

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

Newsletter for 28 March 2021 - Palm Sunday

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for Palm Sunday. Please don't forget that the clocks go forward today!

Although current restrictions prevent from having processions we can still receive palm crosses that are blessed. Do please take one for yourself and one for anyone you know who is not able to come to church.

Holy Week and Easter are not going to be the same as usual but I am grateful that, unlike last year, we can meet together for some of our services. The PCC has planned our main services so that a 'quarantine time' is kept between them.

Holy Week reminds us of the intense suffering, betrayal and death that Jesus endured. He became the suffering servant who, as Isaiah said was 'wounded for our iniquities'. Even on Good Friday we give thanks that 'by his wounds we are healed'.

If you don't feel that you are yet able to return to main Sunday worship why not join one of our quieter weekday services or follow our online prayers?

Today's services are:

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's (live streamed) with celebrant Belinda Speed-Andrews and preacher Ash Leighton Plom

11am Mass at St Michael's with Nigel Guthrie and Ash Leighton Plom preaching.

At 4pm **Thrive** will continue on Zoom with time for learning, discussion and prayer today. Please click here to join:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?
pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTICcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTICcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09)

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 30 March, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer (from Common Worship).

Please join us using this code [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?
pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09)

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

Tuesday 30 March, 7pm, Audio Visual Stations of the Cross at the West End of St Michael's Church. Recorded music of Scarlatti Stabat Mater.

Wednesday 31 March, 9.30am at St Michael's Mattins followed by 10am Mass in the Lady Chapel (also live streamed on St Michael's Facebook page)

Wednesday 31 March, 7pm Holy Communion at St David's Church

MAUNDY THURSDAY 1 April, 7.30pm Sung Mass with Stripping of the Altars followed by the Watch until midnight at St Michael's Church

GOOD FRIDAY 2 April, 2pm Reflection with four members of the parish reflecting on music. With readings from the passion narrative. At St David's Church.

EASTER EVE 3 April, 8pm Easter Vigil. The First Mass of Easter with blessing of the fire and Renewal of Baptismal Vows at St Michael's church

EASTER DAY 4 April, 9.30am Easter Communion at St David's Church

Collection for the Leighton Plom family

Thank you to everyone who contributed to a gift following the significant damage to the home of Ash, Deborah and Alfred and to their possessions. The collection will be given to them this week with the assurance of our prayers as they prepare to move out to Thorverton Vicarage while their house is repaired.

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

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.

Easter Week Services

Please note that Nigel and Ash will be off duty from 5-12 April so there will be reduced services.

Thursday 8 April, 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's

Thursday 8 April, 6pm Vespers live at St Michael's and streamed on the Friends of St Michael's page.

Sunday 11 April

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with celebrant Belinda Speed-Andrews and preacher Howard Friend

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher Fr Robin Eastoe

Good Friday in Central Parish

Nigel Walsh is helping to lead a Good Friday reflective service for Central parish. If you would like to join please let Nigel know to receive a link nigel@ncw.eclipse.co.uk

'Exeter Prays' online

With many churches still not open for public worship this local prayer project has been launched. An online Easter Pilgrimage following the Stations of the Cross, will take place from Monday 29th March to Good Friday 2nd April, with 3 videos per day at <https://www.exeterprays.com/>

There will be a Good Friday service of prayer and reflection on 2nd April at 10:30am as we focus on the death of Jesus, and finally on Easter Sunday morning 4th April we'll air a prayer of blessing, also at [exeterprays.com](https://www.exeterprays.com)

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.

Electoral Roll Revision

Electoral Roll Revision: Between March 31st and April 13th we will be revising the electoral roll. If you would like to have your name added or if you have changed your address please let Sue Wilson know on electoralrollofficer@stdavidschurch.org.uk or in church.

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. Orders for Traidcraft Christian easter eggs can be collected, cash on delivery, from St. David's Church today.

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

Thank you to everyone who joined us yesterday. The date of our next virtual breakfast is Saturday 14th April at 9am, by Zoom.

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

The deadline for the April magazine is today. Thank you to all our contributors.

Green Team

The Green Team met this week and are planning a morning focussed on the environment, with lunch, for 11th September. Please keep the date!

Thanks to your support we have been able to twin three of the toilets at St David's Church. The money from this will provide a toilet for a family or community which lacks such facilities. We will be notified of the exact location of our twinned toilets in due course!

Glynis would 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.

The PCC recently week that the parish investment funds that are not already held in Ethical Investments should be moved into Ethically Managed Funds.

Thank you for your continued financial support

Although this past year has been difficult for many people in different ways members of our churches have continued with their regular giving. The PCC wishes to convey its sincere appreciation for the generous support that has been given to both of our churches in the past year to enable us to continue with our ministry and worship.

Hospiscare Men's Walk

The St David's team would like to thank everyone for their generous support. Our St David's Team *Just Giving* page we raised £1870 (plus £406 Gift Aid) plus another £100 given to Clive last week, which is amazing. Other donations have gone directly to Hospiscare. We are so pleased to support one of our key local charities in this way.

