

The Parish of St David, Exeter

Parish Newsletter for Sunday, 9 March 2025

Our services this week at St David's:

Sunday, 9 March 2025 – 1st Sunday of Lent

9.30am Parish Communion with celebrant, Sarah Cumming and preacher, Mike Clark

6 pm Evening Prayer led by Ian Cartwright

Tuesday, 11 March, 9.00-9.30 am Zoom Morning Prayer. Please join us using this link

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

Meeting ID: 772 6963 5517

Passcode: 0q5ZR4

Thursday, 13 March, 10.30am Holy Communion led by Catherine Blundell with homily by Bill Pattinson

Sunday, 16 March 2025 – 2nd Sunday of Lent

9.30am Parish Communion with celebrant, Mike Clark and preacher, Jonathan Draper

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. Message from Churchwardens

As we were without Wifi last week, we thought it worth repeating the notice given by Hilary last Sunday:

The Annual Meeting at which churchwardens are elected is likely to be on the 19th of May. As you may recall, two years ago, Robert, my fellow

churchwarden, said he would stand for election only if someone stood with him. That turned out to be me. Robert has now decided, after two interesting years, not to stand again. I think you will agree that we have been a good team, with complementary skills and I have greatly enjoyed working with him. I will miss our partnership. But that leaves me with a decision to make. Having talked it over with Roger, I'm saying to you that, as things stand at present (and May is a way off), I am prepared to stand for a further term if wanted, but only if someone will stand with me. I am not able or willing to continue on my own. Our church needs two churchwardens.

So if you are interested in finding out a great deal more about what goes into the running of this church and its services, the sheer number of people who one way and another help to keep the ship afloat; in understanding more about the building and how to keep it functioning, and meeting interesting people both within and in the wider parish and Diocese, then please think about whether this could be for you. There's a lot about the role I really enjoy and I feel I have grown and learnt a lot and continue to learn as a result of doing it so I thank you for electing me for the past couple of years along with Robert. I think he would say the same despite some of the cards we have been dealt! So please think about it; pray about it; talk with us and with other members of the team. And remember, just because Churchwardens are responsible for just about everything, it does not mean you have to do everything! Thank you.

2. Thank you

We hope you have noticed how much more brightly lit the church is. That is thanks to Ben and Shaun who, with Dave's support, changed 160 light bulbs in the lamps (8 per lamp) a couple of Mondays ago. Many thanks indeed, they make a huge difference.

We also hope you enjoyed the cake courtesy of the Social Committee after the St David's Day service last Sunday. Again, thank you to all who cooked and who stayed to enjoy the results!

3. Parish Giving Scheme

With regard to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), we felt it important to clarify a couple of things as a result of queries raised with us. The key points are, firstly, that the PGS is a supplement to, rather than replacement for, the standing order arrangement. People are welcome to continue to use standing orders and indeed we will need to keep a certain proportion of standing orders to retain Gift Aid on small loose change donations. This is because, for some reason, the PGS Gift Aid arrangements do not apply to loose-change donations. However, secondly, there is evidence that younger people in particular do not want to sign up to standing orders and would prefer a PGS style arrangement. So, in effect, there are now four possible ways of monetary giving available:

1. Regular giving by standing order or direct debit set up by donor to the church bank account;
2. The new PGS;
3. Ad hoc donations via the terminal (subject to charge and therefore more advisable for persons without a long-term connection or who do not have cash with them);
4. Ad hoc via bank transfer.

We hope that helps. Many thanks to everyone who contributes in whatever way to our church life, much appreciated.

4. Lent Group – Thursday, 13 March

Howard and Helen Friend will be hosting the first meeting of the Lent group on Thursday, 2 to 3.30pm on Thursdays and running for six weeks. Please contact Mike Clark or Howard if you would like to join the group. mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org

Also, you may like to take a look at these resources for Lent

<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/living-hope-resources-lent-2025>

or download the Everyday Faith app to your phone. This has a brief reading, reflection and prayers for every day, and will be following the theme of 'Living Hope' during Lent.

