New Leaves

December 2022/ January 2023



Parish Magazine of St David with St Michael and All Angels, Exeter Suggested voluntary contribution 50p

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To all Readers of "New Leaves", the magazine for the Parish of St David's with St. Michael and All Angels.

The editorial team invites you to submit appropriate articles which reflect Church, Parish or Community interest

Please send as Word documents to: newleavesnews@gmail.com

Please note that all articles will be printed with the author's name

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 to a member of the editorial team, Bill Pattinson or Clive Wilson. Many thanks.

We will welcome critical comments on the magazine

Editorial Team: Bill Pattinson and Clive Wilson





Regular Services and Events at St David's and St Michael's

Sundays:

9.30-10.30 am Parish Communion from St David's (also streamed on Facebook)

11-12 am Mass at St Michael's

4pm Thrive at St David's Church

6pm Evening Prayer at St David's Church

Weekdays:

Tuesdays at 9.30am Zoom for Morning Prayer

Tuesdays 1030 - noon Friendship cafe at St David's

Tuesdays at 6pm Sung Vespers (Evening Prayer) at St Michael's (also streamed via Friends of St Michael's Facebook Group)

Wednesdays at 10.00am Mattins (Morning Prayer) and 10.30am Mass at St Michael's

Thursdays at 10.30am Holy Communion at St David's

Thursdays at 6pm Sung Vespers (Evening Prayer) at St Michael's (also streamed via Friends of St Michael's Facebook Group)

Fridays 9-10.30am Tea and toast at St Michael's

First Sunday evening of the month Evensong and Benediction at St Michael's at 6pm

St David's Church, Exeter

CHRISTMAS SERVICES



Sunday 18 December
7pm Carol Service
with St David's Choir

CHRISTMAS EVE

Saturday 24 December

4pm – Christingle Service with Nativity

11.30pm - Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY

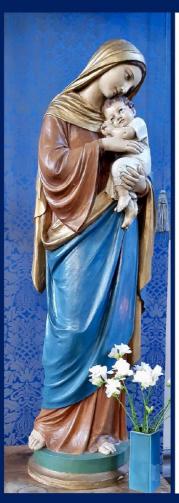
Sunday 25 December

9.30am – Christmas Communion with carols

O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

www.stdavidschurchexeter.org.uk

Saint Michael and All Angels Mount Dinham, Exeter



Advent and Christmas Services 2022

Sunday 4 December 11am Sung Mass 6pm Advent Procession

Carols and readings looking towards the coming of Christ as redeemer

Sunday 11 December 11am Sung Mass

Sunday 18 December 11am Sung Mass

24 December - Christmas Eve 11.30 Midnight Mass with carols from 11pm

1 January 2023 11am Sung Mass

8 January – Epiphany 11am Sung Mass 6pm Evensong and Benediction

St Michael's Church, Dinham Road, EX4 4EB

For more information, visit our website www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk or Facebook Page: St Michael and All Angels,

New Leaves

From the Vicarage December 2022

Glory to God, Peace on Earth

'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!" (Luke 2: 13-14)



This time last year we were breathing a sigh of relief that we were going to be able to celebrate Christmas without too many Covid restrictions. Although there is still Covid infection around, its presence is now less of a worry for many of us. But the war in Ukraine, economic turmoil at home and pressing global environmental concerns conspire to provide a less than cheerful backdrop to our Christmas preparations. Not to mention the avian flu infection threatening the supply of turkeys!

But perhaps that is the point. Christmas is a necessary celebration because it reminds us that there is a light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness can never overcome (John 1:5). To be human is to face darkness as well as to rejoice in light. But as Christians we face the darkness knowing that it can never overcome the light we receive and hold in Jesus Christ. Therefore we can travel with hope.

And the importance of Christian worship in this journey is underlined by the song of the angels which I quote above. By offering our worship to God we don't escape the realities of this world earth but commit ourselves to work for peace within it. The appalling violence and destruction being committed against Ukraine is a stark reminder that we can't remain neutral when we see such an abuse of power.

So even though you may be facing personal darkness on top of the

difficulties which many people are facing this winter, I pray that Christmas may bring you a renewed knowledge of God's presence and a spirit of hope for the coming year.

A visit from the Bishop of Crediton

We are delighted that The Bishop of Crediton will be coming to the parish to lead a confirmation service on Sunday 18 December at 9.30am. Please come and hold our candidates in your prayers as they take an important step in their faith journeys. Later in the morning, at 11.30am, she will be commissioning Anna Chaplains in a Diocesan service also at St David's.



Anna chaplains are those who are trained and commissioned to minister with elderly and potentially isolated people in their parishes.

Christmas Services

I do hope that you will come and join as much of our Advent and Christmas worship as you can.

The beautiful Advent Procession at St Michael's is on Sunday 4 December at 6pm and St David's Carol Service will be on Sunday 18th December at 6pm. We plan to serve mulled wine and mince pies after both of these services.

On Christmas Eve we will hold our Christingle and Nativity with a children's choir at 4pm at St David's. This year there will be midnight services at both churches but on Christmas morning a service only at St David's.

Looking to the Future

As many of you already know Canon Mike Williams has started work

as facilitator for the parish and by the time you read this he will have met with the PCC. The coming years are going to be challenging ones for the Church of England as a whole and there's no doubt that we will also face challenging changes in our parish life. Canon Mike is focusing on the value of listening to each other and I'm sure that this is going to be key in envisioning a way forward for our churches.

