

The Parish of St David, Exeter

Parish Newsletter for Sunday, 6 April 2025

Our services this week at St David's:

Sunday, 6 April 2025 – 5th Sunday of Lent (Passiontide begins)

9.30am Parish Communion with celebrant Mike Clark, and preacher, Ian Cartwright

6 pm Evening Prayer led by Ian Cartwright

Tuesday, 8 April, 9.00-9.30 am Zoom Morning Prayer. Please join us using this link ([usual](#)):

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77269635517?pwd=Lb4OHa9TejMxaaXMc7XrFokjutLaZ1.1>

Meeting ID: 772 6963 5517

Passcode: 0q5ZR4

Thursday, 10 April, (William Law, priest, spiritual writer, 1761; William of Ockham, friar, philosopher, teacher of the faith, 1347) 10.30am Holy Communion led by Sarah Cumming who will also deliver the homily

Sunday, 13 April 2025 – Palm Sunday

9.30am Parish Communion with celebrant and preacher, Sarah Cumming

6 pm Evening Prayer led by Robert Mitchell

For services this week at St Michael's and All Angels CD, please see:

<https://www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk/worship/>

Message from the Vicar and Churchwardens

1. [Welcome to our new Administrator](#) - We have said farewell and thanks to our parish administrator, Jo, who has decided to move on. We are delighted to say that we have appointed Doree Moretti to this part-time post. Doree has a long career in professional administration and we look forward to her supporting our work here at St David's when she starts this coming Tuesday.

2. Consultations

Many thanks for all the responses to the questions so far, and to Maggie for gathering and collating the responses. If you have had further thoughts about any of the questions so far, do please email Mike.

3. **Next Saturday, 12 April – last call for the Men’s Breakfast at 9 and the church Spruce-up, 9.30-11.30** - the Men’s Breakfast will be at 9 am, at the Boston Tea Party, to tie in with the church spruce-up. Please contact Alan Baker if you would like a reminder alan.baker1963@outlook.com

And the Spruce-up will be 9.30-11.30 am (before a concert comes in) so do please come if you can for however long you can. A sign-up sheet is at the back of the church – please let us know if you can come so Paula can plan what’s possible in the time.

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.

Free Easter Craft and Easter Egg Hunt in church - Friday, 11 April, 11-2pm

This is a community-focused family event. All welcome. Please see Sarah for more details.

Ukrainian Easter Celebration - Saturday, 19 April, 2-4 pm

We are delighted to be hosting the Exeter Ukrainian community's Easter celebration at St David's from 2 until 4 on Saturday 19th April. All will be welcome to attend for all or part of it (and if you do plan to attend, please could you let the wardens know since it will be helpful to know which representatives of St David's will be there).

Parish lunch – Thursday, 24 April, 12 noon

The next parish lunch will be on Thursday, 24 April, venue TBC. Thanks, Sue Wilson and Jenny Baker

Parish Magazine – Don't forget to pick up a copy. Many thanks to the editorial team. The copy date for the next issue is *Sunday, 13 April*.

Please note the new email address:

newleaves@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk

Compilation of a New Electoral Roll

This year, we have to compile a completely new Electoral Roll, so everyone who wishes to needs to complete a fresh Electoral Roll form. Many thanks to those who have already done so. Forms are on the table at the back of the church. Please hand completed forms to Sue Wilson or Alice Francis, or speak to them if you would like to know more.

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. All welcome.

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.

Knit and Natter

Please see Glynis for details of future meetings.

Invitation to be confirmed at Exeter Cathedral – Sunday, 11 May, 10am

A confirmation service is an opportunity to make a public declaration about your Christian faith and go deeper in your discipleship. There will be a confirmation service led by Bishop James at Exeter Cathedral on Sunday, 11 May at 10am. [Find out more about confirmation](#). If you would

like to be confirmed, or find out more about it, then please talk to Mike or Sarah.

