



The Parish of St David, Exeter

Worship and Weekly Notices for Sunday, 26 July 2026

Sunday, 26 July – 8th after Trinity

- 9.30am Parish Communion led by Suki Coe with preacher Mike Clark
- 6.00pm Evening Prayer led by Ian Cartwright

Tuesday, 28 July - 9.00-9.30am - Zoom Morning Prayer

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

[Meeting Chat Link](#)

Meeting ID: 732 7455 4112

Passcode: d9L307

Please note - we use the Church of England Daily Prayer app, follow this link to download: [Church of England Daily Prayer](#)

Thursday, 30 July

10.30am Holy Communion led by Mike Clark

Sunday, 2 August – 9th after Trinity

- 9.30am Parish Communion led by Sarah Cumming with preacher Suki Coe
- 6.00pm Evening Prayer led by Robert Mitchell

[Follow for last week's sermon](#) or scroll to the end of this newsletter.

Key Messages and Notices from Clergy and the Churchwardens

Institution, Induction and Licensing of Mike and Sarah

The Churchwardens and PCC of the Parish of St David, Exeter
warmly invite you to come and welcome

The Revd Mike Clark as Vicar of the Parish of St David, Exeter and
The Revd Sarah Cumming as Associate Priest of St David Exeter

At a service of Institution, Induction and Licensing
by the Right Reverend Moira Astin, Bishop of Crediton.
on Tuesday 11th August at 7.00 p.m.

The service will be followed by refreshments in church

There are two sign-up sheets at the back of church: one to indicate if you would like to attend and a second for any offers of contributions to the finger food/canapes that will be served after the service.

Ann Patricia Small – those who remember Ann, who died on the 1 July aged 93, are welcome to attend at church on **Friday 31 July at 11.30am** when Mike will lead the funeral service followed by a collection for the Alzheimer's Society.

Shape the Sound of St David's!

Music is such a powerful part of our worship, and we want to ensure the hymns we sing reflect the heart of our congregation. We have recently formed a small music discussion group at St David's, and we would love to hear from you.

Do you have a favourite hymn that always lifts your spirits? Is there a particular piece of music that holds a special place in your heart from a wedding, christening, or milestone moment? Please share them with us!

How to share your suggestions:

- Pick up a form at the back of the church.
- Write down your suggestions (feel free to name as many as you like!).
- If you know the hymn book number, please include it to help us find it quickly.
- Pop your completed form into the collection box (available from the 2 August) at the back of the church.

The suggestion box will remain in place until the autumn, so if you are away for the summer holidays, there is still plenty of time to share your favourites when you return. We can't wait to see what inspires you!

New Leaves July/August – thanks to the editorial team for producing our summer edition. Faith, fun, and fellowship on every page. [Read online](#) or purchase a hard copy in church.

St David's Events

[More information can be found on this link.](#)

Summer Picnics - Thank you to all those who have offered to help at the Summer Picnics. The first picnic is this **Thursday 30 July**, in the churchyard from 12-2pm, followed by 6, 13 and 20 of August. Families bring their own picnic, and we'll provide picnic rugs and chairs, a few toys and a cuppa or lolly. We are

delighted to welcome someone from Exeter Library on the August 13 and from Co-op Engagement on the 20th. All are very welcome to come along.

Tuesday Friendship Café – continues as normal throughout the summer.

Dementia Awareness Talk – we're delighted to welcome **Home Instead** who will be giving a talk on **Tuesday 28 July, 7pm** on how people can continue to live well, and how we can all play a part in supporting those affected by this condition. Do come along.

Parish Lunch - The next lunch will take place on **Thursday, 30 July at 12 noon** at the Farmers' Union. A menu and sign-up sheet are available on the round table at the back of the church. Please add your menu choices to the list no later than Sunday, 26 July. As usual, a group will be walking across from the church, leaving at 11:45 am.

Viola and Piano recital – Saturday 1 August, at 6pm. Sooyeon Little and Sebastian Lee will be performing music by Hindemith, Franck and Rebecca Clarke. Tickets available on the door - £10 for adults, free for children under 12yrs.

Men's Breakfast – Saturday 1 August, 9am. Venue tbc. If you would like a reminder please [email Alan Baker](#).

Chingford Choir - Compline on Tuesday 4 August, at 9-9.45pm. The Choir of Chingford Parish Church, London, will be singing the daily services at Exeter Cathedral from August 3rd - 9th. The senior girl choristers will be visiting St David's at 9pm on Tuesday 4th August to sing the ancient plainchant Office of Compline, which lasts just under 30 minutes and to which everyone is welcome.