The coming year also brings the challenge of finding new lay leaders. We are still working with just one Churchwarden and one Chapel Warden at St Michael's. I would ask you all to pray and consider this because the future health of our parish relies on our lay leaders just as much, if not more, than on the clergy. I'm sure that God is calling the right people to these roles but I'm also sure that your prayers and conversations will be part of that process!

Thank You

At the end of another year I would like to thank everyone in our churches who has brought encouragement and joy to our common life. Many acts of generous service and kindness make our communities the good places they are. I am very grateful to those who have served, and continue to serve, as church officers, PCC and committee members. I would like to express our special thanks to Glynis Harflett, our Churchwarden, and Laura Casimir our, Chapelwarden, for their dedicated service. I would also like to record our thanks to Deborah Leighton Plom who finished this autumn as our Parish Administrator, having taken the role to a new level, especially in supporting our Safeguarding work. I would also like to welcome Georgie Morton who has recently begun as our new administrator.

I would also like to express appreciation to my ordained and licensed and retired colleagues in ministry, and to all those who have enriched our worship and worked on finance and fundraising, as well as those who have produced this fine magazine!

And finally, I would like to thank all of you who have given regular financial support to our churches. Your generosity underpins

everything we do and I am aware of the real sacrifice that many of you make to support our worship and ministry.

God's love was shown to us in Jesus who brought a light to this world that could never be overcome. May our response to God's love in the coming year bring light and hope to many.

With every blessing to you and those you love,

Nigel



Services & Events for St. Michael's - December 2022 & January 2023

Our thanks to all who have joined us in worship at St. Michael's during the November and special thanks visiting clergy Fr. Dominic Cyrus and to our visiting organist Mr. Richard Stephens. Also, I must mention a thanks on behalf of the congregation for the splendid service for All Souls on 4th November, when the setting was Faure's Requiem. The choir was augmented by choristers from other churches and this was a wonderful event.

Thanks to Barry Mather for the organisation of the newspaper collections. Please continue to support this venture as it brings in an extra source of income.

At time of writing no further lectures are planned.

I am still looking for a for two or three people willing to read the first lesson on Sunday mornings in order to bring our reading team up to strength again – if you feel confident to try this, please see me or Fr. Nigel after service. It's not as daunting as you might think! Don't forget you are reading among friends and helping with our service to Almighty God, albeit in a small but nevertheless important way.

Below are our regular patterns of worship in Church and on-line:-

Sundays: 11am Sung Mass & Sermon

First Sunday in the month: 6pm Evensong & Benediction (check regular

notices for variations)

Wednesdays: Matins at 9.30am and Low Mass at 10.00am (Reverts to original timings with effect from **Wednesday 30th November, 2022 (St.**

Andrew's Day)

Fridays: During school term times we welcome folk to Tea and Toast

between 9am and 10.30am

Plainsong Vespers led by Dr. Richard Parker on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6pm is public worship, also broadcast to

https://facebook.com/groups/2227703237

Friends of St. Michael's Facebook Group - details on the Church website https://www.stmichaelsmountdinham.org.uk

Choir rehearsal – this takes place immediately after Vespers on Tuesday evenings at 7pm. If you are interested in joining the choir please contact Tasha Goldsworth – Musical Director or speak to a choir member.

Services and events for December and January are as follows -

DECEMBER

Sunday 4th December - The Second Sunday in Advent

11.00am Sung Mass

Setting: Mass in the Phrygian Mode - Wood

Motet: People Look East - Trad

6pm Advent Procession

Music and readings for Advent





9.30am Matins 10.00am Low Mass

Sunday 11th December – The Third Sunday in Advent

11.00am Sung Mass

Setting: Missa Super Dixit Maria - Hassler Motet: Rejoice in the Lord always - Anon

Tuesday 13th December – St. Lucia

6.30pm Special service for St. Lucia for the Swedish community details of which can be found on the Internet:

www.evenbrite.co.uk/e/sankta-lucia-concert-exeter-tickets

Please note that there will not be Vespers and choir rehearsal will be held at St. David's Church

Wednesday 14th December

9.30am Matins



Sunday 18th December – The Fourth Sunday in Advent

11.00am Sung Mass

Setting: Little Organ Mass – Haydn

Motet: E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come - Manz

3pm Carols, Candles and Cake – a concert by the Exeter Chorale

Entrance £10.00 on the door including refreshments (Students & unwaged

£5.00 Under 16 free

Wednesday 21st December

9.30am Matins 10.00am Low Mass

Saturday 24th December – Christmas Eve

11.00pm Carols sung from the West Gallery

11.30pm Midnight Mass for the Celebration of Our Saviour's Birth

Setting: Mass in C and F -

Stanford

Motet: O Magnum Mysterium -

Victoria

Sunday 25th December – Christmas Day

NO service at St. Michael's – there will be a service at St. David's Church

NO services between Christmas Midnight Mass and Sunday 1st January but there are various days to note in the Church calendar: -

Monday 26th December – St. Stephen Tuesday 27th December - St. John – Apostle and Evangelist Wednesday 28th December – The Holy Innocents Thursday 29th December – Thomas Becket

