

# PARISH NEWS



**BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH, HEAVITREE, EXETER**

*22 December 2024. 4th Sunday of Advent. Year C. Psalter 4*

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It's only in this last week before Christmas that we begin to hear about the "Christmas story" itself. For the past weeks we have been preparing ourselves to greet the Lord, when he comes. Now we prepare to remember how he first came, by listening to the prophecies of his coming, and by hearing of the events before his birth. We meet the woman, Mary, who herself had been prepared for the coming of the Messiah. She has received the angel's greeting, and his strange news, and has accepted her role in God's plan. Now she hurries to her kinswoman, Elizabeth, who herself bears John the Baptist in her womb. John, just as we heard last week, alerts us to the presence of the Lord, as he leaps for joy in his mother's womb. His joy is that God has kept his promise, and is with his people. *Diocese of Salford Office for Liturgy*

## MASS TIMES

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### **Sunday 22 December – 4th Sunday of Advent**

8.45am *Expectant mothers*

10.45am *Private intention*

**3.00pm** **Parish Carol Service**

6.00pm *People of the Parish*

### **Tuesday 24 December – Christmas Eve**

6.00pm *Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord. Mrs Kelly RIP*

11.30pm *Vigil of Carols and Readings*

12.00am *Midnight Mass. Terry and Vivian Laydon RIP*

### **Wednesday 25 December – Christmas Day**

8.45am *The Jenkinson Family*

10.45am *People of the Parish*

### **Thursday 26 December – St Stephen, Protomartyr**

9.30am *Reginald and Laura Odams RIP*

### **Friday 27 December – St John, Apostle & Evangelist**

9.30am

### **Saturday 28 December – The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

9.30am

### **Sunday 29 December – The Holy Family**

8.45am *Margaret Leonard RIP*

10.45am *People of the Parish*

6.00pm *Private intention*

### **Tuesday 31 December – New Year's Eve**

5.30pm Holy hour followed by Mass at 6.30pm

### **Wednesday 1 January – New Year's Day**

12.00am Mass – *followed by drinks and nibbles in the St Richard Reynolds Centre*

### **Thursday 2 January – St Basil the Great, Bishop & Doctor**

9.30am *Private intention*

6.00pm Adoration

## Friday 3 January

6.30pm

## Saturday 4 January

9.30am

3.00pm Syro Malabar Rite Mass

4.00pm Epiphany Praise – *followed by refreshments in the St Richard Reynolds Centre*

## Sunday 5 January – The Epiphany of the Lord

8.45am *Jack and Peggy Webber RIP*

10.45am *People of the Parish*

6.00pm *Olive Morgan RIP*

## 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

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### Christmas Greetings

Wishing you all a very happy and holy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year. With grateful thanks for all your cards, greetings and offerings and for all you have done to support us this year. May you and those you love be richly blessed by the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God in the flesh.

*Fr Jonathan and Fr John*

### Christmas Offerings

Envelopes available in the porch for the traditional Christmas offering for our priests.

### Parishioners' Christmas Card Post-box.

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](mailto:exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk)

## St Nicholas School News

**Admissions** To find out more about joining our school from Nursery to Yr 6 please contact the school at [admissions@stnics.uk](mailto:admissions@stnics.uk).

We wish all parishioners a Happy Christmas and New Year!

## 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](#).

**Best wishes** from the Caritas Diocese of Plymouth Team Canon John, Deborah, Tanya, Teresa, Carole, Alex and Fran.

## 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.**

## Vocations Day of Reflection

Have you ever asked the question 'Is God calling me to Priesthood or to the Religious life?'. This 'Day of Reflection' for men will be held on Saturday 1 February from 10:00 to 16:00 at Exeter University Chaplaincy, Boniface House, Glenthorne Road, Exeter EX4 4QU.

The day will include Mass, a time of Adoration, a short conference, an opportunity for Confession and 'One to One talks' with serving Priests from our Diocese; and sharing food together (this will be provided – please let us know of special dietary requirements). Under 18s are welcome to attend with parents' permission.

