



Date: Sunday, 27 September 2026 – 17th after Trinity

 Services for This Sunday

Date: Sunday, 27 September 2026 – 17th after Trinity

- **09:30 AM – Parish Communion**
 - **Led by:** Sarah Cumming
 - **Preacher:** Ian Cartwright
- **06:00 PM – Evening Prayer**
 - **Led by:** Ian Cartwright

 Midweek Services

- **Tuesday, 29 September (9:00 - 9:30 AM) – Zoom Morning Prayer**
 - **Join Link:** [Click Here to Join Zoom Meeting](#)
 - **Meeting Link:** [Meeting Chat Link](#)
- **Meeting ID:** 760 7567 8410 | **Passcode:** 0BXtHi
 - *Please note: We use the Church of England Daily Prayer app. Follow this link to download the app.*
- **Thursday, 1 October at 10:30 AM – Holy Communion**
 - **Led by:** Mike Clark

 Looking Ahead: Next Sunday's Services

Date: Sunday, 4 October 2026 – 18th after Trinity

- **09:30 AM – Parish Communion**
 - **Led by:** Sarah Cumming
 - **Preacher:** Mike Clark
 - **06:00 PM – Evening Prayer**
 - **Led by:** Robert Mitchell
-

Last Week's Sermon Link

- **Missed it?** [Follow here for last week's sermon](#) or scroll to the very end of this newsletter to read the text.
-

Messages and Notices from Clergy and the Churchwardens

Christmas Shoeboxes

- Members of St David's are filling shoeboxes with little gifts that will be transported to Moldova and Ukraine in time for Christmas. Many of you have done this before but if anyone would like the information sheet about how it works, please ask Gina. As mid-November is the time that the boxes must be ready for their journey it is time to begin gathering suitable things for wrapping!

Choice of Hymns at St David's

- We have recently formed a small group to discuss the use of music in our Sunday services at St David's. Music is an important part of our worship. We are keen to hear your views and are therefore seeking suggestions for hymns that mean something to you. These might include a favourite, one you had at a special occasion, a reflective or an uplifting one, whatever you like it to be.
- **What we are asking you to do:**
 - Write down your suggestions on a form at the back of the church. You can suggest as many as you like!
 - Include the hymn book number if possible (don't worry if not).
 - Post your form into the hymn suggestion box at the back of the church.
 - *The box will be available until Sunday 25 October. Thank you.*

New Leaves (September)

- Thanks to the editorial team for producing our latest edition easing us into autumn with faith, fun and fellowship on every page. Read [online](#) or purchase a hard copy in church.
 - **University Students' Group** – next Thursday, 8 October - 7pm in church with food! Talk to one of the clergy if you would like to know more.
-

St David's Events (Save the Date!)

Keep track of these upcoming special events, seasonal services, and church socials further down the line:

- **Tuesday, 29 September (10:30 AM – 12:30 PM): The Urban Bike Project** – Mike and his team will be running a pop-up adult bike repair service in the churchyard. Further dates for October TBC. To book a slot please call 07971 616436.
- **Next tba (09:00 AM): Women's Breakfast** – Taking place at The Sylvania Community Café, 1 Sylvania Dr, Exeter EX4 5DT at 9am. You are very welcome to come and join us.
- **Saturday, [Date and venue for October TBC] (09:00 AM): Men's Breakfast** – If you would like a reminder, please email Alan Baker.
- **Friday, 16 October (07:00 PM): Harvest Bring and Share Supper** – This year we will bring and share food together as before and enjoy music and each other's company. Information about tickets and the evening to follow. A sign-up sheet is available at the back of church.
- **Thursday, 29 October (12:00 PM): Church Parish Lunch** – Venue tbc. There's no need to book, just turn up on the day. As usual, a group will be walking across from the church, leaving at 11:45 am.
- **Sunday, 1 November All Saints Day** – we will be having a special service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for those who have died, whether recently or longer ago. All will be welcome.

Safeguarding at St David's

Ensuring a safe environment for everyone: St David's Church, Exeter, takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. We are committed to the safety, care, and protection of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our community.