JANUARY

Sunday 1st January – The First Sunday after Christmas Also The Naming of Jesus



11.00am Sung Mass

Wednesday 4th January

9.30am Matins 10.00am Low Mass

Friday 6th January – The Epiphany

Sunday 8th January – Designated as The Epiphany

11.00am Sung Mass with chalking of the door 6.00pm Evensong with Benediction

Wednesday 11th January

9.30am Matins 10.00am Low Mass

Sunday 15th January – Second Sunday after Epiphany

11.00am Sung Mass

Wednesday 18th January

9.30am Matins 10.00am Low Mass

Sunday 22nd January – Third Sunday after Epiphany

11.00am Sung Mass

Wednesday 25th January - The Conversion of St. Paul

9.30am Matins 10.00am Low Mass

Sunday 29th January – Designated as Candlemas

11.00am Sung Mass

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 1st February

9.30am Matins 10.00am Low Mass



Thursday 2nd February – Candlemas

The DLRC Courses continue during for the Autumn/Christmas Term:

Tuesday Noon - 2pm Ukulele for Your Recovery

3pm – 5pm Taking Your Recovery Further

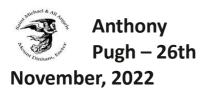
Thursday 10am – Noon Yes, You Can Sing!

1pm – 3pm Introduction to Rhythms for Recovery with Djembe Drumming

 $3.30 pm-5.30 pm \ Taking \ Recovery \ Further \ with \ African \ Djembe \ Drumming$

Booklets about the DLRC Courses are to be found in St. Michael's Church or you can find out more by looking on the website: **www.devonrlc.co.uk** or simply telephone EXETER (01392) 677067 (between 10am and 2pm Monday to Thursday).

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful, happy and blessed Christmas; and also, a very Happy New Year.





Luke 2:14

Readers and Leaders in Prayer at St David's for December 2022/January 2023

Sunday 4th December (2nd Sunday in Advent)

1st Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10
2nd Reading: Romans 15:4-13
Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:1-12
Preacher: Belinda Speed-Andrews
Bible Reader: Keith Postlethwaite

Prayer Leader: Robert Mitchell

Sunday 11th December (3rd Sunday of Advent)

1st Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10 2nd Reading: James 5:7-10 Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:2-11

Preacher: Bill Pattinson Bible Reader: Philip Dale Prayer Leader: Helen Friend

Sunday 18th December (4th Sunday of Advent/Confirmation)

1st Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16 2nd Reading: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel Reading. Matthew 1:18-end

Preacher: +Jackie Bible Reader: Hilary

Todd

Leader in Prayer: Nigel Guthrie

Saturday 24th December (Christmas Eve)

1st Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-11,16

2nd Reading: Acts 13:16-26 Gospel Reading: Luke 1:67-79 Preacher: Belinda Speed-Andrews

Bible Reader: Alan Baker

Leader in Prayer: David James





Readers and Leaders in Prayer for Christmas Day will be decided by Nigel Guthrie



Sunday 1st January (Naming and Circumcision of Jesus/ New Years Day)

1st Reading: Numbers 6:22-end 2nd Reading: Galatians 4:4-7 Cospel Reading Luke 2:15-21

Preacher: Charlotte Townsend Bible Reader: Jeremy Lawford Prayer Leader: Geoff Crockett

Sunday 8th January (Epiphany)

1st Reading: Isaiah 42:1-8
2nd Reading: Ephesians 3:1-12
Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12
Preacher: Howard Friend Bible Reader:

Philip Walker

Prayer Leader: Pete Francis

Sunday 15th January (2nd Sunday of Epiphany/Baptism of Jasmin)

1st Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7

2nd Reading: 1Corinthians 1:1-9

Gospel Reading. John 1:29-42

Preacher: t.b.c. Bible Reader: Maggie Draper

Leader in Prayer: Richard Johnson

Sunday 22nd January (3rd Sunday of Epiphany)

1st Reading: Isaiah 9:1-4

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Gospel Reading: Matthew 4:12-23

Preacher: Julian Albrow Bible Reader: Sue Wilson

Leader in Prayer: Ian Cartwright

Sunday 29th January (Presentation of Christ in the Temple/Candlemas)

1st Reading: Malachi 3:1-5 2nd Reading: Hebrews 2:14-

end

Gospel Reading Luke 2:22-40 Preacher: Nigel Guthrie Bible

Reader: Geoff Crockett

Prayer Leader: Glynis Harflett

Sunday 5th February (3rd Sunday before Lent)

1st Reading: Isaiah 58:1-9a

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:13-20

Preacher: Ian Cartwright Bible Reader: Lawrence Sail

Prayer Leader: Alistair Mackintosh



Some members of St David's choir pictured recently



Jemima's Report for Month 3 in Brazil

Firstly
Here's the link to my third video updates:
<u>Brazil update 3 - YouTube</u>

So, I have now officially passed the halfway point of my time in Brazil! It has gone by so quickly and it's sad in a way as it feels like I've only just started my ministry here. I'm the type of person that obsesses a bit over the passing of time and towards the end of experiences I get anxious that I must make the most of the remaining days, which ironically sometimes stops me from enjoying things! But anyway, I know that God has plans for me in Bolivia and beyond, which I try to keep in mind. It is in such circumstances that I hold on to the wise old proverb of my Granny: "Why worry when you can pray!". I still to this day can never find anything to say to refute it! I do believe that I started my previous update saying that I was "surviving and on my way to thriving". Certainly, I am more than "surviving" considering that I can now adeptly communicate, have genuine friendships with those in the church as well as the children at the project. However, if I'm being completely honest, sometimes I fear I'm prone to switching "thriving" with "resigning to what's most comfortable". I'm a natural procrastinator with a keen distaste for confrontation of any kind which can leave me less proactive than I could be, especially in terms of taking more risks with teaching the children at the project and putting forward new ideas. Anyway, it is with all these self-reflections in mind, that I ask for prayer in the following Ps:

Peace - I suppose with the worry thing. That I would draw closer to the knowledge that the Lord is my shepherd, who comforts me despite the fluctuations of life, rather than antagonising over the FOTRO (Fear Of Time Running Out). (yes I made it up).

