

Contact

A magazine for our community



Happy Christmas

St James' Church, Exeter - Winter 2022



Rector
Fr Henry Pryse



Assistant Priest
Fr Martin Poolton



Assistant Curate
Fr Steve Turner



Churchwarden
Rachel Martindill



Churchwarden
Andrew Mimmack

Parish Office

Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter. EX4 7AH.
01392 420407. office@stjamesexeter.org
www.stjamesexeter.org

Please contact us here for baptisms, weddings, hall bookings and any other Church-related matters.

Weekly Pattern of Services

Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
	6.00 pm	Evening Prayer with Benediction (1 st Sunday)
	6.00 pm	Evening Worship (3 rd Sunday)
Wednesday	12.00 noon	Holy Communion
Daily	8.30 am	Morning Prayer
Online:	Monday and Wednesday	
In the church:	Tuesday, Thursday and Friday	

The Parish Eucharist on Sundays is also available to watch live or later at www.facebook.com/St-James-Church-Exeter-1554468778583171/videos.



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From the Curate

As Christmas approaches, my family and I have begun mentally preparing for our move to Great Torrington, thinking through the items to be packed, and planning the process in our minds long before the physical work begins. The transformation of an empty vicarage into a family home full of love will be our story this Christmas.

Yet, of course, the real Christmas story is of God becoming human in the person of Jesus Christ. God did this because he loves us, because we needed a Saviour, because he is love itself. We celebrate Christmas each year out of gratitude for what God did for us, and we remember his birth by giving gifts. At this time of year we also consciously turn our thoughts and open our hearts to the plight of the poor and less fortunate.

The meaning of Christmas is love. 'Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love' (1 John 4: 8). In Christ, God provides the Way for us to spend eternity with him, giving his only son that we might be saved. 'God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5: 8). Why did God do this? 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life' (John 3: 16). The true meaning of Christmas is therefore the celebration of God's incredible love for us.

This Christmas, many of us will face the challenges of economic austerity and the worries of an uncertain future, but we can take heart from the knowledge that we are never alone; each one of us is known and loved by God. In celebration of this love, we can give small acts of kindness or gestures of goodwill, which need not necessarily have any financial cost. Doing so is a testament to the very heart of our humanity and who we are called to be, reminding us that we are made in the image of God, who is love.

With my love and prayers.



Fr Steve

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Parish Profile: Rita Clapshaw

I was born on 8th March 1927 in a tiny Welsh village outside Llanelli, called Pwll; if you can pronounce that correctly, well done! My family left Wales when I was about three years old and moved to Sampford Peverell, where my father was a headmaster and my mother taught. Despite having moved to England when I was so young, I still support Wales in the rugby championships and sing the Welsh national anthem with great enthusiasm.

Ours was a Christian family, with a keen musical background and sound Christian principles. This meant attending church every Sunday, of course. However, I do remember one occasion, when I had decided to skip church in favour of listening to popular music on the radio. The date is an easy one to recall: it was 3rd September 1939 at around 11.00 am. As my parents rushed to get themselves ready to leave the house, I hid myself away and was delighted to discover that they had left without me. I settled down to listen to the 'pop' music of the day, but the music was interrupted by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, announcing 'this country is at war with Germany.'



The war changed all our lives and I remember well the rationing, the Exeter Blitz, the tragic casualties amongst the young men sent to fight from our village, the gas masks, and the sirens. As I was a child, I also remember how few sweets there were!

Several years later, after I had gained the necessary O- and A-levels, I went to the University College of the South West – now known as the University of Exeter. It was not for me though, and I subsequently qualified as a teacher in Coventry. I returned to Devon to teach and, through a shared love of rugby, I met Owen, a rugby player and farmer. We married and had three children. That was a very happy time for me.

I taught for many years and eventually became a Vice Principal. Among my fondest memories of teaching is a time when I was pregnant: as I sat down to begin the lesson in a classroom that was little better than a shed, one pupil came forward, upended a bin and placed my feet on top of it. The gesture was very much appreciated at the time.

As I came from a Christian family, I have always been involved with the Church. However, I regret that I did not attend as regularly as I might have when I was a busy teacher and mum. Eventually though, I got my act together and became a regular member of the choir at Broadclyst. Later, Owen and I moved to Dawlish, where we attended Cofton Church and where I became the organist – until they found a proper one.