Garden of the Bishop's Palace open this Sunday, 6 April

The garden of the Bishop's Palace covers three acres and is one of the most ancient in Devon. Bounded by the old Roman bank and city wall to the east and by the Cathedral to the west, it is a haven of peace in the middle of the city. *Open Sundays 6 and 13 April, 2-4 pm.* Guided Tree Tours: 2.15, 3.00 pm, 3.45 pm. Tea, coffee and hot cross buns served in the palace porch. More info: devonhistoricchurches.co.uk. £5 suggested donation. Please note: the garden does not have suitable access for wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

Research Student request for help – if you would like to help a research student on the topic: Investigation of the role of self views and thinking style for grief and recovery after losing a loved one during Covid-19, please see the poster on the board at the back of church. Melis Gün Ertan is doing a PhD in Psychology at the University of Exeter. Further details at: https://exe.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2aimpvYl68Q32pU

Green Matters

Great Spring Clean 21 March – 6 April -[Great British Spring Clean 2025 - Clean Devon](#)

Community Garden Week 7th – 13th

World Earth Day 22nd April

Stop Food Waste Day 30th April

Your Prayers are asked for...

those who are suffering including:

Caroline Speed-Andrews; Ann Barnet, Delia Bloom; Libby Clapham; Andrew Francis; Hazel Gowland; Eileen Jarman, Roger Luscombe; Avril Pattinson; Anne Smith; Helena Walker, Sarah Wood; Clive and Jeanie; Beth; Charlotte, Paul and Grace; Will, Dave

those who have died recently

In our Parish Cycle of Prayer please pray for:

The PCC, our parish officers and administrator; the need for a new Churchwarden later this year

Please also pray for:

Our church

Our country and its leaders, both political and religious;

Our world, for wisdom for its leaders and a wish for peace not war, for Ukraine and Gaza; all those affected by the recent earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand and those trying to help

Sunday, 6 April 2025 – 5th Sunday of Lent

Collect

Most merciful God,

who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ

delivered and saved the world:

grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross

we may triumph in the power of his victory;

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 lesson - Philippians 3.4b-14

even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more:

circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the

tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

[Gospel Reading - John 12.1-8](#)

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of

my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

Post Communion

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.

Amen

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please tell us at
notices@stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk

Please send notices/content/prayer requests or amendments to Hilary
on 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 Sarah Cumming for Mothering Sunday, 30 March 2025

Mothering Sunday can be one of those days which reaches to our core; for some people it will bring to the surface feelings of celebration and gratitude, for others, loss and heartache.

After all, one of the things which unites us is that we have, at least at the very start of our lives, a mother somewhere.

I hope that you noticed that, in a nod to Mothering Sunday, each of our Bible readings this morning include a mother, which is a good start. Once you delve more deeply, both events take place in circumstances which could be described as

'challenging' to say the least, and not entirely family friendly. I've looked at the classifications for films which tell these stories, and they range from U to 18!

The first reading was set in Egypt at a time when the enslaved Israelites were treated cruelly and facing their ending as a people.

The Gospel reading is equally challenging. Happy Mothering Sunday!!!

Continuing my film theme, the Bechdel test for films poses a simple question: whether at any time during a film two or more women have a conversation about something other than a man, and also that the women are named. It is a way of identifying films where women have a role beyond "When will the hero rescue us?" It provides a fairly basic measure of whether women are portrayed as developed characters.

This seems an appropriate place to start today as we pause to consider and value the role of women in our lives.

There would be a high score for reading from Exodus: the family lines of both Moses' father Amram, and mother Yochebed, (Jokabed) are given. Prior to today's reading, the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah (named) have disobeyed Pharaoh's murderous instructions.

Moses' mother sees that she has a fine baby, not in the sense of beautiful but pleasing in sight of God. So she weaves a vessel of grasses and coats it with bitumen – the word used is tevat. The only other use of this word 'ark' is for Noah: a boat for salvation.

It is an act of skill and defiance, desperation and strategy.

