

## **The Parish of St David, Exeter**

### **Parish Newsletter for 24 November 2024 - Sunday before Advent/Christ the King**

#### **Our services this week:**

#### **Sunday, 24 November 2024 - Christ the King/Sunday next before Advent**

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's Church with celebrant, Mike Clark (with Banns), and speaker, Pete Hall from the YMCA with a short film

6 pm Evening Prayer at St David's led by Robert Mitchell

#### **Services in church and online this week**

**Tuesday 26 November** 9.00-9.30 am Zoom Morning Prayer. Please join us using this link <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75330401184?pwd=MIUTonKQK9bgFKV6lpn9rMbQUdYl8H.1>

Meeting ID: 753 3040 1184

Passcode: 5RWhXs

**Thursday 28 November** 10.30 Holy Communion at St David's led by Mike Clark

#### **Sunday, 1 December 2024 - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent**

9.30am Parish Communion at St David's Church with celebrant and preacher, Andrew Beane

6 pm Evening Prayer at St David's led by Ian Cartwright

#### **Services this week at St Michael's and All Angels CD**

#### **Sunday, 24 November 2024 - Christ the King/Sunday next before Advent**

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's church with celebrant and preacher, Nigel Mason

Tuesday: 6pm Sung Vespers at St Michael's Church (live-streamed via Facebook [facebook.com/stmichaelsmtdinhamexeter](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsmtdinhamexeter) )

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## **Sunday, 1 December 2024 - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent**

11am Sung Mass at St Michael's church with celebrant and preacher, Hannah Alderson

### **Message from the Vicar and Churchwardens**

**1. Parish Administrator** - we are delighted to say Jo Totterdell is joining us as our new Parish Administrator. She will be working with Mike and us on parish admin, with Mary Quest on bookings, supporting us with our comms and website work generally, and the safeguarding team with their administration. Welcome, Jo!

**2. Please note:** the text of David James's sermon from last week is appended at the end of these notices.

### **3. Concert steward - Saturday, 21 December**

We need a steward to cover Nadia Eade's concert at St David's on Saturday 21st December - see <https://nadiaeide.com/winter-light-2024-uk-tour> - because Mary is unavailable. You would get free access to the concert plus a fee. Please speak to Maggie or the churchwardens.

### **4. Early notice of proposed Services this Christmas at St David's**

#### **Tuesday, 3 December - Women's Advent Reflection, 6.00 - 6.45 pm**

See below for more details.

#### **Sunday, 15 December - Carol Service, 6.00 pm**

See below re request for mince pies

#### **Tuesday, 24 December, Christmas Eve - Christingle, 4 pm**

**Tuesday, 24 December - Bethlehem Mass, 9.00 pm.** This Christmas, many of our singers and musicians are away with family, so as there will be Midnight Mass at the Cathedral and at St Michael's, we will be opting for a service earlier in the evening, without choir but any singers present will be in the congregation.

#### **Wednesday, 25 December, Christmas Day - Holy Communion, 9.30 am**

## **Visiting and home Communion**

If you would like to be visited or phoned by someone from the church community, please let Howard Friend know by ringing him on 07733 739453; for Communion at home, either for yourself or someone you know, please contact Ian Cartwright on 07813 795616.

## **Women's Advent Reflection - Tuesday, 3 December, 6.00 - 6.45 pm to be followed by dinner at the Dinosaur at 7 pm**

We are delighted that Sue Astbury will be leading our reflection this year. It will be followed by the women's Christmas dinner at the Dinosaur at 7 pm. There will be a selection of Turkish snacks to start with then we will each order from the menu and pay our own bills at the end. Please speak with Glynis or Helena to book your place. We will need to give the Dinosaur numbers by *1 December* but it would be helpful to have an idea of numbers as soon as possible. Thank you.

## **Carol Service and a request for mince pies - Sunday, 15 December, 6.00 pm**

We are looking forward to our carol service on 15 December. We would like to offer mulled wine and mince pies afterwards. If you could help with the mince pies, that would be much appreciated. There will be a sign-up sheet at the back of church on Sunday or please speak with Maggie if you would like to contribute.

## **Churchyard clean-up session - 10-12, Saturday, 7 December**

Di Jacob was delighted to see so many eager helpers to tidy the churchyard on Saturday, 2 November. Many thanks indeed. We achieved more than hoped. To continue I would like to have another session 10-12 noon on Saturday 7 December if the weather permits. It would be useful to clear the ivy off the graves, and cut the grass around the same. Strimming and mowing may be needed too. This will hopefully put the churchyard to bed for the winter!

## **Carols in the prison - Tuesday, 17 December**

We have been invited once again to sing some carols in the prison for their "Christmas Festival" on Tuesday, 17 December - time to be

confirmed, but probably late morning or early afternoon. If you might be interested, please speak to Robert.

## **Knit and Natter - Tuesday, 17 December, 4 pm at The Imperial**

The date for the Christmas Knit and Natter is Tuesday, 17 December at 4pm at the Imperial. All welcome for the natter or meal from 5.30. Please see Glynis for more details.