Cleaning at St Michael's Church

We would love to recruit some more volunteers to help clean at St Michael's Church, especially in the Chancel and Lady Chapel. Cleaners usually go in every other week and Elizabeth Hughes is usually in church once a fortnight on a Tuesday morning. We would also like to arrange an occasional cleaning party but this will have to wait until restrictions loosen. Please have a word with Stephanie Aplin or Elizabeth Hughes if you would be able to help. Thank you.

Phone Networks

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

Stella Ugbo; Lesley, sister of Helen Drever; Elizabeth Hewitt

May they rest in peace.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer this week please pray, with thanksgiving, for our bellringers and give thanks for their witness.

A Prayer for Palm Sunday

**True and humble king, hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory. Amen.**

Please also pray for:

YMCA Exeter, all staff and residents at St David's Hill;

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;

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;

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 Syria and Yemen longing for peace and security;

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 Palm Sunday, 28 March 2021

Collect

**Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
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.**

Palm Gospel Mark 11: 1-11

**When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, “Why are you doing this?” just say this, “The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.” ’ They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, ‘What are you doing, untying the colt?’ They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,
‘Hosanna!**

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

First Reading – Philippians 2: 5-11

**Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God**

as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Passion Gospel according to St Mark.

Address from Ash Leighton Plom for Palm Sunday

The two sets of readings today can give us emotional whiplash, between the joy of the Triumphal Entry and the shock of the Passion.

This is the journey of Holy Week: a joyful week, a brutal week, and with much scope for a wide range of emotion besides.

The historian E.P. Sanders, in his book *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, reveals that, contrary to popular belief, the week leading up to Jesus' death and the days following his resurrection are among the best documented in all of ancient history.

We have more written evidence for the last week of Jesus' life before the crucifixion, and the first days afterwards, than we do for any other week in any other person's life in all of antiquity.

I opened up my copy of Sanders' *Historical Figure of Jesus* again just recently in the course of some student ministry. A student friend of mine introduced me – electronically – to one of her housemates who she's been introducing to Christianity.

He wanted to know if what we Christians believe is historically real, and I was touched, because he's working through some of the same questions I explored, before I became a Christian.

So I started, "I have good news": we have an almost embarrassing abundance of sources evidencing the events of the week from Palm Sunday through to Easter Sunday. These sources include eye-witness testimonies from people who were there, and carefully collected sources compiled later.

This is compelling, because historians look for trustworthy sources close to the events reported, and ideally, multiple sources attesting the same events. So, happily, 2 Peter 1.16 for example states, "we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about Jesus, but were eyewitnesses". 1 John 1.3 even reveals the author's motives for writing, saying, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us."

Palm Sunday is one of the most critical moments within these accounts, allowing historians like Sanders to draw a causal line from the Triumphal Entry today to the Passion just less than a week later.

For instance, all four Gospels record that Jesus rode in on a donkey, and they marvel that this fulfilled Old Testament prophecy, recorded around 600 years earlier. All four gospels record the large crowd coming to witness this prophetic entry, waving branches and shouting.

Interestingly, St Matthew, St Mark, and St Luke don't name palm branches specifically, but St John does, and so the day is named.

We, like these First Century witnesses, journey with Jesus this Holy Week.

Observe what he does – his authority in the Temple, his humility at the Table, and his obedience on the Cross.

These are not just historical facts to recall, but experiences to participate in, mystically, and opportunities, too, to invite friends and family to journey on with us. This week, can you find three people to invite to church, in person or online, inviting them to share in this historically factual, and mystically present experience of Holy Week? Let's welcome them together, at any of our services this coming week.

One final detail I want to end with is that the Palm Sunday event is, for a historian, one of *the* biggest contributing factors to Jesus' death just six days (t)hence, on Good Friday.

St Luke 19.39 observes that, as Jesus entered the city – on the donkey, to the adoration of the palm-waving crowd – some of the Pharisees, who were resentful of Jesus, said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

Why did they want Jesus to rebuke these cheering disciples? The reason is simple. The cheers showed that the crowd thought that Jesus was the Messiah, fulfilling the ancient prophecies about a king entering Jerusalem on a donkey. If Jesus failed to rebuke them, it showed he himself was accepting this mantle, owning the title, and claiming the prophecy.

But Jesus replies, "If the people keep quiet, the stones will cry out." (Luke 19.40)

Palm Sunday is the momentous incident when Jesus publicly accepts Messianic kingship, and therefore also the moment of his fatal disowning by the religious hierarchy.

Sanders offers as explanation for the Jewish leaders' actions their fear of the Romans. In the previous decades, the Roman army had massacred anyone who claimed to be liberator of the Jews, and if the crowds' acclaiming of Jesus was not rejected by Jesus, then the Romans could likely massacre the people to suppress this apparent insurrection. So St John 11.50 reports the Jewish high council soon ruling, "it is better that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

From today, as we enter Holy Week, the plot to kill Jesus is most certainly afoot.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

**Lord Jesus Christ,
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:
give us the mind to follow you
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,
to the glory of God the Father.**

**Christ crucified draw you to himself,
to find in him a sure ground for faith,
a firm support for hope,
and the assurance of sins forgiven;
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 in church and online!