



LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS

The Right Revd Robert Atwell
Bishop of Exeter

What has Christmas to do with chewing gum? In truth, not a lot. I don't know about you, but one of my pet hates is pavements and shop floors littered with bits of discarded chewing gum. Stuff sticks to it – or else it sticks to the soles of your shoes and you can't get it off. And that's where Christmas comes in.

Over the years lots of things have got stuck onto Christmas: tinsel and turkeys, Christmas puddings and Christmas trees, not to mention dear old Father Christmas and his reindeer. They're all part and parcel of the 'Disney-fication' of Christmas. All these things are fun, but they are not the essence of Christmas.

What lies at the heart of Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ. Every birth is precious, but the reason we celebrate this birth above all others is because in this child we recognise God's unique gift of himself. Christmas is about the best present of all: knowing that we are loved by God. It's the good news that every generation needs to hear.

'Love came down at Christmas', is how one old carol has it. We are not alone: God is here among us and God meets us in our deepest need to be loved and accepted. It's why we in turn give Christmas presents to our family and friends. They are signs of our love of them.

Christmas is not about getting more stuff. It's about the giving of ourselves to others and to God: our time, our attention, our love. And it's that which can make a difference not only to us as individuals, but to our world.



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GOOD NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE OF EXETER | December 2018



Inside:
NEW QUIET
DAYS WEBSITE
LAUNCHED



PAUSING FOR
THOUGHT ON
RADIO DEVON

Bishop Jackie arrives in Devon as Preb. Hilary heads for Gloucester

TAKING UP NEW REINS

The installation of the tenth Bishop of Crediton has taken place in Exeter Cathedral.

The Right Revd Jackie Searle had previously been the Archdeacon of Gloucester, a post which will be filled by Prebendary Hilary Dawson.

Bishop Jackie used her first sermon in the Diocese of Exeter to tell the congregation not to be put off by negative headlines about the church being in decline. She said that those who oppress and spread hatred cannot triumph over the souls of those who rejoice and celebrate.

"People need hope in our world. We need purpose, a sense of belonging, and belief in a greater power, that power we know as God.

"We do not know how it looks to God. But we do know that we human beings need and long for love and life and joy and laughter as much as we ever did," she said.

"We long for forgiveness, for goodness, for justice and truth. I

dare to believe that these are found in the

gospel of Jesus Christ."

Bishop Jackie was consecrated in Southwark Cathedral by the Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Dr John Sentamu, at the end of September.

The news that Preb Hilary Dawson, Rector of the Holyford Mission Community, is to succeed Bishop Jackie as Archdeacon of Gloucester was greeted with joy tinged with sadness that Gloucester's gain is Devon's loss. She has also been appointed a residentiary canon of Gloucester Cathedral.

The Bishop of Exeter, the Right Revd Robert Atwell, said: "I am delighted for Hilary and the Diocese of Gloucester by her appointment as Archdeacon of Gloucester. She will be sorely missed



Preb. Hilary Dawson will succeed Bishop Jackie as Archdeacon of Gloucester

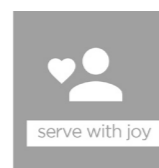
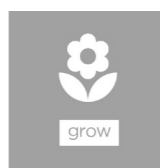
by her many friends in Devon. She has been an outstanding vicar in the Diocese and is greatly loved."

Hilary will be licensed and installed in Gloucester Cathedral on Sunday 27 January.

She said: "I am really pleased to be going to the Diocese of Gloucester and getting to know all the people and places of the Diocese."

Hilary is married to Richard and they have two grown up children, Michael and Eleanor.

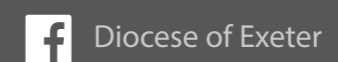
She was born and brought up in Devon and was a teacher for 18 years. She trained for ministry with South West Ministry Training Course and was awarded an MA in Biblical Studies from Exeter University.



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QUIET DAYS WEBSITE LAUNCHED

A Devon lay reader has launched a new website she hopes will become a central hub for people looking for Quiet Days.

Demelza Henderson, from Lymptone, started QuietDaysInDevon.net to give a comprehensive guide to Quiet Days in the Diocese of Exeter.

