



From the Canon Chancellor Canon Deborah Parsons

Easter Reflection: Hope That Rises

As Easter approaches this year, it does not arrive in a quiet or settled world. News of conflict, from Ukraine to escalating tensions in the Middle East, sit alongside the quieter but deeply felt pressures of daily life—the outbreak of war in Iran has led to the rising cost of living, soaring fuel costs, uncertainty about the future, and the weight many carry behind closed doors.

It would be easy to imagine that the first Easter took place in a more hopeful time. In truth, it did not. Jesus lived under occupation, amid political tension and social inequality. His death was not a peaceful passing, but a public act of violence and injustice. His followers were left fearful, grieving, and unsure what would come next.

In other words, the first Easter unfolded in a world not unlike our own.

What the Easter story offers is not a denial of suffering, nor a simple reassurance that everything will quickly be made right. Instead, it speaks of a God who does not stand apart from human pain but enters fully into it. The cross is not an escape from the realities of the world, but a meeting place with them.

And yet, Easter does not end there.

The resurrection is the quiet but radical claim that darkness, however real, is not final. That loss does not have the last word. That even in the most uncertain of times, new life can emerge in ways we do not expect and cannot always see.

For some, this hope is deeply rooted in faith. For others, it may be recognised in acts of kindness, resilience, and courage that continue even in difficult times. In either case, Easter invites us to notice the signs of life that persist: In generosity, in community, in the refusal to give up on one another.

This Easter, we do not need to look far to see the weight of the world. But neither do we need to look far to glimpse hope.

The story we tell at Easter is not that suffering is absent, but that it is not the end of the story. Easter morning reminds us that even in the darkest moments, God is still at work.

The resurrection of Jesus is more than a historical event—it is a promise. It tells us that love is stronger than fear, light is stronger than darkness, and life is stronger than death. What seemed like the end on Good Friday became the beginning of something new.

In our own lives we experience seasons that feel heavy—times of grief, disappointment, or unanswered questions. Easter gently reminds us that these seasons are not the final chapter. Just as the stone was rolled away from the tomb, God can move the stones that seem impossible in our own lives.

Wherever we find ourselves this season, may the message of Easter fill our hearts with peace and courage for the days ahead and may the joy of the resurrection inspire us to look for signs of new life around us and within us.

Wishing you a blessed and joyful Easter.

Deborah

Contemplative Prayer Group

“Come and see” (John 1.39)

Contemplative praying is simply a way of perceiving the Godhead with the heart, rather than with the mind, the latter of which is our usual *modus operandi* for most of our daily waking hours.

The only skill that is required is the ability to sit still for a while.

The group meets in the St. Gabriel Chapel (to the right of the Lady Chapel) on the first Tuesday of every month from 1.00-2.00pm so please “come and see.”

Judith Yeo

Confirmation Preparation for Young People and Adults

The next Confirmation Service will take place at the 10am Choral Eucharist on Sunday 17th May. If you would like to be prepared for Confirmation, please give your full name and contact details (email and phone number) as soon as possible to: James.mustard@exeter-cathedral.org.uk or deborah.parsons@exeter-cathedral.org.uk



In Conversation with Dr. Alison Perham on:

“Is it helpful to talk about Dying?”

Sunday 10th May 2026

6:30pm The Chapter House, Exeter Cathedral

(Refreshments served from 6.00pm)

Dr. Alison Perham is a retired physician, initially working in General Practice, before specialising in Palliative Medicine. She has worked in different settings, hospitals, hospices and the community, in different parts of the country as her husband’s job moved.

Having this privileged experience made her appreciate the value for families, individuals and communities of discussions around older care, and end of life care. Having seen the benefit of informed decision-making, it has made her endeavour to create opportunities where those discussions can be gently approached.

Her intention during the conversation, is not to set herself up as an expert, but as someone who has been privileged to have witnessed, perhaps more than some, the complexities surrounding the end of our lives.

Her faith has always been, she hopes, at the core of her practice, and at the heart of her own decision making.

Join us for an evening of conversation and exploration followed by a short service of compline.



From the Company of Tapisers:

The Opus Anglicanum Team are approaching the end of the Circle of Life Project, commissioned by The Worshipful Company of Upholders in London, that has been worked on for the past year.

There have been six of us working on this embroidery and collectively we have stitched for 1,255 hours! A huge commitment - our members have shown remarkable dedication, determination and diligence in learning, and perfecting, the medieval stitching techniques. It has been a real 'learning curve' for us all - but there has been a lot of fun, too.