Protection - As mentioned in the video, I am currently isolating with COVID. I am on the mend, and I will hopefully be out of isolation this coming Tuesday. I have thus far managed to totally avoid those in my house, but please pray that It stays that way and I don't pass it on to anyone. Rosemary (with whom I live) is a healthcare worker and looks after her elderly parents, so It would be especially important that she doesn't catch it.

Project - please be praying for the project as we enter into the Christmas period. That the ministry would shine through and touch the hearts of the children, and that I might be bold in trying new and creative ways of contributing to it. Please also pray for a new project I am taking on: starting next week I will be teaching English to a group of missionaries in the church that next summer are going on a mission trip to Chard, Somerset! I have never done anything like this before so please be praying that I may have wisdom as to how to lead these classes.

Thank you so much everyone for your continued support, kind responses, and prayers.





"Does anyone have a light, please?"

The Pastoral Fund

The existence of The Parish Pastoral Fund has become more relevant than ever in these difficult times.

The Fund was established over 20 years ago through the generosity of John Meek who left a legacy of £5,000 in his will to create the Fund. He was "convinced that there was a place for such a Fund to help those who are in genuine need". It is amazing to realise that by virtue of subsequent gifts the Fund has been able to distribute grants totalling very much more than the original £5,000 and that the present balance in the Fund exceeds this figure. However, grants made in the last 2 years have significantly depleted the resources of the Fund as applications for grants have noticeably increased and will probably continue to do so given the cost of living crisis. It was John Meek's wish that "the Parish and the P.C.C. will come to share my vision for the Pastoral Fund so that the Fund will at least be sustained by the financial contributions of the church and individuals and that it may even grow to provide for the needs it is established to meet".

The potential beneficiaries of grants from the Fund will be those who have some link to the Parish, however tenuous, and they do not necessarily have to be living within the parish boundaries. The nature of the grants made is that they should overcome some issue the resolution of which will place the applicant in a much stronger financial position it is intended that this should allow them to cope better by themselves as a result of receiving a one-off grant from the Fund. All grant applications are treated with the utmost confidentiality.

The Fund is administered by a group of trustees who are appointed by the Vicar and who are independent of the P.C.C. Potential applicants are usually introduced by the parish clergy but it is open to any member of the parish to make an approach either through the clergy or direct to me on behalf of the trustees.





Green Matters – spent candles and tea lights



What do you do with spent candles, wax and tea-lights? Toss them in the bin? How about collecting them up and taking them to the Recycled Candle Company? The team makes luxury candles entirely from recycled wax and in doing so, saves some 40 tonnes of wax from landfill every year – full details on their website:

https://therecycledcandlecompany.co.uk/pages/about-trcc

The shop was in Gandy Street but has moved to a pop-up site just opposite Sainsbury's in the Guildhall shopping centre till the end of December and they are always pleased to receive donations. I keep a paper bag in my desk and take it in periodically when full.

Something to think about, especially with Christmas coming up and all those candles to be lit and enjoyed?



Green Links

Helpful Booklet available for free online

https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/resource/case-climate-justice-illustrated-booklet/

Special Climate display at St Petrocks

When you are next in the city centre do pop into St Petrocks for a display about Climate Change and the Caribbean.

Official launch of Exeter Climate Hub on Friday 26th November https://climateactionhubexeter.net/

Exeter Plan: Excellent Chance to have an input on Climate Change

Reminder: the Consultation is open until 5th December 2022. There is a new website for it here **The Exeter Plan - Building Greater Exeter** and there is only one Public Consultation date left for this year Thursday 1 December - St James' Church Hall, Mount Pleasant Road, 1pm-7pm. For more details **Exeter-Plan_ConsultationPack.pdf (buildinggreaterexeter.co.uk)**

Community Leaders Climate Training with Royal Met Soc

Reminder: If you feel like you would benefit from training or you think other leaders you know would then you can register here

https://www.rmets.org/event/community-leaders-climate-change-training-2

Dates for your diary

Friday 2nd December – 6.30pm – 8.30pm – Positive Lights Event called Our water: From the city to the sea led by Labour Green New Deal

https://ourwaterexeter.eventbrite.co.uk

The Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2022 - Sleepers Wake, Getting Serious About Climate Change

Sleepers Wake, Getting Serious About Climate Change By Nicholas Holtam, explores the reality of climate change and how Advent is an opportunity for us to wake up, sense the urgency and begin to make radical change.

Give as You Live fundraising - at no cost to you!

