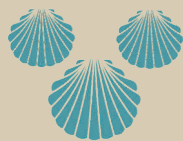


Contact

A magazine for our community



St James'

Church, Exeter
Spring 2026



Fr Henry Pryse
Rector



Joan Ridgway
Licensed Lay Minister



Caroline Adams
Safeguarding



Sue Pinn
Churchwarden



Rachel Martindill
Churchwarden &
Safeguarding

Weekly Services

Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
Wednesday	12.00 pm	Holy Communion
Tue, Thu, Fri	8.30 am	Morning Prayer

Online Services

Mon, Wed	8.30 am	Morning Prayer
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The Parish Eucharist on Sundays and some special services are available to watch live or later at stjamesexeter.org/services/web-services-and-reflections.


Monthly Events

1 st Sunday	4.00 pm	Celebrate Together [not April & August]
	6.00 pm	Evening Prayer with Benediction
1 st Wednesday	3.30 pm	Messy Church [8 th April, not August]
1 st Thursday	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's house group
1 st & 3 rd Monday	2.30 pm	Joan's house group [not April]
1 st & 3 rd Friday	2.00 pm	Craft group [3 rd April deferred to 10 th]
2 nd Wednesday	12.30 pm	Friends Who Lunch
3 rd Sunday	6.00 pm	Evening Worship
4 th Friday	10.30 am	Coffee morning


Get in Touch

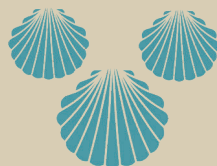
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 [stjameschurchexeter](https://www.instagram.com/stjameschurchexeter)



From the Rectory

Posies of flowers are very much part of Mothering Sunday, brightening up the austerity of Lent and serving as tokens of our love and care for those who will receive the posies. Flowers at Easter are significant (Easter lilies, for example). Time is set aside on Easter Eve to decorate and dress the church – including the stand for the new Paschal candle, which is solemnly processed into church at the Easter Vigil.

Do you remember those storms in January? Gorretti, Ingrid and Chandra. We received quite some battering here in the South West. In the midst of all that, as I was putting the bins out one day, I was drawn to a neighbour's front garden by a powerful vanilla-like scent. I simply had to knock on the neighbour's door and ask the name of the plant, an evergreen shrub with tiny, cream/white flowers and shiny black berries – loved by birds. Can you name that plant? Its formal name is *Sarcococca*, perhaps better known as Sweet Box or Christmas Box. As it turns out,

there was also a *Daphne* in the same front garden, with flowers and scent. What a lovely gift to all passersby, a hint of summer in the middle of winter! As one RHS horticultural adviser put it: 'That perfume will welcome you home long before you arrive.' He added: 'That is good for the soul.' Deep stuff indeed! On a more basic level, he observed, 'it makes taking the bins out an absolute joy!' A bit of a hero all round is this little winter beauty; it's well behaved, it's not bothered by pests and diseases, and it's not afraid of the dark.

I experienced a theatrical equivalent to the *Sarcococca* when I went to the Northcott Theatre to see *Anything Goes* (by Cole Porter) performed by the University of Exeter's Footlights. It included some great singing and dancing and – a highlight for me – a live band. There was tasty ice cream in the interval too: stem ginger. Of course I got drenched walking there and back, but somehow that seemed not to matter; the joy, light and sheer fun gave a real lift to us all who attended.

Little encouragements like these simple joys, small chinks of light, all help us as we journey through the year in an increasingly uncertain world. The days are, at last, appearing to draw out, and the clocks will spring forward an hour on Palm Sunday, in time for Holy Week and Easter. The lovely season of Eastertide then beckons: 50 days, ending with Pentecost on 24th May. During Eastertide we will be hosting the civic service at St James', for the Lord Mayor plus other civic dignitaries and council members. That will be a first during my time as Rector, as indeed is being the Lord Mayor's Chaplain this year. This falls nicely in the 70th anniversary year of St James' current church building. Happy 70th to St James' Church!

