



## Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023

## Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

### Today - Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January - (Presentation of Christ in the Temple: Candlemas)

10.00 am Mission Community Service - St Mary the Virgin, Denbury

### Morning Prayer

This week morning prayer will be said at the following times:

Tuesday	9.15 am	- St Andrew's Ipplepen
Wednesday	9.15 am	- Online Via Zoom (for the zoom password email <a href="mailto:rev.andrewdown@gmail.com">rev.andrewdown@gmail.com</a> )
Thursday	9.15 am	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
Friday	9.15 am	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston (A time of silent prayer and meditation)

### Reflection

All our churches are open for private prayer and reflection throughout the week from approximately 9am to 5pm each day.

### Mid-Week

Rev'd Andrew Down - Day off on Mondays.

Monday	3pm-5pm	'T-Pot'	- Church Cottage, Denbury
	7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston
Tuesday	10.15 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
	2.00 pm	Funeral Service of John Harris	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Wednesday	12 noon	Churches Together - Lunch Club	- St Andrew's Church Hall, Ipplepen
	7.00 pm	Bellringing Practice	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
	7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice	- St Andrew's Ipplepen
Thursday	10.15 am	Holy Communion	- Church Cottage, Denbury
	1.00 pm	Funeral and Burial Service of Margaret Maddicott	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Saturday	10.00 am	Coffee Morning	- The Parish Rooms, Woodland

### Next Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February – Third Sunday Before Lent

9.30 am	Holy Communion	- St John the Baptist, Woodland
9.30 am	Celtic Morning Prayer	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
11.00 am	Holy Communion with Children's Activities	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
4.30 pm	Reflective Evening Prayer	- Holy Trinity, Torbryan

**Service at Holy Trinity Torbryan on Sunday 5th February at 4.30pm** These candlelit reflective services at Torbryan continue to provide an important space to gather and be together in this beautiful and historic church building.

**Beetle Drive. Friday 10th Feb, 6pm, in Denbury Village Hall.** Reserve your tickets in advance (for catering purposes) from Irene ( [imwdavey@gmail.com](mailto:imwdavey@gmail.com) 07767 771 590 )

**Lent Extra** Through its daily reflections and thought-provoking articles, 'Lent Extra 2023' is your essential guide to Lent and beyond. If you would like to order a copy of this book through the office at the cost of £2.25 please sign up on the sign-up list in our churches by Sunday 12th February 2023.

**'Coffee Time!' At St Andrew's Church on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March from 10.30am to 12 noon (ish).**

Everyone is welcome to the first 'Coffee Time!' on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March. There is no charge, donations only. We are hoping that you will come and enjoy a cup of delicious fresh coffee and tea and a piece of cake or biscuit. Bring friends and enjoy the space in our historic building. The coffee morning will be held on the 2nd Saturday of each month from March 2023.

**Dr Paul Russell, Churchwarden from Broadhempston, is running the London Marathon for Compassion UK**, a Christian charity, supporting children in extreme poverty. Please read his article in The February and March 2023 edition of The Beacon Magazine.  
<https://challenges.compassionuk.org/profile/4850/paul-russell>

**Beacon Parishes Lent Reading 2023 - Time to get the book!** During lent this year we are encouraging as many people as possible to read The Book of Forgiving by Desmond & Mpho TuTu. To assist this, we will use the weekly notice sheet to ask questions to prompt reflection on what we are reading. For those who wish we, will also offer a weekly group where you discuss the book.

**February Prayer Diary.** Every month The Diocese of Exeter produce a prayer diary with daily intercessory prayers for local communities. The February Prayer Diary has just been uploaded to their website: <https://exeter.anglican.org/prayer-diary/>

Readings	This week	Next week
<b>Readings for this Sunday:</b>	1st Reading Malachi 3:1-5	Isaiah 58:1-9a, 9b-12
	Psalm 24:1-6, 7-End	112:1-9
	2nd Reading Hebrews 2:14-End	1 Corinthians 2:1-12
	Gospel Luke 2:22-40	Matthew 5:13-20

### Readings for the week ahead:

Mon	30 <sup>th</sup>	Mark 5:1-20	Thurs	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Luke 2:22-40
Tue	31 <sup>st</sup>	Mark 5:21-End	Fri	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mark 6:14-29
Wed	1 <sup>st</sup>	Matt 6:1-6a	Sat	4 <sup>th</sup>	Mark 6:30-34

Readings can be viewed/downloaded from <https://bible.oremus.org/>

Rector: Rev'd Andrew Down. Tel: 01803 813403 E: [rev.andrewdown@gmail.com](mailto:rev.andrewdown@gmail.com)  
Office: Church Office, St. Andrew's Church Hall, Church Path, Ipplepen, TQ12 5RZ  
Office hours: Mon, Tues, Wed and Fri: 12 noon to 3pm. Thurs: 11am to 3pm  
Tel: 01803 814178 E: [office@beaconparishes.co.uk](mailto:office@beaconparishes.co.uk) W: [www.missioncommunity.org.uk](http://www.missioncommunity.org.uk)  
Facebook pages: [www.facebook.com/StAndrewsIpplepen/](http://www.facebook.com/StAndrewsIpplepen/)  
[www.facebook.com/denburyworship](http://www.facebook.com/denburyworship) [www.facebook.com/Broad20/](http://www.facebook.com/Broad20/)

**Points of Prayer:** During the season of Epiphany, we pray for... The unity of the Church.... The peace of the world... and the healing of the sick.