We all love something for nothing don't we? Well did you know that as you do Christmas shopping online you could be also raising funds for your favourite charity (or church)? Give as You LIve is an organisation that does just that at no expense to you. This is especially important now that 71% of people say they are less likely to donate to charity as a result of the cost of living crisis. If you use this link or scan the QR code a favourite charity (Juvenile Diabetes Research Fondation) gets £5 for each new subscriber – remember this does not cost you anything – it's the retailers that pay. https://www.giveasyoulive.com

Badvertising

'Badvertising' is a campaign to stop adverts fuelling the climate emergency. This includes ads for cars, airline flights and fossil fuels. We ended tobacco advertising when we understood the harm done by smoking. Now we know the damage done by fossil fuel products and activities, Badvertising believe it's time to stop promoting them. The campaign is organised by the New Weather Institute think tank and funded by the KR Foundation. It was launched in August 2020.

https://www.badverts.org/



The Living
Churchyards display
from the Green
Event, and our
Fairtrade stall

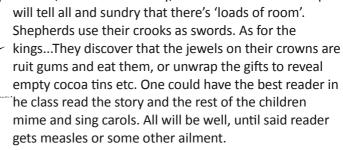
December memories

December. The end of another year, when we look forward to a new one which we hope will be better than this one. Of course, it will be more of the same, highs and lows. So, we just get on with it.

We can't mention December and not mention CHRISTMAS because it affects us all in some way. As a retired school teacher of infants, now 37 years ago, I still am grateful that I don't have to go through the rituals. Top of the list is the dreaded



Nativity Play. What shall I do this year? Once Harvest Festival and half-term is over, a staff meeting is called. Shall I write a script and teach my 40 or 50 innocents simple phrases and movements? I have known children struggle with pointing upwards and announcing 'Lo, see a bright star'. Many will refuse to hold Joseph's hand, because it is sticky, or he smells. The innkeeper



Once the Nativity is crossed off, we devise cards for mums and dads. Some teachers go for the easy option by cutting Christmas pictures out of magazines and giving each child a dab of glue. Just imagine the sticky mess. New teachers will give free rein to a child's imagination with lots of paint and sticky-backed paper and scissors. Then there is the calendar to be made and a cracker with a collection of inner toilet-roll tubes. That dealt with, the Christmas trees are issued with instructions to hand-make the decorations. Generous teachers will buy chocolate decorations, only to come back after playtime to find silver paper and the naughtiest boy in the class with a chocolate covered mouth.

We will draw a veil over the Christmas party.

When the last day dawns, we shout 'Merry Christmas' to the children and retire to the staff room with a few bottles of wine and a box of mince pies. Mothers and fathers amongst us go home and start making preparations for our families. And, it's no good hoping for a Christmas lie-in, as ones excited



offspring will help us to celebrate at dawn.

All this aside, some people say it's just another (expensive) day. But, to us believers it's a celebration of the birth of a baby, who is still followed over two thousand years later. So, let us remember this in the midst of the Christmas presents, too much indulgence and all the worldly happenings. It costs no money to remember Jesus and try to live by his teachings.

Happy New Year.





This article was published by Exeter YMCA in November. We reproduce it with Gareth's kind permission.

Why we celebrate Thanksgiving - Gareth Sorsby, Joint CEO Exeter YMCA

"Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received, thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling, Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse."



You might ask, why would a British family "buy in" to an American celebration and public holiday? Great question, and to answer that I'd have to first rewind 10 years to our second year of marriage. We both have complex family histories that meant joining together as husband and wife at times felt quite lonely with a distinct lack of family nearby to lean on.

At the time I was involved in delivering YMCA Exeter's work in the 3 Devon prisons. We had a colleague who originated from Oklahoma and had moved to Ide and married an English man and that year they extended an invitation to join them for thanksgiving at their quaint little cottage. My wife had spent a year out volunteering at Camp America with the Salvation Army and I had an obsession with American Football and food, so we both jumped at the chance. The food was greater than expected, but the sense of family

and togetherness – being accepted into their home with no expectations – and the fun, laughter and praise that we shared that day really struck a chord with us.

So for the last 10 years, we have marked out the day of Thanksgiving as one of the most important in our calendars. It is now a day every year to be intentional in giving thanks to God for all He has done, is doing and will do in our lives and across the globe.

We try to practice being thankful on a daily basis but for our family to have a whole day focused on the good in our lives can only ever be a positive thing. This year we made a "what we are thankful for" tree and covered it in leaves of thankfulness. For our young boys, this was a fun activity, but it also brought out, for us, a real understanding of what things make a difference in their lives.



The practice of thanksgiving in turn creates even more grateful hearts as we begin to recognise the things we sometimes take for granted around us and all of a sudden your perspective on life changes. So I'd wholeheartedly encourage you to give it a go.

Psalm 118:1 Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.

This piece was originally published by Devon Recovery Learning Community. We reprint it with their kind permission.

Wellbeing Fair at St Michael's and All Angels



On Saturday 8 October, we were excited to bring our Wellbeing Fair, in partnership with St Michael's and All Angels Church, to Exeter. We were joined at the Church by lots of community wellbeing organisations, including Parental Minds, Bridge Books, Exeter Craft Hub, Together Devon, Exeter Communities Together, and others.

Caroline Nicholson, manager of DRLC, writes:

"DRLC tutors helped our students lead three amazing music workshops for the general public to join in: Djembe Drumming, Ukulele, and Singing. Our craft stall was laden with crafts handmade by attendees to our drop-ins. Other tutors helped run our recovery stall, book stall, cake and homemade produce stall, and plant stall with plants from New Leaf for sale. There were teas, coffee and refreshments, lots of other activities and crafts going on, and of course, there was Patrick the Pony!

"Thanks to each and every one of you for the help and good will you brought to our Wellbeing Fair.

