

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

Newsletter for 30 May 2021 – Trinity Sunday

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for Trinity Sunday. At this turning point in the church's year we affirm our understanding of God as three in one – a God of relationships and of mutual love. God exists in the perfect unity of love which, although it is beyond our reach in this life, holds before us a pattern to follow and a goal to aim for.

Our services today are:

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's (live streamed on St David's Exeter Facebook page) with celebrant, Nigel Guthrie and preacher, Ash Leighton Plom.

At today's service our Easter Candle stand will be dedicated in memory of Tony and Daphne Woods. The stand has been donated by Tony's family and made for us by John Wakley reusing timber from old pews. We thank Tony's family for their generosity and John for his skill and hard work.

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant, Nigel Guthrie and preacher, Ash Leighton Plom

Thrive is having a break this week and next week for half term.

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 1 June, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer. Please join us using this code:

**[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73334409585?
pwd=NTJZTHpDTkpjUjdmTkJxMk55YlVDUT09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73334409585?pwd=NTJZTHpDTkpjUjdmTkJxMk55YlVDUT09)**

Meeting ID: 733 3440 9585 Passcode: 1hk34D

(prayers are from Common Worship Book or Daily Prayer app which can be downloaded here: (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aimermedia.dailyprayer&hl=en_GB&gl=US)).

Wednesday 2 June. Please note that there will be NO morning services today.

6pm Requiem Mass for Fr David Walford celebrated by Tom Honey at St Michael's, Mount Dinham.

Thursday 3 June, 7.30pm Sung Mass and Procession for Corpus Christi at St Michael's, Mount Dinham

Friday 4 June, Petrock, Abbot, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 6 June – Trinity 1

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's with celebrant, David James and preacher, Bill Pattinson

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant, Nigel Guthrie and preacher, Bill Pattinson

4pm Thrive is on holiday this week! We are back on 13 June.

Mary Harris Chapel

Some public services have resumed this term at Mary Harris Chapel and if you appreciate Choral Evensong you can hear the chapel choir sing the service on Wednesdays at 5pm. The usual Track and Trace, hand sanitizing and masks are required as in all our churches.

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 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.

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.

Living in Love and Faith – not meeting this week

The Tuesday afternoon group is not meeting this week but will be back on 8th June to continue exploring and discussing these resources from the Church of England which are billed as ‘Christian Teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage’.

The group starts at 2pm and will be running on the following dates:, 8th June and 15th June. The study course is based on videos which include personal stories and there is time for discussion and sharing of thoughts and feelings about the topics. Each session should last no more than 90 minutes. Please let me know if you would like to join on nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com

This is a very significant consultation for the Church of England and all those taking part will be invited to make their responses to the Church of England as the House of Bishops will be considering their approach to these matters during 2022. All the material can be found online by searching for ‘Living in Love and Faith’ and accessed free through the LLF learning hub.

Christian Aid Week

Thank you to those who joined in with the Christian Aid Week online Big Breakfast, and to those who very generously donated. I’m delighted that we have now raised £500 (plus £113 gift aid) for the amazing work of Christian Aid.

In view of the terrible conflict this week in Israel and the Palestinian territories you may like to look up this video which illustrates some of Christians Aid’s long-term work in the area. It was made in 2016 but, sadly, many of the critical issues remain the same: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiiBvIov_aQ

Time for Quiet Reflection

Belinda will next be leading a time of corporate Silent Reflection on Friday 11th June at 5.30pm in person and on Zoom. Please email her for further details and joining link at bspeedandrews@gmail.com

Help with Churchwarden tasks

Often Churchwardens pick up tasks which could be done by others. We have already had some kind offers but there are a number of jobs which we will advertise in the coming weeks.

Would you be willing to help with one of these, please, even if you can't do every week?

Opening and closing the church on Sunday (weekly)

Updating the church inventory which is now online (annual job)

Clearing the churchyard on Sunday mornings before the service (equipment provided).

Thank you!

Keep the Fête Date – 17 July!

We are planning a Parish Fête for Saturday 17 July from 11.30am to 2.30pm. It may not be on quite the usual scale but we hope it will be a wonderful parish and community event. Offers of help or raffle prizes would be most welcome. Raffle tickets are now available from church so please do collect and sell them! There is also a sheet at the back of St David's Church where offers of help can be recorded.

The next 5 years - who are we and where are we going?

In the last year our whole world has been turned upside down by COVID. It has created in most of us emotions that we never knew we had and for some it has been a strange blessing. Whatever the impact on each of our individual lives it has within church communities challenged us to think about how we are a community. What does community mean for us here in our parish? What is our ethos? How are we to live God's kingdom now? Covid has opened the door for all of us to re-think and re-set what it is we say we are. I would like to encourage an open discussion about what the next 5 years could look like for our parish.