We have all learnt how important the role of an Upholder was in 14th century society: everyone knew their local upholder all their lives. When someone died it was the upholder who came to the house and put the body into a coffin, which was often upholstered inside. He then summoned the undertaker to take the body away. It was the upholder who assessed the chattels of the deceased, listed their debts... and auctioned the possessions to pay off these debts.

Hence the functions of upholders were three-fold: upholsterers, undertakers and auctioneers... all of which are reflected in today's London Livery Company.

As the final stitch is carefully placed into our panel it is a time for reflection as we see how much we have achieved. We now look forward to seeing the completed work - from all twelve participating Cathedrals - assembled together and unveiled in July.

Diana Symes, Chairman of The Company of Tapisers

Slow Book Group: *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence

The Slow Book Group is returning after Easter to explore and reflect together on *The Practice of Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence. This is a spiritual classic from a seventeenth-century French monk, which many people continue to find to hold deep wisdom for living today. Brother Lawrence's spiritual insights have helped bring people closer to God for more than three centuries.

There are many different translations, and we have chosen to use the version published by the Revell Division of Baker Publishing Group on 1 January 1999, ISBN10: 0800785991 / ISBN13: 978-0800785994, which includes the spiritual maxims as well as the letters and conversations. But if you already have a copy, please do bring that to the group.

Our meetings will be led by Clare Bryden and Canon Deborah. We will divide the book between the six last Thursdays of May-Jul and Sep-Nov, with no meeting in August. The sessions will be online between 7.30 and 8.30pm. In our time together we will review what we have read, share our insights, seek answers to questions and, in silence, discern how God's Spirit is calling us to deepen our faith.

We warmly encourage new participants. If you would like to sign up or if you have any questions about whether this group may be for you please email Canon Deborah at deborah.parsons@exeter-cathedral.org.uk.

Community Quizzes

The Easter and Christmas quizzes in 2025 raised £293.00 for the Sound System Appeal. Thank you very much to those who took part and special thanks to Jake Hibberd for compiling the clues.

A date for your diary: Harvest Supper Friday 2nd October 2026

The social team of the Cathedral Community Committee has arranged to hold a Harvest Supper in the Medieval Hall on 2nd October 2026.

More details nearer the time. Meanwhile, please put the date in your diary.

Next month's edition

We hope to publish the next edition of *Cathedral News* on Sunday 3rd May. Please send any articles or other information to any of the editorial team: Jenny Ellis, Rosemary Bethell or Heather Morgan at hmm53@tiscali.co.uk by **Tuesday 28th April 2026**.

Thank you from Prebendary Julian Ould

Dear All,

Thank you! There are no words really to describe my surprise at being presented with such generous gifts for both Jane and me. Thank you.

I was pleased to be able to preside at the 10.00 a.m. Eucharist, it always being a joy. I have also been pleased to be part of Cathedral life, it very much being like our family, which I am glad to say will continue. However, I was not expecting such love and generosity in gifts and words. It quite overwhelmed us both.

Yesterday (Sunday 22nd March) marked what I call my second retirement. When I retired six years ago, I was anxious! What would I do? Life as a parish priest had been full-on for so many years. Surely, I couldn't just stop, even if my doctor had insisted, I slow down. Life as a Priest Vicar was the answer, meeting my doctor's demand, but enabling me a continued ministry, which I have loved for the last six years. However, I now feel ready to move a little closer to whatever retirement is.

So now what? Well, we will continue, as I say, to be part of the Cathedral family. With my Permission to Officiate I will continue with a more limited ministry at the Cathedral and beyond. Travel is something we love, but there is now space to explore new ventures. Memories we will treasure and to know we are part of such a loving family, a joy. Once again, thank you.

With our love,
Julian and Jane

Cathedral Community Committee Meeting 10th March

We discussed the use of incense at the 10am Choral Eucharist and agreed to recommend that the present balance was about right. Incense will continue to be used once a month and, where appropriate, on special Sundays such as saints days.

It was agreed to recommend the availability of donation envelopes for Christian Aid Week.

Hot drinks and muffins are to be served after the Easter Vigil on Easter Day. We will have a Harvest Supper in October 2026.

Some suggestions were made to make the rubric at the 10am Choral Eucharist clearer. Feel free to welcome newcomers even during the closing organ voluntary!

It was agreed to approach people to see if they would like to join members of the committee in the team who welcome people outside the West Front before the Choral Eucharist on Sunday mornings.

Heather Morgan Chair CCC

From the Cathedral Flower Arrangers

Lent is nearly over and Easter flowers are just ahead- a sign that Spring is here! We have Holy Week to go through and making up the Easter Garden on the Wednesday, then the Altar of Repose on the Thursday, keeps us busy before arranging on Holy Saturday.

