

Sharing God's love through worship, fellowship and service

From the Rectory

On my birthday this year I found myself walking the ramparts in Berwick-upon-Tweed. Later that day, I took a boat trip to the Farne Islands to see the seals and the bird life – the puffins had long departed – and to see where St Cuthbert had lived in his hermitage.

Between these two places is Holy Island, to which you can drive along a causeway when the tide is out, or it can be reached by boat. I joined visitors, pilgrims and locals for the Parish Eucharist on a Sunday, and visited Lindisfarne Castle afterwards.

The castles and fortifications in Northumberland reminded me of the fragility and insecurity of life there in the past, being vulnerable to Viking raids and 'visits' from the Scots. So it was too in the days of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and his life in Galilee. The Roman Empire controlled people's lives; life could be short, fragile and insecure. Indeed that is how it has been in our own time in that region.

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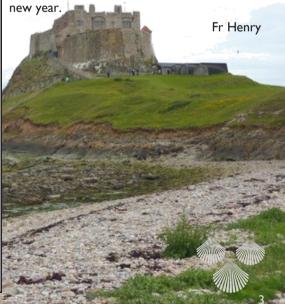
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We are preparing to remember the Holy Family as they travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem under the compulsion of an occupying force, and how God reaches out to us in the vulnerability of a newborn baby born in challenging circumstances.

As we were skirting the Farne Islands, I learned about a lighthouse man's daughter, Grace Darling: in September 1838 she and her father saved nine passengers from a steamship that was dashed on the rocks of the Farne Islands. They left the safety of the Longstone Lighthouse and rowed out to the rescue. She became quite the local heroine and I visited her grave at Bamburgh. Here I felt another parallel: with God seeking to help us, indeed to save us, through sending us his son.

It almost felt as if Christmas had come early for me this year: breathing in the wonder of Northumberland, visiting the wonderful beaches and paddling in the North Sea (up to my knees), renewing old friendships and returning to Durham on the way south. This was all a pretty fantastic Christmas present!

My thoughts and prayers are with you as we travel together through Advent, Christmas and Epiphany and, of course, into another



Puzzle Page Sudoku: Hard

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

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Devon Quiz

- I. Which river runs south from the Blackdown Hills to Budleigh Salterton?
- Which Olympic diver from Plymouth recently appeared on the 'The Celebrity Traitors'?
- Founded in 1087 as a Benedictine Monastery and now a living history museum, what is Exeter's oldest building?
- 4. Derived from the title of a novel by Henry Williamson, what is the name of the railway line that runs from Exeter to Barnstaple?
- 5. Which is the only place in the British Isles to have an exclamation mark in its name?
- 6. The narrowest street in the UK is found in Exeter – what is it called?
- 7. A replica of which ship captained by Sir Francis Drake can be seen in Brixham Harbour?
- 8. After the recent 'Treasures of the Museum' poll, the much-loved giraffe exhibit was voted the public's favourite RAMM object what is his name?
- 9. The lead singer of Coldplay was born in Whitestone, a village just outside Exeter – who is he?
- 10. Jam or cream first?

Solutions on page 15

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Can you find these things you might see at a funfair or circus?

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Friends of Mount Pleasant Health Centre

Once again, thank you to all who have taken part in our fundraising efforts. Our Co-ordinator, and her team of volunteers have done a great job as have those who have supported our fundraising events. The books and bric-à-brac continue to be an excellent fundraiser, and a total of £501 was raised from raffles at two vaccination clinics on Saturday mornings. Our fundraising event in the Health Centre waiting room on 27th November will have a Christmas theme, as well as our usual cake and bric-à-brac sales, tombola and raffle – for a new, donated air fryer. Tea, coffee and cake will also be served.

As usual, we welcome donations of books and jigsaws in good condition. Paperbacks are very popular. If you would like to donate a jigsaw, please ensure that the pieces are in a bag.

The excellent team of fundraisers is sadly becoming smaller as time goes by. So, if you are able to help in any way, Bev would love to hear from you. We would also be pleased to hear from anyone who could give some time

to drive patients to the Health Centre or other medical appointments. Please leave a message for our Co-ordinator, Beverley Todd, on 01392 499291.

Nesta Scales



A Christmas Table Decoration

You Will Need

- 3 paper plates
- I old CD
- Medium-sized pine cones
- 2 dolly pegs
- Cloth
- Small, clear, plastic bottle
- White tissue or crêpe paper
- Wool or ribbon
- Tinsel, foliage or similar
- PVA glue
- Blu Tack
- Acrylic paints or glitter
- LED tealights

To Make the Table Decoration

Create a firm base by gluing together the three paper plates in a stack. Glue pine cones around the rim of the plate with the base of each cone pointing downwards towards the centre of the plate. Glue the CD in place on this base. Arrange the Christmas scene on top of the CD.

