

St David's with St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter

Newsletter for Sunday 29 August 2021 – Trinity 13

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this week's newsletter.

Standing Committee met this week to review our current Covid precautions.

Given the relatively high number of cases in Devon we feel that we should keep our current guidance about social distancing and face coverings.

So please wear a face covering in church if you can and be mindful of keeping a safe distance from others indoors. Please 'mingle' outside church after the service rather than inside.

However, along with many churches, we agreed that congregational singing should resume. We won't, at the moment, be going back to the same amount of singing as before the pandemic. Especially at St David's where there is a larger congregation we will start by having one or two short hymns. At St Michael's with fewer people we can afford to allow more singing.

Please be mindful not only of your own wellbeing (especially if you're not vaccinated) but also of your neighbours' safety and make sure that you are not sitting directly behind other people especially if you would like to sing.

Remember: "space, face, grace"! Thank you for your consideration.

Our services today are:

9.30am Parish Communion (live streamed on St David's Church Exeter's Facebook Page) with celebrant Nigel Guthrie and preacher Belinda Speed-Andrews

11am Mass at St Michael's with celebrant and preacher, David Gunn-Johnson

12.30pm Baptism at St Michael's with Ash Leighton Plom

3pm Baptism at St David's with Nigel Guthrie

4pm Thrive on Zoom: a space to meet and chat about faith and life. Sessions in August are casual socials, no agenda, so why not join in, whether you're a regular, have never been before, or are somewhere in between!

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685738289?pwd=WEh1dINCY3NRQTICcXFjK2ZlejR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 886 8573 8289 Passcode: 159821

Services in church and online this week

Tuesday 31 August, Aidan, Bishop and Missionary, 9.30 Morning Prayer on Zoom. Please join us using this code:

<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 1 September, Giles of Provence, 9.30am Mattins and 10am Mass (also live streamed on St Michael's Facebook page) at St Michael's Church

Thursday 2 September, Martyrs of Papua New Guinea, 10.30 Holy Communion at St David's Church

6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's Church (also live streamed on Friends of St Michael's Facebook Page)

Friday 3 September, Gregory the Great, 9.30 Morning Prayer at St David's Church (also live streamed on St David's Facebook Page)

Saturday 4 September, 1pm, Wedding at St David's with Nigel Guthrie

Sunday 5 September – Trinity 14

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

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Covid-19 Safe for Public Worship

Please avoid touching door handles – Thank you.

Please use hand sanitizer 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'; congregational singing will be gradually re-introduced.

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 Petrock's we are providing 16 packed suppers each week for people who are in transitional accommodation at the Crescent. Thank you to the small team which has convened to buy and 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.

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 up (if needed) the churchyard on Sunday mornings before the service (equipment provided). Thank you!

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be Saturday 25th September at 10am at the Farmers' Union. We may have to be on two separate tables depending on numbers on the day. Please contact Nigel if you would like to be on a mailing list reminder for this.

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

Belinda is leading a study group 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&btkr=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 23 September and Thursday 14 October, before a parish meeting with Archdeacon Andrew Beane on Saturday October 16th. It would be good to have as many people as possible from both churches at that meeting when Andrew will outline possibilities for the future organisation of ministry in Exeter city and listen to our hopes and plans.

Grow Courses

The Diocese of Exeter offers courses to help *you* grow in prayer, make new disciples, and serve the people of Devon with joy. Sessions coming up include 'Sharing Our Faith', 'Stewardship Advocates', and 'Pastoral Care'. For more information or to sign up, please see <https://exeter.anglican.org/ministry/lay-ministry/lay-learning/>

Chaplaincy

Volunteer mentors wanted to help people leaving prison

South West Community Chaplaincy have produced a new video, recruiting volunteer mentors in Exeter for prison leavers, here: <https://youtu.be/etTmRiFQXyE>

Can you provide support for men and women leaving prison to overcome whatever challenges they face to make a fresh start and build a positive future for themselves? SWCC are looking for new volunteer mentors to join our team in Devon and are offering full training for the role in September. If you are interested, please contact Managing Community Chaplain Cathy Jerrard on cathy@southwestcc.org.uk or 01392 284285 / 07816 428 470.

No experience needed, full training provided.

Heritage Open Days at St Michael's

Saturday 11th September: St Michael's will be open from 9am – 6pm

Refreshments served all day

2pm Guided Tour of the Church by Dr Richard Parker

3pm Informal Organ Recital by Dr Lorna Cowdry

Sunday 12th September: St Michael's will be open 10am – 6pm

11am Sunday Service

Refreshments will be served from 12.30pm

3 – 5pm Cream Tea with singing from Boys of the Old Brigade

We plan to run a bookstall at these days so please hold on to your books so that they can be sold in aid of church! We can store them in church if it would help.

