

PARISH NEWS



BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH, HEAVITREE, EXETER
15 December 2024. 3rd Sunday of Advent. Year C. Psalter3



WHAT MUST WE DO?

This Sunday is called “Gaudete” Sunday — “Rejoice Sunday”. This comes from the readings we hear today, and it underlines an important point. In the Gospel, we hear John the Baptist telling different groups what to do - they must repent, and change their lives. We might think of this as a rather joyless thing - something which is hard and unrewarding. The message of this Sunday is that repentance and changing our lives to welcome Jesus is something richly joyful. When we are planning to welcome anyone we love to our homes, we set about cleaning and preparing for their visit with enthusiasm - nothing is too much trouble for someone we care for greatly. Even scrubbing the bath or polishing the furniture can be a happy and joyful thing! The message of this Sunday is that preparing to welcome the Lord - even though it may involve hard work - is something utterly joyful, because of our love for Him, and His love for us. *Diocese of Salford Office for Liturgy*

MASS TIMES

Sunday 15 December – 3rd Sunday of Advent – *Gaudete Sunday*

8.45am

10.45am *Jasinski Krzysztof RIP*

1.45 pm *Syro Malabar Rite Mass*

6.00pm *People of the Parish*

Tuesday 17 December

6.30pm *Private intention*

Wednesday 18 December

9.30am *Mrs Barbara Billson RIP*

Holy Rosary after Mass

Refreshments in St Richard Reynolds Centre

Thursday 19 December

9.30am *Private intention*

6.00pm *Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*

Friday 20 December

6.30pm

Saturday 21 December

9.30am

Sunday 22 December – 4th Sunday of Advent (Expectant Mothers)

8.45am

10.45am

6.00pm *People of the Parish*

Liturgy of the Word for Children

During term time at 10.45am Mass on Sunday. For children aged 3 – School Year 3. Please register as you arrive at church.

Do you feel called to help our young children hear the Word of God and grow to love it? Then please speak to one of the catechists or Fr Jonathan.

Mass intentions

If you would like a Mass to be offered for a particular intention, please contact the Parish Office and we will find a suitable date. It may be that the date you would prefer is not available. It is not a requirement to make an offering, but if you would like to do so, please use one of the small brown envelopes found in the church porch.

Confessions Saturdays after 9.30am Mass or by appointment.

Please also see the notice below about Confessions before Christmas

Live stream Mass [Access the parish YouTube page at this link.](#)

NEWS & EVENTS

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Advent and Christmas diary dates

Confessions before Christmas

Thursday 19 December 7.00pm – with Adoration

Saturday 21 December 10.00am following 9.30am Mass

Parish Carol Service

Sunday 22 December 3.00pm followed by refreshments

Christmas Masses

Tuesday 24 December – CHRISTMAS EVE

6.00pm Vigil Mass

11.30pm Vigil of Carols and Readings

12.00 am Midnight Mass

Wednesday 25 December – CHRISTMAS DAY

8.45am Mass

10.45am Mass

No evening Mass

Heralding the New Year

Tuesday 31 December – New Year's Eve

5.30pm Holy hour followed by Mass at 6.30pm

Wednesday 1 January – New Year's Day

12.00pm Mass followed by drinks and nibbles

Candlelit Epiphany Praise

Saturday 4 January 4.00pm followed by Mince Pies and Sherry

Safeguarding News

I have taken over from Lesley Hooper as safeguarding representative for Blessed Sacrament Parish. The other rep is Maria Edwards. If you have any safeguarding questions or concerns, please contact me on 01392 274724 exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk or Maria Edwards 07870 696530. *Catherine Odams*

Did you know that we are a Live Simply Parish?

'Live Simply' began in about 2006, in the run up to the anniversary of 'Populorum Progressio'. The 'Live Simply' principles of **living simply, sustainably and in solidarity** were drawn up by a group of theologians, for CAFOD.

The movement built on Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical **Laudate Si** 'On Care for our Common Home' which reminds us that Creation is an expression of God's love, and encourages us to recognise that all our actions, however small, have an impact on each other and on our environment. Our 'ecological conversion' leads us to a new lifestyle of **living simply, sustainably, and in solidarity with those in poverty**. As a parish, we officially received our Live Simply award from CAFOD in 2019 having set out on the journey in 2018. To achieve this, we took actions to care for our common home and our global family.

In this spirit, parishioners are invited to commit to simplicity this Advent, in a season that can mistakenly be focused on gifts and consumption, as we prepare in hope for the coming of Jesus and the restoration of the earth.