5. [Brunch on Sunday, 16 March](#)

We look forward to a simple brunch after our service on 16 March - any offers of contributions on sign-up sheet at the back of church which will be available for the next few weeks.

6. [Parish Quiz Night, Saturday, 22 March 2025](#)

Tickets for our Quiz Night on 22 March are on sale today or can be reserved after church. Do make up a team of 6 -8 or join a team on the night. Doors and a cash bar open at 6.30pm and the quiz will start at 7pm. A Ploughman's Supper is included in your £10 ticket. Start thinking of your team name now!

7. [Parish outing to Sherborne, Dorset – Wednesday, 26 March 2025](#)

Robin Thomas is kindly organising a parish outing to Sherborne for us.

Approximate cost to cover return rail fare/coffee/guided tour of Sherborne Abbey/lunch: £50.00 per person. For full details and a proposed timetable for the day, please see the sign-up sheet at the back of church.

8. [Church Spruce-up – Saturday, 12 April, 9.30-11.30 am](#)

Paula Lawford is organising another big clean of the church on Saturday, 12 April (the day before Palm Sunday) so it will be all spruced up for Easter. Do come if you can for however long you can. A sign-up sheet is at the back of the church.

9. [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 Mike at Exeter Cathedral on Sunday, 11 May at 10am and he would like to confirm as many people as possible! [Find out more about confirmation.](#) At least three members of St David's are going to be confirmed at this service. If you would like to be confirmed, or find out more about it, then please talk to Mike or Sarah.

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.

Parish Magazine – Don't forget to pick up a copy. Many thanks to the editorial team. The deadline for the April edition is *Sunday, 16 March*.

Please note the new email address:

newleaves@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk

Compilation of a New Electoral Roll

This is another gentle reminder of the need for everyone who wishes to complete an 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.

Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast will be advised advertised shortly. Please contact Alan Baker if you would like a reminder

alan.baker1963@outlook.com

Parish lunch – Thursday, 27 March, 12 noon

The next parish lunch will be on Thursday, 27 March at Exeter College's @34 restaurant at 12 noon. Thanks, Sue Wilson and Jenny Baker

Green Matters

Global Recycling Day 18th -[Resources - Global Recycling Day](#)

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

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:

Lent Groups; Bible study groups

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 the peace process in Gaza

Sunday, 9 March 2025 - 1st Sunday of Lent

Collect

Almighty God,

whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,

and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:

give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;

and, as you know our weakness,

so may we know your power to save;

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.

1st reading - Romans 10.8b-13

But what does it say?

'The word is near you,

on your lips and in your heart'

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Gospel Reading - Luke 4.1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone."'

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."'

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."'

Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." ' When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

[Sermon by Mike Clark for the 1st Sunday of Lent](#)

This is Lent. Lent is traditionally a time of preparation. It draws our attention to the wonder of the Easter story - Christ's resurrection from the dead. So important is this event in the story of God's salvation of the world that we are invited to take time to take stock of our life of faith.

Where are we on our journey?

What place does God have in our lives?

What does being a Christian or a follower of Jesus mean to us?

Are there choices that we can make that will help us to live more fully as God intends us to live - for our own good and the good of the world?

Repentance has long been associated with Lent, because when we take stock of where we are, we will recognise some ways in which we get things wrong but through which we can learn and grow. We repent - we turn away from those things that lead us away from living as God intends and turn back to him to hear again the message of love, or grace, of acceptance, of hope, of new life.

How might you use Lent to take stock?

The events of today's gospel reading take place immediately after Jesus' baptism, that time when he heard the words of God 'You are my son whom I love - with you I am well pleased.'

You see, at the start of his ministry, it was vital that Jesus knew two things - who he was, and what that meant for his life.

And it is those two things that the devil put into question in this story of Jesus' time in the wilderness.

Are you really the son of God?

Do you know what that means for you?

Listen to the first temptation:

⁵ 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.'

