a cry!

Gospel Reading – Matthew 21: 33-46

‘Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.” So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’ They said to him, ‘He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.’

Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes”?’ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.’

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

An Address by Bill Pattinson at St David’s Church – 4th October 2020

Trinity 17 and the Feast of St Francis

The Vineyards of our Lives: Matthew 21:33-end; Isaiah 5:1-7:

I love this time of year, so full of a great variety of weather, colour and winter preparations. To my utter surprise and pleasure there are so many fresh buds still on our Lady of Shallot rose. God’s bounty seems never ending. Thus I find myself driving along the Exe valley road quoting aloud to myself the opening lines of Keats’ classic poem “Ode to Autumn”:

“Seasons of mists and mellow fruitfulness

Close bosom friend of the maturing sun,

Conspiring with him how to bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run.”

Not that we see today many vines around thatch-eves. Yet the sight of a full, rich harvest of grapes on the slopes of a vineyard is wonderfully aesthetic, the result of so much joint endeavour. You may know Van Gogh’s great painting “The Red Vineyard”, apparently the only painting he sold in his lifetime. The canvas reveals the mellow tones and the glistening light of an evening’s harvest as the sun sets in a vineyard at Arles in the Rhône Valley, where one of my favourite red wines, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, meaning the Pope’s new castle, is produced. The painting celebrates Autumn. What joy in both harvest and glass!

The Bible is rich in the imagery of the vineyard and wine. We read in Genesis how Adam was put in the Garden of Eden “to till it and keep it.” The Garden was a place of fruitfulness, productivity and gladness until the fall. We can assume that there was a vineyard and a wine press, built and planted, as we heard in our first reading from Isaiah, with God’s tender care, with his intimate involvement, with his meticulousness, with his devoted yet fierce love. God’s vineyard, in this reading, represents the Israelites, who just like Adam and Eve turned away from God, worshipping false idols and being inattentive to his ways. So the grapes turned sour and the wine harvest was bitter, full of bloodshed.

God's love for his vineyard was unrequited by his own people and his judgement was swift and powerful.

Isaiah's song of the unfruitful vineyard leads us seamlessly into Jesus' parable of the wicked tenants, which we heard in our Gospel Reading. There are many similarities. Jesus is in his last week. The 1% of his life to which Belinda referred last Sunday, that week of suffering, betrayal and death. Following his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, he has cleansed the temple of ungodly acts; his authority has been questioned by the chief priests and Pharisees. All around are listening to him, yes, even those chief priests and Pharisees. Indeed to the credit of the Temple leaders they understand the meaning of Jesus' parable. They recognise themselves as the wicked tenants of the vineyard. They realise that the parable is a critique of the leaders of Israel, especially the temple leadership. No wonder they sought his arrest.

The landowner is God, who plants and builds his vineyard, his Kingdom, just as carefully as we heard in Isaiah. It was common in those days to lease out such places to tenants, so there would be no surprise in this to the listeners. The slaves who come to collect the produce represent the early prophets, who are mistreated and even killed by the tenants. Now if the landowner, in those days, died without an heir then the land would go to the tenants. So, on seeing the Son of the owner coming, they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him just as, later in the week, Jesus would be thrown out of Jerusalem and crucified.

Jesus seems to confront the scribes and Pharisees time and time again. He doesn't give up on them. Despite abusing God's gift of the vineyard and his love, he wants them to see the error of their ways. And so he persists with us, never condemning us but rather recovering us. We are all welcome in the Kingdom of God. We will be excluded from the Kingdom only by our own actions. God will never give up on us. Yet Jesus says:

"...the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the Kingdom."

And how can we produce the fruits of the Kingdom? By following in Jesus' steps. By recognising he is the cornerstone, the major vine, in the vineyard of our lives. So what is the quality of our grapes, the fruits of the Kingdom, in the vineyard which God has given to each one of us? It is the heart of Christ which reveals these fruits. What do we see growing there - love, intimacy, mercy, forgiveness, justice, generosity, compassion, truth, healing, joy, thanksgiving, peace, obedience and humility. These are the lived realities in the vineyards of our lives. So how are our grapes ripening? What do we see? Is there life? Are we being

good tenants? Are we sharing in God's Kingdom? Are we producing a rich harvest - a wine of love?

Most noticeable in Van Gogh's canvas of "The Red Vineyard" are the bent backs of the grape pickers. Good harvests rely on combined efforts of hard work, which is not always what we may wish to do. So it is in God's vineyard of our Church. In order for us to produce the fruits of the Kingdom here in our Parish of St David's we must all work together. We have God's gifts to help us, our own talents. We are all called to be good tenants. We are so fortunate that Ash and Belinda in their callings, with their gifts are now ministering with us. We give thanks also for the ministries of Charlotte and Howard who renewed their licences as Readers to this Parish yesterday morning. So what is God calling you to do now, here, in this Church, in this Parish? At our Annual meeting later this month we are seeking a Church Warden for St David's, a Chapel Warden for St Michael's and PCC members. Is this something to which you could bend your back and bear fruit? Please pray that people will come forward.

The grapes may have been ripened and picked, the harvest gathered in and the summer past yet the vineyards of our country, of our world are withstanding great storms - an expected second wave of the pandemic perhaps leading to further lockdowns, climate change, sustainability problems, animal and plant extinction, remembering that today we celebrate the Feast of St Francis, the patron saint of animals, and always there is the possibility of winter storms. It appears there has never been a more appropriate time to thank God for the joy of his gift of love, his vineyard, knowing we can rely on his Providence trusting all of us will play our roles as good tenants. By this will our harvest be rich and the taste of the New Wine delicious.

Closing Prayer

**Lord, we pray that your grace
may always precede and follow us,
and make us continually to be given to all good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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

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