She may not be able to keep her young baby quiet or hidden but she will give him the best chance of survival. She places him in the river as her oppressors insist but does everything in her power to ensure his life. She keeps the letter but not the intention of the law.

Then she takes him to the wild waters of the Nile and releases him. Did she choose the spot knowing that it was favoured by the social elite? We don't know. It remains a poignant moment, one of love and releasing and burning, desperate trust.

What follows is a glorious plot twist! Her baby is noticed by the Pharaoh's daughter, and in her own act of defiance, she takes the boy into the royal residence despite immediately recognising him as a Hebrew child. Moses' sister Miriam's courage in following the royal party and offering her own mother's services is an act of brilliance. The Pharaoh's daughter has the authority to appoint and pay Yochebed as his nurse: saving his life and ensuring his survival.

Women are named - the quick-witted midwives who speak up to Pharaoh, Moses' mother and sister. Who isn't named - the daughter of their oppressor! Making a point? Perhaps.

These are quiet, subversive acts which ensure the survival of Moses and his future as leader of the Hebrew people to the promised land. There is a community of care around Moses...and the lingering moral outrage for all those, both then and throughout history who were not so fortunate.

When we apply the Bechdel test to the Gospel reading, of course it doesn't always fit quite so well, although Jesus does address his mother first before his close friend. The arrangements are settled in a few seconds. Mary doesn't speak yet can assume her agreement as she moves in with John's family.

Jesus's friends, apart from John, have fled; betraying and denying him. If found, they face a very real prospect of arrest, flogging or death. Only a few women remain and John, possibly a younger man so seen as less of a threat to the authorities.

Jesus had been rejected by those from every strata of society, by friends and followers alike. Jesus's family face social exclusion and derision. The shame of his appalling death would have been extreme. Small town notoriety tends to stick. So his family may have wished to scoop up Mary and lay low. Placing her in the home of John kept her instead right at the heart of their faith kinship.

Jesus uses his remaining fragments of breath to provide for his mother. I'm cautious to convey that Jesus is 'mothering' Mary. In valuing mothering I'm always concerned that all compassion is labelled as feminine rather than simply acknowledging the role of compassionate men!

I am going to argue that despite their tough themes, these are the perfect readings for Mothering Sunday: because here we learn that our experiences of gratitude and joy, of loss and heartache, and everything in between, is not new to the human condition. It's an important validation of the most personal moments of our lives: the stories we share and the stories as yet untold but known by God.

For people who think that Christians merely sit about singing Kumbaya, this might come as a bit of a shock.

We see, over and over again, that our complex and bewildering stories fit into God's story. A journey of love and redemption, of a deeper purpose which is being worked out in our own lives and also the cosmic story of salvation. This is not to minimise the atrocities of this world; our readings today show the responses of horror and

outraged resistance to that. I'm suggesting more broadly a perspective, which starts with:

In the beginning, God...and ends with a vision of the river of life, with rejoicing and healing and light, provides an eternal perspective of God's love which can anchor us even in stormy seas.

We've also heard stories where family extends beyond its normal boundaries. In my house we have the phrase that there is 'family you are born with and family you choose!' There is a suggestion here of 'faith kinship' the family you worship with, grow with, explore faith and the purposes of God with. Perhaps also the family who stand on your last nerve and then bring you a cuppa... who laugh and weep with you.

As a consequence of Jesus' request, we know that Mary was alongside the disciples, actually in the house with them, at the Day of Pentecost. From her initial 'yes' at the conception of her son to witnessing the birth of the church, as the presence of God the Holy Spirit fills his followers with joy and courage. Continues to fill and empower us today...

Then we may find that God will use us in civil disobedience like that of the Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah, or the creative ingenuity of Jochebed, the resourcefulness of Miriam or the compassion of a daughter who recognised in her own privilege her power to save a life. Of course, it may draw us to the foot of the cross.

May the Holy Spirit guide us all, beloved children of God.

May we allow God, the Mother of us all, to enfold us in God's own circle of care.

Amen