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** (01392 294969 / safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org)

What's On This Week (Midweek Groups & Notices)

- **Tuesdays:** Tuesday Friendship Café – the next [‘Try It Out Tuesday’](#) is **6 October**. This event is run in partnership with Exeter College Community and Partnerships. All are welcome - to book your place [click here](#).
 - **Wednesday evenings (07:30 PM):** Bell ringing practice.
 - **Fridays (7:00 PM):** Choir with Instrumental group every third Friday.
 - **Volunteers Needed (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](#).
 - **Volunteers Needed (Welcome Team):** 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.
 - **Health Notice (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!
-

Pastoral Care

- **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.
-

News from the Diocese: Roots, Shoots & Fruits

This Week’s Highlight: Thinking About Flags, Englishness and the Church of England

Last week the Reconciliation Initiatives charity chose the Diocese of Exeter as the location to run a pilot training session which explored how churches can start having helpful and honest conversations within congregations and with their local communities about flags and what it means to be English.

Bishop Moira is Chair of Trustees of Reconciliation Initiatives, which aims to help the Church to address inequalities and strengthen relationships in divided societies.

The training was delivered by Rev'd Dr Al Barrett, writer, social commentator and vicar of Hodge Hill Church, a multicultural parish in east Birmingham, who has written on the theme of Christian Nationalism, and Carey Haslam, who has 28 years experience as a

conflict consultant. The session was attended by clergy and lay people from across Devon.

During the morning participants were invited to explore what it means to be English and the symbolism and meaning behind the George Cross, where it is being flown and why. Carey and Al said they weren't attempting to provide answers but to share ways of starting helpful conversations on an emotive and polarised subject which can be hard to talk about.

You can [find out more about Reconciliation Initiatives here.](#)

Churches Together in England has produced an ecumenical response to Christian Nationalism called **Kingdom over Nation**. It includes eight Bible studies written by leading Christians from across church traditions. [Download it here.](#)

Prayer Requests

Parish Cycle of Prayer

- **This week we pray for:** St Michael and All Angels on their Patronal Festival

Rest in Peace (Those Who Have Died): Owen Wellbelove

- **Please remember in your prayers:** We pray for the families and friends of those who have recently died.
- *“May they rest in peace and rise in glory.”*

Continued Prayer Support

- **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, Michael Gray and David Loram.
 - **Our Church & World:** 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.
-

Contact & Giving

- **Office Address:** St David's Church, Queen's Terrace, Exeter, EX4 4HR
- **For notices/content/prayer requests or amendments:** email [Mike](#).
- **All readings** can be found via [Bible Gateway](#) in the New Revised Standard Version (anglicized edition).

Support Our Ministry: To give financially to the work of the church, [follow this link.](#)

 Service Sheet & Readings – Sunday 27 September 2026

Collect:

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city
where we shall see you face to face;
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 - Philippians 2.1-13**

Imitating Christ's Humility

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Shining as Lights in the World

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- **Gospel Reading – Matthew 21.23-32**

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’ Jesus said to them, ‘I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?’ And they argued with one another, ‘If we say, “From heaven”, he will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “Of human origin”, we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And he said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

‘What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

Post Communion:

Lord, we pray that your grace
may always precede and follow us,
and make us continually to be given to all good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Families & Children

- **Play Area:** We love having families join us! A dedicated play area with toys and books is available at the front of church in the south (right hand side) transept throughout the Sunday services for parents and young children to use.
-

Last Week's Sermon Text – Mike Clark

Readings: Jonah 3.10 - 4.11 | Matthew 20.1-16 ~ Trinity 16

I think Jonah is one of the great stories of the Old Testament. Reading from it today leads me to encourage you not to avoid the Old Testament. It is not easy going. There is much that is difficult to read, but it is worth it

The New Testament was written over perhaps 40 or 50 years, a remarkably short period. It emerged from a time of crisis, when the events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection were still living memory, and the emerging church was trying to work out how to live in the light of all this.

The Old Testament is quite different. It was written over many centuries and is shaped by a people grappling with their history and varied experiences.

Some parts confidently declare that the righteous will prosper and the evil will come to ruin, while other parts wrestle with the fact that often things don't work out that way.

We read of success and failure, destruction and defeat, and of new hope rising from the ashes.

Some books encourage the people of Israel to build walls and maintain boundaries.

Others, like the book of Jonah, encourage a broader, more inclusive vision.

We read the last portion of the story today. Jonah was called to call the great city of Nineveh to repentance, but since they were an enemy of his people, Jonah wanted no part in it.

He tried to sail away to Spain, ended up in the water and was swallowed by a fish. When he was vomited out on the shore, he decided he had better go to Nineveh after all. The end result was that the city repented and was not destroyed.

