

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

Newsletter for 28 February 2021 — The Second Sunday of Lent

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for the Second Sunday of Lent.

In this traumatic week in St David's parish we have responded to the tragic fire at Clayton Road in which three members of a family died and three others were injured. We held an extended time of private prayer on Thursday morning for people to come and pray and a number brought flowers, wrote prayers and lit candles. We will be doing the same this Sunday morning with St David's open from 9.30 to 12.30pm.

Then an unexploded device from the Second World War was discovered by the university in the field next to our curate's house where excavations are taking place prior to development. Ash and his family had to evacuate along with many others including the students in 12 Halls of Residence. Deborah's photograph of the bomb has appeared on the national BBC website in reports about the incident. As I write this the operation to clear the device continues and we pray for a safe conclusion to the operation and a swift return home.

In the midst of all this the PCC held an online consultation on Wednesday evening to consider whether we should begin public worship again. On the basis that many of our more vulnerable worshippers have had a least one dose of vaccine and the low level of Covid infections locally we resolved to ask Bishop Robert to lift the suspension of services. On Friday I received confirmation from the Bishop's Office that we can open again for public worship after 8th March, as we requested. So next week will be our final online Youtube service of this series and the main Sunday services will begin on 14th March. Services will be held under restrictions as before the current lockdown, with the need to keep 48 hours between major services and restricted singing. This will limit the services we can have in Holy Week but it will be wonderful to be able to celebrate Easter in church, having missed out last year.

Please join us today for our online worship. The link to our **Youtube service** is here:

<https://youtu.be/3f6dvHjrTIE>

At 10.30am we will hold a **Zoom coffee** for 40 minutes including an opportunity to chat in groups. Please join us, if you can, for a catch up. The link to click is below. Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?
pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09)

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

At 4pm **Thrive** will continue on Zoom with time for learning, discussion and prayer today. Thrive is opening up our parish life to others and proving very enjoyable so do give it a try! Please click here to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTICcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

Church Opening Times for Private Prayer

Thursdays: 10.30-11.30am at St David's Church

Sundays: 9.30-10.30am at St David's Church (extended today until 12.30)
11am-12noon at St Michael's Church (with exposition
of the Blessed Sacrament from 11.30am)

Covid-19 Safe for Private Prayer

These are the provisions we are making to keep you as safe as possible during Private Prayer.

Please avoid touching door handles.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

Please leave your name and contact details with Track and Trace.

Please wear face coverings in church. There are 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.

Please take an 'I sat here' notice and leave it on your seat so that others who come later can sit elsewhere.

Please observe appropriate distancing from others at all times.

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.

Online Daily Prayers

Monday 1 March, (St David's Day) 8pm Compline (Night Prayer) on St David's Facebook Page

Tuesday 2 March, (St Chad) 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

Tuesday 2 March, 6pm Vespers on the Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page

Wednesday 3 March, 9.30am Prayer Book Mattins on the St Michael's Facebook Page

Thursday 4 March, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Friday 5 March, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel

A big thank you for the generous donations of food that continue to arrive for our Tuesday packed suppers. The scheme is still set to continue until the end of March. We are well provided with food at the moment, thank you!

Traidcraft Stall & St Michael's Bountiful Table

Unfortunately we are not able to run our regular stalls in church during the current lockdown but we hope to keep them going through orders. Richard Featherstone is happy to take orders through his email address:

r.w.featherstone@gmail.com

these will be available for collection from the vicarage porch or elsewhere. In addition to normal Traidcraft goods Richard will also be taking orders for Traidcraft's Christian easter eggs from now until Friday March 19th. They can be collected, cash on delivery, from St.David's church at private prayer time on Sunday March 28th. The usual milk chocolate ones are £5, dark chocolate £6, hens egg size £5 for six and mini eggs £4 for a bag of 17.

Richard is also able to supply catalogues giving a full range of Traidcraft items.

