

## Reflection St Stephen's Day

Imagining the Christmas scene in the context of the martyrdom of St Stephen, these words from Thomas Merton seem helpful. Thank you to Arch-deacon Andrew Beane for supplying them:

"Into this world, this demented inn, in which there is absolutely no room for him at all, Christ comes uninvited. But because he cannot be at home in it, because he is out of place in it, and yet he must be in it, his place is with those others for whom there is no room. His place is with those who do not belong, who are rejected by power because they are regarded as weak, those who are discredited, who are denied the status of persons, tortured, exterminated. With those for whom there is no room, Christ is present in this world. He is mysteriously present in those for whom there seems to be nothing but the world at its worst."

*Fr David*



### Codes for Zoom Evening Prayer details tbc

**Meeting ID:** 861 6577 7243

**Passcode:** 202677

**Telephone numbers:** 0203 481 5237,  
0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

### NEXT SUNDAY 02.01.2022 Epiphany

**SERVICES:** 10.30am in Church.

**READINGS:** OT Isaiah 60: 1-6  
NT Ephesians 3: 1-12  
GOSPEL Matthew 2: 1-12



### CONTACT US

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

**Revd Sarah Cumming** Curate 07543604115  
rev.sarahcumming@gmail.com

**Revd Alison Whiting** Associate Priest  
rev.alisonwhiting@gmail.com

**Phil Baker**, Reader 07970 216740  
lionelbaker@outlook.com

**Revd Terry Litherland** 07594633195  
tlitherland36@gmail.com

**Ian Totterdell** Church Warden 01392 848674  
07961621001 ian.totterdell@cantab.net

**Email:** parishoffice@stthomaschurhexeter.co.uk

**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/sttexeter

**Website:** www.stthomaschurhexeter.co.uk

**Twitter:** @sttexeter

**Office Tel:** 01392 437486 Messages at any time.



# St Thomas, Exeter

**Sunday 26th December 2021**

## St Stephen

**10.30am in Church,**

**Happy Christmas** to all of you. I do hope everybody had a good day yesterday, and for those who find Christmas difficult in general, or this year in particular, especial blessings.

Our service pattern is resuming its normal timings, although the actual celebrations are a bit unusual this year—nothing surprising in that you might say, so we are taking the opportunity of marking **St Stephen** today, with next week a very early Epiphany.

**The Christmas Octave** (i.e. the days between Christmas and New Year) always seems special, not least that there are so many important dates: St John, Holy Innocents, St Thomas Becket (our co-patron). Given the Covid situation, it seems better to remember these days at home, and so there will be **no service on Wednesday 29/12.**

*Fr David*



## Collect

Gracious Father, who gave the first martyr Stephen grace to pray for those who took up stones against him: grant that in all our sufferings for the truth we may learn to love even our enemies and to seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt, looking up to heaven to him who was crucified for us, Jesus Christ, our mediator and advocate, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## 2 Chronicles 24.20–22

Then the spirit of God took possession of Zechariah son of the priest Jehoiada; he stood above the people and said to them, 'Thus says God: Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has also forsaken you. 'But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. King Joash did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. As he was dying, he said, 'May the LORD see and avenge!'

## Acts 7.51–60

'You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are for ever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.' When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed

into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

## Matthew 10.17–22

Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

## Post Communion

Merciful Lord, we thank you for the signs of your mercy revealed in birth and death: save us by the coming of your Son, and give us joy in honouring Stephen, first martyr of the new Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

## NOTICES

For our services in Church, **mask wearing** is now compulsory. On most Sundays you can also be seated with some social distancing if you wish. Please don't be embarrassed to be safe. If you are coming to coffee, we also recommend wearing a mask until you are seated in the Hall.

**Coffee and tea** will be offered after the 10.30am Mass. It will be served in the Hall. **Volunteers are still required. See Judith.**

**Knit and Natter December 2021** We shall be meeting every Thursday from 10.30 to midday at 19 Maple Road. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

**House Group. Begins again on Tuesday 11th January 2022.** We will be comparing other religions with Christianity, new people very welcome!

**Community Larder** The Community Larder will next be receiving donations on **Tuesday 4th January 2022** from 10am-12noon. Thanks to everyone for their generosity in 2021.

**Volunteers are needed to clean the Church nave.** The nave is divided up into small blocks for people to take on and clean about fortnightly. Please see Judith for details.