My home Church is now St James', a truly vibrant Christian family: in all the churches where I have worshipped, I have never been made to feel as welcome as here. God has been good to me, and every week I rejoice here among many friends, old and new. Long may it continue!



Puzzle Page

Word Search

Can you find these road names around the parish and in the grid?

Cross
Happy

Aldrin
Collins
Culverland
Margaret
Marypole
Old Tiverton
Philip

Roseberry
Sheppard
Springfield
Sylvan
Toronto
Union
Wynford

Word Ladder

Change one letter at a time to get from Cross to Happy in seven steps.

Solutions on page 15

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

Family Fun at St James': There's Lots Going On!

Walking on Dartmoor Together

During the October half-term holiday, some of the families from St James' spent a day letterboxing on Dartmoor. Although we set off in pouring rain, a rainbow appeared later and the sun struggled out just in time for a picnic lunch. At the end of a great day, a happy group of explorers shared stories and hot drinks in a local hotel.

Getting Messy Together

Do your little ones enjoy hands-on experimenting with crafts? Are they unafraid of getting a bit grubby? Then Messy Church is for you! Look out for the banner on the corner of Mount Pleasant Road just before the first Wednesday of each month. Christmas Messy Church takes place on Wednesday 7th December from 3.30 pm.



Want to know more? Check out our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/stjameschurchexeter.messychurch) and let us know you're coming.

Performing Together

Once again it's the time of year when our younger children are supported and guided by the older ones to perform St James' nativity play, written by the 11-Ups and enjoyed by the whole Church family. Come and join us in the church hall on Sunday 18th December from 11.30 am. And don't forget the Christingle service on Sunday 11th December at 4.00 pm, including a craft activity with sweets, candles and an orange!

Learning and Worshipping Together

Each week, JAM children (aged 4 – 10) gather in the hall at 10.00 am to explore the Bible together. At the same time, some of the 11-Ups now serve at the Eucharist and sing in the church choir. Would you like to join us?

Jill Mather



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Friends of Mount Pleasant Health Centre

Through October we sold draw tickets at the vaccination clinics on Saturday mornings, offering prizes of a £50 Morrisons voucher and two £25 gift vouchers. This was the first fundraising function inside the health centre since the end of 2019 and we are grateful to all who contributed so generously. The next fundraising event in the calendar will be our Christmas raffle from Monday 5th to Friday 16th December.

As we were unsure how our financial position would turn out, we undertook no major outlay to improve facilities at the health centre this year. Nonetheless, we have continued with ongoing commitments, including the yearly servicing of the automatic doors. The 'Place to Pause' garden is regularly tended by members of the Friends and displayed beautiful colours in the autumn.

The knitting and craft groups have not restarted, whilst it is still necessary to wear masks at all times in the health centre. However, we hope that these will

recommence next year. Volunteer drivers for the Friends of Mount Pleasant Health Centre are once again taking patients to and from appointments; their time and efforts are greatly appreciated. If you would like to join them and can spare some time to drive patients to health-centre, hospital or other medical appointments, please contact Debbie O'Dell on 01392 499291.



Nesta Scales



Sylvania Hall Community Centre
 Sylvania Hall Community Centre (@sylvaniahallcommunitycentre) aims to be a meeting place for all. Located on the western edge of the beautiful Mincinglake Valley Park, it is a place for the whole community. Here, you will find winter fun, summer events and regular activities throughout the year. The hall is also available for hire when it is not in use by the regular groups who meet here. If you would like to hire the facilities, simply e-mail bookings@sylvaniahall.co.uk or leave a message on 07806 305633.

One regular use of Sylvania Hall is Nestlings Baby Group. This is a relaxed and friendly opportunity to meet other parents/carers, learn about your child's development, enjoy a hot/cold drink, and spend time chatting and playing with your baby. Siblings are also welcome. Nestlings is hosted by an experienced facilitator together with a team of perinatal peer supporters. All mums, non-binary, trans and gender-fluid birthing people of all ethnicities are welcome in this inclusive



group. There is also a closed WhatsApp group for people to connect between sessions. Nestlings Baby Group meets at Sylvania hall on Mondays from 10.00 am to 11.30 am. Please book in advance, if you would like to come along.