May we all continue to find hope and light in God's creation and in one another as this year unfolds.



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Puzzle Page

Word Ladder

Change one letter at a time to turn Flour into Bread in six steps.

Flour
Bread

Sudoku: Hard

Fill in the blanks, so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contains the numbers 1 to 9.

				5	1			
5	6	1	9					
4			7					
		2			5	4		
	4	5						8
1	9			4				3
	8			2	7		3	1
6							2	
	5		8			6	4	9

Word Search

Can you find these sauces and dips?

Alfredo	Ketchup	Plum
Apple	Mayonnaise	Salsa
Bechamel	Mint	Soy
Bread	Mornay	Sriracha
Buffalo	Oyster	Veloute
Fish	Pesto	

Solutions on page 15

From Incendiaries to Instagram

In 1942 St James' Church building was destroyed by bombing. Fourteen years later, the present church in Mount Pleasant Road was consecrated, which makes 2026 our 70th anniversary. As a part of the celebrations,

we have introduced a new look both for *Contact* magazine and in our other media, with an upgraded logo. New lettering for our notice boards and revamped online media are all in the pipeline. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up with what's going on – and we would love to see you at any of the services or events here in your parish Church!

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C	L	R	E	A	N	O	T	S	E	P	D
T	E	A	R	M	C	N	O	A	L	P	E
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K	E	H	T	R	E	A	S	Y	P	L	F
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T	O	S	Y	A	I	I	U	N	T	M	A
M	U	L	O	Y	S	M	I	N	S	O	P



Charity Focus: Balloons

Balloons is a small charity supporting children across Exeter, East and Mid Devon, when someone significant in their life dies or is about to die. Most often our work is where someone has died as a result of illness, but we also support children who have sadly been affected by sudden death, accidents or suicide.

We have a team of 6 part-time staff and we are fortunate to have 45 volunteers whom we have trained to deliver the support. Balloons provides a safe space for children and young people to explore their loss and to find ways to manage their emotions safely, as well as building resilience, self-esteem, confidence and coping strategies. We do this through one-to-one sessions with trained Grief Support Workers, group work, activity days and care packages, as well as training and online support for professionals.

Every year we aim to make a difference to those children and young people who are bereaved in our area. Last year, with the help of our supporters, we were able to:

- Provide one-to-one support for 153 children and young people across 56 schools.
- Deliver 517 one-to-one grief support sessions.
- Support 85 children through group work.
- Run 5 activity days where 65 children, young people and their parents/carers were able to meet with other bereaved children and their families.
- Send out 105 care packages to bereaved children and young people.
- Train 7 volunteer Grief Support Workers.
- Train 48 professionals in bereavement support.

We receive no statutory funding; instead, we apply to trusts and foundations, and for national and local grants. Support also comes from by companies who choose us as their charity of the year, and from community groups, schools and individuals. Some of these run one-off fundraising events and some give a small monthly donation.

The impact of our work is best explained by the children and young people themselves:

I found it difficult at times to open up, but it has been very helpful to understand my emotions and manage my anger.

I know that grief happens to everyone and being angry is normal. I feel that I will now get over how I feel.



2026 marks 20 years of Balloons supporting bereaved children and young people across Exeter, East and Mid Devon – a huge milestone for our small charity. To celebrate, we're launching a '20 for 20' campaign, inviting schools, businesses, organisations and individuals to help us raise vital funds. There is a range of ways to do this, from walking 20km to collecting 20p coins. To find out more, visit www.balloonscharity.co.uk. Thank you for your support.



Don't forget: we are here for any bereaved children or young people who need help. Just call us on 01392 982570 or send an e-mail to support@balloonscharity.co.uk.

Nasim Hartmann

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Friends of Mount Pleasant Health Centre

This year we have not yet held any fundraising events, but the Friends' Corner still proves popular, raising funds from books, jigsaws and other donated items. All are regularly topped up by our wonderful volunteers and our Co-ordinator, Bev. Please leave cash in our safe on the book trolley, or pay using the card machine at reception.