Green Team

Thank you to those who have filled in the Survey on sustainable forms of transport. We will publish the results in due course!

Green Event: Ideas for how we can live more sustainably

Saturday 11th September 2021, 10am to 2pm

Local produce vegetarian Lunch £5 (tickets available)

With:

Co Cars and Bikes, Wildlife talk, Eco church, Churchyard tours

Mending & making things, Tea, coffee, cake

Traidcraft stall, Harvest produce

Participation table - bring your own ideas, Children's activities... and much more

The team would like to invite volunteers to staff stalls at the event especially for 'home and handicrafts' and 'harvest'. 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

Fruit trees for the churchyard

We are going to be working with the YMCA further to improve diversity and interest in the churchyard and we would like to raise money for a few more fruit trees, hopefully to plant this autumn. If you would like to donate a fruit tree for the churchyard would you make your offer to Clive Wilson please? We estimate that they will cost in the range of £20-£30 each.

Ordination of Ash Leighton Plom

Ash will be ordained along with three other candidates by the Bishop of Crediton on Sunday 26th September at 3pm. Unfortunately there will only be a small number of places available for members of each of the four parishes but we will organise a list to sign up if you would like to come. We plan to buy a stole for Ash to celebrate his ordination and if you would like to contribute would you give your contribution to Glynis Harflett or Stephanie Aplin, please. Any excess money will be given to Ash as a gift for books or anything else that will enhance his ministry. Ash will celebrate his first communion on Michaelmas, Wednesday 29th September at 7.30pm at St Michael's when we hope to provide drinks, cake and a presentation.

Parish Magazine – New Leaves

Please pick up your magazine for September. Thank you to our magazine team and distributors, especially Richard Barnes who is moving away shortly having given great support to the magazine team.

Phone Networks

If would like to be phoned by someone from the church community or would just like to talk, please let Nigel know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com or by ringing him on 01392 660226 or Ash on 07855305519.

St Michael's services and prayers

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

Your Prayers are asked for...

Please remember those who have died recently including:

James Tyler, Dorothy Guthrie, Sylvia Pritchard, victims of the bombing at Kabul airport

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer: those who contribute to our worship by reading the bible, leading the prayers and serving at our altars.

Please also pray for:

The people of Haiti following the devastating earthquake and floods there;

all those affected by the tragic shooting in Plymouth;

those held captive in modern forms of slavery in this country and around the world; for our own continued awareness of their plight;

the people of Afghanistan;

the humane and generous treatment of migrants and refugees arriving in this country;

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

those preparing for a new term at school, college and university;

those seeking direction and employment at this time;

those working in care homes, hospitals and hospices;

those suffering from Covid around the world; for those anxious about the lifting of restrictions and for wisdom for those making arrangements for worship.

With every blessing,

Nigel Guthrie

Prayers and Readings for Trinity 13, 29 August 2021

Collect

**Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.**

First Reading – Deuteronomy 4: 1-2 & 6-9

So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.

You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!’ For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children.

Gospel Reading – Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15 & 21-23

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, ‘Why

do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?’ He said to them, ‘Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

“This people honours me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.”

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.’

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, ‘Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.’

For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.’

Address for 22 August 2021 by Belinda Speed-Andrews

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, “perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of – throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.” — C.S. Lewis

We have, in the last 18 months, been inundated with more rules and regulations. Do you remember at the outset of Covid, the rule to wash our hands for at least 20 seconds and the creative ways in which we were guided to at least reach the 20 second cut off point. Say the Lord’s Prayer while washing your hands was one such suggestion. I used to look at the diagrams that found their ways onto bathroom walls above the sinks and try to avidly follow the diagram instructions. Our lives are all about rules and regulations and some of them make more sense than others. We often lament at H&S these days and say it is just common sense but for some reason we now need to be told what our forefathers did automatically. And, of course, it is to a degree because we have become a litigious society and so to cover our own backsides we produce reams and reams of rules

and regulations. To be fair though, most of the rules and regulations are for our own well-being and safety.

The OT may appear to many of us to be full of rules and regulations, no more so than the emphasis on being 'clean'. So, for example, one may ask was eating shellfish an unclean act or had there been an outbreak of disease as a result of eating contaminated shellfish? I can hear your minds answering this question but we perhaps need to remind ourselves the Israelites were working with what they saw and understood - they perhaps would not have recognised as we do now, that the crustaceans were just a bad bunch which caused sickness. The same can be said of eating pork; in those days they did not know how to clean what is an infested animal, but today we have the knowledge and the tools to enable us to produce meat which is safe to eat. Remember the words spoken to Peter in a dream in Joppa, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane'.