You can support St Michael's Virtual Bountiful Table by ordering baked goods from Elizabeth Hughes through her phone 01392 259878 or by Stephanie Aplin by email stephaniecaplin@yahoo.co.uk These will be for collection, rather than delivery to church.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting these stalls.

Men's Breakfast

A dozen of us gathered for a successful Men's Breakfast yesterday - thanks to everyone who joined in. We plan to meet again by Zoom on Saturday 27 March at 9am. Do join us if you can and I will publish a Zoom link nearer the time.

Magazine

This is the last day for material for the March magazine. Thank you to everyone who is busily writing!

Green Team

Good news! The pipes in the boiler room underneath St Michael's Church have been professionally lagged recently, as recommended by the architect, to prevent heat loss and improve efficiency.

Fairtrade fortnight is from 22 February – 7 March. Why not support our Fairtrade Stall run by Richard Featherstone (see above) or include an extra Fairtrade item in your shopping trolley? There are good ideas and resources here from: www.fairtrade.org.uk

Here is an excerpt from their webpage:

In Fairtrade Fortnight 2021, we will highlight the growing challenges that climate change brings to farmers and workers in the communities Fairtrade works with. The facts are straightforward. Farmers and workers in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Honduras, who have done the least to contribute to climate change, are disproportionately affected by it. They have told us that:

- Climate change is one of their biggest challenges right now.
- Low prices for their crops mean that they are struggling to fight back.
- Only with more money will they feel equipped to meet their everyday needs and deal with the challenges they face from climate change.

Lent Course - in partnership with Churches Together Central Exeter

These Are Our Stories: Lent in a Pandemic Year

Hosted by St David's Church Exeter on Tuesday afternoons at 2pm on Zoom from 23rd February to 23rd March

. Here is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

This Lent course is based on the pandemic stories of five people from across Devon and will encourage each of us to tell our own stories and reflect on where our faith fits into the experience of the past 12 months. The teaching is based on the work of a group of clergy and lay people from across Devon thinking about Covid-19. The sessions use videos, worksheets with a bible passage for discussion, and illustrations, each week focussing on a different story and theme, with plenty of space for our own thoughts and feelings and discernment of God's activity in our lives.

Also available:

Monday afternoons 2.00pm, 22nd Feb to 22nd March

Hosted by St James' Church, Exeter, Contact fr.steveturner@icloud.com

Tuesday evenings 7.45pm, 23rd Feb to 23rd March

Hosted by the Parish of Central Exeter, Contact sheila.pite@cooptel.net

Wednesday mornings 9.45am, 24th Feb to 24 March

Hosted by the Parish of Central Exeter. Contact sheila.pite@cooptel.net

Persecution and the Early Church

Professor Oliver Nicholson will be hosting and leading a series of three Zoom Talk-Discussions on Thursday March 4th, 11th and 18th from 7 to 8pm. Please find full details in the magazine. Here is the Zoom code for the meetings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82630831936?pwd=WTJ2MHV0d25TU0hXWjZoaWlFdTMrdz09>

Meeting ID: 826 3083 1936 Passcode: 841383

Clewer Initiative Lent Group – Women in the Shadows

Belinda Speed-Andrews will be hosting this Tuesday evening Lent group from Tuesday 23rd February at 7.30pm for five weeks. If you would like to join here is the calendar link and recurring Zoom invitation which should work every week. Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZYvfuyqqDouHdL0H05Bx0li2LKbGxxaAWxj/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGqrDIvGNKUtB6BRpwQAIr4Z-rwpm5bgqdxzDe1VgJLMg_ZM5pMJVnCNnx

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82295261476?pwd=TGJhbythb0krQnBHOXR0eXpncnpBUT09>

Meeting ID: 822 9526 1476 Passcode: 6L6bzG

Here is an introduction to the course:

Worldwide women and girls account for 71% of the 40.3 million people living in modern slavery. In the UK it is harder to gather exact numbers, but we know that in 2018 a third of cases reported to the UK modern slavery helpline related to female victims.