"At the end of the day, I came away feeling tired and happy, but most of all thinking just what a great atmosphere there was, which was down to all of us coming in the spirit of togetherness.

"Although the Wellbeing Fair was launched as a partnership between the DRLC and St Michael's and All Angels Church, it was in fact jointly



led by each one of you, from the stall holders, volunteers, and those who valiantly performed in the music workshops, to those who contributed in other ways by donating prizes to the raffle and handmade crafts to the craft stall, helping to carry extra tables down from St David's, and making scones

and cakes for the teas.

"And of course, let's not forget the huge contribution made by those who turned out to enjoy the fair; not just members of the general public, but also DRLC students, mental health professionals, parishioners, and those who might have had to gather up considerable courage to overcome their anxieties to attend as a way of showing their support of Exeter's recovery and wellbeing community.

"The atmosphere filled me with much hope. I came away feeling that we are more and more becoming a genuine community of recovery and wellbeing, supporting one another, and being more connected and sharing. We seem to be better at recognising that we may be at the helm of a different boat but we are all sailing in the same ocean. I hope I am not alone in sensing a culture of change in the air. For my part, I will certainly endeavour to contribute to positive change, and to that end I am already thinking ahead to next year's Wellbeing Fair to which I hope many of you will want to join in again!

"With very many thanks for all your efforts. Be proud; we did an amazing job at what turned out to be a genuinely wonderful day."



Rodney didn't know how she'd got in, but she seemed keen to audition for the nativity play...

You are warmly invited to an evening's entertainment at





Poetry & Music For Ukraine

Lawrence Sail with Lily Neal & Alex Harding

Wednesday 14th December at 7.30 pm

Tickets: £5 each from The Topsham Bookshop 27 Fore St, Topsham Tel: 01392-877895

Supporting **InterFamily** - a Ukrainian centre training young doctors and providing free medical treatment to thousands of refugees. See justgiving.com/crowdfunding/alex-harding

FREE WINE & NIBBLES DONATIONS WELCOME

Poetry and music for Ukrainian

You are warmly invited to an evening of poetry and music for a Ukrainian charity, **Interfamily**, which trains young doctors and provides free medical treatment to thousands of refugess. Lawrence Sail will be reading, along with Lily Neal, and Alex Harding will be singing and playing guitar. It's <u>on Wednesday 14 December</u> at The Café, <u>76 Fore Street</u>, Topsham, and <u>starts at 7.30 pm</u>. Tickets are £5 each from The Topsham Bookshop, and wine and nibbles are included.

With all good wishes,



Two recent releases on the Royal Literary Fund Website
On the website, click on **Showcase**, then on the following headings:

COLLECTED

Article by Lawrence Sail: 'The Third Foot: Writers on Ageing' (Released on Monday October 24)

WRITERS ALOUD (Released on Thursday 17 November)

Poetry Break: Lawrence Sail and Julia Copus discuss classic poems by Emily Dickinson



Peace Dove Prayers for Ukraine

God in the Arts

Editor: The Revd Michael Burgess takes a look at the cartoon for 'The Mackintosh Madonna', which normally hangs in the British Museum.

Preparing the Way

This month's drawing is 'The Virgin and Child' by Raphael (1483-1520). Raphael was a talented artist from a very early age, but this drawing belongs to a time when he was in Rome from 1510-12. The finished painting is known as the Mackintosh Madonna, after its last owner.



This drawing, or cartoon, was the first stage in creating that work: it is in black chalk with heightening marks of white. When an artist made an initial drawing like this, he would then prick the cartoon with holes and then sprinkle charcoal powder over the drawing to reproduce the design on the canvas below. The pinholes on this drawing are still clearly visible. Sadly the final painting has been damaged through time, but here in the cartoon we

see that first stage: a sensitive and balanced picture of mother and child: Mary warm and caring, Jesus laughing and alive.

During Advent we think of the preparations God made for the birth of the Saviour. We celebrate God's work of creation and how He chose a people for His own. Within that people He looked for a holy remnant and then finally a loving heart in the assent of Mary to be the mother of our Lord. These preparatory steps were as vital for our salvation as the artist moving from idea to sketch to the finished work.

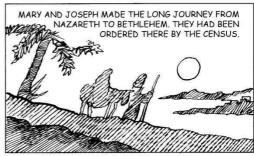
Each stage is important; each stage a revelation of life and love. Vasari wrote of Raphael that in his paintings 'the flesh palpitates, the breath comes and goes, every organ lives, and life pulsates everywhere.' Even this preliminary drawing displays that life and vitality. It is a life we celebrate at Christmas in the birth of a child who turns to us, as he does in this work, as a sign of joy and love.























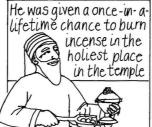
It can be read in the Bible in Luke ch. 1 verses 1-25 & 57-80

A short story from the Bible

The Romans had invaded Israel and still ruled it. Zechariah and Elizabeth were an old childless couple living in the hill country.



It was Zechariah sturn for temple duty in Jerusalem.









To show you that God means what He says...

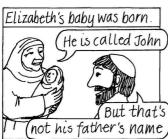


Yochanan'or God is gracious













Smile Lines

Santa

I am terrified of the Santa at the shopping centre where I work. Our HR lady talked it over with me, and has discovered I am Claustrophobic.

The Holy Family

A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "What was Jesus' mother's name?"

One child answered, "Mary."

