

Easter 4 Reflection

Six years ago (almost to the day) I asked this congregation to find the best words to describe itself. The top choices were: friendly, welcoming, local and fellowship. I wonder what words you would choose today.

In recent months you've had to expand from single words to writing your parish profile. For what it's worth, I think you've done a magnificent job of reflecting this vibrant and prayerful community in a thorough and stylish way. You've covered history, location, data and some thoughts for the future as you seek to fan the flames which are being lit in potential applicants. You've found some powerful words which declare the stance of this people on significant issues, including 'inclusive' and 'affirming'.

Compare this with our reading from the Acts of the Apostles which describes a community 'devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.' They then include signs and miracles, and holding everything in common, which we didn't include in our parish profile! Do we see this as something to aspire to or as something merely relevant for them?

Finally, if we believe the church to be the body of Christ in our world, how would we hope to describe it in the future?

Rev Sarah Cumming



NEXT SUNDAY 03.05.26 Fifth Sunday of Easter
10.30am in the Church (with Baptism)
Followed by the APCM



OT 1 Peter 2: 2-10
NT Acts 7: 55-end
GOSPEL John 14: 1-14

CONTACT US

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Day off: Monday

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St Thomas, Exeter

26th April 2026

Fourth Sunday of Easter

10.30am in the Church

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

231 *I heard the voice of Jesus say*

484 *The King of love my shepherd is*

237 *I will sing the Wondrous story*

181 *Good Christians, all rejoice and sing*

Tuesday 28th April

7.30pm House Group at Helen's house.

Thursday 30th April

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30am-12noon Knit & Natter at Jenny
Tuckett's house.

Friday 1st May

9.30am Morning Prayers

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 2nd May

11am—noon Noticing Nature Walk. Meet at
the Hall.



Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life: praise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that we may seek those things which are above, where he reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

1 Peter 2: 19-end

For it is to your credit if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the credit in that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls

Acts 2: 42-end

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

John 10: 1-10

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Post Communion

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd, and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again: keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Notices

We welcome Rev Sarah Cumming as our preacher today.

Please continue to hold our search for a new rector in your prayers and pray that the Lord will be calling the right person, preparing those who are involved in the selection process to have good judgement and discernment and that the Lord will prepare us to work with our new rector

when they are installed later this year.

Come and join us (and invite a friend) to our 2026 mindful walk to the Wisteria!

On Saturday 2nd May, Liz and Sarah will leave the church hall just after 11am to slowly and mindfully walk round to Pincus Gardens via Barton Fields to, hopefully, admire and smell the legendary St Thomas wisteria. We will end the time by going to the Birdhouse Cafe for a drink. Bring a friend or family member with you! Liz

The APCM is on Sunday 3rd May after the service. There are vacancies on the PCC, Deanery Synod and for Churchwardens. Forms will be available in Church. For more information please see Jenny Thomas, Ian or Sarah.

Exeter Pride is on Saturday 9th May. Christians at Pride and Open Table Exeter will be participating in the March together with banners. Open Table will have a stand at the festival in Northernhay. Do join in! Email exeter@opentable.lgbt for more information.

Thy Kingdom Come Sunday 17th May 6pm-7.30pm In the Cathedral. Free tickets must be booked in advance through Eventbrite. See Ian for details.

Ian, your Churchwarden, will again this year, be taking part in the Hospiscare 100 Miles Challenge in May. See Ian next week for details of how you can sponsor him.

If people are interested in taking part in a sponsored walk for a good local cause, Exeter Foodbank is holding a short walk on Saturday 4th July. For more details see Ian. Please continue to support Exeter Foodbank when shopping in the supermarkets.