We have to gather all the components of the garden from stored places all around the Cathedral with the help of the Maintenance staff, the floor Managers and the Virgers. Then we have to make it look like the cave amongst stones, greenery, grass and the three dark crosses on the hill – not forgetting the twinkling light and cloth as the final placement in the cave.

Then my favourite – the high Altar as the Altar of Repose. We do this while the Bishop preaches at the Chrism service and we are privileged to be able to hear it all as we tip toe around. When it is lit on Maundy Thursday evening it is just magical with orchids and lilies and many candles. Sitting for the Watch at the end of the service is so moving and reminds us all what Holy Week and Easter is all about.

Then comes the joy of arranging everywhere in the building and the Easter candle beside the nave pulpit so that our beautiful building looks it's best for congregation and visitors alike. Should you wish to donate to the Easter flowers we will be happy to accept envelopes!

In line with the decisions made at General Synod we are moving to comply as much as we are able with regard to flowers. We have moved to a new supplier in Exeter who can supply local flowers when they are available, so we are cutting down on air miles as well as local mileage to deliver them.

Do let us know what you think of all the Easter arrangements as we are happy to have brickbats as well as bouquets!! Happy Easter everyone!

Flick Evans, Chair Exeter Cathedral Flower Arrangers

Farewell and Thank you....

...to our Marketing & Communications Manager, Amy Haynes, who left the Cathedral on 26th March to pursue an exciting new travelling adventure in Australia. Over the past four years, Amy has been an invaluable member of the Marketing & Communications team. She has led our development project communications, strengthened our social media presence, and helped to raise our profile through positive media coverage. She has been a great help and support to the *Cathedral News* team and we wish her all the best for the future.

The Cathedral is also saying farewell to Sarah Batt as she prepares a move to a different part of the country. Sarah has been a fantastic member of our Welcome Desk team, and we are grateful for all of the enthusiasm and positivity she has brought to her role.

Contemplating the Beatitudes: Being Blessed, Making Peace

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 5.9)
We discovered last month that those who are pure in heart are those who see God, and one another, without the distortions of divided loyalties. It is no accident that the beatitude which follows immediately afterwards invites us to live out that insight and to become active peacemakers in the world.

The Greek for 'peacemaker' is *eirēnopoioi*. Though Matthew did not coin the term it is noticeable that it does not appear elsewhere in the New Testament, or anywhere at all in the Greek Old Testament. So, Jesus is describing a group of people who have not been named in quite this way before. He is identifying those who not only long for peace for themselves alone or prefer harmony, but, crucially, are drawn by God into bringing it about.

Eugene Peterson (*The Message*) paraphrases this beatitude as:

You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

And in his lecture on *The Hebrew Understanding of the Beatitudes*, Rabbi Jack Zimmerman, a messianic Jewish teacher, offers this:

Oh, the joy you have when you seek peace with others, even when it isn't easy: you are truly acting as a child of God.

These interpretations may not be the ones we are most acquainted with. However, it is precisely because of this that we are helped to reach beyond our own familiar understanding of Jesus' declaration. Jesus proclaims that peacemakers *will* be called children of God (rather than *are* children of God). But he is not exhorting his followers to take up peacemaking in the hope of being called into the kingdom of God at some far-off point in the future. Rather, he is referring to something which is true but not always known. Where peace is being made, God is already at work through those who love him.

The reality of this claim will not be obvious to everyone of course, but it is to God. So, it is essential to remind ourselves that we do not act to earn God's blessing. It is by God's grace that we are already blessed and the work of making peace as an outworking of God's unconditional love.

In St John's account of the Easter story, the risen Christ enters the upper room where the disciples are locked away and proclaims: 'Peace be with you'. And, as we go on to read, Christ offers his peace not once but three times to this group of bewildered, fearful, grieving people. The disciples are not, however, instantly transformed into global bridge builders in the blink of an eye by the power of a single word. They are vulnerable human beings given a divine gift who will discover throughout the rest of their lives how to respond to it.

Peacemaking is not the same as keeping the peace of course. Martin Luther King captured the distinction when he wrote that peace is 'not merely the absence of tension, but the presence of justice'. And what is often referred to as *The Peace Prayer*, published anonymously in the early twentieth century (long associated with St Francis) shows us something of the character and shape of this calling. Its first line: 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace' is not the faint plea of someone for personal peace at any price but a petition asking that God will draw us intentionally into situations where reconciliation and justice are needed.

