

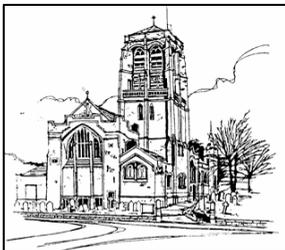
NEW LEAVES

PARISH MAGAZINE

St David's Church Exeter



MARCH 2026



SUGGESTED
VOLUNTARY
CONTRIBUTION

50p

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PARISH OF ST DAVID'S EXETER

Interim Vicar	Rev Mike Clark	mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org 07889 570159
Associate Priest	Sarah Cumming	rev.sarahcumming@gmail.com 07543 604115
Curate	Rev Suki Coe	rev.sukicoe@outlook.com
Licensed Lay Ministers	Bill Pattinson Charlotte Townsend Ian Cartwright David Blundell	
Churchwarden	Phil Dale	wardens@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk
PCC Secretary	Maggie Draper	pccsecretary@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk
PCC Treasurer	Jonathan Johns	07831 486987
Parish Administrator	Doree Moretti	admin@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk
Electoral Roll Officer	Sue Wilson	electoratorlofficer@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk
Safeguarding Rep	Alice Francis	safeguarding@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk 07487 774590
Treasurer	Barbara Allin	270162
Asst Treasurer	Geoff Crockett	468073
Director of Music	Richard Johnson	
News Sheet	Rev Mike Clark	notices@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk
Servers	Shaun Smith	01626 367075
Church Bookings	Mary Quest	07792 062403
Readers & Time of Prayer	Helena Walker	helena.bystock@gmail.com

Magazine

Editorial Team	Sarah Susan Alice	newleaves@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk
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For services and events at St Michael's and All Angels CD, please see:
www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk



WELCOME

The editorial team invites you to submit appropriate articles that reflect church, parish or community interest.

**Please send contributions as Word documents (if possible in A5 format, maximum 1000 words) to:
newleaves@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk**

All articles will be printed with the author's name.

The views expressed are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or the Church.

We hope you enjoy this month's read.

Although this magazine is free of charge, voluntary contributions would be gratefully received. This can be done via the wall safes found close to the exit of the west and north doors. Alternatively you can give them to a member of the editorial team. Many thanks.

We welcome critical comments on the magazine.

Editorial Team: Sarah, Susan and Alice



Regular Services and Events

Sundays:

9.30 -10.30 am Parish Communion from St David's Church; also streamed on Facebook

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church

Weekdays:

Tuesdays at 9.00am Morning Prayer on Zoom

Tuesdays 10.30am – noon Friendship Café at St David's Church

Thursdays at 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's Church

Thursdays at 7pm Student group

If you don't already receive our regular weekly notice sheet by email and would like to, please contact Rev Mike Clark at notices@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk

CLERGY GREETINGS

I write on 16th February, the day after a visit to the grounds of Killerton House that was full of surprises. I'm hoping that by the time you read this we'll be enjoying a decent stretch of sunshine! But cast your mind back to the weekend of 14th and 15th February and what felt like the first glimpse of sun for weeks. Despite the almost constant rain and lack of light, there was plenty of colour at Killerton: daffodils, crocuses (some admittedly looking rather battered), and even blossom already appearing on the trees. It didn't feel completely like spring, but it was clear that spring had decided to start without waiting for permission from the weather.

March often feels like that. Not winter anymore, but not quite spring either. One bright day followed by three grey and wet ones. Signs of life mixed with mud! Which is why it's fitting that March begins with St David's Day - Sunday 1st. He's remembered for saying, "Be joyful, keep the faith, do the little things you have seen me do". Not necessarily dramatic things, or really impressive things, but the ordinary faithfulness of daily life.

Those flowers at Killerton simply grew when it was time. They didn't wait for perfect conditions. Much of life and faith can be like that. We might imagine we will make progress when circumstances improve, when life settles down, when the weather brightens, when we feel more certain, more organised or more ready. But growth doesn't need to wait for conditions to be ideal. As March begins and Lent continues maybe the invitation is simply to notice the small opportunities in front of us, to 'do the little things'.

Every blessing

Mike



READERS AND LEADERS IN PRAYER: MARCH 2026

Sunday 1 March: 2nd Sunday of Lent

1st reading	Genesis 12.1-4a or Romans 4.1-5, 13-17
Gospel Reading	John 3.1-17
Preacher	Rev Mike Clark
Bible Reader	Jean Thomas
Leader in Prayer	Richard Johnson

Sunday 8 March: 3rd Sunday of Lent (with baptism)

1st reading	Exodus 17.1-7 or Romans 5.1-11
Gospel Reading	John 4.5-42
Preacher	Sarah Cumming
Bible Reader	Mary Williams
Leader in Prayer	Bill Pattinson

Sunday 15 March: 4th Sunday of Lent - Mothering Sunday

1st reading	Exodus 2.1-10 or 1 Samuel 1.20-28 or 2 Corinthians 1.3-7 or Colossians 3.12-17
Gospel Reading	Luke 2.33-35 or John 19.25b-27
Preacher	Suki Coe
Bible Reader	Paula Lawford
Leader in Prayer	Catherine Blundell

Sunday 22 March: 5th Sunday of Lent

1st reading	Ezekiel 37.1-14 or Romans 8.6-11
Gospel Reading	John 11.1-45
Preacher	Ian Cartwright
Bible Reader	Lawrence Sail
Leader in Prayer	Geoff Crockett

Sunday 29 March: Palm Sunday

1st reading	TBC
Gospel Reading	TBC
Preacher	Suki Coe
Bible Reader	Sarah Rimmington
Leader in Prayer	Nigel Walsh

Sunday 5 April: Easter Sunday

1st reading	Acts 10.34-43
Gospel Reading	John 20.1-18 or Matthew 28.1-10
Preacher	Sarah Cumming
Bible Reader	Sue Wilson
Leader in Prayer	Jonathan Draper



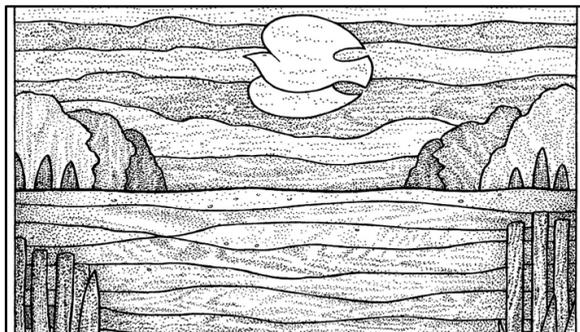
ST DAVID'S PARISH CYCLE OF PRAYER

March

- 1st St David's Patronal Festival, Women's World Day of Prayer (6 March), Women's breakfasts
- 8th The Thursday team making evening tea for the homeless 15th Choirs, instrumental group, and all church musicians
- 22nd Bell ringers; lay leaders of worship
- 29th Exeter Community Initiatives

April

- 5th Easter Sunday: Joy as we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ
- 12th Local cafés and coffee shops and pubs; all who work in hospitality in the parish
- 19th The PCC, our parish officers and administrator
- 26th The Listeners (Samaritans training initiative for Exeter Prison inmates)



BISHOP SARAH MULLALLY TO BE INSTALLED AS ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY ON 25TH MARCH

On 28th January, in a special service at St Paul's Cathedral known as her Confirmation of Election, Bishop Sarah Mullally DBE, became the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Confirmation of Election is a legal ceremony, set within a church service, at which Bishop Sarah, the Archbishop-Elect, legally became the Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Sarah's first act as Archbishop was to take up the Primatial Cross and give the blessing at the end of the service.

