

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

Newsletter for 14 March 2021 — The Fourth Sunday of Lent, Mothering Sunday

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for Mothering Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent. And welcome back to public worship in our churches, if you are able to join us. We thank God that the Covid infection rate is now much lower in our area and that many of us have already had at least one dose of vaccine. But we will be exercising caution in church with the same arrangements as before the latest lockdown (see below). If you are feeling nervous about returning to main Sunday worship you might consider coming to one of our weekday services. And we will continue to stream prayers and worship on Sundays and during the week.

Today's services are:

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's (live streamed) with celebrant Nigel Guthrie and preacher Bill Pattinson

11am Mass at St Michael's with Fr Nigel Guthrie celebrating and preaching.

At 4pm **Thrive** will continue on Zoom with time for learning, discussion and prayer today. This week's theme for Mothering Sunday will explore God as a good and loving Mum, featuring breakout groups, presentations on the week's theme, and conversation. Please click here to join:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?
pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTlCcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09)

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 16 March, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer (from Common Worship).

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

Tuesday 16 March, 6pm Vespers on the Friends of St Michael's Facebook Group

Wednesday 17 March, St Patrick's Day 9.30am at St Michael's Mattias followed by 10am Mass in church (also live streamed on St Michael's Facebook Page)

Thursday 18 March, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

10.30 Holy Communion at St David's in church

Friday 19 March, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 21 March - The Fifth Sunday in Lent, Passion Sunday

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's (live streamed) with Nigel Guthrie celebrating and Belinda Speed-Andrews preaching.

11am Mass at St Michael's with Fr Robin Eastoe celebrating and preaching.

Would you like to keep silence together this Lent?

Would you like the opportunity to put the week to rest and lay aside all that the week has brought so that you can really enjoy a time of sabbath? If you would like to, please join us for half hour of silence on Friday evenings from 5.30-6.00pm for the last two weeks of Lent. Here are the joining instructions:

The zoom link for each week is below. If you do lose it or can't find it please don't worry just email Belinda Speed-Andrews and she can send it out again.

Topic: Lenten Silence. Time: Mar 19, 2021 05:30 PM & Mar 26, 2021 05:30 PM
Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZ0lf-qvpz4tHdc3dl_8_og9LZwBpFyWM90B/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjMpHd2Qtx6ERpx5Goqgb-3xmCVagqdezvvpPHhsbQSvGthVEKJZCe_9

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89883795773?pwd=VHBLVmFRTXJqcUhET042dHY0YnVJZz09>

Meeting ID: 898 8379 5773 Passcode: z8ukpm

The Glenthorne Road Bomb

Following the discovery of a Second World War bomb near Glenthorne Road and the detonation of the device, many people were evacuated, including a number of members of our congregations and our curate, Ash Leighton Plom and his family. We thank God that no lives were lost and that most people are now back home. However significant damage has been done to our Curate's house amongst other properties. The Diocesan property department has been proactive in assessing the house and making it safe. Ash, Deborah and Alfred are now back in temporarily, but they will need to move out (probably to a vacant vicarage) while substantial repairs are carried out. Exeter Diocese will cover housing and moving costs. A number of people have asked if they can offer gifts to Ash and his family and the Standing Committee agreed to receive donations this week (closing 21 March) which will be passed on to Ash and his family as a gift. Please forward any gifts to Barbara Allin, St David's treasurer, or through our Churchwardens or Chapel Warden making clear who they are for. Barbara can provide account details if needed.

We have also been considering what else can be done to help those affected by the bomb detonation and the tragic house fire in Clayton Road. Glynis has been speaking to Diana Moore, our local councillor, and it is clear that the University are looking after the students that have been displaced and that the Housing Association is looking after those in social housing near the site of the explosion. Two 'Go Fund Me' sites are already set up to help the surviving children of the fire and to pay for the funerals of those who have died. We keep all those affected in our prayers.

Services back in Church

As from this week we will be holding our main Sunday services and midweek communion services back in church. Services will be held under the same restrictions as before the current lockdown, with the need to keep 48 hours between major services. This will limit the services we can have in Holy Week but it will be very wonderful to be able to celebrate Easter in church, having missed out last year. Please avoid mingling or chatting in church but move outside if you would like to hold conversations to minimise any risks of transmission.

Covid-19 Safe for Public Worship

Please avoid touching door handles – Thank you.

Hand sanitizer must be used on entering and leaving church.

Please wear a face covering in church unless you are exempt.

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.

At St Michael's the priest will come to distribute Holy Communion to people in their seats.

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.

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

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

Please avoid mingling inside church before or after services.

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.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting – could you contribute to our PCC?