The Pharisees lived in a particular time and in their zeal they became stricter and added to the number of laws; they used their power and position to impose their rules on others and in so doing they became blinded to the One the laws pointed to.

The word 'ordinances' in vs 1 of our reading from Deuteronomy means having charge over, tending, and keeping watch like a sentinel. But why laws? Laws of the Lord are the source of life but the Pharisees failed to recognise this in Jesus. All they could see were the disciples eating food without washing their hands first. The Pharisees struggle with Jesus but Jesus is trying to show them Godself and they can't understand why he doesn't do what they want. Notice that Jesus did not criticise the Pharisees' attitude towards purity or the sabbath. After all these laws came from God to Moses on Mount Sinai for a wandering people, to give them a framework to keep G-d at the centre of their lives.

The Pharisees though want God in a box, a box of their own creation, a box where they choose when and what is 'right'. What they don't realise is they are resisting God and they don't see the miracles, the teaching and the healing of Jesus, they just see the broken rules, healing on the Sabbath and in this passage today, eating with defiled hands. Yet the charges for purity were for the temple and the priests, not for ordinary people. They have forgotten the words spoken by Moses; 'You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you'.

So, I go back to my quote at the beginning from C S Lewis. Is Jesus coming in and destroying the house that God built among a wandering people or is he as

Lewis suggests, making it more beautiful, more spacious and more wonderful because he wants to live there with us?

So, I wonder what rules and regulations, unspoken or codified, exist within our world, or even within our community. Every community, whether a faith community or a club, all human groupings have their rules and regulations with the expectation that they are observed as a part of ones belonging. We perhaps need to be aware of our own zeal and determination to keep the law that takes us away from the heart of Jesus' message - love your God with all your heart, mind soul and strength and love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the heart of God, it was at the heart of God's commandments to Moses and the Israelites given on Mount Sinai and it is at the heart of Jesus' message to the world too, not whether we have clean hands or not but the Pharisees failed to see this.

I have had much to ponder on in the last few weeks, not just for myself but for others that I know. One of my wonderings is whether the Church as in the institution has become so big that it fails to live God's love in times of real need. Is it failing to really listen to the Spirit as she blows? Is it so fixated on rules and regulations that a person's individual need is trumped by said rules and regulations no matter the desperate situation someone might be in?

This week we met again as part of our exploration about the way forward and all of us who were able to come along were challenged by the particular chapter we were reading.

The chapter was about compassion and our intentions when working with those on the edge of society. Part of the challenge was the suggestion that if we are engaged in a relationship with the homeless say, are any members of that particular group on the decision-making so that their voice can be heard and listened to and considered? The simple answer is no because the rules of the Church state that you have to be on the electoral roll to be a part of the PCC, the decision making body of the local church community. And so we take it upon ourselves to make decisions for these people, which suggests that we know exactly what they need and want us to do for them. So, the challenge is, how do we involve these people to be a part of the conversation?

This is very simple example but simple enough to make me think carefully about any decisions we choose to make here in St David's and the impact it might or might not have on a particular group of people. Perhaps we (we as the wider Church) are too scared to think outside the box now because God forbid it sets a precedent, whether that precedent might be the decision that lives God's love? Perhaps we are too scared to do what is right in a given situation because we now

live in a litigious society? I am not saying this is right or wrong, but in the history of the Church there have been many examples set before us of people who were not scared to do what needed to be done because it bought to life Jesus' command to love your neighbour as yourself. Have we become captive to the rules and regulations of the Church, that we fail to live the message Jesus gives us over and over again?

For now I only have questions, the answers are yet to come and they may never come, but nevertheless they are worth considering and pondering on if only to make us think really closely about what comes out from us, as individuals and as a church.

Most of this passage reflects a conversation that Jesus had with the religious leaders and authorities, but his final and definitive words were for the crowd. It's not enough that he sets the Pharisees straight and corrects their wrong teaching among them; Jesus doesn't finish until he sets the people free from the bonds put in place by those asserting a human authority and will over them. I imagine there were probably Pharisees and scribes who were enlightened and transformed their teaching based on Jesus' illuminating words. But, in breaking into humanity, Jesus bypassed religious authorities. No priest was needed to mediate his message; Jesus brought it directly to the people. Jesus invited them into a direct relationship with the Holy Love and liberated them from the expectations .and limits of human tradition

We walk right when we are more concerned with God's will than with human defined doctrines.

Closing Prayer

God our creator,
you feed your children with the true manna,
the living bread from heaven:
let this holy food sustain us through our earthly pilgrimage
until we come to that place
 where hunger and thirst are no more;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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