To help shine a light on the suffering of marginalised women the Clewer Initiative has launched ‘Women in the Shadows’, a new five-week course for Lent focusing on the different ways women and girls are exploited in the UK today. During the course you will discover how women are drawn into modern slavery and exploitative situations and what life can be like for them once they are rescued from exploitation including the many challenges they face as they recover from trauma. You will also find out more about sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and County lines and how to recognise signs of modern slavery.

Please click on this link (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iXsZeGHFuM>) to see the trailer for this course. The course is predominantly about women but I would encourage men to join as this is a problem for all of us, men and women.

The course has five short films and a devotional booklet. The films include haunting survivor storeys with insightful contributions from frontline experts and campaigners.

Hospiscare Men's Walk

Last year's 'Men's Walk' was one of the last things that happened before the first lockdown. The past year has been very challenging for Hospiscare as so many of the usual fundraising events have been cancelled. But the Men's Walk is going ahead albeit in 'Covid secure' mode with many people walking on their own or in twos – or whatever might be possible by March 20! We already have the makings of a parish team with at least eight of us signed up to walk. If you would like to support Hospiscare through our Justgiving page we would be delighted and grateful. <https://www.justgiving.com/team/StDavidsExeter>

If you haven't signed up and would like to please contact Clive Wilson or Nigel Guthrie for further details.

Phone Networks & local Walks with a friend

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, or would just like to talk, 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...

Please remember those who have died recently including:

Daniel and Kaylie Rudge and Lilly who died in the Clayton Road fire last Sunday

Ken, Jeremy and Tony – known to members of our church communities

Elizabeth Hewitt whose funeral will be held at St Michael's on Friday 5th March at 12noon. Please remember Adrian and their family.

May they rest in peace.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer this week please pray for our Lent Groups and those who will be leading them.

A Prayer during Covid 19

Loving God, at this time of crisis
when so many are suffering, we pray for our nation and our world.

Give our leaders wisdom, our Health Service strength, our people hope.

Lead us through these parched and difficult days to the fresh springs of joy and comfort that we find in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Please also pray for:

those affected by the fire in Clayton Road last Sunday, family, friends neighbours, members of the emergency services and staff at Cornerstone Housing

those evacuated due to the World War Two explosive device found on Glenthorne Road, the members of the emergency services and armed forces involved in making the device safe and removing it

giving thanks for the vaccination programme in this country and praying the equitable distribution of vaccine throughout the world and the Covax programme;

people here, and around the world, suffering from Covid-19, and those who are feeling anxious, isolated or afraid;

our Government, local and national, in the difficult decisions they must make and implement, wisdom in planning economic recovery which will consider the human and environmental costs and benefits;

school staff preparing for a return of all pupils next week;

those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices - giving thanks for their commitment and courage;

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

those who are enslaved in the modern world;

give thanks for those working towards fairer trade in the world;

May God bless you and those you care for,

Nigel Guthrie

Order of Service for the Second Sunday of Lent, 28 February 2021

Welcome to worship in the parish of St David and St Michael, Exeter on this Second Sunday of Lent. Today we reflect on the Jesus words that he would suffer, be rejected, be killed and rise again. It was a message which his disciples found it hard to hear.

When Jesus told his followers that they must take up their cross and follow him you would not have thought it would be a very successful rallying cry. But countless generations of Christians have done just that and given themselves in love and service to God and their neighbours.

I would like to lead an opening prayer and act of confession before reading the Collect for the day.

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

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

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled against him. Let us then renounce our wilfulness and ask his mercy by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness

And cleanse me from my sin:

Lord have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

Make me a clean heart, O God,

And renew a right spirit within me:

Christ, have mercy. Christ have mercy

Cast me not away from your presence

And take not your holy spirit from me:

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

The priest pronounces the absolution.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect

Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Reading – Genesis 17: 1-7 & 15-16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.' Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No

longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.'

Gospel Reading – Mark 8: 31-end

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

Address from Nigel Guthrie for the Second Sunday of Lent

Jeremiah 29: 11

'For I know the plans I have for you', declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'

I suppose the word of the week might be 'roadmap'. Many people were eagerly awaiting the government announcement on Monday when the stages for opening up society after the most recent lockdown were laid out for us.