We are planning to hold our APCM online on Wednesday 28th April 2021. Because of the continued uncertainty about meeting inside parishes are being encouraged to plan meetings to be held by Zoom. We will be looking for three new PCC members from St David's and one from St Michael's. Please think about whether you might serve our parish community in this way. We will also be seeking to elect a Churchwarden for the parish and a Chapel warden for St Michael's. These are essential roles for the health of our parish please pray for the right people to come forward. Please speak to Nigel or one of our existing church and chapel wardens if you might be willing to stand.

Food for vulnerable community housed at the Great Western Hotel

A big thank you for the generous donations of food for our Tuesday packed suppers. The scheme is still set to continue until the end of March with reduced

numbers as some of the residents are being re-housed. We are well provided with food at the moment, thank you! We have had a thank you message from St Petrocks which Roger Beer has passed on to me: *'Thank you all so much for the truly incredible energy, dedication and hard work you've poured in to keep this service running consistently for an entire year – it has been an absolute lifeline and had a transformative impact on many of the individuals there. 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 church. In addition Richard will 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 in church. Thank you for your generosity in supporting these stalls.

Men's Breakfast

A dozen of us gathered for a successful online Men's Breakfast in February. 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.

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

The magazines for March are now available through our websites or in church. Thank you to our fabulous magazine team for their hard work.

Green Team

Have you heard of **'Toilet Twinning'**? If not do have look at their website. For a £60 donation they will fund a toilet for a family or community which lacks such facilities. Part of working towards eco-church accreditation at St David's is to have our church toilets 'twinned'. In return for the donation you receive a picture of the toilet you have funded with its GPS location. If you would be interested in supporting this project please have a word with Glynis Harflett. Glynis would also like to source **some shade loving plants** for inside St David's Church. If you might be splitting some plants and have spares she would like to try spider plant, mother-in-laws tongue and peace lily.

Thank you for the donation of another **nest box** for the churchyard this week.

Thank you letters

Members of St David's Church planned giving scheme usually receive a letter at this time of year to acknowledge their financial support during the year. Because

a number of people may not be attending church in person yet it is planned to send these by email using the address through which you receive this newsletter. If you would NOT be willing to receive your letter in this way would you let us know as soon as possible please?

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.

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. 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.

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 a parish team with 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

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, 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, Iviee-May and Lilly who died in the house fire at Clayton Road.

Ken, Jeremy, Tony, Stella, Mike Newman and Elizabeth Hewitt

May they rest in peace.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer this week please pray for the Esther Community and for Donna who leads the work there providing a safe and supportive environment for young people aged 16-25 who are experiencing homelessness
A Prayer during Covid 19

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour,
And to care for those in need as if we were caring for you.

**In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful,
To tend the sick and to assure the isolated of our love and your love,
For your name's sake. Amen.**

Please also pray for:

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

those whose homes have been damaged by the detonation of the World War Two bomb found at Glenthorne Road, and those providing support for them;

the family of Sarah Everard; and all women who feel unsafe in their homes or outside

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 this week;

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

those who are facing unemployment or economic hardship;

the people of Myanmar in their struggle for democracy;

Please give thank for:

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

the falling Covid case numbers in this country;

May God bless you and those you care for,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers, Readings and Address for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, 14 March 2021

Collect

God of compassion,

whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,

shared the life of a home in Nazareth,

and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:

strengthen us in our daily living

that in joy and in sorrow

we may know the power of your presence

to bind together and to heal;

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.

First Reading – 1 Samuel 1:20-28

In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the Lord.'

The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her

husband, ‘As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the Lord, and remain there for ever; I will offer him as a nazirite for all time.’ Her husband Elkanah said to her, ‘Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only—may the Lord establish his word.’ So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was young. Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, ‘Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me the petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is given to the Lord.’ She left him there for the Lord.

Gospel Reading – Luke 2:33-35

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

Address from Bill Pattinson for the Fourth Sunday of Lent

“Called to Care”, Mothering Sunday 14.03.2021

Happy Mothering Sunday or Happy Mothers Day?

Mother’s Day has its roots in early 20th century America. A beloved day of affection and celebration for mums thanking them for all they do; an opportunity to spoil them with breakfast in bed, to send cards and flowers and enjoy family meals around the table. The problem is with such a celebration that it’s not totally inclusive. Those who are childless or motherless or who have lost an only child may feel cast adrift. A mother’s role may be the domain of the father or grandparents or other relations or friends.

Mothering Sunday, on the other hand, is a distinctly religious festival started in the 16th century. The word “mothering” refers to “mother church”, the main church or cathedral of the region. Traditionally on the fourth Sunday of Lent, people would return to their mother church, where their faith was first born and nurtured, for a special service. This pilgrimage became known as “going a-mothering” (I love that phrase) and it became something of a holiday event. This is a totally inclusive festival for all Christians.

