

Reflection –Christmas 1

Here we are on the cusp of a New Year, what do we know about it.

Not a lot, yet it's a venture into the unknown like time it's there ahead of us. Of course we will have our plans of the things we want to do or at least try to do, but as we know the best laid plans etc!!!!

We can look around the world and be despondent because of the senseless violence and the injustice we see and read of. So, look at today's Gospel, we have Celebrated the birth of the Christ Child, but we know nothing of how the growing boy knew His identity and mission, we can only assume that it deepened and intensified as He grew into adulthood.

What we do know is that the world in the 1stC was violent and dangerous certainly for the Holy Family, hence their escaping to another community.

We are beginning to write the next chapter in our Mission to this community. Let us remember all that Jesus achieved in his short life on this earth. He became what we are so that we might become what He is, fit for the presence of God .

Fr Terry



NEXT SUNDAY 04.01.26 Epiphany

10.30am in the Hall



OT Isaiah 60: 1-6

NT Ephesians 3: 1-12

GOSPEL Matthew 2: 1-12

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St Thomas, Exeter

28th December 2025

First Sunday of Christmas

10.30am in the Hall

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

395 Of the Father's love begotten

542 What child is this

51 Away in a manger

283 Joy to the world

There are no activities this week until Morning Prayer at 9.30am and the Staff Meeting at 10am on Friday 2nd January 2026



Collect

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Isaiah 63: 7-9

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, 'Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely'; and he became their saviour in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Hebrews 2: 10-end

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.' And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Here am I and the children whom God has given me.' Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to

become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Matthew 2: 13-end

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.' When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.' When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

Post Communion

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at

Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help your Church to live as one family, united in love and obedience, and bring us all at last to our home in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Notices

The House Group Advent Course. Begins again on Tuesday 6th January, with the last sessions of our Advent Course. See Ian for details.

From January, we'll be trialling an all-age service once a month on the first Sunday of the month. The service will still follow the usual format, but there will be adapted liturgy that is more accessible for younger people. Do let us know what you think! Our first All-age service will be on 4 January when we celebrate Epiphany.

Rev Sarah will be taking some time off after Christmas, returning on 3 January. If during that time you need a priest, Father Terry will be available. His contact details are on the front of this pew sheet. Wishing all our St Thomas family a very merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2026.

Rev Sarah would like to thank everyone for their Christmas Cards and best wishes.

January dates for your diary

Tuesday, 27th January 2026. Church Family Bowling. 6.30pm. Please speak to Liz or Sarah for details. All welcome.

Thursday 29th January 2026 Church Community Lunch. Meeting outside the Church at 12.30pm then on to a local hostelry.