The bible verse I would like us to hold on to is from John 14: 12:

“Those who believe in me will do what I do - yes, they will do greater things”

Are we a blessing to the community around us?

Are our two churches places of encounter, or just places for those who belong?

Often at the heart of all we want to do there is a question of resources, whether that is financial, time, space, or human input. But in the words of Sam Wells I want to argue that ‘God gives his people all they need to follow him, and following him is expressed in answering the call to worship him, to be his friends and to eat with him.’

In light of this I would like to bring together a group of 12 people from across the breadth of the community beginning at the end of May, to read through and discuss the book ‘A Future that's bigger than the past’

https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07YNTLDKB/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1) as we begin to think and discern what God is calling us to for the next 5 years. This would of course mean a solid commitment to meet once a month for up to an hour and a half to discuss one chapter at a time, to pray together, to share openly and honestly about our life together as a parish and how we become a blessing to and receive gifts from the wider community.

If you are interested in joining in the conversation please do email me directly at bspeedandrews@gmail.com

5 places have already been taken by clergy, churchwarden and a Reader.

The dates for meeting at 7.30pm are: Wednesday 9 June, Wednesday 23 June, Thursday 22 July, Thursday 26 August, Thursday 23 September and Thursday 14 October, before a meeting with Archdeacon Andrew Beane.

Painting Exhibition for Hospiscare- a message from Howard Friend

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday June 5th - 10 till 4 at St Leonard's Church Hall. I'm holding a Lockdown Art Giveaway Exhibition. Come and see what I've been up to during Lockdown (clue - painting watercolours) and if you like one you may have it FREE - as long as you promise to make a generous donation to Hospiscare. See my work on Instagram @ friend.howard.

Traidcraft Stall & St Michael's Bountiful Table

We are delighted that our stalls are running again but please be careful to maintain social distancing and just approach the stalls one at a time. Thank you for your support.

Men's Breakfast

We plan to hold the next Men's Breakfast on Saturday June 26th at 9.30am. Venue to be confirmed

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

Magazine for June are ready to collect. A big thank you to all contributors and to our editorial team!

Green Team

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the paper recycling scheme at St Michael's Church and to John Darch who organises the collection.

The Green Team are planning a morning focussed on the environment, with lunch of locally sourced food, for 11th September 2021. Please keep the date!

Cleaning at St Michael's Church

We will be holding a 'summer clean' on Saturday 3 July from 9.30-11.30am so please put the date in your diary and come along if you can to help. We hope to be able to provide refreshments (regulations permitting!).

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:

Terry Ham, David Walford (formerly hospital and hospice chaplain), Bill (Belinda's uncle)

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer: for Exeter Community Centre on St David's Hill.

Please also pray for:

The people of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, giving thanks for the ceasefire and praying for reconciliation and a will to tackle underlying injustice;

The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially those whose lives have been disrupted by the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano;

Those working to protect the environment and develop sustainable ways of living;

the worldwide vaccination programme, giving thanks for all those who have enabled a rapid roll-out in this country;

students taking exams and finishing assessments;

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

those suffering from Covid around the world, especially in India and Brazil;

May God bless you and those you care for,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers, Readings and Address for Trinity Sunday, 30 May 2021

Collect

**Almighty and everlasting God,
you have given us your servants grace,
by the confession of a true faith,
to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity
and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity:
keep us steadfast in this faith,
that we may evermore be defended from all adversities;
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 – Isaiah 6: 1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.’

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: ‘Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’

Gospel Reading - John 3: 1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born

of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Address by Ash Leighton Plom, 30 May 2021

Almighty God, Creator and Saviour,

Glorious trinity,

Guide my words and all our spirits,

By your Word and Spirit,

That we may please you, and see your fruit in our lives,

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

Good morning everyone, and for anyone new, or perhaps joining us online, my name's Ash, one of your curates, and as we've noted, today is Trinity Sunday. There's a bit of a joke that vicars always give Trinity Sunday to their curates to preach on, because vicars want to duck out from having to preach on it!

Now, let me say I'm sure Nigel would do a better job than me, but I actually volunteered for this slot because the Trinity excites me so much and I find it really helpful to have this opportunity to clarify our thinking on this key doctrine in relating to God.

Let me also say that there is an extent to which the doctrine of the Trinity is beyond words, and every attempt to describe or explain God's nature and action will fall short of the full reality... I mean, if you could put God in a neat little conceptual box, then that just wouldn't be God anymore, it would be too small,

as it were. No matter how 'big' the box, the full reality of God would be bigger still. So, doctrine should allow room for the mysterious and even, to an extent, the incomprehensible.