Today, in many ways, both festivals have been put into the pot and stirred - we celebrate both mothers, whoever they may be, and mother church. I certainly recall my mum on this day, giving thanks for all she gave and sacrificed for me.

Her year's mind was this last Thursday. It's 18 years since she died. A wonderful woman! My mother church was St. Paul's, Scotforth, Lancaster, where I sat with mum or dad in the choir stalls as a babe in arms, growing up to attend church as a choir boy three times every Sunday, not forgetting choir practice on Thursday evenings. My faith was born, nurtured and developed at St Paul's. For this I also give thanks. The most important thing is that both mother and the church are called to care. The Austrian philosopher and theologian, Baron Friedrich Von Hugel wrote:

**“Christ taught us to care
Caring is the greatest thing
Caring matters most.”**

So what constitutes “caring”? What are the values and attributes of caring, of mothering? These questions will be considered as I continue.

Our two readings this morning concern two wonderful, godly mothers Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, was desperate for a child, so desperate that she wept and prayed regularly at the temple, often overseen by the priest, Eli. She prayed that, if God granted her a male child, she would dedicate his life to God, that he would become a Nazirite. Now a Nazirite is a child consecrated to the service of God, who is placed under vows to abstain from alcohol and to let the hair grow. Eventually, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel, which means “God heard”. When Samuel was weaned, Hannah took him to the temple and handed him over to Eli fulfilling her promise that his life would be given to the Lord. Samuel grew up to be one of the greatest prophets and judges that Israel has ever known. All mothers recognise what a painful, selfless and sacrificial act this would be. Often the cost of caring.

This morning's Gospel Reading from Luke is one we recently read at Candlemas. Notice once again, the Temple is the heart of this passage, the link to Mother Church. Mary and Joseph, as brand new parents, are bringing their child, Jesus, to the Temple to thank God for him and to dedicate him to God's service, in a similar way as we might do at an infant baptism. They are met by Simeon and Anna, as if in the role of wise supportive grandparents. They recognise the child as not only the Saviour of Israel but also of the Gentiles. Yet this realisation is coupled with the disturbing words of Simeon to Mary that “a sword will pierce your own soul.” Once more we are reminded how painful parenting can be. Not only the deprivation of sleep, not only the worry when children perhaps stay out too long and eventually go their own way and you simply have to let them go, but in Mary's case, as in many others', the excruciating pain of burying your own child. Mary must have felt the nails herself going into her own hands, the sword in her own side, as she stood at the foot of the cross of our Lord.

Of course, the emotions associated with caring, with mothering, are not always burdensome and painful. Paul writes to the Colossians “..clothe yourselves with

compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience...above all clothe yourselves with love.” These are the attributes of a carer, a mother and the church, to which we more readily subscribe. No doubt you could add more. I like the values of calming, encouragement and gentleness expressed by Carl Sandburg, the Swedish-American poet, in these words:

“Here is a thing my heart wishes the world had more of:

I heard it in the air of one night when I listened

To a mother singing softly to a child restless and angry in the darkness.”

I’ve followed with interest the argument that countries like New Zealand, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Taiwan, Iceland and Bangladesh, all of whom are led by a woman, have been more successful in the fight against coronavirus. These women were seen to be more open, more authentic, more truthful, more inclusive, more decisive and more trusting of the science and technology than many of their male counterparts. Jacinda Adern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, in the early days of the pandemic, hosting an informal Facebook live question and answer session from her home, dressed in slops began, “Excuse the casual attire, it can be a messy business putting toddlers to bed.” Can you see Boris adopting a similar open, authentic approach? Erna Solberg, the Prime Minister of Norway, recently interviewed on the wonderful “Woman’s Hour”, held coronavirus instructional lessons for children to help ease their fears. How inclusive is that? She explained, “I think some leaders are motivated by love and care of their populace, while others will use fear and power.”

The irony of all this is that we are still living in a political society, which hugely undervalues mothers, showing an ignorance or an active decision to ignore their needs; in a society which doesn’t value care leaving it primarily in the hands of the private family. Caring professions are still not given the recognition they deserve. Indeed women are still the main carers. Natasha Walter, founder of the charity “Women for Refugee Women”, writing recently in the Observer wrote, “The pandemic is bearing down hard on working mothers and risks turning the clock back on women’s equality.”

If we are to be true disciples of Christ, to adopt the values of caring, the attributes of being a loving mother, the compassion of an inclusive church, then surely we need only to look to the Great commandment “To love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.”? Julian of Norwich wrote:

“Our Saviour is our true mother in whom we are endlessly born and out of whom we shall never come.”

Happy Mothering Sunday!

Closing Prayer and Blessing

**Loving God,
as a mother feeds her children at the breast
you feed us in this sacrament with the food and drink of eternal life:
help us who have tasted your goodness
to grow in grace within the household of faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**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 services on Facebook!