Two events are coming up soon. The first is our **cake sale** on **Thursday 23rd April** from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm. As well as a good choice of cakes and bakes, we will have a tombola, bric-à-brac, and many other items. Please look out for our advertising pamphlets! On **Saturday 16th May** we are holding a **plant sale** in the car park from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm.

As well as plants there will be many other items, plus refreshments, tombola and other amusements. Following the success of our wonderful painting exhibition and sale, we would like to hear from anyone who enjoys crafting and wishes to participate by selling some of their work and donating a percentage of their takings to the Friends.

We would not survive without our volunteers, those who participate by providing many of the items for sale, and all who support our events. Should you wish to find out more, Bev or another member of the team can be contacted on 01392 499291. We look forward to seeing you.

Nesta Scales



Mount Pleasant
Health Centre



The school sits right at the heart of our local community. We are proud of the diverse make-up of our school family and how

that extends to the local area, so we're always trying to make links and to work with other local organisations.

In December we were delighted to partner with the Sylvania Stores community group and to work with one of their community educators. Aspiring writers and illustrators from Year 6 joined a lunchtime club with Pete the Poet. The aim was to create and publish their own big books fit for a younger audience. The project came to a magical conclusion when the juniors read their books to the pre-school children during a story time session at Sylvania Stores. The books are of a remarkably high standard for children so young, and the amount of extra work that the



children did outside school was brilliant. They are now proudly on display in our new library area, for all of the children to read.

The Federation choir did a fantastic job of spreading joy in the community during visits to two local nursing homes and the dementia clinic. In these moments we were able to take a little happiness and to rest easy, knowing that giving time and a warm smile to others really can make all the difference.

At the Junior School, we are in the process of obtaining the internationally recognised Green Flag Award, highlighting our dedication to improving the provision for the children, and teaching them about ways in which we can all be better global citizens. Dozens of children here work as part of Green Teams each day, to improve the environment and to ensure that sustainability is at the forefront of our minds. We even have a weekly Golden Acorn award for the child who shows the most dedication to improving the planet.

It is always a pleasure to welcome new families; we love to hear that they have chosen the school for its good reputation. We also love working with you in the community, so don't forget to tell others about us, and see whether they want to be part of this great school too!

Jamie Sullivan
Head of Junior School



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Parish Profile: Pat Cockman

Thoughtful, appreciative and kind, using her talents to the benefit of many. Let me tell you about Pat Cockman who is just such a person.

Pat's childhood was split between Hove and Yorkshire. She was actually born in Venezuela, as her father worked for the oil company Shell, and she arrived in England when she was a few months old. Sadly Pat's father died when she was five years old,



leaving her mother to cope with three children, of which Pat was the eldest, and her little brother just six months old. Pat's aunt was an amazing support to this little family; they formed a unit. When World War 2 broke out a short time later, they were evacuated together to Yorkshire from Sussex.

Life in a Yorkshire village was totally different. Away from the intense bombing and danger, 'you wouldn't have known there was a war on', Pat says. No one locked their doors, everyone looked out for one another, her aunt taught in the local school. It was a happy childhood. These two wonderful women had a profound influence on Pat, laying strong foundations in her mind and heart. Her aunt was a devout Christian. Pat remembers, 'it was there that I learnt that God loves me and is always there for me.' It shaped her future path.

After the war ended, the family returned to Hove, where Pat finished her schooling, trained as a nurse, and eventually met and married David, whom she had known for a long time. He ran the Scouts, and she the Guides. David worked in insurance, commuting to London daily from Woking. Soon they had four children, were running the Scouts and Cubs, and were involved in Sunday schools and other activities. Life was busy,



pressured and relentless. So in 1973 they made the huge decision to escape the 'rat race' in London and bought a guesthouse on the edge of Dartmoor. They arrived in Bridford with four children, two dogs, three cats, a budgerigar and two guinea pigs. The family made up half the congregation at the local church. 'They were special years,' Pat recalls. She went back to nursing, David started theological training as a Lay Reader, and together they ran the guesthouse. They loved it, and the family was accepted and became part of the village.

