

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

Newsletter for 7 March 2021 — The Third Sunday of Lent

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for the Third Sunday of Lent.

Please join us today for our online worship. The link to our **Youtube service** is here: <https://youtu.be/uEpO1qr3CNQ>

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to our recorded services over the past two months and especially to Nigel Walsh who, with great skill and imagination, has edited them together for us each week.

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.

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

There will be no **Thrive** meeting this Sunday afternoon but we plan to be back on Zoom next week.

The Glenthorne Road Bomb

I'm sure that you will have heard about the Second World War bomb that was discovered in the building plot near Glenthorne Road and the subsequent evacuation of nearby residents 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 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 over the next two weeks which will be passed on to Ash 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 is 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 from 8 March

As from this coming week we will be holding our main 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.

Churches open for Private Prayer on Sunday 7th March

9.30-10.30am at St David's Church

11am-12noon at St Michael's Church (with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 11.30am)

Services in Church this week at St David's Church

Thursday 11 March: 10.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 14 March: 9.30am Parish Communion (Mothering Sunday) (streamed)

Services in Church this week at St Michael's Church

Wednesday 10 March: 9.30 Mattins (Prayer Book) and 10am Requiem Mass (streamed)

Sunday 14 March: 11am Mass with Cantor

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

Tuesday 9 March, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer.

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

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

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392 Passcode: 196651

Tuesday 9 March, 6pm Vespers on the Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page

Wednesday 10 March, 10am Requiem Mass streamed on the St Michael's Facebook Page

Thursday 11 March, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Friday 12 March, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

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 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. 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 church. 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 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 we receive a picture of the toilet we have funded with its GPS location. If you would be interested in supporting this project please have a word with Glynis Harflett.

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.

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.

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...

The two children injured and bereaved in the Clayton Road house fire.

Please remember those who have died recently including:

Daniel and Kaylie Rudge, Ivie-May and Lilly who died in the house fire at Clayton Road.

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

Elizabeth Hewitt whose funeral was held at St Michael's on Friday. Please remember Adrian and their family.

May they rest in peace.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer this week please pray for the Women's World Day of Prayer and the Church Women's group

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, 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;

Pope Francis during his visit to Iraq. May it lead to relief for Christians in Iraq and better understanding between the faiths;

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;

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, 7 March 2021

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,

whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,

and entered not into glory before he was crucified:

mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,

may find it none other than the way of life and peace;

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 – Exodus 20: 1-17

The Ten Commandments

Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Gospel Reading – John 2: 13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Address from David James for the Third Sunday of Lent

Well, here we are, half way through the season of Lent. Only half way, I hear you say! How long, O Lord, how long! How is it going? Are you finding it a helpful time? I do hope so. For me, I think one of the important opportunities that Lent offers is the chance to pause each year and get a better perspective on where we are and how we are with others and with God. And I think the readings we've just heard help us to do that, oddly perhaps, by reminding us just how different God is from us.

That may seem a strange thing to say because in one sense it's obvious. God is almighty; we aren't. God is immortal; we aren't. God is present everywhere but we have difficulty in just being present where we are. God is all-loving; we aren't. Christians perhaps more than others risk domesticating God - 'What a friend we have in Jesus', says the old hymn. True, but Jesus is not actually like our other friends - and that's why I want to suggest he's our best friend in fact; because it enables him to do what humans can't - but what we need.

The first of the readings today, the version of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20, took me back to those days when every celebration of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, from the BCP included a recitation of all those commands, each one followed by the response, 'Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.'

Many churches had and some still do, all those commandments written up on the wall behind the altar or else framed in the shape of two stone tablets on either side. This was often the only decoration to be seen; the rest was whitewash, occasionally relieved by stained glass. So you couldn't miss them. The sense that Christian faith was essentially about obedience to an austere moral law - and that

you jolly well ought to behave yourself - subtly permeated the whole religious mindset.

The God of the Commandments is awesome, a God who tolerates no rivals, a God to treat with respect. And yet, of course, a God who also wants a relationship, a God who shows mercy and love to those who keep the commandments which are the terms of that relationship. A God who wants us to live harmoniously with others.

What God is doing in the Ten Commandments, though it's less obvious to us now, is in fact creating a new people, a new community of faith who would be defined by their behaviour. And that, in turn, was a reflection of their new relationship with the only true and living God. God was clearing the ground and doing a new thing.