The teacher then asked, "Who knows what Jesus' father's name was?" Another child ventured: "Verge?"

Confused, the teacher asked, "Where did you get that?"

He replied hesitantly: "Well, you know they are always talking about Verge n' Mary.

Christmas entertaining

Inviting a number of people to come and stay with you over the Christmas holidays is a lot like living in California: if you find a fault, don't dwell on it!

Seasonal smiles

Children's version of the Christmas story

- When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manager.
- When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta
- Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

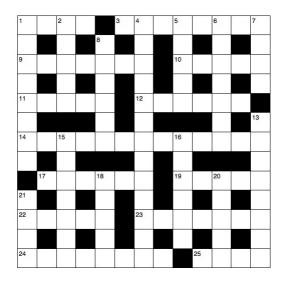
What do you call Santa's helpers? - Subordinate Clauses.

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? - Frostbite.

New Year's Eve is coming soon...

The bagpipes are the missing link between music and noise. - E K Kruger Bring not a bagpipe to a man in trouble. - Jonathan Swift.





Across

- 1 'How long will you your face from me?' (Psalm 13:1) (4)
- 3 'Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the he bore' (Hebrews 13:13) (8)
- 9 Posh sin (anag.) (Romans 8:15) (7)
- 10 Solemn pledges (Matthew 5:33) (5)
- 11 Italian term for full orchestra (5)
- 12 'For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not the cry of the afflicted' (Psalm 9:12) (6)
- 14 Prescience (1 Peter 1:2) (13)
- 17 Where a Hindu holy man lives (6)
- 19 'If he found any... who belonged to the Way, whether — women, he might take them as prisoners' (Acts 9:3) (3,2)
- 22 Fragrance (2 Corinthians 2:15) (5)
- 23 Vine hen (anag.) (Jonah 1:2) (7)
- 24 Precious stone decorating the twelfth foundation of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:20) (8)
- 25 'Will you keep to the old path that evil men have —?' (Job 22:15) (4)

Down

1 'Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with — — ' (Numbers 20:11) (3,5)

- 2 'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, "--murder" (Matthew 5:21) (2,3)
- 4 One of Paul's many hardships endured as a servant of God (2 Corinthians 6:5) (13)
- 5 'We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, inwardly' (Romans 8:23) (5)
- 6 Changed (Daniel 6:8) (7)
- 7 'My yoke is and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30) (4)
- 8 Recoil (Revelation 12:11) (6)
- 13 'O Lord, you have me and you know me' (Psalm 139:1) (8)
- 15 '— to me the joy of your salvation' (Psalm 51:12) (7)
- 16 Express sorrow (Isaiah 16:7) (6)
- 18 'Then he said to Thomas, " out your hand and put it into my side" (John 20:27) (5)
- 20 'God has said, " will I leave you; will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5) (5)
- 21 Son of Onam and brother of Shammai (1 Chronicles 2:28) (4)



Sudoku -Medium

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8			7		6		8
8				2		1	7

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Word search

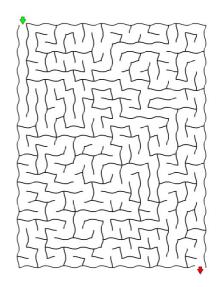
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holy
Elizabeth
prayer
childless
pregnant
invaded
Zecharaigh

Israel name burn angel son baby John

Mary

Maze



Days of Note - December

3rd December:

Francis Xavier, the seasick missionary

Ignatius Loyala sent his friend and follower Francis Xavier (born 1506) to the Orient as a missionary. What a missionary! Imagine David Livingstone, Billy Graham and the Alpha Courses rolled into one. His mass conversions became legendary – he baptised 10,000 people in one month and in just ten years of work was credited with 700,000 conversions.

Xavier became the most famous Jesuit missionary of all time, working so hard that he had only a few hours' sleep each night. He was known as 'the Apostle of the Indies' and 'the Apostle of Japan'. He began by reforming Goa, which contained numerous Portuguese Catholics, notorious for cruelty to their slaves, open concubinage, and neglect of the poor. For three years, by example, preaching and writing verses on Christian truths set to popular tunes, Francis did much to offset this betrayal of Christ by bad Christians.

For the next seven years he worked among the Paravas in southern India, in Ceylon, Malacca, the Molucca islands, and the Malay peninsula. He met with immense success among the low-caste, but with almost none among the Brahmins.

In 1549 he ventured on to Japan, translated an abridged statement of Christian belief, and made a hundred converts in one year at Kagoshima alone. When he left Japan, the total number of Japanese Christians was about 2,000; within 60 years they were resisting fierce persecution, even to death.

Wherever Xavier sailed, he left after him numerous organised Christian communities. Not bad for a man who suffered seasickness and had trouble in learning foreign languages!

Xavier died in 1551, on his way to China. His body was preserved and enshrined for many years. His right arm was detached in 1615 and is still preserved in the church of the Gesu at Rome. He was canonised by Gregory XV in 1622, and declared Patron of the Foreign Missions by Pius XI in 1927.

4th December: Osmond, an immigrant before Brexit

Osmond is the saint for you if you regret Brexit, and believe that immigrants can bring good to Britain. Osmond came to England from France back in the days before EU regulations. It was shortly after 1066, and he was a Norman, following William the Conqueror.

Osmond himself was no soldier, but a gifted and godly man, with a great gift of administration. He became royal chaplain, and then chancellor in 1072, producing numerous royal letters and charters for the king. In 1078 he was made bishop of Salisbury. As such, he completed and consecrated the cathedral, and formed such an outstanding chapter and constitution that it later became a model for other English cathedrals.