## **Tuesday Friendship Café**

St David's Church is normally open on Tuesday mornings from 10.30 am to 12 noon as a drop-in for people to find a Christian welcome and company.

## **Wednesday Walks**

Wednesday walkers meet and enjoy convivial conversation, gentle strolls, the changing of the seasons and a coffee together. Would you like to join us? We'd make you very welcome! We meet at 9am at the door at the west end of St David's and we leave promptly. If you'd like to join us please just turn up, or speak to Helena in church.

## **"Missing People" Volunteering Opportunity G4 Christmas Concert -**

### **28 November 2024, Exeter Cathedral**

The choral band G4 (from X Factor) are having a Christmas Concert on 28th November, at Exeter Cathedral. The band allows "Missing People" to fundraise at their Christmas concerts due to a personal connection with the missing cause. They are looking for volunteers of all ages including families to help usher and fundraise for Missing People on the evening. The ushering is only needed during the breaks and at the start/end, so volunteers get to watch the show for free as well. The tour raised £16,000 across all the concerts last year towards services for missing people and their loved ones. Have a look at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3JHDkj79eg> or to sign up go to <https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/support-missing-people/volunteer/g4-christmas-concert-usher> .

## **Men's Worship in Exeter**

Ben Greenwood (of Belmont Chapel) is looking to set up a city wide men's worship evening. If you might be interested, please let us know: [wardens@stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk](mailto:wardens@stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk).

### **Adult Literacy and Numeracy ("ALaN")**

Could you help support adults seeking to improve their basic reading and arithmetic? The ALaN Club meets at The Mint on Thursday afternoons. If you might be interested, speak to Robert M., or see flyer at back of church.

### **Skylarks a cappella singers - Sunday, 22 December, 4 pm, St Stephen's**

A concert of Christmas songs old and new in aid of St Petrock's. Suggested donation £10.

### **Your Prayers are asked for...**

#### **those who are suffering including:**

Caroline Speed-Andrews; Maggs Bedford; Delia Bloom; Libby Clapham; Andrew Francis; Hazel Gowland; Roger Luscombe; Anne Smith; Sarah Wood; Clive and Jeanie; Beth; Charlotte, Paul and Grace; Will, Dave

#### **those who have died recently including:**

George Hexter

#### **In our Parish Cycle of Prayer please pray for:**

The parish magazine, web sites, social media and all involved in our parish communications

#### **Please also pray for:**

Our church following the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury

Our country and its leaders, both political and religious

Our world, for wisdom for its leaders and a wish for peace not war

### **Sunday, 24 November 2024 - Christ the King/Sunday before Advent**

#### **Collect**

Eternal Father,

whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven  
that he might rule over all things as Lord and King:  
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit  
and in the bond of peace,  
and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### **1st reading - Daniel 7.9-10, 13, 14**

As I watched,  
thrones were set in place,  
    and an Ancient One took his throne;  
his clothing was white as snow,  
    and the hair of his head like pure wool;  
his throne was fiery flames,  
    and its wheels were burning fire.  
A stream of fire issued  
    and flowed out from his presence.  
A thousand thousand served him,  
    and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.  
The court sat in judgement,  
    and the books were opened. As I watched in the night visions,  
I saw one like a human being  
    coming with the clouds of heaven.  
And he came to the Ancient One  
    and was presented before him.  
To him was given dominion  
    and glory and kingship,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
    should serve him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion  
    that shall not pass away,  
and his kingship is one  
    that shall never be destroyed.

### **or Revelation 1.4b-8**

John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Look! He is coming with the clouds;

every eye will see him,

even those who pierced him;

and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

‘I am the Alpha and the Omega’, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

### **Gospel Reading - John 18.33-37**

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered, ‘Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?’ Pilate replied, ‘I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?’ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate asked him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’

### **Post Communion**

Stir up, O Lord,

the wills of your faithful people;

that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **Amen**

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please tell us at [notices@stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk](mailto:notices@stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk)

Please send notices/content/prayer requests or amendments to Hilary on [todd.stdandm@gmail.com](mailto:todd.stdandm@gmail.com))

(All readings can be found via Oremus Bible Browser: <https://bible.oremus.org/> in the New Revised Standard Version (anglicized edition))

## **Sermon by David James for Sunday, 17 November - 2nd before Advent**

Years ago, when I first visited Jerusalem and walked up towards the Temple Mount, I found myself quite moved by what came into view. Looking up towards the still huge stone structure, you can still see at the base of the walls large stones, tossed higgledy-piggledy into the valley below. I don't know why the sight became one of those memorable moments in life when you realise something at a deeper and more emotional level. But I'm sure it had to do with suddenly being transported back in time to a pivotal moment in history - the destruction of Herod's Temple.

'Look, teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' exclaimed one of Jesus' disciples as they left the Temple. 'Ah,' he replies, 'Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.' (Mk 13.1,2)

And there they were, as if it had just happened yesterday. I think that was it, that was the trigger that seemed to take me back 2,000 years.