The website consists of two main pages (a map and a diary page), giving information about where and when Quiet Days are taking place.

Demelza, who is also a spiritual director in the Diocese, said: "I set up the website as I know that there are a good number of people across the Diocese who would love to go on a Quiet Day, but are unable to commit to an overnight retreat because they cannot stay away from home, for a whole variety of reasons.

"Indeed, many people are willing and able to travel beyond their own communities, but just don't know what's going on further afield. Equally, many parishes and local churches offer wonderful Quiet Days (and put a lot of effort into them), but are disappointed when numbers are low.

"I hope that by developing a kind of central 'Hub' of this information, more people will be able to find the spiritual refreshment they need, and will reap the benefits of even just a few hours of quiet time with God."



Demelza Henderson, founder of the Quiet Days website.

If you are planning to hold a Quiet Day or if you know people who might welcome invitations to lead Quiet Days for others, contact Demelza on quietdaysindevon@gmail.com or call her on 01395 272243.

HELP TO MAKE SURE VULNERABLE CHILDREN ARE NOT ALONE THIS CHRISTMAS

Churches across the Diocese are being asked to come together to celebrate Christingle's 50th anniversary in aid of The Children's Society and show vulnerable children they are not alone this Christmas.

All the money raised will go towards helping children dealing with a range of serious issues including violence, abuse and poverty.

Christingle is a celebration named after the Christingles given out at the service – these are oranges decorated with red ribbon, sweets or dried fruits on cocktail sticks and a candle, to highlight different parts of the Christian story.

To find out about a local Christingle near you visit christingle.org

HANDBELLS FOR SALE

A set of Whitechapel handbells are for sale. The set, which includes 22 bells plus one replacement, is on the market for £2,750. For more information call 01503 264414 or email deirdrecrocker@gmail.com

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

All of us on the magazine team wish you a peaceful and happy Christmas. Please do keep us updated with good news stories around the Diocese in 2019: email abigail.meeke@exeter.anglican.org

"I always heard things rather than saw them, so radio was always going to be my preferred method"

A well-known face in the Diocese of Exeter is becoming an even better known voice in Devon thanks to his continuing success with a radio programme.

Canon Andrew Godsall, who has had many roles in the Diocese including Canon Chancellor of Exeter Cathedral, has a long history of working in the media, dating back to university when he worked for Pebble Mill Studios.

Five years ago, he set out tentatively with new designs on Radio Devon's Pause for Thought slots – and these have been received with acclaim by listeners.

He said: "I started in television, many moons ago when I was 18 and at university in Birmingham. Alongside my studies, I worked at Pebble Mill Studios. But I always heard things rather than saw them, so radio was always going to be my preferred method.

"I worked for BBC Radio 3, producing Choral Evensong with Barry Rose, among many other things. It was a huge amount of fun and took me all around the country to cathedrals and college chapels.



Then I went to train for ordination and my ministry took over for a number of years.

"About five years ago, I was listening to Pause for Thought and contemplating how interesting it would be if it was not just talk, but was mixed with music.

"I love 80s music and I play the drums in an 80s band, so I drafted some programmes and sent them to Radio Devon. They liked them and asked me to take on weekly slots. I have a three-minute slot and I do a week's worth for Radio Devon at a time.

"My programmes focus on one particular song and then I use this to write my thought for that particular day. I tend to pick a theme for the week – my most recent one was 'Getting home' – and then find songs that fit.

"I sometimes ask friends to suggest songs too. 'Bridge over troubled water' was a recent one, and that has a story about Bickleigh bridge associated with it – sadly untrue, but a great story!"

Laura James, Early Breakfast Show presenter on Radio Devon, said: "We've all got a favourite song, and our own personal reasons for loving them, maybe memories from our childhood, or a loved one, or a moment in our lives.

"We love listening to Andrew's Pause for Thoughts because he brings a song to life. He talks about songs that have featured throughout our lives, classics from the likes of Elton John and Rod Stewart, but he makes us look at them from a different light, with fresh eyes.

"Andrew helps bring these thoughts and feelings to life, with a moment to reflect before we start our day."

Andrew's next Pause for Thought series can be heard in the week beginning January 14.



Andrew takes to the stage with his band.