

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

Newsletter for 11 July 2021 – Trinity 6

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our newsletter for the fifth Sunday after Trinity.

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

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

4pm Thrive: 'Loss and Lament'

Matt Merriam talks about Loss and Lament. With experience of church planting, working in deprived areas and supporting those struggling with poor mental health, Matt brings a wealth of experience to Thrive this afternoon.

Zoom Meeting:

**[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 13 July, 9.30am Zoom Morning Prayer. 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

(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 14 July, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass (live streamed) at St Michael's Church

Thursday 15 July, St Swithun's Day, 10.30 Holy Communion at St David's Church

Friday 16 July, 9.30am, Morning Prayer, on St David's Facebook Page

Sunday 18 July – Trinity 6

9.30am Morning Praise (non-eucharistic) at St David's led by Belinda Speed-Andrews talk by Chris Forster from the Clewer Initiative

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

4pm Thrive

Whether you're already a regular or have never been before, we'd love to welcome you and look forward to you joining us at Thrive.

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 distributes 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.

Food for the Vulnerably housed in Exeter

Working through St Petrocks we have now agreed to take on the provision of suppers on Thursday evenings for those in transitional accommodation at the Crescent. We will be providing 16 packed suppers each week and a small team has got together to buy/make them. We don't need any additional support at the moment as there is a significant amount in our 'Soup Evening' kitty which can fund this for the time being.

Time for Quiet Reflection

Belinda will be leading times of corporate Silent Reflection on Friday 23rd July and 6 August 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)

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

Thank you!

Prize Draw is still on July 17th!

We are disappointed to have to cancel the parish fête due to the government pushing back the end of Covid restrictions. It would have been too hard to run the fête in an open public space (the churchyard) with sufficient precautions in place. Thank you to everyone who had already volunteered to help. We just hope that we can hold it next year!

But we are still running the Prize Draw as we have a licence, prizes and have sold some tickets. So please buy plenty of tickets and sell them to your family and friends if you can! We will have the church open from 1 -2pm on Saturday July 17th and make the draw publicly at the end of that time. We plan to have refreshments and some small stalls available. If you would be willing to donate a prize please bring it to church by Sunday 11th July or drop it off at the vicarage.

We also plan to open St David's Church from 11am -12noon on Saturdays during August. Please have a word with Glynis if you would be willing to help staff one of these occasions so that we can have the church open and perhaps have a small stall, too.

Visiting Speaker from Clewer Initiative

On Sunday 18 July we are welcoming Chris from the Clewer Initiative. The Clewer Initiative enables Church of England dioceses and wider church networks to raise awareness of modern slavery, identify victims and to help provide victim support and care. Earlier this year during Lent, a group of women from our parish came together to learn more about modern day slavery in some of its forms; district lines, sexual exploitation, employment exploitation and many more.

We have invited Chris to come and talk about the work they do, specifically in and around Exeter, and how we as a community can become more involved and work alongside the Clewer Initiative to raise awareness of this insidious disease

in our communities. Please watch the introductory video from the Course we followed during Lent, 'Women in the Shadows' which you can see by following this link <https://youtu.be/7iXsZeGHFuM>

Part of the service is Q&A with Chris and so I would like to encourage people to ask their questions. If you could email me (bspeedandrews@gmail.com) a question you would like an answer to before Sunday 18 July that would be great. Please do come along and join us as we hope Chris will be able to hang around after the service to chat with people as well and perhaps continue to answer questions that we weren't able to air during the service.

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

Belinda is leading us in a group study based on the book 'A Future that's bigger than the past' (https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07YNTLDKB/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btcr=1) as we think and discern what God is calling us to for the next 5 years.

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

The dates for the meetings at 7.30pm are: Thursday 22 July 9at St Michael's Church), Thursday 26 August, Thursday 23 September and Thursday 14 October, before a parish meeting with Archdeacon Andrew Beane.

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 July 24th at 10am at the Famers' Union. Unfortunately, due to uncertainty over Covid restrictions we can't book a table yet so please watch this space and we'll hope to meet in person!