Some ways we can try and do this may be to:

- **Buy presents from CAFOD.** Cafod World Gift selection can be found here, or booklets can be found in the porch.
- **Use recycled wrapping paper**
- **Shop locally** for Christmas food.
- **Buy Fairtrade.** Supermarkets also stock a wide range of Fairtrade goods. There's a fair-trade buying guide [here](#)
- **Reflect.** Find a few minutes each day during advent to read the reflection on the CAFOD Advent calendar [here](#)
- **Christmas crafts.** Where possible, make rather buy things, perhaps decorations out of pinecones, paper or leaves. It can be great to involve children.
- **Preparing a special grace for the Christmas day meal** – great to get children to think about the real meaning of Christmas.

"We are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty, and fullness"
(Pope Francis LS 53)

Parishioners' Christmas Card Postbox.

There is a box in the porch for posting cards to parishioners only. Please post alphabetically by surname. Please check the box each time you come to Mass to collect the cards sent to you.

Offertory envelopes

For those who make their offerings to the parish through the weekly envelopes, the ones for 2025 are available to be collected from the parish office. Please contact Catherine in the office to arrange this. exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk

Job vacancy

A parishioner is looking for paid help with tidying and a bit of cleaning in their home, for 2 hours, twice a month. The property has parking available and is on the bus route. Due to an allergy, no cat owners please. If interested, please email Catherine at the parish office exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk.

St Nicholas School News

Congratulations to Ivy, Seth, Antoni and Zack from Year 6 who earned the 4th place at the Wellington Maths Challenge, against 60 Devon, Cornwall and Somerset schools. What a great achievement! Some great, higher Maths questions on the day.

St Nicholas Day

We enjoyed celebrating St Nicholas Day on the 6th December. Our Pupil Chaplains, as well as other Year 6 children, were superb in our morning Mass. Father Jonathan was the celebrant and Mrs Quinn led our music. For the rest of the day, we had a relaxing time creating our St Nicholas Day shoes, our party hats and crowns and participating in a highly competitive paper chain challenge, boys vs girls! We loved making the classrooms festive. We loved coming back from assembly to find 3 chocolate coins in our homemade shoes! A lovely day to begin our preparations for Christmas at school!

Admissions

To find out more about joining our school from Nursery to Yr 6 please contact the school at admissions@stnecs.uk.

We wish all parishioners a Happy Christmas and New Year!

Catholic Children's Society

Putting all children first-especially at Christmas time.

Please take time to visit our nativity over the Christmas period. The collection will be donated to the Catholic Children's Society (Plymouth) as it works across the Diocese spreading God's love and giving families hope in times of crisis. We continue to ask you for a combination of concern, prayer and action. **May God bless all our supporters and donors.**

Caritas Newsletter

Click [here](#) to read the latest news about upcoming events and love in action around the diocese in the November Caritas newsletter.

To subscribe to the Caritas newsletter [follow this link](#).

CAFOD Advent Appeal

This Advent you can help CAFOD to continue to support families fleeing conflict in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and across the world. [Click here](#).

Legion of Mary Pilgrimage

To celebrate the Jubilee Year of 2025, you are invited to join the Legion of Mary's weekend Pilgrimage to Walsingham in the summer. Three nights: from Friday 11th to 13th July (returning Monday 14th). Dinner, B & B from £74/night (may change). Reserve your place(s) by 15th November as early booking is essential. For details and a booking form call Adrian Wardle on 01752 830113 or e-mail arwardle@talk21.com

Light a Candle. Tamar Lay Dominican Group

Once again, this Advent, the Tamar Lay Dominican Group would like to warmly invite you to join us to 'Light a Candle' for a loved one or any other intention, at Christ the King Church, Armada Way, Plymouth. We will be outside the church offering candles to late night shoppers and those on their way home from, or going to, work; to find a quiet place to be in the busyness of their lives. We will be at Christ the King from 6:15 until 7:30pm on 19th December.

At this incredibly busy time of the year when there are pressures of all kinds upon and all of us, please, come join us to spend a few moments of peace in the presence of our Lord and Saviour. Please see the poster in the porch for more details.

Guided Retreats at Buckfast Abbey 2025

Offering spiritual nourishment and reflection. To book and for more information, please visit www.buckfast.org.uk/retreats ,or see the poster in the porch for details including dates.



Stay Awake, 5 April, 2025

A day conference for all the family including the celebration of Mass, Children's streams, Praise and Worship, inspiring speakers, Workshops and pizza!

