

## Reflection Epiphany 3

This Sunday we are in the middle of the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January). Divisions in the church may seem to be a recent problem (relatively - just the last 500 years or so!) but today's reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians makes clear that the risk of different factions arising has been present from the earliest days. It's not clear what the cause of the quarrelling was, but various groups obviously felt that comments made by Paul, Apollos or others justified their position. Paul appeals for them to resolve such disagreements.

Disagreements over doctrine (or, more often, over style of worship or action) can seem to be major sticking points between members of different denominations, but seen from outside the Christian faith such things can be seen to be insignificant - at least, compared to the difference in outlook and priorities that exists between those who recognise God's love for us and acknowledge Jesus as Lord and those who don't. So how can we make sure we don't let our disagreements get in the way of our collective Christian life and witness?

Today's Gospel recounts how Jesus called his first Apostles: Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John. At one level these four are very similar: adult Jewish males who work as fishermen and live on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. But the Gospels show that Peter and John are very different characters; and other Apostles are even more different, for example Matthew the Tax Collector (working for the hated Romans) and Simon the freedom fighter (Zealot). Nevertheless they all work together to help Jesus demonstrate that the Kingdom of God was at hand and to show people how they could be part of it: 'fishing for people' as Jesus puts it, or 'outreach' as it might be called today.

Perhaps the best way to be united as Christians is to keep the focus of our faith turned outwards, towards the neighbours we are called to serve, and not get hung up on which denomination is leading a given act of service but rather support and encourage it.

*Ian Totterdell, churchwarden*

## WARM SPACE ST THOMAS PARISH HALL

THURSDAY 3-5PM



Free refreshments in a warm space.

**NEXT SUNDAY 29.01.2023** Candlemas

**SERVICES:** 10.30am Sung Eucharist in the Hall.

**READINGS:** OT Malachi 3: 1-5  
NT Hebrews 2: 14-18  
GOSPEL Luke 2: 22-40



### CONTACT US

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# St Thomas, Exeter

22nd January 2023

Epiphany 3

10.30am in the Hall

### Today

10.30am Sung Eucharist.

*Hymn Numbers*

220 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

451 Songs of thankfulness and praise

560 Will you come and follow me

### Tuesday 24th January

7.30pm House Group. See Ian for details.

### Wednesday 25th January

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

2-4pm Young at Hearts.

7.30pm PCC Meeting.

### Thursday 26th January

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots.

10.30am-12noon Knit & Natter

3-5pm Warm Space in the Hall.

### Friday 27th January

9.30am Morning Prayer.

10am Staff Meeting.

### Saturday 28th January

12.30pm Ladies Lunch in the Royal Oak.



## 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**

## Isaiah 9: 1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

## 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not

know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

## Matthew 4: 12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.' From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

## 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**

## NOTICES

**Knit and Natter.** On Thursdays from 10.30am-12noon at 19 Maple Road. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

**Community Larder** is receiving donations on Tuesdays from 10-11am. On Sundays there will also be an opportunity to bring donations to the 10.30 service.

**House Group** Fortnightly on Zoom. New people are always welcome; see Ian for Zoom details.

**Our proposal** is to stay in the Hall until Palm Sunday.

In the interests of safety we suggest that people should **not work alone in the Church.**

Food Fight (Food for Sundays) are looking for donations of warm clothing, such as hats, gloves, jackets and socks. They are also happy to receive individual-serving bottles/tetra packs of water or juices. **Volunteers are outside Nat West bank on Sunday mornings from 11am-1pm** so any donations can be dropped off there.

Simon James, social prescriber at St Thomas Medical Centre, is asking for volunteers on behalf of the **ExwickTwo's Company Befriending Service.** His telephone number is 01392 676638 For more information see

<https://linkinglives.uk/project/exwick/>

Advance warning that on 29th January (next week) we will be marking **Candlemas** by making **Christingles** in the context of our worship. Please bring your craft making fingers!

This Sunday marks the middle of the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** (18th-25th January). Please pray for all Christian communities in the City.