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

Please pick up your magazine for July & August. Thank you to our magazine team and distributors!

Green Team

Survey on travel to St David's Church St David's Church is seeking to encourage the most sustainable forms of transport where possible. We hope to achieve Eco church status. This survey will help identify better ways of travelling to church.

Car parking near the church is already difficult and unlikely to improve, so we need to consider and seek other solutions.

Please help by completing the survey (which takes about one minute) online at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TJY7SHP>

Paper forms are also available in church. Best wishes, Clive

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

The team would like to invite volunteers to staff stalls at the event especially for 'home and handicrafts' and 'harvest'. Tickets for the local produce lunch will be available in the second half of August. If you have green photos of local wildlife and plants or environmental projects that could be part of display on the day please send them to Neil: mrpragnell@gmail.com

Farewell from Debbie McNeile

Debbie has recently moved away from Exeter and sent this lovely message to friends at St David's Church:

We have moved to be nearer my parents. I have enjoyed being part of the St David's congregation and have greatly appreciated the on-line services during lockdown. I have felt God's love and support as I have reflected on them often in the garden. Thank you to yourself and the clergy team. Please pass on my best wishes and goodbyes to those who knew me at St David's, it all happened very fast, and God's blessing to you all.

We wish Debbie every blessing in her new home.

Phone Networks

Many of you appreciate 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.

St Michael's services and prayers

If you would like to access the services details and prayer list for St Michael's please contact Oliver Nicholson at virtualsaintmichaels@gmail.com and he can add you to their weekly mailing.

Your Prayers are asked for...

Please remember those who have died recently including:

Peggy Vigurs

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer: Sea Sunday, those serving in the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy; our flower arrangers and coffee makers; St Michael's Committee and PCC meetings this week.

Please also pray for:

The people of Moldova: CR2EE Christian response to Eastern Europe (we enjoy making Christmas Boxes for them) has asked for prayer for a good outcome from Moldova's forthcoming snap election this Sunday July 11th. Please pray that Maia Sandu, the current president will be able to continue to fight against corruption whatever the result of this election and pray that her party "The Party of Action and Solidarity" is successful in gaining a majority in Government

the people of Ethiopia and Southern Sudan facing conflict and famine;

those suffering from extreme heat and rising sea levels;

rough sleepers in Exeter and the Exeter Homelessness partnership;

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

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; for those anxious about the lifting of restrictions and for wisdom for those making arrangements for worship under the new regime;

May God bless you and those you care for,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers, Readings and Address for Trinity 6, 11 July 2021

Collect

**Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
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 – 2 Samuel 6: 1-5

David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. David and all the people with him set out and went from Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who is enthroned on the cherubim. They carried the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God; and Ahio went in front of the ark. David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

Gospel Reading - Mark 6: 14-29

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, 'John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' But others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.' But when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.'

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly

perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.' And he solemnly swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the baptizer.' Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Address by Ash Leighton Plom at St David's & St Michael's Church, Exeter, for Sunday 11 July 2021

Our gospel reading today features one of the several stripteases in scripture, and always reminds me of an incident that happened when I led Exeter Street Pastors, helping people get home safely after nights out. One time, my team and I had stopped outside a strip club, and I suggested praying. I meant that we would pray, for example, for healthier relationships, not objectifying ones, and so on, and I started something like this:

"Lord, thank you for the women and men working in there. Help them, even tonight..." and I was going to continue with something like, "to find you and your good plan for each of their lives...", probably along the lines of other job opportunities, less exploitative and more wholesome, but my prayer got interrupted at that point by an urgent call over the radio, and so we had to stop praying and hurry to respond to wherever it was that we were needed. To this day, I sometimes wonder if my team thought I was just thanking God for the strippers, and asking him to help them that night with their dancing... just one of those awkward moments you can't really take back, I suppose.

Today I want to talk about Herod the Great, John the Baptist, and King David. The dance of Herodias junior for Herod the Great, and the subsequent beheading of John the Baptist, is one of those very famous incidents in scripture that we can be quite casual about, perhaps because we hear it in church quite often, but we must keep in mind that it is actually a record of a tyrant's vile abuse, a man died, and many felt the consequences.