The Confirmation is followed by an Installation service at Canterbury Cathedral on 25th March, where Archbishop Sarah will preach her first sermon as Archbishop of Canterbury. Between her Confirmation of Election and Installation, Archbishop Sarah will pay homage to the King and meet with the leaders of other Christian denominations and other faiths in the UK.

By tradition, Archbishop Sarah will begin her public ministry and full programme of public engagements following her Installation.

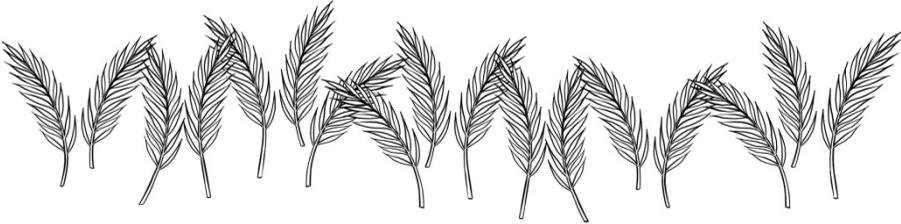
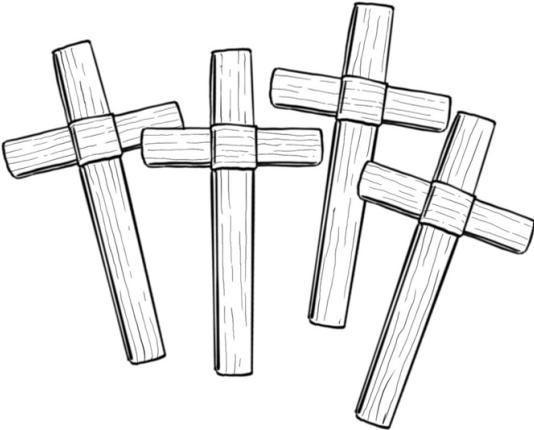
Bishop Sarah said, "It is an extraordinary and humbling privilege to have been called to be the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. In this country and around the world, Anglican churches bring healing and hope to their communities. With God's help, I will seek to guide Christ's flock with calmness, consistency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



PARTS OF A CATHEDRAL 5: THE CLOISTERS AND CLOISTER GARTH

For my final article on parts of a cathedral, we move outside the cathedral itself to consider the history and importance of the Cloisters and the Cloister Garth.

A cloister, from the Latin word 'claustrum', is a covered colonnaded walkway or open arcade that most usually adjoins a wall of a cathedral or other medieval ecclesiastical building, forming a quadrangle shape.

The attachment of a cloister to a cathedral or large church normally indicates that it was once part of a monastic foundation. The cloister formed a solid architectural barrier, separating the monks from other people who carried on their daily life outside the cloister.

The cloister frequently encloses an area of grass and this enclosed area is known as a 'Garth'. The cloister garth provided monks with a quiet, undisturbed enclosure in which to walk, meditate or study. Nowadays the cloister garth is likely to contain small hedges, fountains and sculptures.

Not all cathedrals had or still have cloisters, but there are some fine examples of cathedral cloisters here in the South West.

In his authoritative book *England's Cathedrals*, Simon Jenkins comments, "No cloister in England stands comparison with Gloucester, standard bearer for the new Perpendicular". Having recently visited Gloucester Cathedral and a number of other cathedrals with cloisters, I have to concur. "On a warm summer evening, the sun, filtered by coloured glass, floods its arcades. The roof is the first example in England of the half-cone vault, dating from the 1350s. The effect is of a row of seated ladies fluttering their fans in unison, the fans being so low that we can almost touch them".





The cloister at Salisbury Cathedral, completed in 1266, is the largest in England and measures 190 feet square. It was designed for processions, hence its width of 18 feet, and as a place for reading and relaxation. The Cloister Garth at Salisbury contains two magnificent Cedars of Lebanon.

The cloisters at Chichester Cathedral, which I visited last month, were built in the 15th century and, like most cathedral cloisters, are situated on the south side of the cathedral in order to benefit from the warmth of the sun. Here the cloister garth, is known as 'Paradise'. This is because it is a large serene, enclosed area of green space, reflecting the medieval idea of a cloister as a peaceful earthly paradise for contemplation and as a walled garden symbolizing spiritual refuge and a foretaste of the heavenly city.

To me the cloisters are one of the most atmospheric and peaceful parts of a cathedral and a delightfully cool area in which to sit and reflect on a warm summer's day.

At Wells Cathedral, which Simon Jenkins freely admits is his favourite English cathedral, there is no history of monastic foundation, yet it has a large and fine cloister sitting between the cathedral, which dates from the 12th century, and the Bishop's Palace and garden.

Here in Exeter the original cloisters were also on the south side of the cathedral, but during the English Civil War in the mid-17th century they were demolished to make way for a cloth or serge market. At this time, Exeter was one of the most prosperous and wealthy towns in England thanks to the wool cloth trade. The cloth market was later converted into houses along the southern side of the cathedral, which still exist today in the ownership of the Dean and Chapter.

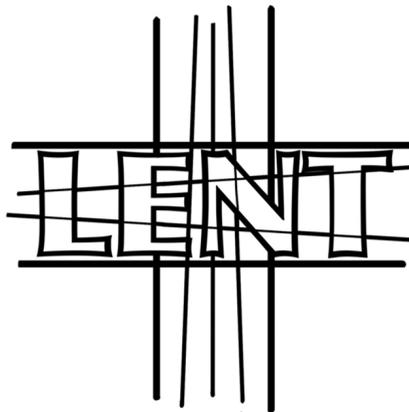
Between 2023 and 2025, under the inspiration of the current Dean and Chapter, a brand new cloister was created on the eastern side of the former cloister garth. This is now known as the Friend's Cloister Gallery and it connects the cathedral with the former Chapter House (now used as a café), the Treasury and the cathedral shop, together with some more modern toilets.



The plan for the next stage of this work, when funds permit, is for the buildings along the south side of the original cloister garth to be improved and eventually to complete the full rectangle, enclosing a new cloister garth.

Cathedrals are therefore not just monuments to the medieval period and the Victorian alterations by architects such as Sir George Gilbert Scott RA but evolving and living buildings which so well serve those who wish to worship in or visit these wonderful buildings.

Robin Thomas
February 2026



MOTHERING SUNDAY

Adapted from an article by Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director

In the Middle Ages Mothering Sunday was an occasion for everyone to visit their 'mother' church - the place where they had been baptised. Later, an opportunity for those who worked away from home to visit their mothers became added to the mix of reasons to make it a special day.

Today we honour all women who are, and have been, special to us, and in church this is usually signalled by small bunches of flowers for every woman present.

Not everyone has enjoyed a wonderful or enduring relationship with their mum, so lest we get carried away on a wave of love and sentimentality, there is usually space in the Mothering Sunday church service to reflect on and pray for those whose relationships with their mother were not all they might have been.