There you have first the doubt- do you really know who you are? Is it true?

Then the devil suggests a false consequence: if you are, then you shouldn't need to suffer the indignity and discomfort of human hunger. You can simply command food into being whenever you want!

Doubt over who he is, and then a false consequence. Jesus resisted both

He knows who he is and what it means. He is going to live a fully human life with all that comes with that.

Secondly:

⁵Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world... **'If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.'**

Here the devil seems to suggest that if Jesus believes he is the Son of God, then surely he deserves to rule and to dominate the world - the false consequence.

Again, Jesus resists. He knows who he is and what that means for him. He is not going to seek power and domination of the world - he is going to change the world through love.

Thirdly:

⁹Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, **'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,** ¹⁰ for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you."

The doubt and the false consequence. You can challenge God to prove his care of you! You can behave recklessly or foolishly God will protect you from the consequences whatever you do!

Again, Jesus resists. He knows who he is and what that means. He will not test God, and he will take responsibility for his actions.

Jesus is unique and these specific challenges were unique to him at that vital stage of his life. But all this also speaks to us. It is vital for us to know who we are and the consequences of that.

Firstly, it is important for us personally

Who are you?

You are many things. But, first of all, you are a beloved child of God. Hear that again this morning - God loves you - you are of more worth to him than you can ever even begin to understand while living on this earth. And that remains true even if you have messed up big time this last week or even this morning. That is who you are.

What does that mean for all of us?

We don't seek to take advantage of that simply for our own gain. We don't just expect that God will give us what we want when we want it, or necessarily provide all that we need without our effort. We don't expect our actions to have no consequences or that God will sort out our mess in an instant.

As we seek to heal and become more and more the people God made us to be there is still a process to go through. Some of you will know that Ben Cookson runs a boxing training group on a Wednesday morning followed by a lunch and prayer time. Some of the people who come are facing huge challenges in their lives and we pray together and share our experiences together of how God can work in us. This week we recognised that there is not a short cut when we are working through things in our past or present that influence us negatively. We become who God wants us to be through a process, through the pains and the struggles and the joys. It doesn't just happen instantly when we come to understand that we are God's children. But God will never abandon us on that journey. He picks us up and welcomes us back when we go wrong.

So, that is a little bit about why it's important for us individually to know who we are and what that means.

Secondly - it is important for us as a church.

Who are we as a church? There are many pictures and descriptions in the New Testament about what it means to be the church.

We are the body of Christ. We are the people of God. We are to be part of Jesus' mission to see the Kingdom of God come.

I make no apology for once again reminding us of Jesus' Manifesto from later in Luke 4 when, shortly after today's events, he reads from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Jesus knew who he was and what that meant. We as a church know who we are and what that means. We are a church not just for our own good but for the good of the world.

As a church, we are looking towards making a permanent appointment of an incumbent at some point in the next year or so. To help us in that process we are going to think together about who we are and what we are about. We would like everyone to be involved. And that starts today. After the service please visit the table at the back of the church and write on the large piece of paper your thoughts in response to the question - 'what do you most value about St David's church?' You can write one thing or many. You can do so anonymously or put your name to what you write. (If you are not able to make it to the service on Sunday then perhaps you could email me at mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org)

In the weeks to come we will be asking for your thoughts and ideas about aspects of our church life and in what ways we can grow. I know that there are challenges and difficulties. I know that there are challenges and obstacles. But for today we are simply focusing on the positives - because it is always good to start a process, or start our day, or start a prayer, recognising the good things we have. It helps us to realise the gifts we have been given and the resources we have. It reminds us of God's goodness.

So to draw to a close. I encourage you, in whatever way you may find helpful - to spend some time this Lent reminding yourself of who you are and what that means.

You are a beloved child of God. You are a vital part of the body of Christ.

Amen

Post Communion

Lord God,

you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;

by it you nourish our faith,

increase our hope,

and strengthen our love:

teach us always to hunger for him who is the true and living bread,

and enable us to live by every word

that proceeds from out of your mouth;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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))