Make the Christmas scene by wrapping cloth around each of the dolly pegs to represent Mary and Joseph. To do this, paint the dolly pegs with PVA glue, fold and gather the

cloth or paper, and use a small amount of glue to hold it in place. If necessary, you can also secure the figures with wool to create the appearance of two cloaked figures. Form a



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small roll of cloth or paper to represent a baby in a shawl. Glue this partly into the cloak of one of the figures. Use Blu Tack to secure the figures to the CD and then decorate around them with tinsel, foliage or similar.

Form a ball of tissue or use a small ball or marble. Glue this to the top of the bottle to represent the head of an angel. Wrap tissue or crêpe paper around the bottle to form the angel's gown. To make the wings, fold a rectangle of paper into a fan shape. Next, hold the fan closed, fold it across the centre, and then cut the folded outer edges diagonally on both sides, so that the wings become pointed

when the fan is unfolded. Glue the middle of the wings in place on the angel figure and finish by securing them with ribbon or wool around the neck of the bottle.

Decorate the pine cones with acrylic paints or glitter. Place LED tealights around the decoration and beneath the angel.

Anne Killingback

Parish Profile: Tom Slade

Tom is an enthusiastic young man, gentle in manner, friendly and easy to talk to – a really good fit for the community of St James Church. He has lived in Exeter for only six months, having moved with his family from Somerset for his mum's new job, as none other than Chaplain to the Bishop of Exeter. She trained to be a vicar and was ordained when Tom was 16, so he is very familiar with the Anglican leadership model, which runs like a thread through his life. It has been an important and influential framework to create habits of reflection and worship. 'The rhythm of Church is appealing and it changes how you live,' he says.

Tom went to Durham University, where he studied Maths and Philosophy, a brilliant combination to train a logical, puzzle-solving mind and at the same time to explore big questions and find faith answers. His Grandpa, who was a camera man, had wanted to study Maths but didn't have the opportunity. He used to send Tom puzzles and notes to see whether he could solve them to foster a common interest.

Tom's job is now in IT at Exeter University, where he sets up systems for the staff and essentially trains the teachers. Much of this work is remote, so Tom has great flexibility in his working patterns, which his two spaniel dogs eagerly exploit. As soon as they hear the click of the laptop lid shutting, they are ready for their walk in Stoke Woods, a magical place for them to sniff, explore and run. I think Tom probably enjoys this as much as they do.

Music features strongly in Tom's life. He is the middle one of three brothers and they sing unaccompanied harmonies together with Tom as the bass. One of their favourites is a song called *It's Alright*. Tom also plays the flute and sings in St James' Church choir. His easy-going nature meant he used to sit happily in the middle of the back seat on long car journeys, a great place for the brothers to sing together. One of Tom's brothers is now a

s c i e n c e teacher, the o t h e r researches d e e p - s e a worms, and his stepsister is studying for a music degree.

Tom's love of cooking means he is doing a role



reversal with his mum; she cooked for him for many years, now he cooks for her (and the rest of the family). As for future hopes and plans, he is motivated by exploring new places, seeing wondrous parts of the world and learning new languages — anything that brings variety and interesting conversations.

Pauline Goodall



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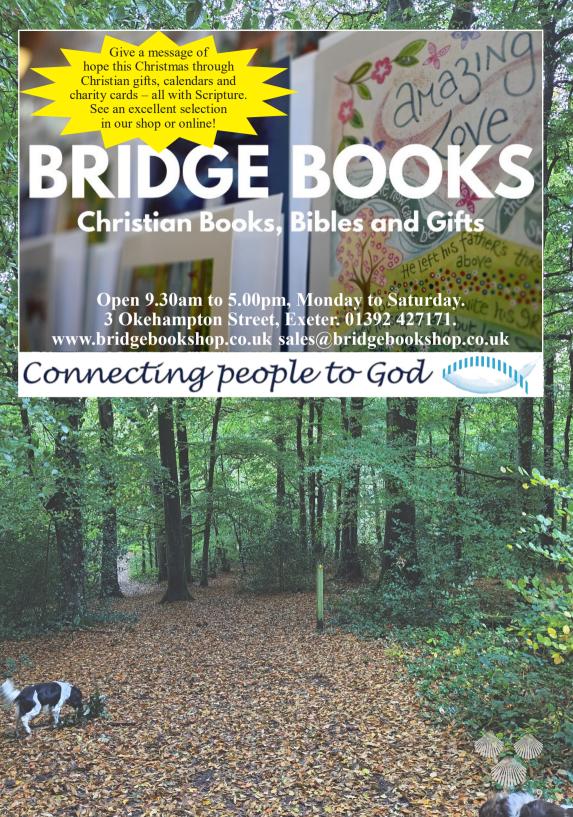
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At Your Service

Some time in the 19th century. St lames' adopted the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England. One feature of this tradition is a stress on the importance of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, which is our main Sunday service. In it we recall and

re-enact the Last Supper, in which lesus gave bread and wine his closest comrades, and told them that the bread was his body. and the wine his blood.