There are also families who have been blighted by the lack of children or the death of a child; families remembering a mum who has died; women who have not had children but would have dearly loved the opportunity; all these and more are a recognition of the imperfections of human love, human life.

These imperfections can be brought in prayer to the God who mothers us. In the Old Testament, Isaiah speaks of God comforting His people like a mother hen. In the New Testament, both Matthew and Luke bear witness to Jesus expressing His desire to gather His people as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings. God has strong maternal qualities which He invites us to discover and enjoy!

Have you discovered the mothering, nurturing, maternal qualities God offers to all people? It's lovelier than flowers, more long-lasting than cake, better than a visit from family, and it's free to everyone who wants it. It could be yours!

THE PLEASURES OF READING AND RE-READING

During November, infuriated by the film adaptation of Richard Osman's *The Thursday Murder Club*, with missing plotlines and in particular a changed ending, I re-read the book to remind myself of what actually happened, and then continued on through the following three books, back to back. Ignoring the almost casually rising body count and the sheer improbability of the basic premise, I thoroughly enjoyed them, not least the voice of Joyce.

However, for Advent, I normally pick up my Aunt Joan's 1947 copy of *A Christmas Carol*, not only for the pleasure of having her book in my hands, but also because I find something new each time I re-read it. This December, however, being laid out by the cold all of us seem to have had, I was drawn to a childhood favourite, CS Lewis's *Prince Caspian* (1951). From there, I progressed to *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952), and then went back to another favourite, *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), then forward to the two I've least read, *The Silver Chair* (1953) and *The Last Battle* (1956). I then decided I really should go back to the beginning of the story and *The Magician's Nephew* (1955), finishing where most people start with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950). I've since had an interesting conversation with Mike about the rather eccentric order in which I read them, but it worked for me! The books I enjoyed most are those featuring the great lion, Aslan. I love the conversations where he explains things to a person, only ever their own story, no one else's. The books do repay reading as an adult – I have re-read them many times over the years and I draw great comfort from them.

My next read was entirely different and one I picked up by chance in Waterstones: *Water Moon*, by Samantha Sotto Yambao. My choice was enthusiastically endorsed by the assistant who served me and who was in the middle of reading it. It has to be the most interesting piece of imaginative writing I've come across in years - a pawnshop that only seems to appear to someone wanting to trade a deep regret for peace of mind. The new owner wakes up to find the shop ransacked, her father missing and a stranger standing in the doorway, which is open to the outside world. What's happened, why has it happened and where is her father? Nothing is what it seems. It's a tale of mirrors, half-truths and deception, but also of love, sacrifice, other

realities and worlds and it kept me guessing to the end.

Alongside this, my serious read has been Cat Jarman's *The Bone Chests: unlocking the secrets of the Anglo-Saxons*. The book starts with the December 1642 desecration of Winchester Cathedral by Parliamentary troops, which included the pulling down of six of the ten 'bone chests'. These contained, according to the writing on the outsides, the bones of several Anglo-Saxon kings, a queen and a couple of bishops. Not content with scattering the bones over the floor, the troops hurled some at the cathedral's stained glass windows, smashing them to pieces. The west window is a mosaic of the shattered shards that were collected up subsequently. There are now six chests, two having been added in 1661, containing a mix of the bones that survived. With the advances in knowledge of DNA, research work is now ongoing to unravel just whose bones are in the chests. Jarman wraps the story of the chests around our increasing understanding of the history of our island before the Norman Conquest, the often violent entwining of Anglo-Saxon and Viking/Danish activities including the Danish invasion of 1016, and Winchester's position as one of the centres of that world. Roger and I are hoping to visit Winchester soon to have a look for ourselves.

Hilary Todd
February 2026



Note from the Editors: Many thanks to Hilary for this interesting article. We'd love to start a regular *New Leaves* books feature. Have you read a good book lately, or one you think people would be interested in? Why not write us a paragraph or two about it?

MUSINGS FROM CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

Many years ago, Pete played Thomas à Becket in T.S.Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, in a production in the Quire of Exeter Cathedral. Ever since, we have wanted to visit Canterbury Cathedral, and recently we had this opportunity.



As far as the homage to Becket goes, there are several sites within the cathedral: the actual site of the martyrdom, which is now marked with a magnificent sculpture of swords hanging above a simple stone marked THOMAS; the place in the Crypt where his tomb originally stood, which now has a statue by Anthony Gormley suspended above it, made entirely from old nails from the roof of the cathedral; and the place in the Trinity Chapel where the tomb later stood, now marked by a candle.

Here in Exeter we also have connections to the martyrdom of Becket: there is a wonderful boss in the roof of the nave in Exeter Cathedral,

depicting the event. One of the knights who murdered Becket was William de Tracy, who owned the manors in Bradninch and Moretonhampstead, among many others. One of his acts of penance for the murder was to rebuild the church in Lapford, which is dedicated to Saint Thomas of Canterbury.



Another source of interest for me in Canterbury Cathedral was the French Protestant Chapel in the Crypt. This was set up for Huguenot refugees, many of whom arrived in Kent after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. One branch of my family were Huguenot refugees, so this spoke to me in particular, especially as I have recently read Kate Mosse's *The Joubert Chronicles*, a series that covers the persecution of the Huguenots. The chapel in Canterbury Cathedral still holds services in French every Sunday – though I doubt many current attendees trace their families back to actual Huguenots!

There were, of course, many sights in the Cathedral, but the final one I will mention is the scaffolding up in front of the lists of all the Archbishops of Canterbury – because the stonemason was in the process of engraving the name of *Sarah Elisabeth Mullally*. A momentous occasion, the first woman to hold this post after 105 men!

Alice Francis
February 2026



The Anthony Gormley statue, suspended in Canterbury cathedral

NATIONAL TREASURES FOR THE COMMON GOOD NEW REPAIRS FUND ANNOUNCED

The Church of England's Director for Cathedral and Church buildings, Emily Gee, has welcomed the Government's Places of Worship Renewal Fund, and its willingness to invest in repairs and improvements for eligible parish and cathedral church buildings.

She said, "We also welcome the Government's recognition of the special role of historic churches in national life - church buildings are national treasures for the common good.

"They have huge spiritual, cultural and historical significance, and are major centres of practical assistance through food banks, lunch clubs and parent and toddler groups. They serve as a place of sanctuary, refreshment and cultural heritage throughout the UK.

"The vast majority of fundraising for the maintenance and repair of these buildings is done locally by heroic volunteers and Government support is crucial in helping them reach their targets - and we are really grateful for this ongoing support.

"However, we are very concerned that the end of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme - after more than 20 years - will mean added pressure on local fundraisers and inevitably a drain on other sources of funding. We will work with the wider sector and the Government to see how that burden can be alleviated."

Parish Pump News
March 2026



THE BERGHAUS REPAIR SERVICE – REPAIRHAUS

I recently became aware of this essentially free service and, my ancient Berghaus jacket being in a sorry state, thought it worth a go. So I emailed Repairhaus at repairs@berghaus.com, outlining the problems (the elastic round the hood had perished and there was a split in the seam across the back where my rucksack had rubbed it through). I received a reply saying they thought they could help and to send the jacket in for assessment with detailed instructions on how to do so. The postage was all I had to pay for. I then received a further email saying they could repair it and that it would take 2-3 weeks. My jacket duly came back mended, together with a sachet of Ganges re-proofing liquid to use in the washing machine and I've been delighted with the result.