Pat and David's obvious talents were noticed by the diocese, so the Bishop of Exeter, Bishop Mercer, invited them to be involved with setting up a training facility for the use of South West Ministries. The old vicarage in Exwick was chosen and named Mercer House. They now found themselves as wardens of this new venture. Most of the training was for Anglican ministry but the scope was eventually expanded to include caring services, such as nursing and probationary day courses. David himself trained to be a vicar and was subsequently ordained. 'It was a wonderful time,' says Pat, 'very successful, and people were ordained from there. David was a lovely, caring man, a "solid rock". He could empathise and people loved him.'

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In 1997 Pat and David retired. They moved up the hill to Pennsylvania. But, you guessed it, retiring is not really in their vocabulary. David was asked to take services everywhere, and having become a part of St James' Church congregation, that included taking services here. 'The moment I walked into St James', I felt their love and acceptance, even though they didn't know me,' she enthuses.

In 2011 David died. He was in hospital for only two weeks, having become very tired. Tests showed up the cancer that had spread throughout his body. For Pat it was devastating. Initially she was numb. Yet, as a widow, she has had to learn to live again; 'life is happy, fulfilled, but not the same.' Her family is very important to her.

Even in later years, she is still useful and very active. Whether leading intercessions with her inspiring and thoughtful prayers at the Sunday morning service, facilitating the monthly coffee mornings that enable people to socialise and get to know one another, or at Messy Church brilliantly executing the edible crafts for which all the children make a beeline as soon as they arrive: she is there.

'As I look back on my life, I realise how good God has been to me. I'm a proud grandmother to eleven grandchildren, and great-grandmother to eight – with three more due this year – plus caring for my dog and three chickens.'

Pauline Goodall

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Book Review: Democracy Needs Religion

By Hartmut Rosa (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2024).

This short but thought-provoking book started life as a lecture given to the Catholic Diocese of Würzburg in Northern Bavaria in 2022. The Diocese had chosen as its theme for the year a verse from 1 Kings 3: God give us a listening heart.

The verse unlocks the key question: how can we – the people of Würzburg, the general reader, the democratic citizen, indeed all of us – learn to listen more effectively to those around us, not all of whom will share our point of view. Music lovers will note in addition not only Rosa's musical sensitivities as such, but his awareness that music very often evokes unusually attentive listening.

The book (essay might be a better word) is in three parts: a short introduction; an analysis of the ills of late modern societies; and the role of religion in providing a way forward.

Rosa starts by setting out his aim: that is to persuade his readers that religion(s), and churches, have an important – indeed crucial – role in modern societies: specifically, 'they have access to certain resources that might help us find our way out of the frenetic standstill in which we presently exist' (p. 10).

The notion of 'frenetic standstill' is key both to this book and to Hartmut Rosa's wider thinking. It captures both the continuing acceleration of modern societies, including our own, and the feeling that we are getting nowhere. How often do we hear our political leaders tell us that the answer to all our ills lies in economic growth? It is this that will sustain the services to which we have become accustomed and improve our standard of living. True, but at what cost? In insisting on perpetual growth, it is clear that we are doing ourselves, our societies and our planet not only no good, but considerable harm.

What is to be done? How, in other words, can we escape from the regime of 'dynamic stabilisation' just described, and what can religion offer? Rosa's response is twofold: first, that 'religious traditions and institutions

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such as churches have at their disposal the narratives, cognitive reservoirs, rites, practices, and spaces in which a listening heart might be cultivated and experienced' (p. 42); and second, that the capacity to *listen* attentively is as central to a functioning democracy as the freedom to speak.

