

**The Parish of St David, Exeter**  
**Parish Newsletter for 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026**



**Our services this week at St David's:**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026, Fourth Sunday of Epiphany  
Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)**

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

6pm Evening Prayer led by Ian Cartwright

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February - 9.00-9.30 am Zoom Morning Prayer**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71786502944?pwd=cXtFhWESSm2w5mEOiXN9IGolsaYoH9.1>

Meeting ID: 717 8650 2944

Passcode: 5wkLN7

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> February - 10.30am Holy Communion led by Mike Clark**

**Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Second Sunday before Lent**

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

6pm 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. **Covid/colds and flu** - there's a lot of it about! So please, if you have cold-like symptoms/Covid, for the sake of your fellow parishioners, please do not come to church!

2. **A message from Geoff Crockett.** A service of thanksgiving will be held for Liz Crockett on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 12.30pm, at the Exeter Crematorium, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 6EU. Celebrant Ian Cartwright. Afterwards there will be refreshments at the Devon Hotel, Old Matford Road, Exeter, EX2 8XU. I know that not everyone will be able to attend, so therefore, the service will be livestreamed. Please follow this link: <https://lizcrockett.muchloved.com>, which will lead to the live stream link, donations and more."
3. **Lent reflections and Lent course.** This year's Lent resources from the Church of England are called '*Draw near: Life giving habits for Lent.*' The free Everyday Faith app will have the daily reflections through the season. In addition booklets of the same reflections are available. We will have some in church for you to buy (cost £2.50) or you can buy them yourself here: <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/drawnear>  
Following the same theme, we will be holding a Lent group on **Thursdays at 2pm starting on 19<sup>th</sup> February**. Hosting of the group this year will be shared between Suki and Howard and Helen. Please let Mike know if you are interested in joining.

#### 4. Dates for your diary: -

**Women's Breakfast** – The next breakfast will be on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February, 9am at the Sylvania Café and Store** - put this date in your diary for another enjoyable get together.

**St David's Day Brunch, 1st March.** To celebrate St David's Day we are having a Brunch after the morning service on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> March - all are welcome. A sign up "shopping list" will be available at the back of church (from the 3<sup>rd</sup> February) if you would like to donate any of the items for the Brunch.

#### **Parish Quiz Night, Friday 20th March 2025**

Come and enjoy this very popular event. Tickets will be on sale shortly (£10) and will include supper with cake to follow. Would you like to make up a team?

**Visiting and home Communion** - If you would like to be visited or phoned by someone from the church community, please let Mike Clark know by ringing

him on 07889 570159 or emailing [mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org); for Communion at home, either for yourself or someone you know, please contact Ian Cartwright on 07813 795616.

**Welcome** – would you like to join the welcome team? We are still looking for another couple of people. This is a vital part of our ministry, and an important role so do think about it. If you might be interested, please see Sue Wilson or the Churchwardens.

We are also thinking more widely about how we welcome people into our church and as part of that, wondered how many languages are spoken by members of our congregation? If you would be prepared to share this information, please see Mike or the Churchwardens.

**Tuesday Friendship Café** – this Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February is also ‘Try It Out Tuesday’. This event is run in partnership with Exeter College Community and Partnerships. 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.

**Men’s Breakfast** – Here are the dates for the Men’s Breakfast for the year. Contact Alan Baker if you would like a reminder.  
- [alan.baker1963@outlook.com](mailto:alan.baker1963@outlook.com).

Date	Time	Venue
Saturday 7 February	09:00	Sylvania Stores
Saturday 7 March	09:00	Boston Tea Party
Saturday 4 April	09:00	The Imperial
Saturday 2 May	09:00	To be announced
Thursday 4 June	18:30	Pie & Mash @ the Exeter Brewery Tap (TBC)
Saturday 4 July	09:00	To be announced
Saturday 1 August	09:00	To be announced
Saturday 5 September	09:00	Eat on the Green - top room
Saturday 3 October	09:00	To be announced
Saturday 7 November	09:00	To be announced
Thursday 3 December	18:30	Pie & Mash @ the Exeter Brewery Tap (TBC)

## **In Roots and Shoots:**

### **INTRODUCING DAME SARAH MULLALLY - THE 106<sup>TH</sup> ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE officially became Archbishop of Canterbury on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026, when she was legally confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral.

Bishop Sarah said: "It is an extraordinary and humbling privilege to have been called to be the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. In this country and around the world, Anglican churches bring healing and hope to their communities. With God's help, I will seek to guide Christ's flock with calmness, consistency and compassion.

"These are times of division and uncertainty for our fractured world. I pray that we will offer space to break bread together and discover what we have in common – and I pledge myself to this ministry of hospitality.

"I want us to be a Church that always listens to the voices of those who have been ignored or overlooked, among them victims and survivors of church abuse who have often been let down. I am committed to equipping the Church to be a kind and safe place that cares for everyone, especially those who are vulnerable, as we rise to the challenge of God's call to justice, equity, peace and the care of creation".

The Bishop of Exeter, the Rt. Rev'd Dr Mike Harrison, said "I am so delighted to see Sarah formally and legally made Archbishop of Canterbury today. She will be an Archbishop who is deeply experienced in both rural and urban contexts and has so much wisdom and knowledge to bring to this incredibly demanding role of Archbishop of Canterbury. The added bonus for us is that she knows Devon so well from her time as Bishop of Crediton. No doubt she will be utilising what she learned in Devon in her leadership of the Anglican Communion."

## **Events in Church:**

### **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February**

Fever concerts - Queen vs Abba at 7pm. Tribute to Coldplay & Ed Sheeran at 9pm.

[Follow for more information and to buy tickets](#)

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February at 7.30pm**

Isca Ensemble Chamber Orchestra with soloist Joel Munday, in support of the British Red Cross.