Their stated aim is to keep kit 'going over land, not into it!' And it's not just jackets: they also deal with footwear and rucksacks. For more details, have a look at: <https://www.berghaus.com/repairs.list>

Hilary Todd
February 2026



EARTH HOUR 2026 – A TIME TO TURN OFF YOUR LIGHTS

Earth Hour 2026 takes place on Saturday 28th March: at 8.30pm their local time, millions of people worldwide will turn off their non-essential lights for one hour.

Organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the 20th anniversary of this global initiative will aim to raise awareness of the earth's climate crisis, and to encourage environmental action through sustainable, actionable lifestyle changes.

The first Earth Hour was held in Sydney, Australia, on 31st March 2007, and has since become a global movement. The 2025/26 theme, 'Giving an Hour for Earth', encourages people to adopt sustainable habits in their daily lives.

And while our lights are off for an hour, Earth Hour encourages us to spend the time in nature, or stargazing, or engaging in environmental, educational, or sustainable activities.



ONE HUNDRED YEARS

On 7th January this year, I became 100 years old. Everyone says it is amazing. It is a long time, I must admit, but it has crept up on me.

The year I was born there was a general strike, which meant there was little money, although my father was a qualified carpenter, painter and decorator.

By the time I was 10, I had four younger brothers. This meant that not only was I expected to help around the house, but I was also baby-minding.

I loved reading and I loved school. I had an inspirational teacher, Miss Pritchard. She managed to help me become a member of the public library at the age of 8, although 11 was the usual age to join. I was a regular attender. We were only allowed one book at a time, and I would walk home reading it – bumping into people and lamp posts.

The lady in charge of the library was an intimidating person. She would inspect our hands for cleanliness and our mouths for illicit sweets.

When we returned books, they were inspected for dirty finger marks. My brothers were inclined to scribble in them.

I was fortunate that my husband and sons also loved reading and we could do something in peace.

I wanted to teach others to read; I feel that books can help you to escape any worries you have. Also, reading can be done alone, like swimming.

Looking back and wondering if I will leave my mark, I feel happy that I have helped so many children to enjoy this pleasure.



Eileen Jarman
February 2026

ST DAVID'S MUSIC GROUP AKA 'THE BAND'



On the 3rd Sunday of the month, at St David's morning service, the choir and organist take a break. Instead, the music is led by our music group – a merry band of musicians which currently includes players on violin, flute, clarinet, guitar and keyboard.

The purpose of the music group is to:

- make heavenly music as part of the morning service
- be inclusive of all who wish to play – whatever their age or standard – supported by experienced players
- offer an optional, occasional opportunity to play solo or duet during communion with/without keyboard accompaniment

In the past, we have had players on recorder, oboe, viola, cello, saxophone, trumpet, bass guitar and harp.

The age range, to date, is 7 – 80+.



We welcome new players.

- University students have joined us for the duration of their course.
- Young children have joined us until they are grown up and leave home.
- Adult 'returners' have dusted off their instruments and rekindled a love of playing.

Come and try a Sunday if you like – play a hymn or two??

If you would like to find out more, speak to Robert or Susan at church or email:

instrumentalgroup@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk

REGULAR EVENTS

- Martial Arts Medieval sword fighting
Monday 7pm - 9pm
irondoorcollective.co.uk
Contact the group on idxcexeter@gmail.com
- Friendship café Tuesday 10.30am – 12pm
- Bell Ringing Wednesday 7.30 – 9pm
- Lent Group Thursday 2pm
- Student Group Thursday 7pm, with food!
- Please talk to one of the clergy if
 you would like to know more
- Men's/Women's Saturday 9am (check newsletter for
Breakfasts dates and venues)



UPCOMING CHURCH EVENTS

- Sunday 1st March** Brunch after the service
- Friday 20th March** Quiz Night



Try it out Tuesday at the Friendship Cafe

- **Try something new!**
- **Build confidence and take some time for yourself**
- **Enjoy a creative activity with a cuppa and a cake**



Scan QR code for
details and to book.

When: First Tuesday of each month, 10:30am-12noon

Where: The Friendship Cafe, St David's Church, Queens Terrace,
Exeter, EX4 4HR



OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

at St David's unless otherwise indicated

Tuesday 10th March at 7.30pm

Exeter Chamber Choir: *A Light in the Heavens* at St James' Church
Faure, Bainton, Ireland, and Nigel Walsh's *A John Donne Tryptich*

Saturday 14th March at 7.30pm

Exeter Philharmonic Choir: Handel's *Solomon* in Exeter Cathedral

Saturday 14th March at 7pm

Fever by Candlelight: *Queen vs. Abba*

Saturday 14th March at 9pm

Fever by Candlelight: *Hans Zimmer's Best Works*

Saturday 21st March at 5pm

University of Exeter Symphony Orchestra: Schumann, Borodin, Ticheli
and Mozart

Saturday 21st March at 7.30pm

Devon Philharmonic Orchestra: Verdi, Vaughan Williams and
Shostakovich in Exeter Cathedral





**Devon
Philharmonic
Orchestra**

Conductor: Benjamin Voce

Leader: Clare Smith

Tickets: £15 - £20

Under 16s: £5

devonphilharmonicorchestra.co.uk

Verdi
Force of Destiny Overture

Vaughan Williams

Fantasia on a theme of
Thomas Tallis

Shostakovich
Symphony No 5

Sat 21 Mar 2026

7:30pm - Exeter Cathedral



Reg charity: 1064282



Exeter Chamber Choir

A Light in the Heavens

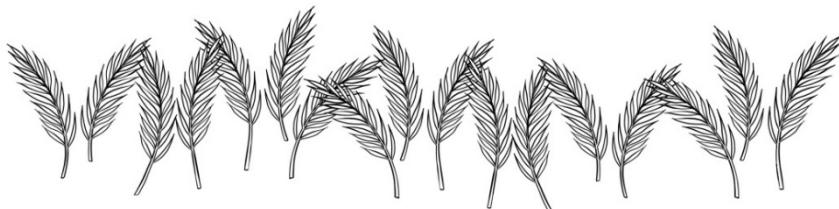
7.30pm Tuesday 10th March

St James' Church, Exeter

"A Light from the Heavens" brings together moving choral music, designed to stir the soul. From the elegant, calming melodies of Faure's *Cantique de Jean Racine* to the grand, sweeping hope of Bainton's *And I Saw a New Heaven* and the romantic warmth of Ireland's *Greater Love Hath no Man*, these pieces speak a universal language of love and longing.

The choir will also premiere *A John Donne Triptych* by Nigel Walsh, setting poems by John Donne that wrestle with doubt and faith.

Tickets from: <https://www.exeterchamberchoir.co.uk/>





Programme of Talks – March 2026

Exeter Forum's programme of weekly talks for February 2026 is shown below. Meetings take place in the Mint Methodist Church, Fore Street, Exeter, EX4 3AT on Wednesday mornings. The talks start at 10:45am, while coffee is available from 10:15am. Descriptions of talks and speakers also appear on the Exeter Forum website

www.exeterforum.org, and in the weekly newsletter sent to Forum members and to interested visitors. Visitors are welcome subject to a small charge for each talk. Late programme changes will be shown on the Exeter Forum website.