Rosa is well aware that religions do not always do this; they are capable of very considerable harm as well as good. We know this, but all too often we focus on the failings of religious organisations and ignore the wider potential for positivity. Likewise, there are other dimensions of society, not least music, that offer space for 'resonance', meaning by this a receptive and responsive heart.

These should – indeed must – be fully acknowledged, but they do not detract from the vital role of religion as a space in which to foster the intentional listening that will, Rosa argues, enrich our common life.

Grace Davie

Keeping St James' Gardens Blooming
 If you've walked past St James' Church in the summer, you will have seen how colourful and welcoming our gardens are. From the lavender borders buzzing with bees, to bright roses, daisies and wildflowers lining the paths, the gardens are a real oasis in the heart of Exeter. They are cared for by a small team of friendly volunteers, who meet on Tuesdays mornings between 9.00 and 10.30.

Gardening brings so many benefits. It's good for your health, helping to reduce stress and keeping you active, without feeling like exercise. Many people find that working with plants and soil lifts their mood and creates a sense of calm. Research shows that spending time outdoors, especially surrounded by greenery, can lower blood pressure and improve mental wellbeing.

There is also community benefit in gardening. The beautiful gardens here provide a space for everyone to enjoy, a quiet place to sit, walk, and reflect. They provide habitats for birds, bees, butterflies, and insects, supporting local biodiversity and helping the environment to thrive. Looking after them is a way to give back to the community and the planet.



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Our grounds at St James' include colourful flowerbeds, peaceful benches and open grassy spaces where families and friends can gather.

Keeping them tidy and full of life takes teamwork, but it's a lovely way to meet new people, share gardening tips, and feel part of something positive. You don't have to be an expert to join in, and you don't have to commit to every session or stay for the full time: even a little help makes a big difference. Whether you come for half an hour, an hour or the whole session, you'll be warmly welcomed.

If you would like to get some fresh air, meet a few friendly faces and help to keep our gardens looking beautiful, please get in touch by e-mail to office@stjameschurch.org or on the phone, or just turn up on a Tuesday morning! We would love to have you join us.

Gary Patch

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An Easter Garden and a Paperweight You Will Need

- Salt
- Plain flour
- Acrylic paints
- Large plate or tray
- Egg box segment
- White paper
- Small stones, beads or shells
- PVA glue
- Plastic milk bottle top
- Foliage: rosemary, heather, lavender etc.
- Jam/coffee jar lid

To Make the Easter Garden

Mix 3 parts salt to 1 part flour, then add water to make salt dough. Separate the dough into 2 parts. and mix green paint into 1 of these to create a grassy colour. Mix grey or brown paint into the remaining dough, for rocks and a path.

Cover the inside of your plate or tray with the green dough to form the garden. Place the egg box segment on its side, on one edge or

in one corner of the garden. Cover the top of the egg box segment with grey/brown dough to form a tomb. Fold a small piece of white paper and place this inside the tomb to represent the empty grave clothes.

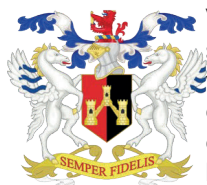
Mix small stones, beads and shells with PVA glue and place these in the plastic milk bottle top. When the glue has dried, place the top across the tomb entrance. Roll away the 'stone' on Easter Day, in celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Use more small stones, beads and shells mixed with PVA glue to create paths and rocks in your garden. Plant foliage in the grass, to resemble trees and shrubs. When it is finished, keep your Easter garden in a warm, dry place.

To make a paperweight, perhaps as an Easter gift, mix small stones, beads and shells with PVA glue and pack these into the jam/coffee jar lid. Level the surface for a good finish.

Anne Killingback

News from Exeter Twinning Circle



Way back in 1956 Exeter signed an official accord with the city of Rennes, the capital of Brittany. The cities became twinned and have maintained close links ever since. Ten years later, a similar agreement was formed with Bad Homburg in Germany, and in 1988 Terracina in Italy was added to our family of 'sister' cities.