**In Memory:** Ian House, Frank Petty, Arthur Guppy, Jenny Buckle, Peter Byrom, Ann Hockin Higby, Mary Cleave, Derek Reed, John Harris, Ron Paston, Margaret Maddicott and Vernon Kerslake.



## Reflection by Steve Sheldon

**Advent 4**  
**John 2:1-11**  
**29<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

Most of us probably have at one time in our lives been responsible for a dog. I've always had cats around me [20], but some dogs as well [3].

My personal opinion is that dogs are dumber than cats. They are so easy to entertain. Just chuck a tennis ball around, and they're happy. And they'll bring it back to you every time, until it's good and slimy. And they never tire of the endless repetition; the game ends only when you yourself decide to end it.

A friend once had a dog that was so dumb that even this simple game of fetch eluded him. He'd keep losing track of the ball. In frustration my friend would foolishly try to point out the ball to his dog. But the dog would just stare at his hand instead of where he was pointing.

We read today about "*the first of his signs, in Cana.*" Some of the people around Jesus were like my friend's dog. They were fascinated by the signs and wonders and wanted more; and they'd stare and stare at the signs, rather than what the signs were indicating.

The signs were supposed to direct their attention to the Kingdom of God and they would resolutely keep missing the point. "*Many believed in Jesus because they saw the signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself to them.*" Jesus refused to give them the signs they wanted.

Trust can be hard to give sometimes. So we try to rely on our own strength and wisdom and knowledge. We want things we can see and touch. We want signs and wonders to justify the giving of our trust to God. It's like the story of Lazarus where Richman wanted a sign from God before he would choose to act justly.

We not only want God to save us, but we want to SEE him doing it! Our human instinct craves explanations, even of the inexplicable. We want to understand the workings behind God's activities, we want to take it all apart and see the wheels and cogs turning about. In our modern scientific culture we've come to expect rational explanations for everything, including our faith in God.

But one must first have the will to believe, in order to see God's revelations. Those whose hearts are already shut down and closed to compassion, will also have minds closed to revelation. God had already revealed his will to Israel in the teachings of Moses and Prophets.

Jesus knew that if someone chooses to not believe, no amount of proof will ever satisfy. Belief is a work of the Spirit. Like Bob Dylan sang: "*People try to stop me, shake me up in my mind. They say "Prove to me he is Lord; show me a sign!" What kind of sign they need, when it all comes from within? What's lost has been found; what's to come has already been. So I'm pressing on to the higher calling of my Lord*"

As Jesus says in John's gospel, "*What gives life is God's Spirit; man's power is of no use at all*"

What do we as individuals know anyway? What do we actually know? In our ridiculously fast-changing world, driven by marketing, the media and entertainment, knowledge is constantly changing; a bit like Wikipedia where anyone with access to the Internet can participate in editing the online encyclopaedia.

While instant communication can sometimes be a good thing, it can become difficult to distinguish empty nonsense from legitimate wisdom and knowledge.

Jesus is God's ultimate word and revelation and wisdom, and we need to keep our eye on him.

With most subjects, the more we truly begin to understand something, we realize that we really don't understand it all; that there is always more to a subject than meets the eye. As the mind opens to new understanding, there comes a deeper awareness not yet explored.

The closer we get, the more complex God can seem, and God fails to adhere to cartoonish images created by those who've yet to explore God very hard. It is only as we personally and diligently seek the Lord and grow in that knowledge, that we come to recognize how little we know of the mystery.

As Christians we have to admit that much cannot be explained; we are called to be stewards of God's mysteries in a way that honours the otherness of God.

So what are we to do? First we must not get obsessed with the finger that points us to the Kingdom.

We must never make an idol of the **means** of God's revelation, or the forms we use to share that revelation with the world. The Bible, our church buildings, our worship services, our personal religious experiences, our favourite clergy persons, are all tools given to us by God to do his work in conjunction with the Spirit who gives life. They are a means to an end and should never distract us from our love of Jesus and the truths he came to teach us.

You, and everyone else that listens to God's call, have been chosen by God to celebrate and enlarge his Kingdom of justice and joy. You have been chosen to be a sign of the Good News, bearing the fruits of the Spirit. You have been chosen to love others just as you have been loved by God. You have been chosen to follow in the steps of Jesus making disciples by living out his teaching. You have been chosen to have a purpose.

Not to be miracle workers; not to be out there trying to fix broken people of long-standing, deep-seated problems; not to bring about sudden miraculous conversions. Your purpose isn't to save people; your purpose is to love them, welcome them, be open and honest with them, giving of yourself.

That's costly and painful, as well as joyous and rewarding; and whenever you do it, it is a sign that the Kingdom of God is near.