<p>Wednesday 4 March 2026</p>	<p>John Davidson</p>	<p>Jack Rattenbury: Fisherman, Privateer, Pilot, Free Trader; Rob Roy of the West. Jack Rattenbury lived in Beer, Devon. During his lifetime he had an honest trade as a pilot and fishermen, was recruited into the Royal Navy on various occasions, and was actively involved in smuggling. This talk will look at his exciting career, both legitimate and on the wrong side of the law.</p>
<p>Wednesday 11 March 2026</p>	<p>Tom Acres</p>	<p>A Legacy of Care: Why Step One Still Matters Today This talk explores Step One's long-standing legacy of support and shines a light on each of our services, what they do, and the difference they make. It will highlight the growing needs within our communities and explain why Step One</p>

		continues to play a vital role in supporting people at every stage of their journey.
Wednesday 18 March 2026	Professor Martin Sorrell	The Phantom Train Professor Sorrell will describe antifascist Francesco Fausto Nitti's two-month journey on a deportation train from the South West of France to Dachau. Initially planned to last three days this was longest and probably the most eventful of all deportation journeys out of France during the Second World War.
Wednesday 25 March 2026	Emma Laws	Treasures of Exeter Cathedral. Exeter Cathedral Librarian Emma is returning to tell us about some of the wonderful treasures in the Cathedral's historic collection.
Wednesday 1 April 2026	<i>Easter break</i>	<i>No Meeting</i>
Wednesday 8 April 2026	<i>Easter break</i>	<i>No Meeting</i>



PRAYER AND POETRY CORNER

TWO PRAYERS FROM THE 11th & 12th CENTURIES

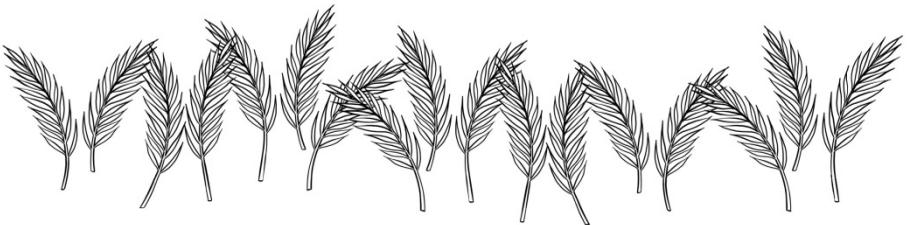
Let me hold fast to You, beautiful Lord, whom the angels themselves yearn to look upon. Wherever You go, I will follow You. If You pass through fire, I will not flinch, I fear no evil when You are with me. You carry my griefs, because You grieve for my sake. You passed through the narrow doorway from death to life, to make it wide enough for all to follow. Nothing can ever now separate me from Your love.

by Bernard of Clairvaux 1090 -1153

The Love that gives love

Jesus Christ, the love that gives love,
You are higher than the highest star;
You are deeper than the deepest sea;
You cherish us as Your own family;
You embrace us as Your own spouse;
You rule over us as Your own subjects;
You welcome us as Your dearest friend.
Let all the world worship You.

by Hildegard of Bingen 1098 – 1179



POETRY

The Song of the Spirit

O when Your Spirit softly sings
Within our hearts of stone
Lord, speak to us of godly things
And make our hearts your home.

Sometimes our doubts like briars grow
Sometimes our faith is weak,
O Spirit, sing, that doubt may go,
Lord, help us hear You speak.

Transform us through Your Spirit's voice
And set our hearts alight,
So truly may our hearts rejoice
And shine with Godly light.

For those who hear the Spirit's song,
Are filled then with His power!
Their light shall shine the whole day long
And praise fills ev'ry hour!

by Nigel Beeton

The Daughters of Mothers

There are certain small things that you notice,
Little things you have started to do,
That prompt you to question, and wonder
If the face in the mirror, is *you*.

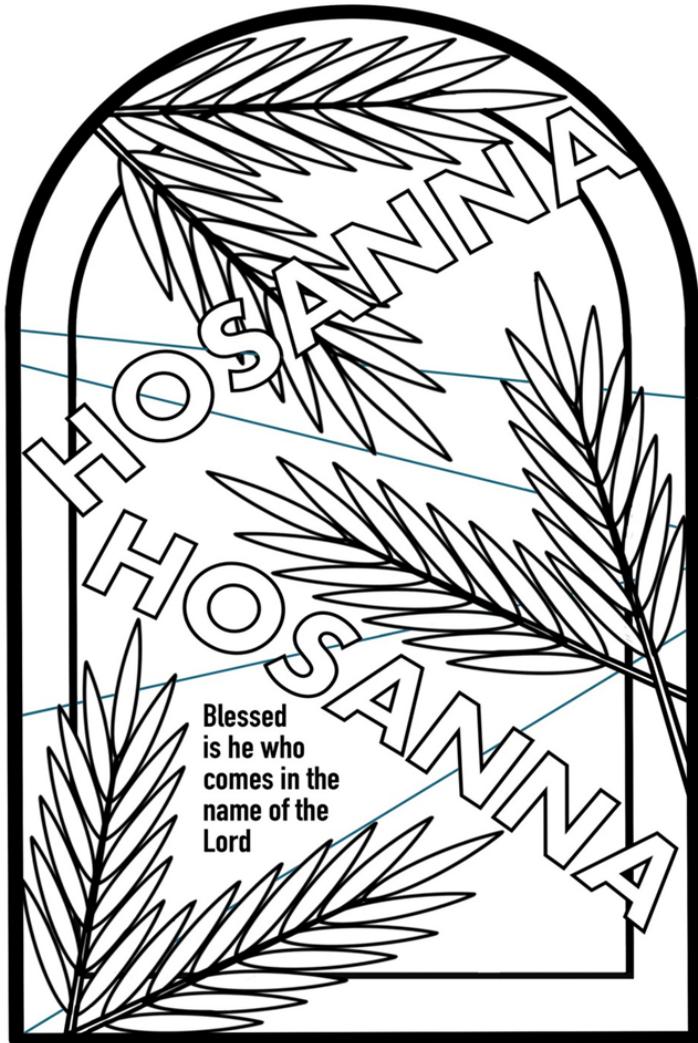
The realisation is dawning,
As one year hurtles after another,
That in word, thought and deed,
In gesture and glance,
You have somehow turned into your mother!

by Daphne Kitching

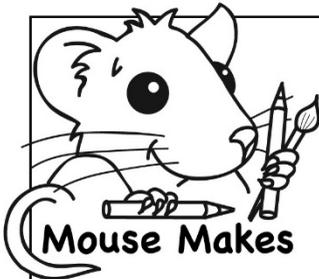
CREATIVE & MINDFUL MOMENT

Let your creative juices flow, add colour or pattern

Bring your finished artworks to church
and share them with everyone!



MOUSE MAKES



The Bible has many stories of mothers who had great faith in God. With their love, care, encouragement and prayers their children grew up to be great people of God.



Who saved her baby by putting him in a basket in the river?