Venue: All Saints School in Weymouth.

More details later! **All welcome!**

Please save the date!

13–17 year-old Residential. January 24 – 26 2025

East Shallowford Farm, Dartmoor.

Come and join other 13 -17 year olds from across the diocese to explore the scripture Job 12:7-10. There will be workshops for you to join including: photography; music; art and filming. East Shallowford is a working farm giving you a chance to meet the animals and feed them. There is a charge of £50 for the weekend. Contact Saskia Hogbin for further information; youth@prcdtr.org.uk or [follow the link](#) to book

Diocesan Newsletter December 2024

You are warmly invited to [click on this link](#) to read the diocesan newsletter for December 2024: Journey to Christmas and The Jubilee of Hope. It includes a reflection on the Gospel for Gaudete Sunday by Monsignor Robert Draper

Please sign up [here](#) to receive future newsletters, weekly Advent Reflections by Monsignor Draper, and Journeying to the Jubilee related content.



Aid to the Church in Need

Aid to the Church in Need (UK) has launched an Open Letter campaign calling on Foreign Secretary David Lammy to make persecuted religious communities priority recipients of UK Overseas Development Aid (ODA). They need your help to reach their goal of 10,000 signatures, which will trigger a response from the Government. Please sign their open letter today [here](#). Together, we can help Christians and other religious minorities trapped in modern slavery, extreme poverty and worse.

Catholic Bishops' Conference

The latest news from the Catholic Bishops' Conference can be accessed [here](#)

Catholic South West

Copies are in the porch. Please put your money in the wall box marked 'newspapers'.



Exeter Food Bank

There are still plenty of tags on our Foodbank Tree in church. Please take a tag, buy the item listed and place it under the tree. We will arrange for items to be delivered to the foodbank for Christmas.

We continue to need other items for day to day living. Priority items: tins of meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, noodle and pasta snacks, jams and spreads, small jars of coffee, rice pudding. Please place these items in the basket at the back of church.

Many thanks for your generosity.

GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER

GIFT News

Sacramental Preparation

There are a number of Blessed Sacrament GIFT families currently preparing their children for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Please keep the Ajayi, Fitzpatrick, Jones, Lynde, Ngotho and Peri families in your prayers.

Baptism Preparation Courses 2025

Are you expecting a baby and/or wish to have your child baptised? We look forward to supporting you in preparation for this important sacrament and welcoming you and your family into the community of the Church. Courses are over two consecutive Saturday mornings from 10:15-12:15 delivered via zoom.

Forthcoming Dates: **15 & 22 February 2025** Godparents are especially welcome to attend the course as the role of Godparents is explored. Click on this link at the end of this article to register. If you have any problem accessing this, contact Catherine in the parish office at Exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk or 01392 274724. Click [here](#) to register for the February Course.

Forming in Faith

We continue to journey through the Word on Fire series 'Priest, Prophet, King'. Discover Jesus as the Anointed One: the ultimate priest, prophet and king foreshadowed throughout Scripture. All are welcome to our next fortnightly meeting on **Monday 16 December** from **10:30-12:00** at Sacred Heart Lower Room.

GIFT tots

Our next session will be on **Friday 10 January** in the St Richard Reynolds Centre. If you and your little one(s) would like to join us please register using this link: [GIFT Tots Registration Form](#)

GIFT families and youth

GIFT is for primary and secondary aged families and supports them to live and grow as Catholics. It enables parents to prepare their children to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Next GIFT session at St Nicholas School: **Saturday 11 January 2025**

Register for GIFT and GIFT Youth at the links below:

[GIFT Registration Form](#)

[GIFT Youth Registration Form](#)

GIFT Youth socials

Please note Parents of any young person wishing to come to GIFT Youth socials please register them before they attend by using the link above. This helps ensure everyone's safety. If you've signed up for GIFT Youth, details of the next session will be sent to you.

Wednesday Word Scripture Reflection

Wednesdays 2.00 – 3.00pm via zoom. We meet to pray, read, meditate and reflect on the upcoming Sunday's Gospel. We are a friendly and inclusive group from different walks of life, and we'd be delighted if you joined us. Contact Maria exeter-pastoral-assistant@prcdtr.org.uk if you would like to join us.

Going into hospital?

If you, or someone you know is going into hospital for any length of time and would like the Chaplaincy team to know, please let the parish office know.

Getting Married?

Congratulations. If you are hoping to marry at Blessed Sacrament Church or any other place, including abroad, we require at least six months' notice. Please contact the parish office to arrange an appointment to meet with the parish priest.