It is a word which resonated with us at home too. Last weekend we went to consult the roadmap in our car only to find that the Devon pages were in an advanced state of decomposition. So a roadmap will need to be on our shopping list, when we are allowed to shop for such non-essentials. In spite of the wonders

of Google Maps I still like to look at a proposed journey on a real map – or perhaps I should say a paper one! I like to get a mental picture of the journey so that I can imagine its shape and scope.

And I guess that is why the announcement was so eagerly awaited by many. We all wanted to have some idea about when we might be able to see loved ones again or go away for a break, or reopen businesses. And the government roadmap has certainly helped us to get a picture of what might happen when - even though, wisely, the dates are conditional on infections and hospital admissions falling and then staying low.

In both of our readings today roadmaps are set out and they are not at all what the recipients were expecting. Abram, at the age of ninety nine, was told by God that he would become the father of a multitude of nations. The passage this morning doesn't record his reaction but later in the same chapter we hear that Abram fell on his face and laughed at God's plan. And in the next chapter when Sara, whose age is recorded as ninety, found out God's plan she also laughed. Even if we take these advanced ages with a pinch of salt it seems ridiculous that such elderly people could have children and become the basis of an everlasting covenant between God and his people. The roadmap seemed crazy, but that is what God wanted and that is what happened.

Tina and I had been married for fifteen years when our first son was born. We had been regretfully getting accustomed to the idea that we would probably not have children, and were enjoying the company of a golden retriever! But then the unexpected happened and the past twenty two years have been joyfully shaped by the birth and growth of our sons.

But not all surprises are so welcome or positive. Sometimes our lives and the plan we imagine for them are interrupted, and disrupted, by negative events and experiences that we hadn't anticipated. Sickness, relationship breakdown, unemployment and bereavement can hit any of us and throw us off course. It is that sort of dislocation that we have experienced as a society in the past year. I can hardly believe that just one year ago most of us still had little idea about the what the coming year would bring. Just as well, we might say. Most of us brought up since the war have experienced improving health care, growing material wealth, and lack of war on our own soil. Perhaps that has made this past year even more of a shock?

'For I know the plans I have for you', declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.' If God had a plan for last year I can't attempt to understand it or to explain it to you.

And that puts me in good company because the road map which we heard Jesus lay out for his disciples in today's gospel reading was neither understood nor appreciated. If anything it went down even worse than God's plan that Abram and Sara should become the parents of a multitude of nations in their dotage. Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the Jewish establishment and be killed and after

three days rise again. Peter really didn't like that road map. He took Jesus to one side and started to rebuke him. But Jesus rebuked Peter in turn saying 'Get behind me, Satan'. And explained to his followers how they must take up their cross and follow him. He showed them that that couldn't have it all ways. But if they were willing to give up their lives, they would ultimately save them.

In the Diocesan Lent Course which some of us are following we are attempting to find words to describe our experiences over the past year stimulated by the video stories of others recorded by Christians in Devon. When we have a tragedy or major loss in our lives it is good to try and express what it means to us and how it affects us. The process of articulating what has happened can help us to feel that we own it, rather than it owning us. And the aim of the Lent Course is to help us come to terms with the past year in way that is realistic but also hopeful. We can't turn the clock back and bring back those who have died or regain lost opportunities or events. But we can consider how we might live and love better. We can give thanks for the good things that have come out of this time.

The Christian life is about living well in the present, seeking to love and serve those around us, and rejoicing in God's hope. But it is also about looking forward to the resurrection life that God has promised us through Jesus Christ and preparing ourselves for that eternal life which is the final destination of our journey.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Almighty God,

you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:

keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls;

that we may be defended from all adversities

which may happen to the body,

and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves,

take up your cross and follow him;

and the blessing of God almighty, the Father,

the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon us and remain

with us always. Amen.

Do join us next week for our prayer