Exodus 2:1-3 and 6:20

Who was 90 years old when she had her son Isaac?
Genesis 17:19



Across

3. **Obed's** mother
Matthew 1:5
4. **John's** mother
Luke 1:57-60
7. **Reuben's** mother
Genesis 29:32
8. **Joseph's** mother
Genesis 30:22-24
9. **Jesus'** mother
Acts 1:14

Down

1. **Boaz's** mother
Matthew 1:5
2. **Solomon's** mother
1 Kings 1:11
4. **Timothy's** mother
2 Timothy 1:5
5. **Ishmael's** mother
Genesis 16:15
6. **Jacob and Esau's** mother
Genesis 25:21-26

Whose prayers for a child were answered by God?
1 Samuel 1:20

Who had two sons called Cain and Abel?
Genesis 4:1-2



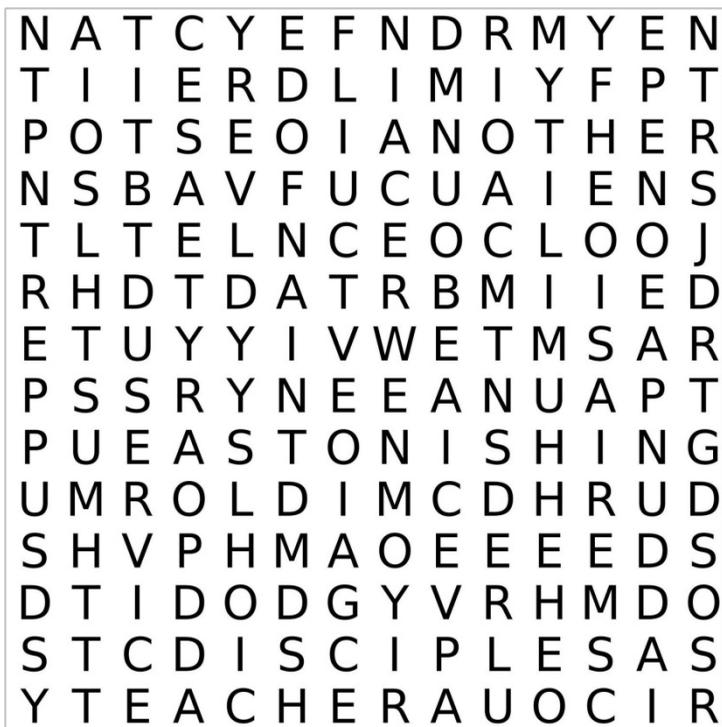
Answer the questions then put them into the crossword

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WORD SEARCH

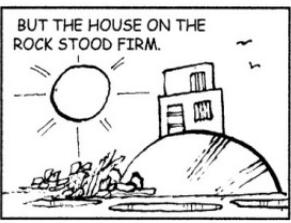
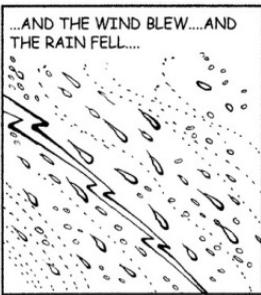
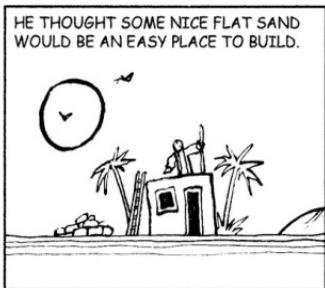
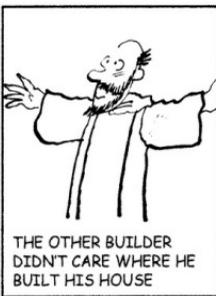
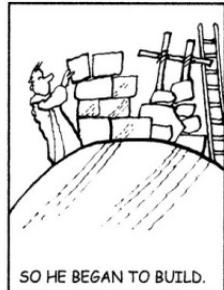
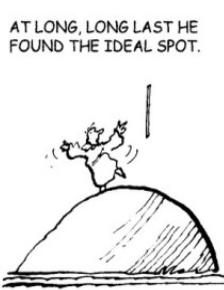
On Maundy Thursday we remember the final command that Jesus gave to his disciples before his death:

“A new command I give you: Love one another”.



Maundy Thursday Final Command Jesus Disciples Feet Astonishing	Service Domination Latin Ceremony Medieval Humility Obedience Teacher	Loved You Must One Another Washed Supper Purpose	Service Domination Latin Ceremony Medieval Humility Obedience Last
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PARABLE



**JESUS EXPLAINED -
IT'S IMPORTANT OUR LIVES HAVE
A FIRM FOUNDATION!**

SUDOKU (Medium)

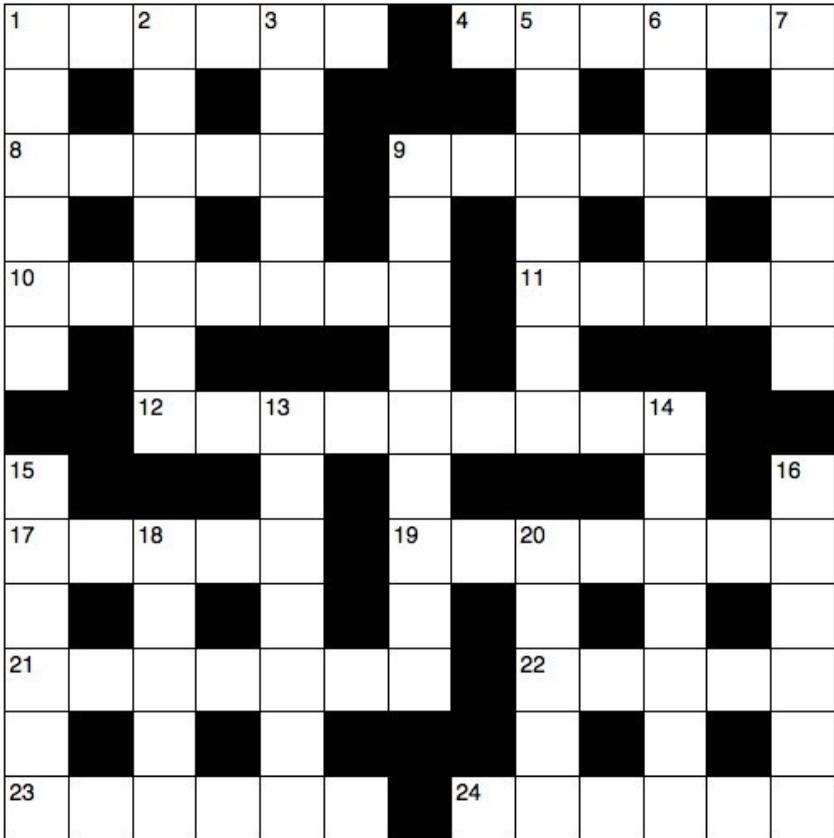
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CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Arouse (Song of Songs 2:7) (6)
- 4 Extinguish (Isaiah 1:31) (6)
- 8 “They — —,” you will say, “but I’m not hurt!” (Proverbs 23:35) (3,2)
- 9 Unhappiness (Nehemiah 2:2) (7)
- 10 Jewish (7)
- 11 Dirge (anag.) (5)
- 12 ‘A truthful witness gives honest —, but a false witness tells lies’ (Proverbs 12:17) (9)
- 17 Paul quoted from the second one in his address in the synagogue