But God has given us a number of means to perceive the mysterious and know at least in part the incomprehensible. These means include holy scripture, as in the Bible, and also tradition, by which I mean for example the wisdom of people who have read the Bible before us, and finally reason, i.e. our ability to think and reflect on these things. So, let's deploy some scripture, tradition, and reason to enliven our thinking about the triune nature of God today.

This will build on our session of Thrive last week for those of you who were there, but don't worry if you weren't, this will be stand-alone as well, so it's not essential that you caught Thrive last week, it's just hopefully progressing and embedding what we looked at for those of you who were there.

So, our starting point is that the Bible states very clearly that there is only one God. Deuteronomy 6(v4) for example emphasises, "the Lord our God is One", and this is so central it's chanted in synagogues globally every week.

This one God is called God because he is identified as uniquely worthy of worship for a number of specific reasons. For example, scripture asserts that God alone is the eternal creator of the universe. Isaiah 40(v28) says, "The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth." This states that only God is everlasting, because he alone existed before creation, and he created all of creation. This means there's an infinite "ontological gap", a complete difference in nature, between God the creator and everything else, as creatures.

Another example of a thing that scripture says is unique about God is that he alone is our saviour. For instance Jeremiah 3(v23) says, "salvation is in the LORD our God". So, to sum up so far, unique traits like being our creator and saviour mark God alone out as God.

Now, secondly, it's probably not a massive leap to identify the Father as God. For example, 1 Corinthians 8(v6) states, "there is only one God, the Father, who is the Creator of all things". Jesus, of course, prays to the Father as God, and Isaiah 63(v16) says of God: "You are our father... You, O LORD, are our father; our saviour in times past."

But where it starts to get a bit tricky is that the Bible also names Jesus as creator and saviour, those unique traits attributed to God. For example, John 1(v3) says of Jesus “through him all things were made”, and Luke 2(v11), part of the nativity, says "today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

Similarly, the Holy Spirit, is also named as creator and saviour. For example, Job 33(v4) says, “The Spirit of God has made me”, and in Ephesians 1(v13), it's the Holy Spirit who seals believers' salvation. So, scripture has the Spirit, too, as being creator and saviour.

Collectively, this means we have a tension whereby God is emphatically One, and yet we have three persons (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) named as fulfilling those unique divine ontologies as creator and saviour.

It's this tension which is synthesised in trinitarian Christianity, exemplified for example in the Athanasian Creed. This summarises:

“There is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Spirit.

But the Godness of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is all one... the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God.”

“For as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; so we are forbidden to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords.”

So, the credal doctrine of the trinity neatly integrates the various statements about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which would otherwise be contradictory.

Some of you are thinking "What does this have to do with me?" But I hope it might mean you'll engage or reengage with worship in a new or deeper way, and perhaps expand your awareness of Father, Son or Holy Spirit. I think a lot of us default to thinking of, say, the Father as the creator and the Son as the saviour, but scriptures Trinity Sunday is a timely opportunity to remind us of the full divinity of each of the Father, and the Son, and Holy Spirit.

I also think a lot of Christians have a default go-to in prayer, probably catholics are more likely to pray to the Father, evangelicals maybe more likely to pray to

Jesus, and charismatics to the Spirit. But if prayer is talking to God, then prayer to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can be theologically rich and life-giving. So, who from the Trinity might you engage or reengage with in prayer and worship in a new or deeper way over the rest of this service, and the week to come?

And finally, there's a missional element here, too. Too few people properly grasp that Jesus is fully God, and that it was God himself who came from heaven to earth, teaching and healing and who took up his cross to show us how radically to love one another, to die for our sins, and to defeat death – God himself, not just “God's son”, as if only the Father is God, and he was some kind of tyrant who sends his son to suffer and die. Yes, God the Father grieved as Christ suffered and died, but God himself, in Jesus also hung on the cross and died for you and for your friends and your family, and I wonder if they all know that yet. And God himself fills us now in the Spirit, to help us to share these wonderful truths. So, I hope you'll feel closer to God, and more empowered, too, to share the whole Trinity today, and in the week ahead, getting to know God more fully and deeply, and critically, sharing this fulness too.

Amen

Closing Prayer and Blessing

**Almighty and eternal God,
you have revealed yourself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
and live and reign in the perfect unity of love:
hold us firm in this faith,
that we may know you in all your ways
and evermore rejoice in your eternal glory,
who are three Persons yet one God,
now and for ever.
God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
Defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;
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!