We celebrate this service reverently, not only with Bible readings and prayers, but also with music, led by our choir, and 'smells and bells' - the use of incense. candles and bells to highlight the key points of the liturgy.

Henry, or whoever are called servers. We light the candles. prepare the incense, ring the bells and look after the altar linen; we lead the processions at the start and end of the service, and we have other duties to perform. Among these is the ringing of the bell in the tower before the

service begins - thirtythree times to recall the thirty-three years of Jesus' earthly life. So, the next time you hear the bell, try counting to check that we've got the number right! We always welcome new members of our team - no previous experience needed. you are interested, please contact the parish office and leave a message for ludith Wedgwood, our head server.





At Stoke Hill Junior School we had a wonderful start to the school year. Our fantastic grounds, coupled with the lovely weather,

meant that 350 children were able to do a large amount of learning outside of the classroom. We strongly believe that each child has a unique learning style, and teachers adapt their teaching to enable all children to maximise their potential.

Some schools think outdoors learning is about high-level skills and employing a Forest School specialist to lead learning. For us it is taking any subject in the curriculum and seeing how we can make it 'real' for the children. We have our own orienteering course that covers the front of the school and our two large fields, and each station has questions and symbols that challenge the children. As the year progresses, we will be looking to secure Green Flag status to celebrate the core sustainability values that are embedded across the school.

This term we also took 70 children in year 6 to Dartmoor for a week of outdoor adventurous activities. Staff took the children to Heatree House Activity Centre, where favourites included night walks, raft building, rock scrambling on Hound Tor, and low adventure (this is possibly the muddiest you can get!). For our oldest children the trip is an annual highlight of the journey through the





school and it always ranks as one of their top memories.

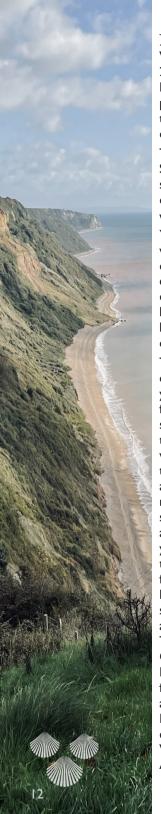
We are also very proud of our diverse community. This term we have welcomed 21 new families to the school, and we now have children representing 25 different countries from around the world — our latest are Kazakhstan and Zimbabwe. We make many links with Exeter University as parents come to study and children attend the school. Everybody is welcome at Stoke Hill and it's simply fantastic to learn about different countries and their traditions and cultures. In recognition of this aspect of the school, we are in the process of obtaining the bronze Equality, Diversity and Inclusion award.

Furthermore, we continue to establish links with local clubs: Exeter City Football, Premier Education and Exeter Chiefs. This year for our harvest collection we chose to support the Exeter Foodbank charity, an organisation that is so important to many of our families.

Our biggest community event of the year went ahead at the beginning of November, when you may have seen our spectacular firework display. Over 1000 members of the Stoke Hill community enjoyed the fundraising event, with the former British firework champions Sonic Fire setting it off with a bang!

We look forward to sharing more of our news throughout the school year, as we work together to make Stoke Hill a great place to learn, work and play.

Jamie Sullivan Head of Junior School



I Will Lift Up My Eyes to the Hills...And Go for a Walk We started walking the South West Coast Path the first time in January 2009. It wasn't a planned project, but a new baby had just been born in Minehead and a walk to the seafront with our new grandchild had us passing the sculpture informing us that we had only 630 miles to walk to reach Poole. Well, we had started, so we decided to finish, and we did exactly that in April 2015.

Then, on an afternoon stroll on the cliffs above Budleigh Salterton in September 2021, we thought, 'why not revisit the path, completing sections when we can, keeping the sea on our left this time?' So we are doing just that, heading, in a leisurely manner, back to Minehead.