- at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:33) (5)
 19 'Do not use your freedom to — the sinful nature' (Galatians 5:13) (7)
 21 'As you can see, he has done nothing to — death' (Luke 23:15) (7)
 22 Name applied by Isaiah to Jerusalem (Isaiah 29:1) (5)
 23 'All the people — — one man, saying, "None of us will go home"'
 (Judges 20:8) (4,2)
 24 Lazarus, who was carried by angels to Abraham's side when he
 died, was one (Luke 16:20) (6)

DOWN

- 1 Appalled (Job 26:11) (6)
 2 'In an — to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down
 into the sea' (Acts 27:30) (7)
 3 Expel (Acts 18:16) (5)
 5 'But I have a baptism to —, and how distressed I am until it is
 completed!' (Luke 12:50) (7)
 6 'Of the increase of his government and peace there will be — —'
 (Isaiah 9:7) (2,3)
 7 Hurry (Psalm 119:60) (6)
 9 'For I desire mercy, not —, and acknowledgement of God rather
 than burnt offerings' (Hosea 6:6) (9)
 13 One of its towns was Sychar, where Jesus met a woman at Jacob's
 well (John 4:5) (7)
 14 Shouting (Acts 7:57) (7)
 15 Arachnid (Isaiah 59:5) (6)
 16 One of Paul's first converts in Philippi was Lydia, a — in purple cloth
 (Acts 16:14) (6)
 18 Donkeys (5)
 20 Raked (anag.) (5)



One of my churchwardens is a stickler for 'Health and Safety'...

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Matthew 25: 14-30

Jesus told a story to help his disciples to be ready for the end of time. 'A rich man was about to go on a journey...'

He gave his servants money to look after, depending on what they could do.

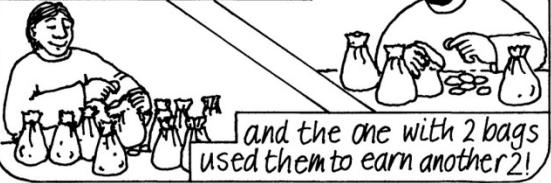


He gave 5 bags of coins to the first, 2 to the second, and 1 to the third.

As soon as he had gone, the first two servants started to work.



The one with 5 bags of coins used them to earn 5 more,



and the one with 2 bags used them to earn another 2!

The third servant dug a hole and buried his bag.



When the master came back, he called his servants to him...



The first two showed him they had doubled his money, and he was very happy with them.



You are a hard man who expects us to work. I was afraid so I just hid it.



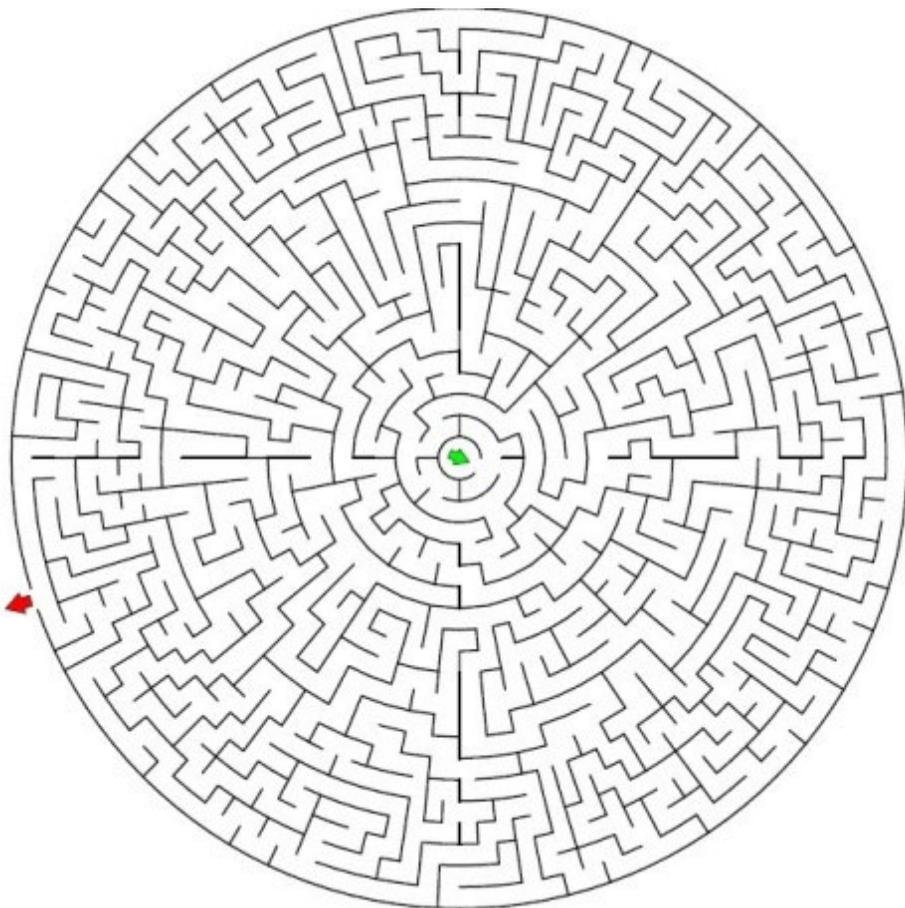
If you knew what I expected, why didn't you do it?



Get out of here!

AMAZING MAZE

Start bang in the centre and exit bottom left



DOES YOUR PARTNER...

OR A FAMILY MEMBER LIVING WITH YOU...

...cut you off from family & friends?

...make you feel ugly, undesirable or useless?

...threaten you to get their own way?

...blame you for their behaviour?

...never admit that they are wrong?

...force you to do things you aren't comfortable with?

...misuse the Bible to excuse their behaviour towards you?

1 in 4 people experience domestic abuse - do not suffer in silence

If you believe you or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, dial **999**

If you are concerned about someone you know, but unsure what to do, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team: 01392 345909/ 345910/ 294969

If you believe you are experiencing domestic abuse and want to talk to someone, call the National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247 or contact the Devon Domestic Abuse Support Service: 0345 155 1074



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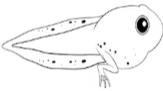
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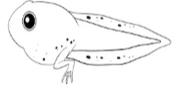
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GOD IN THE SCIENCES

This article by Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz, Church Engagement Director at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge, explores the positive relationship between science and Christian faith.



A Bucket of Tadpoles:



SPRINGTIME, CURIOSITY, AND THE THEOLOGY OF SCIENCE

When I was nearly three, I knocked a bucket of tadpoles all over the patio. Those unfortunate creatures must have been collected to educate my brother and me on where frogs came from, but a toddler can't just stand by and watch. Can I see up close? Or maybe I was 'helpfully' moving it to another place. I just remember doing something I shouldn't have done, and tadpoles on the ground. I was sad that I wouldn't get to see those creatures grow up.