Concert by the Katona Twins - 'Alhambra Inspirations'. We're excited to be hosting identical twins Peter and Zoltan Katona, the classical world's best known guitar duo for their '**Alhambra Inspirations' concert on Saturday 19 September at 7.30pm**. They have given recitals in major concert venues throughout the world including performances at Carnegie Hall in New-York, Wigmore Hall in London, The Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, The Konzerthaus in Vienna and the Suntory Hall in Tokyo.

[Click here](#) to see a promotional video on YouTube and [click here to buy tickets](#).

Other Notices

Safeguarding

If you have a concern about the safety of someone or the actions of someone working with children or vulnerable adults, please speak to someone:

- Alice Francis, Safeguarding Representative – email: [St Davids Church Safeguarding](#)
- Contact 07487774590
- Or the [Exeter Diocesan Safeguarding Team](#)

Call for Volunteers, Sunday Coffee Rota - can you spare just six Sundays a year to help serve coffee and tea after the service? It's a great way to meet people. Full training is provided! If you'd like to join the team, please [email Jenny Baker](#).

Visiting and Home Communion – if you would like to be visited or phoned by someone from the church community, please let Mike Clark know on 07889 570159 or by [email](#). For Communion at home, either for yourself or someone you know, please contact Ian Cartwright on 07813 795616.

Wednesday Walks – if you enjoy convivial conversation, gentle strolls, the changing of the seasons and a coffee please join us at 9am at the door at the west end of St David's when we leave promptly. Please just turn up or speak to Helena in church.

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

Covid/colds and flu – if you're feeling under the weather, please prioritise your rest and join us from home to keep our community healthy!

In Roots and Shoots:

Bishop Mike's Summer Visit to Melanesia

During August Bishop Mike and his wife Rachel will be spending two weeks visiting the Solomon Islands in our link Diocese of Melanesia. Bishop Mike said, "This is one of our close diocesan links and there has been no visit by the Bishop of Exeter for 15+ years. I will be visiting the Solomon Islands in August, not least to learn how the effects of climate change are impacting Melanesia (especially with rising sea levels) but also to see how the churches there have been working effectively to make a difference and to find out how we can play our part in supporting them."

"Following this trip, I hope to share both the sobering challenges faced by the Melanesian Church and the joys and inspiration of their faithful witness to Christ, not least as embodied by the Melanesian Brotherhood and the Community of the Sisters of Melanesia."

Bishop Mike's visit is in partnership with the Melanesian Mission charity, which is based in Devon. [Find out more about the Melanesian Mission.](#) We will be sharing highlights and reflections from the trip in future editions of Roots & Shoots.

[Click here](#) to read more on this and other topics in Bishop Mike's summer Ad Clerum (newsletter).

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; Beth; Charlotte, Paul and Grace; Will, Dave, John Sampson and Michael Gray.

Those who have died recently: Ann Patricia Small

In our Parish Cycle of Prayer please pray for:

Local Police and Police Community Support Officers

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, 26 July – 8th after Trinity

Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern
both our hearts and bodies
in the ways of your laws
and the works of your commandments;
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

1st Reading – Romans 8.26-39

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

God's Love in Christ Jesus

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

'For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 13.31-33, 44-52

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

The Parable of the Yeast

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

Three Parables

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Treasures New and Old

'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

Post Communion

Strengthen for service, Lord,
the hands that have taken holy things;
may the ears which have heard your word
be deaf to clamour and dispute;
may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit;
may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love
shine with the light of hope;
and may the bodies which have been fed with your body
be refreshed with the fullness of your life;
glory to you for ever.

Amen

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please [email us](#).

For notices/content/prayer requests or amendments please [email Mike](#).

(All readings can be found via [Bible Gateway](#) in the New Revised Standard Version (anglicized edition)).

Last week's sermon – delivered by Sarah Cumming

Wheat and tares, good seed and weeds

We are faced with a simple story of wheat, weeds and farming with nice clear categories of who is good or bad. Yes?! At one stage this week my talk included 22 questions which I was trying to resolve and at least three separate people have suggested that I might be overthinking it! So, this talk is partly my reflection on what we might do when scripture doesn't settle into easy answers.

I'm going to look through different lenses; first literal and historic.

The story starts well: someone sowed good seed in their field. Then we see a direct sabotage; not an act of nature or bad luck but a deliberate act from an enemy to reduce the productivity of a neighbour's harvest. They sneak in, not only at nighttime, but while everyone is asleep. With mischief made, the enemy simply goes away. The enemy mimics the actions of the farmer by sowing seed, but unlike the farmer, the intention is not to grow food and sustain life but to grow weeds. Why? We don't know.