Osmond took part in the preparation of the Domesday Book and was present when it was presented to William in April 1086. He died in 1099, well respected for his purity and learning, and his lack of avarice and

ambition.

6th December: What's in a (Christmas) Name?

What do your family call him, that cheerful old man in a red robe and floppy hat who pops up everywhere at Christmas? Sometimes he's Father Christmas, sometimes Santa Claus, and in parts of Europe he's Saint Nicholas. That's his real name, abbreviated to 'Santa Claus' by Brits and Americans who don't like to follow the Europeans, and then turned into a more homely, cuddly kind of name for the children. Whatever he's called, his function is the same – delivering presents to children at Christmas.

The first St Nicholas was bishop of Myra, in the country we now call Turkey, in the fourth century. He was known as the friend of the poor, and especially poor or abused children. At (or just before) Christmas he went around handing out presents to them, as well as rescuing some from dreadful circumstances. The red robe our modern Santa Claus wears may be a vague representation of a bishop's garment, and the floppy hat is his mitre!

The original good bishop from 1600 years ago is remembered by the Church on 6th December, and the lucky children in Belgium and the Netherlands get their presents then.

25th December: Reflections on the Christmas Story

The following is a mix of Bible readings and comments by Tony Horsfall, a former OMF missionary to the Far East and now retreat leader and author based in Yorkshire.

Matthew 1:18 Joseph's dilemma

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit...."

It is not clear at what point Mary told Joseph the news of her pregnancy, but when she did it came as a bombshell. What should he do, knowing the child was not his? Could her story be true? He was however a righteous man, and he sought God for direction rather than acting impulsively. God spoke to him

through a dream, confirming that the child was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and this gave him the courage to stand by her, and take her as his wife. It was a brave decision, but he now knew that the child would be the One to save people from their sins.

It is easy when we have difficult decisions to make to be impetuous or hasty, but the best decisions are made slowly and with prayer. When you are making important choices ask God to guide you clearly, and to give you the courage to do what is right.

Matthew 1:22 Long-awaited Immanuel

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')... And Joseph gave Him the name Jesus.

The plan of salvation is intimately connected to the Old Testament, and was the fulfilment of prophecies made long ago. God was sending His Son into the world that we might be saved. God is with us – this astonishing, mind-blowing truth underpinned Joseph's straight-forward trust in Him. Today as you get on with your life, pray that the wonder of knowing that God is with you will never be far from your awareness.

Luke 2:1-7 Bethlehem

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... so Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

This is perhaps the most familiar picture we have of the Christmas event —but remember what was happening. This was no ordinary child. In Jesus God became a human being and dwelt among us, perhaps the greatest

miracle (and mystery) of all. As you visualise the scene again, let worship arise in your heart: 'From heaven you came, helpless Babe, entered our world your glory veiled.' Emmanuel, God with us! The Servant King, worthy of all our adoration and love.

LORD God, in this season please help me to live in the wonder of your upside-down Kingdom where your love for us compels you to become helpless, vulnerable and dependent. May your Kingdom come in and through my life today.

Luke 2:8-12 The Shepherds arrive

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

The first visitors are not VIPs but humble shepherds who have been summoned by an angelic visitor. For those who have eyes to see, there hidden in the manger beneath the blankets is the Son of God, the one sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. Very few of those crowded into Bethlehem that night were aware of what was happening. Only those with faith could recognise the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah. It is the same today.

Lord, I pray for eyes to see where the glory of Heaven touches earth. May I be alive today with the truth that the Saviour, rescuer, King Jesus has been born 'to us' and that there is joy in this for all people. May my life reflect that glory even in a small way in my interactions with people, so that in this Christmas season the good news of great joy will be known.

Luke 2:13-15 Angel hosts

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.'

The darkness of the Judean hillside was lit up by the appearance of a great angelic choir, messengers sent to herald the birth of the Saviour. Their song breaks the stillness of the night, first in praise of God for his act of mercy in sending the Son, and then in proclamation of the peace the child will bring to earth. The shepherds now decide to do the unthinkable -leave their flocks, and head off into town to see the new born King. Such is the drawing power of the Saviour.

Sometimes there are things we too must leave behind if we are to follow his call, but whatever sacrifice is needed, it will be worth it just to find him for ourselves.

Luke 2:16-20 Mary ponders

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ... Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen...

The shepherds became the first evangelists, proclaiming the good news... That was their response, and it should be ours too.

But for Mary there followed a time of reflection. Exuberant witness and quiet contemplation are not opposites. They are in fact good companions in the spiritual life.

Thank you, LORD Jesus, that you are still found when we search for you. May I be willing to share the discovery I've made with others at this time. But I also want to know you better in my inner life, too. Please give me that balance of active following and heart-pondering reflection, especially in this Christmas season.

Puzzle solutions

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4	6	5	8	9	2	3	1	7

The deadline for inclusion of articles for the February issue of New Leaves is Sunday 22nd January

If you have images of any events of interest to the Parish community please send them to us. Any information and articles you'd like to submit for inclusion in future issues should be sent to the new editorial team at:

newleavesnews@gmail.com

Please send digital files via email and please make the subject header fit the content of the email - thanks!

Thank you to Graham Lerwill for organising the printing of this magazine

- his hard work is much appreciated.