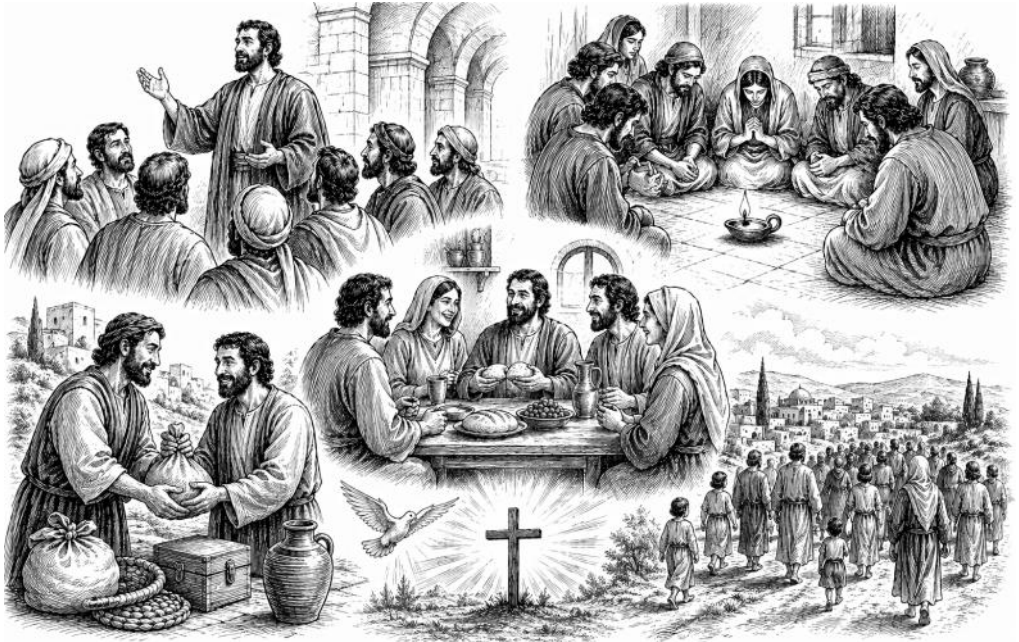




Two Shires Link - Weekly News

for the Parishes of
**Tatworth, Chaffcombe, Winsham,
Thorncombe and Cricket Malherbie**

April 26th, 2026



42 And **they** continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon **every soul**, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And **all that believed were together**, and had all things in common. 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them **to all men, as every man had need**. 46 And **they**, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with **all people**, And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Above is the reading for this Sunday. I have quoted from the KJV with which I am more familiar. You will notice it differs from the NRSV in that each sentence begins with 'and'. Now the word 'and' is a word that connects sentences and thoughts, to weave them together into a collective whole and

It seems that Luke is doing just that, he is tying together the imagery of life for the early believers to help us understand what it was like when the church first got hold of the gospel. What is striking about the sentences are the many references that Luke gives us to Community. He highlights those words in the passages because they express plurality not individuality. To illustrate this the various words and phrases are highlighted in red. So belonging to the church was all about togetherness, people connecting with people, a family, helping and supporting each other, what Paul referred to in 1 Corinthians as 'the body of Christ'. The first verse of our reading says they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching on the word of God; and fellowship alongside the apostles teaching. The word fellowship is from the Greek, which speaks of a close mutual relationship and participation with the community of believers. In verse 45 'they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need'. This was a kind of early welfare program, as Rome certainly didn't provide anything, if you were poor you stayed poor and you could die of starvation, so the church decided it needed to do something about that, so it instituted this idea that we're going to share, we're going to have things in common. Next Luke tells us they were devoted to the breaking of bread from house to house. The early believers regularly ate together, so they devoted themselves to the very simple act of coming together and sharing what they had, as it was all about caring for those who didn't have. This is what Luke is describing, that the heart of the church is a giving church, a caring church. It was also a growing church. In the previous verse 41 'So those who welcomed his message were baptised, and that day about three thousand persons were added'. In the final verse of our reading, 'And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved'.

'Lord, bring the life of the church back into your church and let it start with us today. Amen' Mark Stainer

Services this week

Tatworth 8am Morning Prayer

Thorncombe 10am Holy Communion

Chaffcombe 6:30pm BCP Evening Prayer

Winsham 6:30pm Service of Light

Readings

Acts 2: 42 to end and **John 10: 1-10**

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads

them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers. ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life: raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that we may seek those things which are above, where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.



Loving God, you are close to the brokenhearted and you hold the weary in your arms. Be near to all who are unwell, bringing them peace and strength. Be gentle with those who grieve, surrounding them with your love and the hope of eternal life. May they know they are never alone, for you walk beside them, today and always. Amen.

Services next week

8am **Forde Abbey** - Holy Communion

10am **Winsham** - Holy Communion

10:30am **Tatworth** - Emmaus

Readings next week

Acts 7: 55 to end and John 14: 1 to 14

Dates for your Diary

Winsham

29th April Margaret's coffee & social morning at St Stephen's 10:30am

Lord Jesus,
you are the shepherd who knows us and the gate who keeps us safe.
Amid the noise of life, help us to hear your voice.
Lead us into your peace, and guide us into the fullness of life you promise.
Amen.



Contact Us

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