The landowner has much to lose. At this time, many people lived a subsistence existence from the land where a failed harvest was catastrophic. Failed harvest resulted in debt to others and loss of historic land. To sabotage someone else's livelihood was a serious act.

The slaves themselves may well include those who have fallen on hard times. They question the householder's standards and suggest a solution: better to lose some asset now rather than risk the whole crop. Yet the landowner chooses to let all plants grow and thrive until harvest and avoid damage to the good seed. What would you have done?

Then, abruptly, harvest ends the coexistence, even tolerance, of the weeds alongside the wheat. All will be harvested and the weeds will be burnt. As someone who faces a constant battle with brambles and bindweed I have some sympathy, but it is a startling change of tone.

Then Jesus decodes his parable in the following simple terms:

The sower of good seed is the Son of Man: himself.

The field is the world. The word used here indicates the human realm.

Good seed are the children of the kingdom.

Weeds are the children of the evil one.

Enemy who sowed them is the devil. (How are we to understand that?)

Harvest is the end of the age, so not a single, annual cycle but the ending of all things.

Angels are the reapers. The servants are not mentioned.

Looking more widely we might notice the framing of this story. Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven may be compared to these events. It fits within a sequence of stories exploring this theme: the kingdom of heaven is a bit like...a woman making bread with yeast, a mustard seed and so on. This is not the whole story.

I find that the imagery and meaning becomes more problematic when we realise that the seed represent children; of the kingdom and of the evil one. So is this about the classification of people; us and them? In a world which seeks to separate out and alienate others, this parable could be an effective weapon. I struggle with the fact that the seeds are sown, either by the landowner or by the enemy, so they have no agency or control, yet at the end they are either harvested to be bundled in the barn or are burned. It all seems predetermined and entirely passive.

Is this parable really saying that nothing we do will change our final outcome? We'll muddle through this life together then, suddenly, judgement breaks through and some of you will suffer.

Certainly, there are some who hold this binary view. Is it enough for Christians to simply declare that we are the good guys and to look away at the presence of evil? I'm not sure this is what Jesus has in mind! Perhaps though my mistake is to see each seed as an individual rather than representing a collective reality for each group.

Let's zoom out further and consider the author. This parable is only found in Matthew's Gospel. He was writing to Jewish Christians who faced opposition. They lived among those who wished their downfall and who appeared to be flourishing. The idea that the disciples could retain their identity as children of God while living alongside such neighbours, might have been attractive.

Perhaps this parable is about the role of suffering in the world when those causes the hardship seem to escape unchecked. Perhaps the conversation around the delaying of the destruction of the weeds to prevent harm to the children of God should reassure us; that God sees our struggle and chooses to enable us to flourish.

Let's zoom out even further, recognising that the story takes us to the end of the age. Being a child of God will matter when we see the whole narrative of God. Perhaps the message is that it will all work out in the end.

Jesus says that at the end of the age the angels will collect all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Rather than the medieval imagery of demons nibbling the feet of the unbelievers in a fiery pit, Jesus is likely to have meant something far more mundane. The place referred to is Gehenna: the

place for burning rubbish outside the city walls, where animals would scavenge and fight, where fires would never quite be extinguished and there would be snarling and wailing as those on the edge of society eked out their survival. This is not a conscious, eternal torment but an image of a familiar place just down the road; where the things which needed to be destroyed would go. It's an assurance that the presence of evil itself will be destroyed.

Once this task of burning all that is rotten and decaying is complete, then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the Father. As St Paul writes (Romans 8. 21) 'the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God'.

We look towards a time when all will be set free and all evil will cease. We affirm that there will a resolution and restoration, even if not yet! We affirm the ultimate authority of God to sow seed, respond to our doubts and bring forth solution. St Paul speaks of our adoption as children of God, which we cannot earn or demand, where we await the glorious, eternal and unimaginable glory which already greets those who have gone before us. As blessed adopted children of the kingdom, we might offer helpful suggestions; we may even become part of the solution but the ultimate authority rests with God. We are trusted to grapple with the world; finding balance between showing grace and seeking justice while not overstepping into judgement of those around us; to stay both holy and loving so that God's purposes can be displayed; acknowledging that only God has the whole picture of eternal love. In addition, it's perhaps learning that sometimes it's not about being right, it's about being prepared to grapple with the challenge.

Amen