

Reflection for the 4th Sunday of Advent

*You say you want a revolution
Well you know
We all wanna change the world*
(Revolution 1, The Beatles)

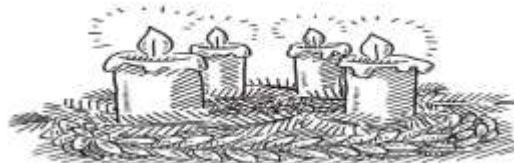
John Lennon wrote that song in 1968, a year of political and social strife. The war in Vietnam was reaching new extremes of destruction, and opposition to America's involvement in it was becoming louder and more violent; China was in the midst of its savage Cultural Revolution; France saw protests and barricades on the streets of Paris; Czechoslovakia would have its 'Prague Spring' reforms ended by an invasion of Soviet troops; and key public figures such as Martin Luther King would be murdered. Lennon's song rejected calls for violent revolution, and he was accused of being too passive politically.

Revolutions rarely end well; human-led ones, anyway. Often started to end genuine injustices they frequently descend into blood-letting and score-settling, and can generate their own injustices at least as bad as the ones inspiring them. But none of that means the original injustices should not be tackled.

We sometimes contrast the expectations the Jewish people had of a Messiah (smash the Roman oppressors, etc) with the more spiritual outcomes (forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit) that Jesus announced and achieved by his death on the cross. But Mary's song in our Gospel reading today should leave us in no doubt that God not only cares about material social and political injustices in our world, but also is far from passive in bringing them to an end. The song speaks about completely overturning the established order – a true revolution.

Very often he calls us to be instrumental in achieving that. But we must not only pursue the right ends; the means we use must also be in step with Jesus's humble, compassionate and self-sacrificial nature and example. We can control the way we go about God's work; the final outcome we often have to leave to God. If we obey him then we can be sure *'it's gonna be alright'*.

Ian Totterdell, churchwarden
(who will not be carrying any pictures of Chairman Mao)



NEXT SUNDAY 29.12.2024 St Thomas of Canterbury
10.30am in the Hall

READINGS: OT Samuel 1: 20-22, 24-28
NT Colossians 3: 12-21
GOSPEL Luke 2: 41-52



CONTACT US

Fr David Nixon 01392 667192. Day off: Mondays
rev.dave@virgin.net

Revd Sarah Cumming Assistant Priest [on secondment
at St Davids]

Revd Mike Clark Associate Priest
mike.clark@exeter.anglican.org

Phil Baker, Licensed Lay Minister 07970 216740
lionelbaker@outlook.com

Revd Terry Litherland 07594633195
tlitherland36@gmail.com

Ian Totterdell Church Warden 01392 848674
07536459096 ian.totterdell@cantab.net

Liz Pioneer Community Worker
pioneerstthomas@gmail.com

Email: parishoffice@stthomaschurhexeter.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sttexeter

Website: www.stthomaschurhexeter.co.uk

X (formerly Twitter): @sttexeter

Office Tel: 01392 437486 Messages at any time.



St Thomas, Exeter

22nd December 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.30am in the Hall

5pm Evening Prayer with Zoom

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

552 When our God came to earth

311 Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us

467 Tell out, my soul

Tuesday 24th December

4pm Crib Service with Carols in the Hall

11.30pm Midnight Mass in Church

Wednesday 25th December

9.30am Sung Eucharist in the Hall

Thursday 26th December

No St Thomas Tots or Knit & Natter



Collect

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Micah 5: 2-25a

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Hebrews 10: 5-10

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).' When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Luke 1: 39-55

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.' And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Post Communion

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

Support for Pensioners on Low Incomes

An estimated 880,000 low-income pensioner households eligible for pension credit currently fail to claim it and a deadline is approaching. The government says it is worth an average £3,900 a year, but it is also a gateway to other financial support such as winter fuel payments. If you know a pensioner on a low income, please encourage them to check if they could be eligible for pension credit. This can be done online through www.gov.uk/pension-credit:calculator or people can get advice via phone on weekdays 0800 99 1234

Warm Space will return on Thursdays, from 3pm in the Hall. Tea, coffee and biscuits and a chance to meet other people. A start date will be announced once the administration has been completed. **Also there are more spaces for people to volunteer. See David or Ian.** Watch this space for details.

Future dates & local info: 14 December—5 January Winterwood at Theatre Alibi.

Parish Walk

What: Noticing Nature walk—Winter edition
When: Saturday 25th January 11am-12noon
Where: Meet outside St Thomas Church Hall
Come and join us for a gentle, guided walk around St Thomas Pleasure Ground that will help you slow down and notice the things around you as well as connect with your inner world. This walk will take place on paved paths with the option to go on grass. Bring clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather and meet at St Thomas Church Hall.