Exeter Twinning Circle was established to maintain the social and cultural links with our twins. 2026 marks the 70th anniversary of our links with Rennes. The twinning circles in both cities are busy planning a year of celebration, with events to mark the special nature of our relationship.



Via the overnight ferry from Plymouth to Roscoff, a party from Exeter will travel to Rennes on Tuesday 26th May and return on Sunday 31st May. Accommodation in Rennes is usually provided by French families; we try to match the ages and interests of participants, and reciprocation with accommodation when the Rennais twinned come to Exeter is expected, if possible.



Similarly, a visit to Terracina is planned from Wednesday 2nd to Monday 7th September. This pleasant seaside resort between Rome and Naples lies on an important part of the Appian Way. Its historical heart, Piazza del Municipio, features Roman paving stones and a crumbling archway, as well as a cathedral built over a Roman temple to Augustus.

Exeter Twinning Circle would love to welcome more new members, and warmly invites anyone who would like to take part in its trips and events. Please contact secretary@exetertwinningcircle.org.uk or visit <https://exetertwinningcircle.org.uk>

Beryl Whidden

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Dates Ahead

March

Mon 16 th	6.00 pm	Stations of the Cross
Tue 17 th	2.30 pm	Lent course
Sun 22 nd	12.00 pm	Annual Church meetings
Mon 23 rd	2.00 pm	Table decoration workshop in the hall
	6.00 pm	Stations of the Cross
Tue 24 th	2.30 pm	Lent course
Mon 30 th	6.00 pm	Eucharist

April

Thu 2 nd	10.30 am	Chrism Mass, Cathedral
	7.30 pm	Maundy Thursday Parish Eucharist
Fri 3 rd	9.30 am	All-age service followed by hot cross buns and activities in the hall
	1.00 pm	Stations of the Cross
	2.00 pm	Good Friday Liturgy
Sat 4 th	10.00 am	Church decorating
	8.00 pm	Easter Vigil
Sun 19 th	10.00 am	Civic service
	6.00 pm	Wholeness & Healing service

May

Thu 14 th	7.00 pm	Ascension Day Parish Eucharist
Sun 17 th	2.00 pm	Big Cream Tea

June

Thu 4 th	7.00 pm	Corpus Christi Parish Eucharist
Sat 27 th	2.00 pm	Summer fête

July

Thu 16 th	7.00 pm	Archdeacon's Visitation
Sun 19 th	6.00 pm	Wholeness & Healing service
Fri 24 th	7.00 pm	Patronal Festival Parish Eucharist

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Sunday 9th August

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Puzzle Solutions

Sudoku

3	7	8	4	5	1	9	6	2
5	6	1	9	8	2	3	7	4
4	2	9	7	3	6	1	8	5
8	3	2	1	7	5	4	9	6
7	4	5	3	6	9	2	1	8
1	9	6	2	4	8	7	5	3
9	8	4	6	2	7	5	3	1
6	1	3	5	9	4	8	2	7
2	5	7	8	1	3	6	4	9

Word Ladder

One possible solution

Flour
Floor
Flood
Blood
Brood
Broad
Bread

V	E	L	O	L	E	M	A	H	C	E	B
E	E	D	A	E	R	B	S	I	F	R	R
P	T	S	U	F	F	A	L	O	E	P	E
U	U	R	I	F	O	L	A	F	F	U	B
H	O	I	U	A	F	I	S	H	I	R	O
C	L	R	E	A	N	O	T	S	E	P	D
T	E	A	R	M	C	N	O	A	L	P	E
E	V	C	E	O	T	Y	O	Y	P	E	R
K	E	H	T	R	E	A	S	Y	P	L	F
E	L	A	S	K	N	O	L	A	U	L	
T	O	S	Y	A	L	I	U	N	T	M	A
M	U	L	O	Y	S	M	I	N	S	O	P

Word Search

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