And the stones are indeed huge. They are known as Herodian Ashlars. The ones in the so-called 'master course' at the bottom of the wall are 44 foot long, 15 foot wide and 11.5 foot tall. They weigh over 600 tons. When the Romans destroyed the Temple in AD 70 they only actually managed to topple the upper strata - the ones at the base were simply too vast to move.

Herod the Great, who was the one at the beginning of Matthew's gospel who ordered the death of all the children in Bethlehem, died in 4AD. By then he'd reigned for over 30 years and had undertaken



a huge programme of rebuilding in Jerusalem, of which the Temple was the largest and most prestigious. In good standing with the powerful in Rome he wanted to prove his attachment to the Jewish people he'd been sent to rule over and to ingratiate himself with them by building what became known as one of the greatest wonders of the ancient world.

There could, after all, be nothing more important to the Jewish nation than the practice of their faith which centred around the appointed place for God's dwelling, the Temple in the City of David. Think of how central it is to Jesus's own ministry. It's where he is presented to God as a baby and circumcised as a sign of the covenant between God and his people.

It's where his parents take him regularly on pilgrimage for the Feast of the Passover and where he goes to teach the people because it's his Father's house. It's the place he has to return to at the climax of his life because, as he says, it's unthinkable that a prophet should die anywhere other than in Jerusalem. It's as he looks over the Temple Mount on his final approach that he weeps over the foolishness of the city which will crucify him. 'If only you knew what belongs to your peace', he laments.

The destruction of the Temple may be what's behind the turmoil Jesus warns about in the last verses from Mark's Gospel we heard this morning. It's probably not written as an end-of-the-world scenario but may even be the author recalling the cataclysmic event itself, depending on when you date the writing of the gospel.

Whatever, the passage is about turmoil in the world around and the message of Jesus to stand firm and hang on in there.

It's a similar message we find in the Hebrew letter we've also heard today. It's another piece of writing which may even be contemporary with the writing of Mark or at least soon after.

If so it was written to Christians who were experiencing trial and tribulation in their contemporary world. If, like the gospel, it was also written around 65 or 67 AD, then Christians at the time were experiencing persecution for their faith by the Emperor Nero. 'The trouble with persecution', I remember Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali once

saying, 'is that sometimes it works.' He knew of what he spoke, having been brought up in Pakistan.

Jesus understood the need for a profound change to take place in how people thought of God. One of the shocking things he had done, which had really unnerved the authorities, was to overturn the tables of the money-changers in a symbolic and prophetic gesture which meant to say, All this is finished. It's not needed for you to come closer to God. Sacrificing animals is not necessary to placate an angry God. Quite the opposite: God already loves you and will always love you. What you need to do is to work out what that love means for you.

It's tricky for us, used as we are to thinking about our faith as something personal, something in our hearts and minds. In the Hebrew Bible - the OT - what matters is obeying the law and the commandments, which call for concrete, practical actions.

For them that was what faith meant. But what we read today in the letter to the Hebrew Christians is 'I will put my laws in their hearts and I will write them on their minds'. For that writer this prophecy from the Book of Jeremiah has come true in Jesus.

Now faith no longer means just doing things right. Faith in Jesus is different. It means 'holding fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful,' as the Hebrew letter tells us. And this means we need 'to provoke one another to good deeds,' as it goes on to say.

Christianity is about doing things that will help others, it is about demonstrating our loving in concrete actions, but inner faith is the mainspring of what we do and that in turn shapes who we are and what we become. If we aren't filled with a sense of being eternally loved, for example, we're not likely to be very loving ourselves.

So Christianity brings about a profound change in our understanding of what it is to believe.

It's no longer a kind of tick-box exercise which shows you have done everything the law requires, it's about an interior conviction. It's about an inner life of prayer and growing closer to God in heart, mind and loving action.

Trials test our faith, our inner belief. But as the Bible shows us this is neither new nor anything to be surprised at. Jesus certainly didn't think so. He says if anyone wants to follow him they must pick up their cross and carry it along with them. In this world you will have tribulation, he tells his disciples in John's gospel. But don't despair, cheer up, I have overcome the world.

Bishop Mike, in his enthronement sermon spoke of the challenges of faith in our very turbulent and troubled contemporary world. But he also reminded us we are to serve the people of Devon with joy. He said this:

'The challenge of the gospels is to live now as if joy is the last word - because it is. To live now as if the journey we are on is not from life to death but from death to life - because it is. To live now as if sorrow is eclipsed by joy - because it is. And to realise something of that joy even while the trials and tribulations are still with us. The early martyrs sang as the wild beasts fell upon them.'

I leave you with two pictures. The first a portrait. A programme in which we watched 3 artists paint Rosy Jones who suffers from cerebral palsy but who is a comedian who as she said at one point is 'proud of my disability.' You cannot miss her infectious smile. The winning portrait captured her personality, said the judges. She was laughing.

And a monk from the small Benedictine community at Salisbury whose requiem took place recently. The photo on the front of the order of service was a lovely one of him smiling, which was very much him: he had a great sense of humour. And the prior told us that he died in the nursing home where he was being cared for. He collapsed in the lounge, having got up from his chair to dance with the music being played.