

The Parish of St David, Exeter

Parish Newsletter for Sunday, 23 February 2025

Our services this week at St David's:

Sunday, 23 February 2025 – 2nd Sunday before Lent

9.30am Parish Communion with celebrant, Sarah Cumming and preacher, Jonathan Draper

6 pm Evening Prayer led by Robert Mitchell

Tuesday, 25 February, 9.00-9.30 am Zoom Morning Prayer. Please join us using this link

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77269635517?pwd=Lb40Ha9TejMxaaXMc7XrFokjutLaZ1.1>

Meeting ID: 772 6963 5517

Passcode: 0q5ZR4

Thursday, 27 February (George Herbert, priest, poet, 1633), 10.30am Holy Communion led by Mike Clark

Sunday, 2 March 2025 – Sunday next before Lent/St David's Day, our patronal festival

9.30am Parish Communion with celebrant and preacher, Mike Clark

6 pm Evening Prayer led by Charlotte Townsend

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. Lent Course

Based on the book 'The Final Days' by Mark Rawle, this course explores the four Gospels' differing accounts of Jesus' Passion, offering a fuller picture of his suffering, death and resurrection.

Howard and Helen Friend have kindly offered to host a group at their home. This will be from 2 to 3.30pm on Thursdays starting on 13 March and running for six weeks.

We are also considering holding an evening group if there is enough interest. Please contact Mike Clark this coming week if you would like to join either group. mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org

2. Parish lunch – Thursday, 27 February, 12 noon

The next parish lunch will be on Thursday, 27 February at Exeter College's @34 restaurant at 12 noon. A group will be walking over from the church at 11.45, for anyone who doesn't know the way. Thanks, Sue Wilson and Jenny Baker

3. [Patronal Festival, Sunday, 2 March and a brunch on Sunday, 16 March](#)

Over coffee, there will be cake served to celebrate our patronal festival, our dedication to St David, (whose day is celebrated on 1 March). Do stay for coffee and enjoy some cake.

We also 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.

4. [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!

5. [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.

6. [Advance notice – closure of High Street for 3 weeks](#)

We understand the High Street will be closed for 3 weeks from 24 February for maintenance work. For relocation of affected bus stops, do check online.

7. Covid & flu: sensible precautions

With Covid and flu very much about, a gentle reminder that if you are coughing/sneezing and/or feeling unwell, out of consideration for others, please refrain from attending church, and where possible, join us via the live-stream.

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 – this is out so do pick up a copy. Please note there is a new email address: newleaves@stdavidschurhexeter.org.uk

Compilation of a New Electoral Roll

This is another gentle reminder of the need for everyone who wishes to 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 advertised shortly. Please contact Alan Baker if you would like a reminder alan.baker1963@outlook.com

Your Prayers are asked for...

those who are suffering including:

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

those who have died recently

Maggs Bedford. Her funeral is to be on Tuesday, 4 March at 1.30pm at Cheriton Fitzpaine Church. All welcome.

In our Parish Cycle of Prayer please pray for:

The Thursday team making evening tea for the homeless

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, 23 February 2025 – 2nd Sunday before Lent

Collect

Almighty God,

you have created the heavens and the earth

and made us in your own image:

teach us to discern your hand in all your works

and your likeness in all your children;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things,

now and for ever.

First Reading - Revelation 4

After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.' At once I was in the spirit, and

there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! And the one seated there looks like jasper and cornelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,
'Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come.'

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,
'You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.'

[Gospel Reading - Luke 8.22-25](#)

One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake.' So they put out, and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A gale swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. They went to him and woke him up, shouting, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to

them, 'Where is your faith?' They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?'