The group is organised by the Nest Southwest Community Interest Company, a not-for-profit, social enterprise set up by local women to support other women and girls through the major life transitions of menstruation, pregnancy, birth and menopause. This is an organisation that provides social, emotional and informational support; it hosts regular groups and workshops, as well as creating vital peer-support networks. To find out more, visit <https://thenestsw.org>.

Joanna Mimmack

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Focus on Food

Exeter Food Bank

485 adults and 238 children: that is the number of people for whom Exeter Food Bank provided food between 19th September and 14th October this year. The total is a 45% increase on last year's numbers, 356 adults and 143 children.

Exeter Food Bank (EFB) is a Christian charity with a big heart and a big vision: to support local people in crisis and to ensure that no one in and around the city of Exeter goes hungry. Now in its thirteenth year, the charity draws support from all sectors of the community to provide food and other resources for those in need. Last year, for example, nearly 103,000 kilograms of food were donated to the Food Bank. 72% of that amount came from supermarket collection points, where people can give as they shop.



EFB is a member of the Trussell Trust Association of Food Banks. The charity employs four staff members, who oversee the day-to-day collection and distribution of food and resources by 150+ volunteers of all faiths and none. People who use the Food Bank are referred by local agencies, including Exeter City Council and Exeter Citizens' Advice, as well as schools, churches and other local organisations.

EFB manager Mark Richardson says, "We've identified that, as well as giving food, it is important to establish that people are accessing all the available advice and support and are able to maximise their income. That's why we appointed our Advice Worker, Ali Tame, who helps people with issues such as low income, benefit problems, debt, and budgeting. Occasionally we are also able to access grants for those in desperate need of



essential household and electrical items." Ali can also refer people to other agencies that offer specialist help with issues such as domestic violence, mental health and housing, and EFB works alongside Exeter charities such as Babybank and Turntable, which may be less well known to clients.

Since September, the Food Bank has again been offering tea and coffee to visitors in its support suite, known as "The Living Room." The plan is for people also to be able to obtain advice and help here, not only from Ali but also from partner agencies.

As Christmas approaches, Mark Richardson expects demand for support to increase – as it did during the pandemic – with the ongoing effects of rises in the cost of living. He is confident, however, that ongoing community support will enable Exeter Food Bank to carry on helping fellow citizens in crises that any one of us might experience. From parents who are unable to buy birthday presents for their children to people who have to choose between heating their homes and eating proper meals, the personal stories that clients tell are often heart-breaking.

For more information about EFB and how you can help, go to <https://exeter.foodbank.org.uk>. Each month, this website provides details of food items that are in short supply. For up-to-date information about what is needed, you can also download an app at www.bankthefood.org, or follow the charity on Facebook for the latest news and for ways to help at Christmas.

Jeff Skinner

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St Katherine's Community Larder

In response to the pandemic, a group of volunteers set up a community larder at St Katherine's Priory in April 2020. The plan was to operate only for a short period but food poverty existed before the pandemic and has certainly continued. In the present cost-of-living crisis, demand for the community larder remains.

On average, the St Katherine's Community Larder is visited by around 50 people each week. We help them and their households by providing much-needed food and other essentials, such as home cleaning products and toiletries. The larder opens every Friday from 10.00 am to midday and operates alongside the busy Community Café at St Katherine's Priory.



The Community Larder relies on donations and is grateful for the generosity of many businesses and individuals, including Morrisons, Co-op, Exeter Food Action, and local residents. Some regularly drop off food on Friday mornings and some give monthly monetary donations. There are

many ways to help: small monetary gifts, a bag of shopping now and then, one of those green bags from Morrisons, a box for donations where you work or in your local shop. Sylvania Community Stores also has a collection box for St Katherine's Community Larder. To find out how you can help, simply pop in on a Friday morning, or e-mail stkatherinescommunitylarder@gmail.com.

