

## Reflection for the Third Sunday of Epiphany

### Which Comes First, the Fish or the River?

Since every gift comes down from the All-Giver,  
How can I choose between the Giver's gifts  
Or say which should come first, the fish or river?

He scatters first, and then calls us to gather,  
To lavish on his work our smaller crafts  
And sail our praise upstream, back to the Giver.

He gives His gifts when we are met together,  
Not in our splits, our schisms, and our rifts:  
We cannot prize the Fish and not the River,

Divide the two and say 'which would you rather?'  
We float through time on fragile little rafts,  
But time and life alike flow from the Giver.

Away upstream, it all flows from the Father:  
The stream is His own Spirit, giving gifts;  
His Son, our brother, joins us in the River.

He is our 'both-and' God, not 'or', or 'either';  
He gives full measure: steady, heady draughts!  
The Giver must come first, always the Giver,  
We prize alike His gifts: both Fish and River.

*By Malcolm Guite*

Revd Alison



### 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 30.01.2022 4th Sunday of Epiphany

**SERVICES:** 10.30am in Church.

**READINGS:** OT Ezekiel 43: 27, 44.4  
NT 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13  
GOSPEL Luke 2: 22-40



### 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 23rd January 2022**

**Third Sunday of Epiphany**

**10.30am in Church**

This Sunday marks about the mid point of the annual **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, 18- 25 January, finishing with the feast of the **Conversion of St Paul** on 25th. I have often been to the diocese of Bayeux-Lisieux in Normandy to preach and participate in services there, which we decided this year because of Covid would not be possible. They have sent clergy over here, including Fr Laurent Berthout who preached at St Thomas in 2019. Instead a number of us including the parishes of St David's and Central Exeter combined to record a short service in French which can be found on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/W4W72n-wMwg>

The theme for this year from the Churches of the Middle East is *We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship him* (Mt 2:2). Here is an extract from one of the official prayers for the week:  
O Lord God our Father, you sent the star to lead the Magi to your only begotten Son. Increase our hope in you and let us know at all times that you are walking with us, watching over your people. Teach us to follow the guidance of your Holy Spirit, however strange the path may seem, so that we may be led to our unity in Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

*Fr David*



## Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## Nehemiah 8.1–3,5–6,8–10

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'

## Corinthians 12.12–31a

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were

to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

## Luke 4.14–21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

## Post Communion

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

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## 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.

**Knit and Natter January 2022** We shall be meeting every Thursday from 10.30 to midday at 19 Maple Road. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

**House Group.** Next Meeting on **Tuesday 25th January 2022.** We will be comparing other religions with Christianity, new people very welcome!

**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.

**Flower Team.** If anyone would like to join the flower team they would be most welcome. This would involve arranging flowers for various occasions and watering and dismantling them when appropriate. We are looking to form a rota. If you are interested please contact Ian.

**Street Pastors** are starting their training sessions on 7th March 2022. If anyone is interested in joining the Street Pastors please see the website below. [www.streetpastors.org/locations/exeter](http://www.streetpastors.org/locations/exeter)

**Living in Love and Faith** There is an opportunity to join a Diocesan wide version of this Course that is starting on January 25th. Please see Diocesan website and email Philip Sourbut if you are interested. [Philip.sourbut@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:Philip.sourbut@exeter.anglican.org)

**Young at Hearts** 26th January at 2pm in the Hall. All welcome.

**PCC meeting** 26th January at 7.30pm

**Ladies Lunch** 29th January at 12.30pm at The Royal Oak. All welcome