Jonah was disgruntled about this. His prayer was more or less, "God, I knew this would happen, that if they repented you would forgive them because 'you are gracious God, abounding in steadfast love....' And I am very annoyed!"

Some centuries after this story was written, others were also disgruntled at the goodness and generosity of God.

Jesus has arrived. He is mixing with undesirables and offering a place in God's kingdom to people who have lived far from faultless lives.

It was all about God's grace, and at least some of those who had made it their life's aim to live as righteously as possible were not pleased.

Into this situation Jesus tells one of his brilliant stories.

It is about workers who were hired by the day, waiting in the town marketplace for a day's work harvesting grapes.

The first group work for an agreed wage of one denarius, a standard day's pay. The rest who come later simply leave it to the employer to pay what is right.

And then at the end of the day comes the surprise. Those who have worked only an hour, and would expect only a fraction of a day's pay, actually get a whole day's pay. So do all the other groups that have been hired through the day.

Then come the original group, who received exactly what they had agreed to work for, yet they start to grumble that the ones who had worked only an hour had been made equal to them, who had borne the heat of the day.

Who do you sympathise with in this story?

The workers who worked only an hour and received a whole day's pay?

The employer who paid the same to all of them, however long they had worked, having agreed from the start that those who did a day's work should be paid a one-denarius wage?

Or those who, having borne the heat of the day and done by far the most of the work, receive equal pay to those who have done only an hour's work?

I too feel for them, and know that I would have grumbled too.

Let's put the situation in a different way to see what Jesus was getting at.

Think of the religious leaders who had committed themselves to the service of God, who had lived lives of purity to the best of their ability and sought to teach others to do the same. They wanted to be part of God's kingdom and they had put everything they had into attaining it.

These people find Jesus telling them that people regarded as sinners and outsiders are entering the kingdom ahead of them. How fair is that? Who do you sympathise with?

Or think of the early church. Those who had struggled against persecution to establish, build and maintain the church. Now these new Gentile converts come in, don't even see the need to keep the Jewish laws, and think they should have a say in how things are done. Is that fair? Who do you sympathise with?

But you know, this is all about the grace of God. That is what Jesus is about.

Look. God's love is bigger than you ever knew. Any attempt to put walls or boundaries around it will fail. Any sense that anyone might have that somehow they are more deserving than others is shown to be false.

The life that God offers us, his divine life united to ours, is a free gift, not to be earned.

To be sure, we have the freedom to turn it down. Human beings can refuse to accept the love of God, and God will honour that choice.

We can, by our choices, set our lives on a path that makes it hard to turn around. We can make a habit of choosing against God so that it becomes very hard to choose for him.

But the welcome is the same whenever we turn to him, however old we are when we turn and however long we have waited.

That is the scandalous message of Jesus' story.

But there is something that I noticed this week when preparing that I had not noticed before.

If you had asked me last week about the people who were hired last, I would have said that they represent the latecomers.

But that's not the case. Verse 6: "And about five o'clock [the landowner] went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.'"

It had never struck me before that they had been there all along. Faces lost in the crowd as various landowners had come and gone. Patiently they had waited all day.

They weren't late. They had been overlooked.

It made me think of being a child in the school playground when teams were being picked for a game. You remember. The two most confident kids were always the captains and would take turns in picking. Their best mates would be picked first, and then the ones who were considered to be good at the game. And then there were a few who were always last to be picked.

I'm not going to say where I fit into this story, because you might think I am begging for sympathy!

But it made me wonder about whether we ever feel unnoticed or overlooked. If so, you may even think that God hasn't really noticed you. That somehow you are not good enough or important enough.

If that is true, then be assured that God sees you.

Because the remarkable thing in this story is that the landowner sees the people whom everyone else has overlooked.

And he doesn't simply notice them. He goes looking for them.

God sees the people who are overlooked.

God goes looking for them.

And when he finds them,

he welcomes them into his work and gives them a place.

There is also a challenge here for us.

Who are the people we fail to see?

Who is standing at the edge of the crowd that we haven't noticed?

The kingdom of God is wider than human instinct tells us it should be.

We might be tempted to find that very annoying!

But its grace reaches further than our boundaries.

The invitation of this story is to learn to see the people whom God already sees.

Because in the end, this is the grace of God: there is no one whom God fails to notice, no one who is beyond his welcome, and no one who has been waiting so long that it is too late for them.

God sees you. God sees them. And God goes looking for us all.

Amen