Sermon by Jonathan Draper for the 2nd Sunday before Lent

When I was a lad, not long after Adam was created, there was nothing we spent more time on in our Baptist church than the Book of Revelation – unless it was the equally hallucinogenic Book of Daniel. Revelation was the meat and drink of the future, offering hints, and glimpses, and clues about when Christ would return in terrible judgement, about how long the devil would have his way with the world, and about how many people would be saved (144,000 in case you want to know). There were literary clues, and numerological clues. I remember one Sunday School lesson, when I was in my early teens, as we all sat in the basement room with our completely batty Youth Leader, as he wrote out the number of the Beast and showed us how, if you do this and that with the numbers, it spelled out Kissenger. Now Henry Kissenger might not have been the most savoury of men, but I doubt he was the beast from the sea of the Book of Revelation. But there it was, spelled out for us in almost mathematical precision, on the blackboard: 666 meant Kissenger was the beast of the book come to ravage the world. Little did we know then that later scholarship would give the number of the beast as 616, not 666. Yet another certainty bit the dust.

When I read a passage like today's from Revelation, because I'm a very naughty boy, it makes me think of the Wizard of Oz, with smoke and fire coming out of the throne. As I read it as someone who has done at least a little biblical study, I now stand in wonder at the completely lunatic things people try to take from it. On the whole, proper biblical scholars see two main kinds of things in Revelation, and, while referring to a future which is God's and victorious over evil, both are meant to be challenging to the present. First there is the challenge to the churches to be faithful to the Gospel, and seven churches are named to illustrate the kinds of short-comings the churches had: they were lukewarm, compromising with the Emperor cult, losing their enthusiasm, following and tolerating false teaching. These churches are urged to remain patient and faithful, keeping themselves pure from false teaching and the worship of idols: the faithful will receive the crown of glory when Jesus

comes again and God wipes the slate of history clean. As we read at the end of chapter 3, 'To the one who conquers, I will give a place on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne'.

The second range of things, referencing but never quite quoting a wide range of work from the Hebrew Bible, has to do with the violence and corruption of the earthly powers of the present age. Here we have a sense of the violence and corruption of the Roman Empire with imagery such as the beast with 10 horns, the great whore of Babylon, locusts who look like horses dressed for battle, the four horsemen of the apocalypse. You'll not be surprised to learn that when the young European Union reached 10 members it was identified with the beast rising up from the sea and collaborating with the great dragon in uttering blasphemies, and bringing death, and destruction, to God's saints. It is not hard, in this vision of a dark and dangerous world, full of terrors and despair, to see a portrait of the early church, of its persecution, and the violence of the Roman state. And at the root of it all, we are told about a war in heaven between the Archangel Michael and the great deceiver, Satan or the Devil, the great red dragon supported by the 10-horned beast.

The culmination of all this wild imagery and challenge to the churches is the promise held out to those who are faithful, that God will prevail, that justice will be served, that rewards will be given to those who have conquered, those who are washed in the blood of the lamb and whose names are written in the Book of Life. In one of the great, moving passages of Revelation, used probably every day at funerals all over the world, we hear this:

'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'see, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples; and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

For all that it is genuinely weird, the Book of Revelation is ultimately a book about God's faithfulness and our hope for the future. It is not a cryptic book of clues about the timing of the second coming of Christ, or the identity of the beast, or the number of the saved. It is about challenging those who would follow Christ to be faithful to him, to endure what cannot be changed, to name the evils of our world, and to be clear that violence and death, persecution and hardship are not the last words for God's people, for death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for all these are overcome in Christ.

Like everyone else, I have no idea what happens after we die, though most of the visions of heaven I've seen sound rather dull. But what I hold to is a sense that whatever happens to us we are held, enfolded in the love of God and that that is something we can never lose, even if we never know exactly what that means. The apocalyptic visions of the Book of Revelation can be strange and disturbing, more Ragnarok, the great world-ending battle of Norse mythology, than the peaceable kingdom. But they are also strangely comforting: we are left with a vision of the water of life flowing from the throne of God bathed in the light of God's love, and of heaven as a place for all peoples, where no one is in need, and no one needs to be afraid, where violence and corruption are no more: the Lord God will be our light and we will live in God's peace forever.

Post Communion

God our creator,

by your gift

the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise,

and the bread of life at the heart of your Church:

may we who have been nourished at your table on earth

be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross

and enjoy the delights of eternity;

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))