We like a long-distance path. You get up in the morning and you walk. You don't have to plan a route and at the end you can tick off that trek with a sense of achievement. Although we have done other long-distance walks, the South West Coast Path is our favourite. It offers challenge: paths snaking their way up, down and around high cliffs with dizzying drops into the sea below. It offers beauty: remote sandy coves, huge stretches of surfing beaches and quaint fishing villages with boats bobbing in the harbours. And it offers time: for reflection, for moments of contemplation, for peace.

There's something very special about going for a walk, taking time out of the rush and noise of everyday life in the city. For some, a walk on your own in the countryside can be a time to think and to take note; for others, walking with a friend offers a way of conversing with ease,

side by side, following the natural rhythms of walking pace. You have time to notice things: autumn colours, clouds moving through the sky, shadows chasing across the hills. And you don't need to travel far: we fortunate in Exeter to live in a city of green spaces – of valley parks and green horizons. This morning, on the Green Circle around Exeter, I looked out from the bridleway above Stoke Valley Road, down to the estuary and across to Woodbury Common. And over the last few



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weeks, by the canal and the river in St Leonard's, I have been stopped in my tracks by flashes of kingfishers – turquoise darts, so quick that you only glimpse their glory, transforming the scene.

When I walk, particularly in hills and mountains and by the sea, my spirits lift. I feel more alive, more connected to nature, in communion with God. In this way, each little walk and stroll can be part of a pilgrimage, a time to reflect on the beauty of our world and our place in it.

I'm not going to be unrealistic when it comes to New Year's resolutions for 2026 – I rarely keep them – but I do know that I will resolve to continue to go for walks as often as I can.

III Mather



SP St Petrock's

Responding Positively to Homelessness

St Petrock's is Exeter's local homelessness charity. This year it marks 30 years supporting those experiencing homelessness. As the number of those experiencing or facing homelessness is rising, the charity is needed now more than ever before. It is on the front line, offering a lifeline for many and providing support, clothing and welfare to those who need them the most

The increase in demand has been manifested for example in 476 sleeping bags handed out just between April and September this year, 167% more than in the same period last year.

However, as the festive season rapidly approaches, the team is busy preparing for the winter months, when they will face even greater demand for their services. With the rain come damp sleeping bags to be dried, clothing to be washed, and healthcare needs to be met. The team always aims to provide a safe space that is sheltered from the elements. where clients can relax. This may mean catching up with friends, reading or sleeping. During the colder months, this space is even more important. Every day the team has an average of 35 visits from clients.

As well as kitting people out with clothing and sleeping bags, the team also provides homecooked breakfasts and lunches, five days a week, including on Christmas Day, both at the Centre and to clients across Exeter who can't



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get here. For these outreach visits the team often walks up to 8 miles per day to carry out welfare checks, as well as supporting and monitoring existing and new clients.

Over the last three decades, from its location near the Cathedral, St Petrock's has been a staple of the Exeter landscape. However, much of the work carried out by the charity would not happen without the support of the community, through donations of food and clothing, as well as monetary contributions.

To find out more and keep up to date on the work of St Petrock's and to sign up to receive the bi-monthly newsletter, visit www.stpetrocks.org.uk. Donations, either one-off or recurring, can also be made here.

Thank you for continuing to stand with Petrock's in support experiencing homelessness in Exeter.

Ella Chambers Communications and Fundraising Officer

Image: Liminal Media

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| Mon Ist | 2.30 pm | Joan's house group | | |
| Wed 3 rd | 3.30 pm | Messy Church | | course |
| Thu 4 th | 7.30 pm | Fr Brian's house group | | ee morning |
| Fri 5 th | 2.00 pm | Craft group | March Sun I st 4.00 pm Cele | ebrate Together |
| Sun 7 th | 4.00 pm | Christingle service | • | 's house group |
| | 1.00 pm | Friends Who Lunch | , , | ons of the Cross |
| Sun 14 th | 11.30 am | St James' Nativity | | course |
| Fri 19 th | 2.00 pm | Craft group | • | sy Church |
| Sun 21st | 6.00 pm | Carol service | • | rian's house group |
| Wed 24 th | - | Crib service | | t group |
| vved 24 | 11.00 pm | Midnight Mass | | course |
| Thu 25 th | 10.00 am | Parish Eucharist for | | nds Who Lunch |
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| Sun 28 th | 10.00 am | Parish Eucharist for the | | hering Sunday with |
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Ash Wednesday with imposition of ashes

2.00 pm Craft group

Fri 20th

D



- Drama - F

3.30 pm, St James' Church Hall On the Ist Wednesday of each month

Children, don't forget to bring your parents or carers! Book your place here: messychurch@stjamesexeter.org

Join us for our Christingle service too! 4.00 pm, Sunday 7th December