Geoff Stow

Dates Ahead

December

Thu 1 st	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's House Group
Fri 2 nd	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Sat 3 rd	2.00 pm	Christmas Bazaar
Wed 7 th	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Sun 11 th	4.00 pm	Christingle
Wed 14 th	12.30 pm	Friends Who Lunch
Fri 16 th	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Sun 18 th	11.30 am 6.00 pm	JAM and 11-Ups Nativity Carol Service
Sat 24 th	4.00 pm 11.00 pm	Crib Service Midnight Mass
Sun 25 th	8.00 am 10.00 am	Holy Communion Parish Eucharist for Christmas Day
Fri 30 th	11.00 am	Coffee Morning

January

Thu 5 th	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's House Group
Fri 6 th	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Wed 11 th	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Wed 11 th	12.30 pm	Friends Who Lunch
Fri 20 th	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Fri 27 th	11.00 am	Coffee Morning

February

Wed 1 st	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Thu 2 nd	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's House Group
Fri 3 rd	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Wed 8 th	12.30 pm	Friends Who Lunch
Fri 17 th	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Wed 22 nd	7.00 pm	Parish Eucharist for Ash Wednesday
Fri 24 th	11.00 am	Coffee Morning

March

Wed 1 st	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Thu 2 nd	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's House Group
Fri 3 rd	2.00 pm	Craft Group
Wed 8 th	12.30 pm	Friends Who Lunch
Fri 17 th	2.00 pm	Craft Group



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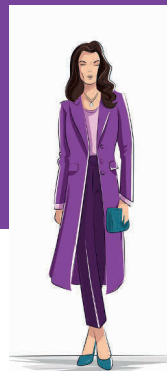
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An Advent Calendar Tableau

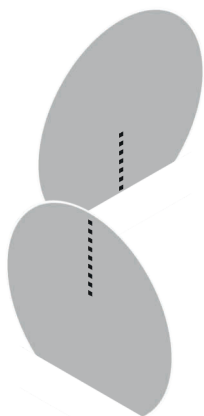
You Will Need

- 6 paper plates
- 2 pipe cleaners
- Scissors
- 2 clothes pegs
- Felt pens, paints or stickers
- Christmas cards and pictures
- Cloth or tissue paper
- PVA glue or sticky tape
- LED tea lights

To Make the Advent Calendar Tableau

Glue the paper plates together in pairs, to make them stronger than when used individually. Place one glued pair of plates as a base.

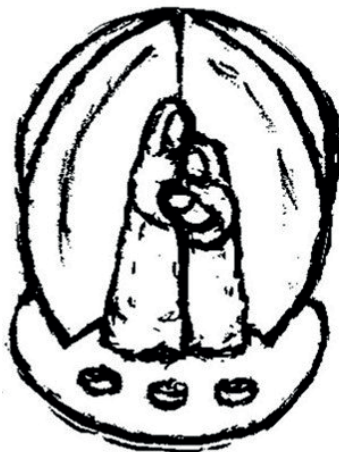
From the other two glued pairs, cut off the edge in a straight line, so that roughly a quarter of the surface area is removed. Ensure that the cut is identical on both pairs.



Now, from the middle of the straight edge to the centre point of one glued pair, cut a straight slit. On the other glued pair cut a straight slit from the middle of the curved edge. Place the slits together to construct a dome. With the straight edges level, this will stand on the base and form four segments of the calendar.

Firmly glue or tape the dome to the base.

In one of the four segments place a Nativity scene. To construct the figures in the scene, dress clothes pegs in cloth or tissue paper. Bend pipe cleaners to make arms and to form a tiny figure representing the baby, Jesus. Tuck the 'baby' into the folds of the cloth used to make the figure of Mary.



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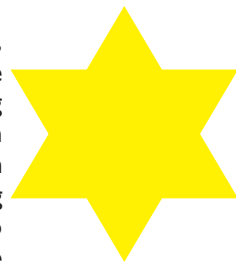
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For the Advent calendar, number each of the segment walls: starting with numbers 1 to 4 on the first wall, continue in one direction, adding four consecutive dates to on each wall. Decorate each segment with tinsel, hay and LED tea

lights, and add colour with felt pens, paint or stickers.

To finish your tableau, make a six-pointed star from card. Cut a slit along one of the points and slot the star over the top of the dome segments, so that it sits above the Nativity scene.



Anne Killingback



Spotlight on Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery Schools

In the years after the end of the Second World War a huge amount of rebuilding and redevelopment was undertaken in much of Britain. After much of Exeter city centre had been flattened by air raids and many of the outer areas were damaged, the city's post-war developments included the Stoke Hill estate, a large area of housing (then all council-owned) bounded by Mincinglake Road, Stoke Hill Road and Prince Charles Road. The development was designed to cater for the

needs of all parts of the community, and planners included space both for a pub and for the two Stoke Hill schools. The Church of England also responded by siting the new St James' Church at the bottom of the hill, to replace the destroyed building in St James' Road. In our spring 2022 issue, *Contact* looked at some of the challenges facing the Junior School; we now turn to the Infant and Nursery School.