[Follow for more information and to buy tickets](#)

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

**those who are suffering including:**

Caroline Speed-Andrews; Ann Barnet, Libby Clapham; Andrew Francis; Hazel Gowland; Eileen Jarman; Anne Smith; Clive and Jeanie; Beth; Charlotte, Paul and Grace; Will, Dave, Moira Dale; Bridget Newman;

**Those who have died recently:**

Liz Crockett

John Hammond

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

YMCA and The Thirsty Group (monthly faith discussion)

**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.

**Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026,**

**Collect**

Almighty and ever-living God,  
clothed in majesty,  
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple,  
in substance of our flesh:  
grant that we may be presented to you  
with pure and clean hearts,  
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Malachi 3.1-5**

**The Coming Messenger**

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

#### [Gospel Reading – Luke 2.22-40](#)

##### **Jesus Is Presented in the Temple**

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that

will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

### **Post Communion**

Lord, you fulfilled the hope of Simeon and Anna,  
who lived to welcome the Messiah:  
may we, who have received these gifts beyond words,  
prepare to meet Christ Jesus when he comes  
to bring us to eternal life;  
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

**Amen**

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

Please send notices/content/prayer requests or amendments to Mike  
on [mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org)

(All readings can be found via Bible Gateway <https://www.biblegateway.com>  
in the New Revised Standard Version (anglicized edition))

Sermon from Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> Jan by Ross Maynard, South Street Baptist Church

### The Great Comma

Q. How many of you know the APOSTLES CREED? It was a creed developed by the early church, and a big part of it articulates what the early church thought about Jesus. The beginning of the creed says this:

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

*born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;*

Richard Rohr says this...

*'... have you ever noticed the huge leap the creed makes between "born of the Virgin Mary" and "suffered under Pontius Pilate"? A single comma connects the two statements, and falling into that yawning gap, as if it were a mere detail, is everything Jesus said and did between his birth and his death! Called the "Great Comma," this gap certainly invites some serious questions. Did all the things Jesus said and did in those years not count for much? Were they nothing to "believe" in? Was it only his birth and death that mattered? Does the gap in some way explain Christianity's often dismal record of imitating Jesus's actual life and teaching?' (Richard Rohr- The Universal Christ)*

I think what Richard says is very true. The great comma... a single comma that separates Jesus's birth and death, meaning everything he did on this earth comes across as seemingly unimportant.

This has often been the story we have told throughout the church in the West, hasn't it? The focus has been Christmas and Easter. His life is just a blip between these events.

The focus of a Christian has been ORTHODOXY (Right belief), rather than many other religions like Judaism for example, or Eastern Orthodox Christians that emphasises ORTHOPRAXY (Right practice).

And yet, the key to being a Christian is following Jesus.  
Imitating his life.

The lectionary readings for today have all been about following Jesus, PETER'S words in Matthew 19, in particular, hit me this week.

He cries out to Jesus:

**'WE HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING TO FOLLOW YOU.'**

These words come out of a debate about the afterlife. But what I was struck by was Peter's commitment to living like Jesus. He had given up everything to be a disciple of Jesus, a student of his ways.

Following Jesus, WASN'T about an assent to particular doctrines. Never did Jesus say: 'just believe these things, put your feet up and wait for death.'

Following, by its very nature, is active. Peter was a disciple, a student of Jesus learning how to be more like his teacher.

Peter's faith was about Orthopraxy (right practice), it was about Jesus' life.

This is also the story of the APOSTLE PAUL. A man in whom one encounter with Jesus transformed him from a brutal persecutor of Christians to one of the very people he had killed.

When the scales fell from his eyes, he saw his life and the world differently. He chose to live in imitation of the one who had called him.

Paul's faith was about Orthopraxy (right practice), it was about Jesus' life.

Jesus' life is important. Following Jesus, living like he lived is part and parcel of what it means to be a Christian.

This is why I'm still a Christian. I'm not interested in right belief. All that seems to accomplish is division and tribes amongst Christians.

If I can be brutally honest... I don't know half the time what I believe. I don't understand certainty when it comes to belief. I can't be certain about anything I believe. I hope and trust, which are expressions of faith, but I can't be certain.

What I believe often fluctuates between faith and doubt. I go through seasons in which faith is easier and seasons in which doubt is easier.

The reason I mention this is because, even in the times that I've been dangerously close to walking away from ministry. The times I've shouted, 'I'M DONE WITH BEING A CHRISTIAN, look at all the harm done in the name of God!'

Even in those times, I can't imagine letting go of Jesus. I am enamoured by Jesus and his life.

The way he loved his enemies... literally showing compassion to those who plotted to kill him and those who killed him.

The way he gave dignity to the least, spent time with the poor and broke societal norms in order to love.

The way he stood up to empire and the harm being done by the state institution.

The way he lived was captivating.

I want to live like that.

If it turns out I've got this whole God thing wrong, then I'm ok with that, as long as my life hasn't been in vain. And for me, following Jesus, living like him, allowing him by his spirit to transform my life, is most definitely a life worth living.

So, I want to sum up by re-reading the Richard Rohr quote from the beginning of this message...

*'..Called the "Great Comma," this gap certainly invites some serious questions. Did all the things Jesus said and did in those years not count for much? Were they nothing to "believe" in? Was it only his birth and death that mattered? Does the gap in some way explain Christianity's often dismal record of imitating Jesus's actual life and teaching?'*

It turns out that in a creed all about God, I'm obsessed with a comma. Because that comma is where the good stuff takes place. The birth and death of Jesus is of vital importance of course. But the life of Jesus is irresistible.

The question is: Q. Will you follow him?