For more information and to register your interest please contact Fr Jacek Kostuch on [jacek.kostuch@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto:jacek.kostuch@prcdtr.org.uk) or [vocation@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto:vocation@prcdtr.org.uk)

## Guided Retreats at Buckfast Abbey 2025

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

## Gather 2025 Jubilate

A weekend of faith, formation and friendship, Friday 28 – Sunday 30 March, Livermead Cliff Hotel, Torquay. Booking forms available from the parish office, see facebook page or email [plymouthgather@yahoo.com](mailto:plymouthgather@yahoo.com) for more information.

## 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.

East Shallowford Farm, Dartmoor 24 – 26 January 2025.

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. £50 for the weekend. Contact Saskia Hogbin for further information; [youth@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto: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 for The Fourth Sunday of Advent by Monsignor Robert Draper and Jubilee of Hope news.

Please sign up [here](#) to receive newsletters and Jubilee 2025 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'.

# GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER

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## GIFT News

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](mailto: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 13 January** 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](mailto: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

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### We commend to the Lord...

John Woods who has died. Please keep him in your prayers as we ask God to bring him into paradise and grant him eternal rest.

### Welcome to the life of faith...

Nikolas, who will be baptised next Sunday. May he grow in knowledge and love of the Lord and be richly blessed. Please keep him in your prayers.

### 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

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## **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?*

## **Sunday 29 December – The Holy Family**

**First Reading** I Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28. *Samuel, as long as he lives, is lent to the Lord.*

**Psalm Response** Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

**Second Reading** I John 3:1-2, 21-24. *We are called children of God; and so we are.*

**Gospel** Luke 2:41-52. *Jesus is found by his parents sitting among the teachers.*

## **Sunday 5 January – The Epiphany of the Lord**

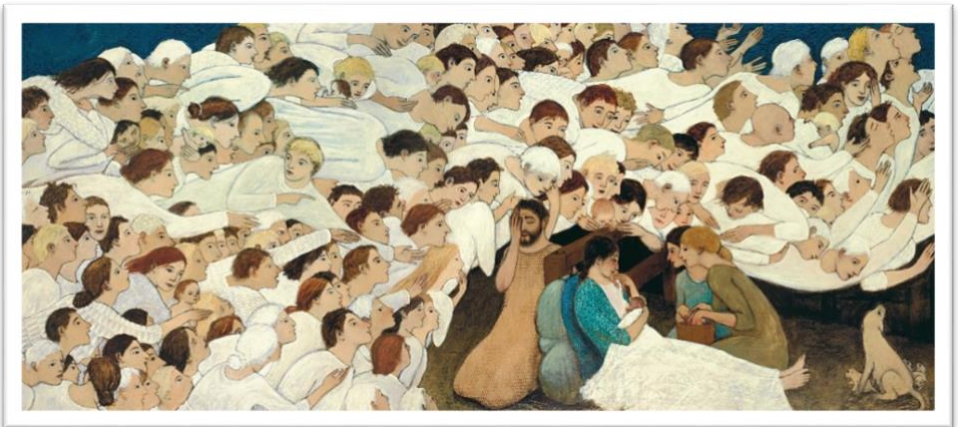
**First Reading** Isaiah 60:1-6. *The glory of the Lord has risen upon you.*

**Psalm Response** All the nations on earth shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.

**Second Reading** Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6.

*It has now been revealed that the Gentiles are fellow heirs of the promise.*

**Gospel** Matthew 2:1-12. *We have come from the east to worship the king.*



This gorgeous image of the Nativity of Jesus is by the American artist Brian Kershisnik. It shows Mary and the very new-born baby resting against a bag packed for a journey. Two midwives attend her and wait to wash the baby Jesus. Joseph sits in amazement at what has happened, his hand against his face. They are surrounded by the heavenly host; myriad angels who swoop down to see the baby and then move on to the future. The mother dog with her new-born pups is a symbol of fidelity.

[Read more at this link.](#)



# CONTACT US

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## Blessed Sacrament Parish

29 Fore Street, Heavitree, Exeter EX1 2QJ

01392 274724

[exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Exeter-heavitree-giftaid@prcdtr.org.uk)

Parish website [blessedsacrament.org.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:admin@stnics.uk)

[www.st-nicholas-exeter.devon.sch.uk](http://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](#)