For ourselves, day by day, we may notice God's gentle nudge for us to be his instruments of peace in the extraordinary ordinariness of our lives. We may, for example, discern God's invitation when with our family and friends when misunderstandings sit simmering beneath the surface. Or we may feel God's gentle prompting when tensions between colleagues are ducked or skirted around. And, in our church communities we may feel inspired when we observe that the natural differences between us are no longer cherished as gifts to be celebrated but slip into becoming points of disagreement and discord.

The peace we share in is not our own. It is the peace which Christ offers to the world. Knowing this, our response is no longer one which treats God's peace as some sort of portable spiritual comfort blanket. Instead we may turn to God to ask where he might be inviting us to pursue peace in the here and now with the assurance of his blessing already given.

*Risen Lord Jesus,
You came to your disciples and gave the gift of peace.
Come to us now and speak your peace into our lives,
Equip us and send us out,
as those who carry your peace into the world.
Amen*

A Prayer for Peace

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
(Attributed to St Francis of Assisi)*

Phil Wales, Priest Vicar

Thank you....

...to Nellie and Pepper, the donkeys who led our Palm Sunday Procession.





Demelza Henderson writes: In May, I will be cycling about 1150 miles from Land's End to John O'Groats in aid of the *Association for Promoting Retreats* (APR), a national charity that promotes prayer and Christian spirituality especially through retreats.

I first completed the 'End-to-End challenge' as a young, fit twenty-something in 1998, and have always wanted to do it again – but somehow life circumstances have got in the way until now. Last time, I remember being amazed at how the landscape changes every single day, and how the country is completely linked by a web of picturesque lanes. I also remember enjoying a huge variety of flora and fauna: watching a family of badgers playing in a garden in Somerset, and seeing golden eagles soaring in the Scottish Highlands must be the highlights. This time, I will be taking a considerably longer route, which will meander across the country connecting twenty different APR member retreat houses and retreat leaders. It will be an opportunity to support them in their work, and to see some of the wealth of peaceful places of retreat that the UK has to offer. You will be able to follow my progress on the APR Facebook page, [@promoting.retreats](#).

In 2013, the *Association for Promoting Retreats* established a Bursary Fund to help finance retreats for people who might otherwise not be able to afford the

full cost themselves. Since then, it has contributed to more than 350 retreats at 30+ different retreat houses, and continues to support another 60-70 people every year. In 2024, the APR extended the scheme to offer no-questions-asked bursaries for retreats for teachers and welfare staff at Church of England schools. You can find out more about all of these on the APR website, promotingretreats.org/bursary.

With rises in the cost of living, there is even more need for financial assistance for people of all walks of life to take time apart for retreat; for rest, refreshment, stillness and prayer. I hope to raise at least £5000 from my bike ride, which would support an extra 50+ retreats this year for those who need them most. Will you support me?



You can contribute online (and pay via Paypal) through the QR code, which will take you to promotingretreats.org/cycling-fundraiser, or I am happy to collect cash or cheques (made out to the 'Association for Promoting Retreats'), which can also be left with Catrina in the Cathedral shop, if that is easier. Every donation, however small, will make a difference to someone who urgently needs time to step aside from daily life for a while to take stock and/or pray. Thank you.

Invitation to an Open Meeting of the Cathedral Community Committee **Sunday 12th April 2026 at 11.30am in the Sacristy**

All members of the Cathedral Community are invited to an open meeting of the Cathedral Community Committee in the Sacristy on 12th April (Low Sunday) at 11.30am in the Sacristy.

The purpose of the meeting is to gather views and insights from those who worship and volunteer at the Cathedral. These will be gathered and put into writing to assist those who will appoint our new Dean, following Jonathan's retirement.

The timetable for the appointment panel, chaired by the Earl of Devon, is tight, hence the short notice.

ALL WELCOME



The Installation of the Very Reverend Chris Palmer

Sunday March 15th 2026 is a day that many of us will treasure!

Winchester Cathedral is not one that I know well, but what riches it contains! The excitement of the packed Cathedral was palpable. The buzz of the many Devonians who had made the journey to support Chris and Olivia, and I believe the Hampshire contingent who were so looking forward to a new chapter in their story as they welcomed their 39th Dean. What must it have been like for Chris? Awe-inspiring challenging, thrilling? The service was one of much-loved hymns and anthems, solemn vows and prayers. Undaunted by all of this Chris managed to give an awe-inspiring

outline of his plans for his time as Dean which many of us felt exhausted just contemplating. I fear Chris will not be slowing down one bit!

Winchester will be a challenging role with many possible conflicting facets: an ancient building with 300,000 visitors per annum and all the changing philosophies of the 21st century to name but two.