PRAYER & LITURGY

Pope's December Prayer Intention – Pilgrims of Hope.

Let us pray that this Jubilee strengthen us in our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

[The Pope Video](#)

Worship Thursday

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in church each Thursday 6.00–7.00pm.
Come and spend time with the Lord, opening your heart to all he has for you.

Holy Rosary After morning Mass every first and third Wednesday each month.

THE WORD

Sunday 15 December – 3rd Sunday of Advent – *Gaudete Sunday*

First Reading Zephaniah 3:14-18a. *The Lord will exult over you with loud singing.*

Psalm Response

Shout aloud and sing praise, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Second Reading Philippians 4:4-7. *The Lord is at hand.*

Gospel Luke 3:10-18. *And we, what shall we do?*

Sunday 22 December – 4th Sunday of Advent

First Reading Micah 5:2-5a. *From you shall come forth one who is to be ruler in Israel.*

Psalm Response

Bring us back, O God; let your face shine forth, and we shall be saved.

Second Reading Hebrews 10:5-10

Behold, I have come to do your will.

Gospel Luke 1:39-45

Why is this granted to me that the mother of the Lord should come to me?



Reflecting on Advent

I absolutely love this painting. It depicts St John the Baptist in the Wilderness and was painted in oil on a panel of oak by Geertgen tot Sint Jans a Dutch painter in around 1490. It was probably painted for one of the monks from the Haarlem Commandery of St John, where he lived as well. It's now in the Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

It's not the image of John we might expect or are familiar with. He's usually depicted as a young vibrant figure, standing in the River Jordan or on a mountain top, arms aloft, preaching and baptising. He's a prophet so he's shown prophesying. Here he is in a rather melancholy mood. He looks disappointed, sad or even bored. I think he's simply waiting.

The gospels tell us John lived in the desert, the wilderness described by the prophet Isaiah, but here he sits in a verdant garden, filled with trees and flowers. Animals and birds, full of life, surround him. This is no wilderness; it looks more like the Garden of Eden!

Next to him sits a lamb, but this is no ordinary farm animal. This is the Lamb of God, identified by John and pointed out to his disciples. The Lamb's sparkling halo confirms the sanctity of this character and reflects John's own halo.

His garment of camel hair is covered with a rich blue cloak. Blue is the colour of heaven, once more confirming John's heavenly mission as the prophet of God and the one who will announce the arrival of the Messiah.

Finally, look at his feet. He rubs them together seemingly in a distracted manner. Perhaps he's trying to keep them warm! The position mirrors the position of Christ's feet when they are nailed to the Cross. John will give his life for his cousin; he will be martyred for his fidelity to his Redeemer.

So, this is a perfect painting to help us respond to the season of Advent.

Let us, like John the Baptist, wait in expectant hope for the coming of Jesus.

Let us reflect on how his coming will change us. As the wilderness will bloom with trees and plants at the coming of the Messiah, so the advent of Jesus brings life, hope and joy to us and to the world. Maranatha!

Let us recognise Jesus as the Lamb of God and follow him willingly. Let us accept that there is a cost to discipleship, that we too will give something of our lives if we follow the Messiah.

Let us, like John, put our trust in the Lord and have faith that the promises made to us will be fulfilled.

CONTACT US

Blessed Sacrament Parish

29 Fore Street, Heavitree, Exeter EX1 2QJ

01392 274724

exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk

Parish Priest *Fr Jonathan Stewart*

Priest in retirement *Fr John Watkins*

Pastoral Assistant *Maria Quinn* exeter-pastoral-assistant@prcdtr.org.uk

Parish Secretary *Catherine Odams*

Parish Office *Open Tuesday – Friday 10.00am–4.00pm*

Gift Aid enquiries: Exeter-heavitree-giftaid@prcdtr.org.uk

Parish website blessedsacrament.org.uk

Parish Facebook [Catholic Exeter](https://www.facebook.com/CatholicExeter)

Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a vulnerable child or adult, please contact the parish office on 01392 274724 or by email: exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Representatives

Maria Edwards 07870 696530

Catherine Odams 01392 274724

St Nicholas School

St Nicholas Catholic Primary School, Ringswell Avenue, Exeter EX1 3EG

01392 445403

admin@stnics.uk

www.st-nicholas-exeter.devon.sch.uk

Head Teacher *Mr D Railston*

Useful links

[Bishops' Conference Updates](#)

[Churches Together Devon News](#)

[Churches Together Exeter News](#)

[Churches Together in England News](#)