The two schools form a federation led by Executive Head Yvonne Hammerton-Jackson, supported by a combined governing body. Claire McKimm is the head of the Infant School and leads a teaching staff of eleven, as well as fifteen teaching assistants and fifteen ancillary staff members. There is also input from a Special Educational Needs Coordinator and a Family Support Worker, who are shared with the Junior School. The nursery section, led by Clare Farion, caters for three- and four-year-olds, most of whom move into one of the three parallel reception



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George, 25 Nov 2020

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Xariah, 26 Jul 2020

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Janet, 16 Aug 2019

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classes as they approach their fifth birthday. In addition to the reception classes, the main school also includes years one and two. It now has some 250 students, including fifty for whom English is their second language.

After the disruption of the Covid pandemic, the school has enjoyed a return to something like normality. Ms McKimm speaks of the joy of a normal start to the school year in 2022 and is proud to show and talk about 'our amazing school'. Perhaps the first thing to strike any visitor is the spaciousness of the school grounds. Despite being surrounded by housing, the children have access to woodland and safely-fenced areas of wetland, such as they might equally experience in the rural Devon countryside. As well as underpinning the mental health of students and staff, these areas represent a significant resource for science teaching. Additionally, the school is close to Mincinglake Valley Park and it pioneered the Wildlife Champions project in partnership with Devon Wildlife Trust.

Like every school in the country, Stoke Hill Infant School has come under increasing financial pressure in recent years. Nonetheless, Ms McKimm and her team ensure that their students continue to benefit from traditional school resources, such as the well-stocked library, and from the increasingly

Cuppa and Chat

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essential IT; by the end of year 2, students are fully equipped to engage with the Chromebooks that play a significant role in learning at the Junior School.

The Stoke Hill schools have a strong tradition of loyalty among the staff, many of whom choose to spend their whole careers here. Claire McKimm also speaks enthusiastically

about the exciting process of bringing the two schools closer together under a combined management, with the aim of providing the greatest possible continuity for the students between the ages of three and eleven. 'There's something about Stoke Hill: it's just a wonderful place to be,' she concludes.

Andrew Mimmack



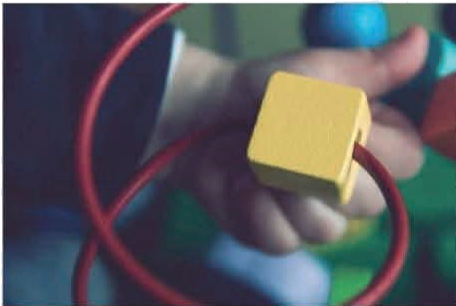
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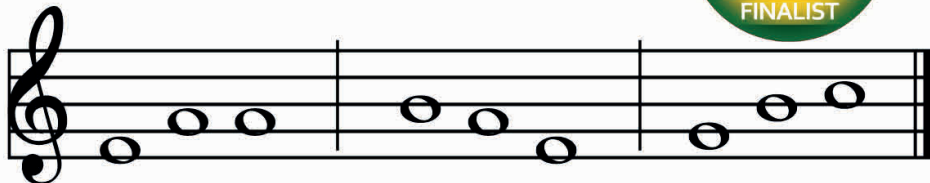
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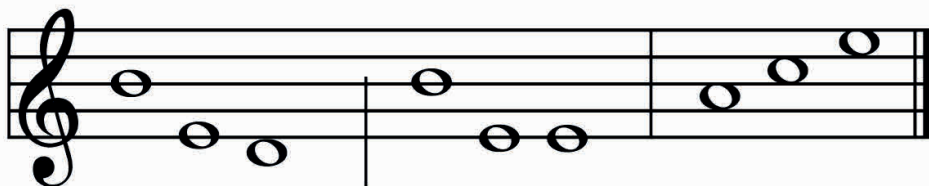
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Singing for the Brain



Singing for the Brain brings people affected by dementia together to meet in a fun, supportive environment



WEDNESDAYS 2:00-3:30pm
The Sycamores - Mount Pleasant Rd
£5 per person - Carers Free
Fortnightly