Until Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from Mount Sinai, the Israelites were simply another Middle Eastern tribe. They were not consciously God's people. But through the experience of the Exodus and freedom from slavery the special relationship with God that had begun with Abraham and the patriarchs was forged through the commandments for the whole community. Through their reflection of God's character they were to become a light for all nations.

Let's turn now to the gospel. This is John's account of the cleansing of the Temple. Jesus, in a fury we don't often associate with him, overturns the stalls of the traders around the outside of that huge building where people could exchange money for the currency or animals needed to fulfil the sacrificial laws for cleansing or forgiveness, once inside the sacred precincts themselves. God is clearing the ground again; in Jesus God is doing a new thing and forming a new people through his Son.

This is often seen as a prophetic sign of Jesus indicating that he has come to replace that whole system which had turned faith into a religious transaction - offer the right sacrifices and God in return will forgive us and cleanse us. But Jesus is coming to sweep all of that away. In future he will be the way to God, he will forgive us and cleanse us so we can start afresh. There's no transaction, it's free, it's undeserved. It's a gracious act offered out of sheer love for us, nothing less.

In all the other 3 gospels this incident comes just before Jesus is arrested and put to death, as if it was part of the provocation that the authorities reacted to because it was too threatening. It undermined the whole system. It deprived the religious authorities of control - and income.

But in John's gospel we find it right at the beginning. Why I wonder? I think it's because it sets the scene for what's to follow in the rest of John's account. It's a sign of who Jesus is and what he's come to do. The rest of the story simply shows the truth of it. He will himself eventually become the sacrificial victim, the Lamb of God who, in this gospel, will be offered up on a cross at exactly the same time

as the lambs for Passover will be sacrificed in the temple. His death will bring forgiveness and cleansing to all who trust him.

Sometimes things happen which shake us up and upset our equanimity, our regular pattern of living. We've been living through just such a time this past year. I've been reminded of the fragility of the world I've taken for granted ever since I was young; a world of progress, of opportunity, of peace and freedom to act and move about and meet new people and do new things. I've been reminded sharply of my mortality and that of others whom I love. Some have not just been reminded of course, but have lived it and some have not survived.

One who did get through it, though, is the celebrity chef, Raymond Blanc who caught Covid before Christmas and spent a month desperately ill in hospital. It was devastating for him and his family but, he says, 'It turned out to be one of the greatest lessons of my life... I feel rich, much richer, because I now realise how precious and sacred life is. I will be a stronger, kinder, better man in the future, not straightaway - it may take some time - but I am working at it.'

One of the things that may have happened for us as a society as a result of this pandemic is that, as for Raymond Blanc, some of the many things we have been doing have actually not been life-giving but life-draining for us. Maybe for all of us this enforced time of inaction with more time to notice the world around us and the importance to us of our human relationships and the communities we belong to, will be a time of future renewal, getting back to the essentials of what it is to be human. It feels a very Lenten experience.

I wonder if sometimes that's what it takes to open our eyes to the wonder and reality of the amazing grace of God's presence and care for us. But here's the thing. In those circumstances what we need as people is not just a good friend. We need someone who knows us and loves us personally, like a friend, certainly, but also one who has the power to change things and open up new possibilities for a better future. We need a friend like Jesus, but also a God like him too. We need the one who is beyond us and other than us to enable good things to be drawn from bad ones. We need a friend to be with us but also a redeemer to transform us.

Offering his thoughts during the first pandemic lockdown, a previous Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, says this in a little talk entitled "We are not God":

'The only way to eternal life ... is, as we read in the Gospel of John, knowing the true God and Jesus whom he has sent: the true God who alone can tell us we are not God, and yet are the infinitely precious and diverse children of God, called to receive gifts without limit and to receive them with and for one another in the unthinkable odd community of the Church.' (*Candles in the Dark* p32)

In this strange Lenten time let's pray that we may become ever more aware of the Beyond in our Midst who both loves and leads us to a new and better way of living.

Conclusion

We are returning to holding our main services in church in this coming week, both the midweek and Sunday Communion services. The arrangements in church will be as before but at the moment only three singers are allowed which will restrict the music we can offer. But it will be good to be in church again for Mothering Sunday. If you are able to come please avoid casual chatting in church or mingling before and after the service. It is best if conversations can be held outside so that any possibility of contagion is minimised. We will also continue to stream the Sunday Service from St David's and the Wednesday Mass from St Michael's among other online services.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Merciful Lord,

grant your people grace to withstand the temptations

of the world, the flesh and the devil,

and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God;

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 **Online or In Church.**