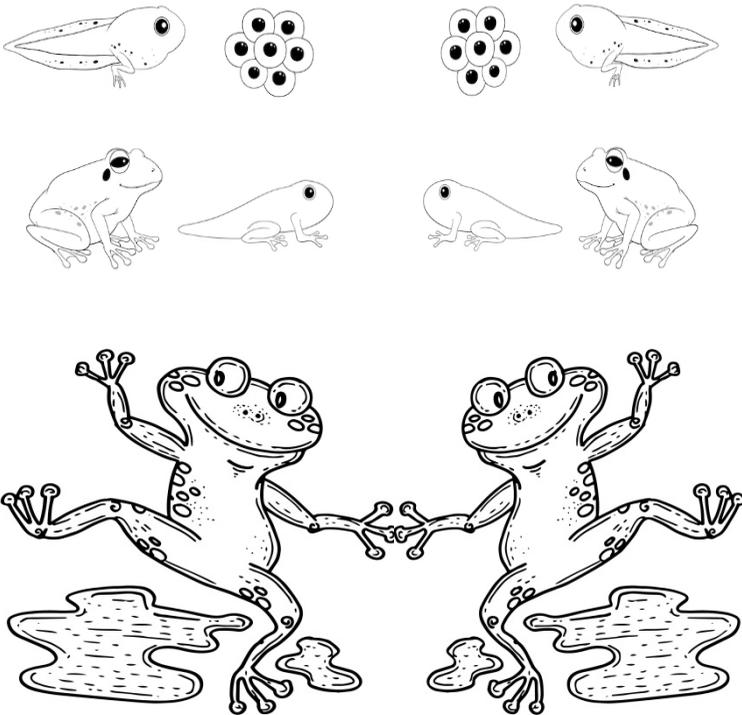
I might have been great at destroying things when I was a child (my family would probably say I still am), but I absolutely love watching living things up close. The more I learn, the more my sense of wonder grows. For a tadpole to become a frog, large sections of its gut, salivary glands and muscles must die, as well as the gills. The cells in those tissues are programmed to curl up and disintegrate, and are then swallowed up by a specialised kind of white blood cell. Legs grow from small sacs of cells on the tadpole's body, and one of my textbooks says that 'The nervous system is also remodelled' - which I suspect is a bit of an understatement.

This knowledge removes a little of the mystery of how a tadpole turns into a frog, but there is plenty more to discover. These few details also reveal the cleverness of the process. Metamorphosis is surprisingly common in the animal kingdom. How is that an efficient way to grow up, or is efficiency not the most important thing for an animal?

Scientists are essentially grown-ups who are still very much in touch with their inner two-year-old. They refuse to stop asking questions,

even when finding an answer becomes decidedly more awkward than opening a textbook.

Many scientists are people of faith, and this also drives their questioning. They believe that God created a world that was good, that the purpose of all Creation is to praise Him, that we are made in God's image, and that we are tasked with looking after Creation. So Christians, of all people, should be enjoying and investigating our surroundings. These are the bones of a theology of science that serves some of us very well, and keeps us looking into things like buckets of frogs – that is, until a two-year-old comes and knocks them over.



QUOTES

With Lent and spiritual self-examination in mind....

God often works more by the illiterate seeking the things that are God's than by the learned seeking the things that are their own. - *St Anselm*

Mysteries are not dark shadows, before which we must shut our eyes and be silent. On the contrary, they are dazzling splendours, with which we ought to sate our gaze. - *A Carthusian*

Very often, when people first turn towards God and realise that God loves them and that everything about them matters to Him, a wave of joyful emotion overwhelms them. But actual faith is mostly the realisation that, even though we don't in the least deserve it, God believes in us and finds us lovable. This is astonishing. - *Philip Pare*

Think only of the present, abandon the future to Providence. It is the good use of the present that assures the future. - *Jean-Pierre de Caussade SJ*

Miscellaneous observations on the Christian life

Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week. - *Joseph Addison*

Patience achieves more than force. - *Edmund Burke*

Let God's Word fill your mind, rule your heart and guide your tongue. - *Anon*



SMILE LINES

Ask children about angels - and this is what you get!

Angels talk all the way while they're flying you up to heaven. The main subject is where you went wrong before you got dead. - *Daniel, age 9*

When an angel gets mad, he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. And when he lets out his breath again, somewhere there's a tornado.
- *Reagan, age 10*

Angels have a lot to do and they keep very busy. If you lose a tooth, an angel comes in through your window and leaves money under your pillow. Then when it gets cold, angels go south for the winter.
- *Sara, age 6*

Angels live in cloud houses made by God and His Son, who's a very good carpenter.
- *Jared, age 8*

The following appeared in the magazine of the Light Music Society:

Agnus Dei was a woman composer famous for her church music
- *schoolchild's essay*

Most composers don't live until they are dead
- *child's essay*

Sign on door of music shop:

Gone Chopin, but have Liszt, so Bach in a Minuet!



DAYS OF NOTE IN MARCH

1st March - On St David's Day, why the leeks?

St David's Day, and it's time for the Welsh to wear proudly wear a leek or daffodil.

Shakespeare refers to the custom In Henry V, Act 5 Sc.1, where Gower berates Pistol for mocking at "an ancient tradition begun upon an honourable respect and worn as a memorable trophy of predeceased valour."

According to some sources, the wearing of leeks may be based on a legend that Welsh archers fought bravely at the Battle of Crecy in a field of leeks and, as a reminder of their bravery and loyalty, the Welsh began to wear a leek in their caps every St David's Day. The legend, true or not, could be a source of the 'honourable respect' the Welsh had for their valorous archers.

We do know that David - or Dafydd - of Pembrokeshire was a monk and bishop of the 6th century. In the 12th century he was made patron of Wales, and he has the honour of being the only Welsh saint to be canonised in the Western Church. Tradition has it that he was austere with himself and generous with others - living on water and vegetables (leeks, perhaps?!) and devoting himself to works of mercy. He was much loved.

In art, St David is usually depicted in Episcopal vestments, standing on a mound with a dove at his shoulder, in memory of his share at an important Synod for the Welsh Church, the Synod of Brevi.

15th March - Mothering Sunday

Whatever our childhood was like, it was formational. We learned from our earthly parents, good things ideally, although not everyone's childhood is great.

In the Bible, St Paul refers to the importance of upbringing and of spiritual heritage. When he greets Timothy in his second letter to him, he calls him his 'Dear Son', praises his 'genuine faith' and then goes on, "You share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you."

Physically, we when we are young, we need nurturing by mothers and fathers. Spiritually it is the same. When we come to faith, we need spiritual mothers and father to help us grow into maturity as God's adopted children.

Is there someone in your life who has helped you to grow spiritually? This Mothering Sunday, why not thank God for them.

Is there someone your life whom you have 'mothered' or 'fathered' along the way? This Mothering Sunday, why not pray for them.

29th March - Palm Sunday - Jesus at the gates of Jerusalem

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, when the Church remembers how Jesus arrived at the gates of Jerusalem just a few days before the Passover was due to be held. He was coming to His own people in their capital city, and yet He came in humility, riding on a young donkey, not in triumph on a war-horse.

As Jesus entered the city, the crowds gave Him a rapturous welcome, throwing palm fronds into His path. They knew His reputation as a healer, and welcomed Him. But the welcome was short-lived and shallow, for Jerusalem would soon reject the Messiah, and put Him to death. On this day churches worldwide will distribute little crosses made from palm fronds in memory of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem.



*My sermon today comes from
Apps Chapter 1 beginning at verse 2...*

**The deadline for inclusion of
articles for the next issue of
New Leaves (March) is:
Sunday 15th March 2026**

Please send any information, articles or images you'd like to submit for inclusion in future issues to the editorial team at:

newleaves@stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW EMAIL ADDRESS!

Please send digital files via email and ensure the subject header fits the content of the email - thanks!

Thank you to Graham Lerwill for organising the printing of this magazine – we very much appreciate his hard work.