Despite its familiarity for many of us, I do believe we can still find much in it for application. Note, for example, the wild notions that the people had about Jesus; he was becoming famous for doing miracles, and they thought that he might be the prophet Elijah raised from the dead, or John the Baptist, whom Herod

himself had killed. They were willing to believe all sorts of speculation, but not the truth of who he is, which is a sad thing we see today, too.

And notice that they were open at this time to the possibility that a man could be killed, raised from the dead and go about doing miracles. Yet three years later, when this very thing happened – Jesus was killed, raised from the dead, and went about doing miracles – they didn't believe it. Napoleon once said, "People will believe anything you tell them, as long as it isn't in the Bible"!

We might notice, too, Herod's guilty conscience: it torments him into imagining that John whom he had killed was back to haunt him. This is almost Shakespearian, Macbeth-like, in its pointed commentary: a person's guilty conscience can haunt them, and so those who want to keep their minds at peace should keep their consciences clean. (C.f. Acts 24:16, "So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man")

John had boldly rebuked Herod for marrying his brother's wife, against both Leviticus 18 and 20 in the Torah, the Old Testament Law. John clearly preferred the risk of earthly punishment to slacking off in his heavenly duty. Sometimes, to be faithful to God, we must not be afraid of the offence of people. Like John the Baptist, and like the apostles Peter and John on trial in Acts, may we remember that we serve God, not people. (Acts 5.29) As Martin Luther put it, "I would not give one moment of heaven for all the joy and riches of the world."

Herod, on the other hand, makes himself a servant of his own lusts and the manipulators around him, instead of being a servant of God. We find a contrast between Herod and David in our two readings today. David, of course, not always morally perfect, and a sinner like the rest of us, but today we find him glorifying God, even at the expense of the respect of his wife.

Having defeated the Philistines, today we see him bringing the ark of God to Jerusalem, so that it might be a blessing to him and his people. The ark had first been made during the Exodus but had been neglected for a long time, in part due to war with pagan tribes. And so the writer, probably Nathan or Gad, describe the ark with great words. It is often timely to remind ourselves to speak highly of God and the things he honours, for example the sacraments, which are for us somewhat like the ark was to ancient Israel, a physical sign of God's presence.

Thus it is with great joy that David receives the ark into his home, and it is with great joy that we can receive the sacrament shortly. David and others with him were musically skilled, and they played and sang and danced to express their joy. Some scholars suppose that it was on this occasion that David wrote Psalm 68, because it begins with an ancient prayer about moving the ark.

Either way, David himself danced before the Lord with all his might, transported with worship. The difference between Herod and David, here, is that David's joy is in God, not people, so much so that he didn't care what people thought of his worship, even his wife. He's more like his fellow prophet John the Baptist than his fellow king, Herod, in that his focus is his relation with God first and foremost.

And so we should perform our worship and service for God: all our might is still too small an offering, when we think what Christ offered for us on the cross.

We've had reason to rejoice at various moments this last year as lockdown measures eased and we've been freer to worship. And I know PCC covet your prayers ahead of our meeting this week to discuss the 19th July easing, and how to free worship up even more, while still remaining safe.

I love how the 2 Samuel reading ends with the ark safely brought to a place prepared for it, public and accessible. David and the people joined in worship – even young people who might never have seen the ark before! Why? Well, they had heard that Obed-edom had been blessed by it, and so they wanted to experience this themselves. So too can your story of your experience of what you gain from the faith be the encouragement someone else, maybe some young person needs to hear today. Invite them to church, in person or online. They too can be like these Israelites, rediscovering a lost sacrament.

Those who have received from God should share - and so we should all share God with others. We have more opportunities now than ever to invite friends, colleagues, neighbours, family members to church, whether online or onsite, so have a think who and be sure to share an invite to church with someone this week, and maybe very soon you'll be able to introduce them to me over coffee or outside after a service. Thanks be to God.

Closing Prayer

**God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Do join us next week for our services in church and online!