In conclusion the day was a very uplifting service and we wish Chris and Olivia joy and strength to lead one the great English cathedrals into the future.

Muff Dudgeon

Chris is pictured above in his decanal cope; below with the Winchester Chapter



What's on in April

Easter Holiday Family Activities

3-17 April

Visit Exeter Cathedral during the Easter school holidays to take part in a range of fun craft activities.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/easter-holiday-family-activities/>

John Stainer's 'The Crucifixion' with University of Exeter Chapel Choir

3 April

Join the University of Exeter Chapel Choir and its alumni for a moving Good Friday performance of John Stainer's The Crucifixion at Exeter Cathedral.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/john-stainers-the-crucifixion-with-university-of-exeter-chapel-choir/>

A Friendly Introduction to Palaeography: Reading Some 14th Century Medical Remedies

15 April

Based exclusively on records in the Cathedral Library & Archives, this beginner's workshop is a chance to learn about some 14th century medical and culinary recipes and have a go at reading and transcribing some.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/a-friendly-introduction-to-palaeography-reading-some-14th-century-medical-remedies/>

Hands on History – What are Archives?

16 April

If you're aged 14-18 and curious about history, stories, and how the past connects to the present, this workshop is for you.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/hands-on-history-what-are-archives/>

An Opportunity to Wonder and Wander and Walk the Labyrinth

18 April

A labyrinth is a journey to the centre, a winding pilgrim path that is walked prayerfully and reflectively. There is no one way to use the labyrinth; each person experiences this pilgrimage in a different way.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/an-opportunity-to-wonder-and-wander-and-walk-the-labyrinth-2/>

Library & Archives In Focus – S. S. Wesley: Life, Music and Legacy at Exeter Cathedral

22 April

Marking the 150th anniversary of the death of Samuel Sebastian Wesley, this pop-up display looks at the enduring musical legacy and reforming vision of one of England's – and Exeter Cathedral's – most celebrated cathedral organists and composers.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/in-focus-wesley/>

The Exeter Volunteer Fair 2026

23 April

Explore volunteering opportunities at 70+ local charities and organisations across Exeter and the surrounding areas.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/the-exeter-volunteer-fair-2026/>

Shakespeare and his Contemporaries

24 April

Step into the world of Shakespeare at the Cathedral Library and Archives! Come and celebrate the South West Shakespeare Festival 2026 at our special pop-up display of Shakespeare and the brilliant writers and thinkers who shaped his age.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/shakespeare-and-his-contemporaries/>

Radiohead Reimagined by Candlelight

24 April

A groundbreaking show that reimagines the legendary sound of Radiohead in a breathtaking symphonic setting.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/radiohead-reimagined-by-candlelight/>

Art of the Book: Illustration in Early Printed Books

28 April

Study beautiful treasures in the collections of Exeter Cathedral Library & Archives to discover how illustrations were produced from woodcuts to lithographs and explore how text and image come together to convey meaning.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/art-of-the-book-illustration/>

The Music Of Westlife by Candlelight: 30 April

The Music of Westlife by Candlelight is coming to Exeter Cathedral!

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/the-music-of-westlife-by-candlelight/>

Saint of the Month: William Law, Priest, Spiritual Writer, 1761 Lesser Festival 10th April

William Law was born in Northamptonshire in 1686. He studied at Emmanuel College Cambridge where, in 1711, he was ordained and made a Fellow.

In 1714 he could not in good conscience take the oath of allegiance to the Hanoverian King George 1 and thus he was unable to function as a priest. He turned instead to teaching and spiritual direction and formed a close relationship with the family of the historian Edward Gibbon.

Law's best known works are *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection* (1726) and *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729). These publications, especially the latter, greatly influenced the proponents of the evangelical revival such as John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield and Henry Venn. Other admirers of his work included William Wilberforce and Samuel Johnson. One of his lesser know works is the intriguingly entitled *Letters to a Lady inclined to enter the Church of Rome*.

Law returned to Northamptonshire for the last 21 years of his life, where he died on 9th April 1761.

The Collect for the feast of William Law

*Almighty God, who called your servant William Law to a devout and holy life:
grant that by your spirit of love and through faithfulness in prayer
we may find the way to divine knowledge
and so come to see the hidden things of God:
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

Welcome!

A very warm welcome back to the Cathedral to the Venerable Hilary Dawson as interim Canon Treasurer. She will be installed during Evensong on 28th April.

Bishop Mike's Holy Week Ad Clerum

Bishop Mike has written an Ad Clerum (newsletter) for Holy Week. He reflects on the recent Installation of Archbishop Sarah, the War in the Middle East, changes at Exeter Cathedral and includes information about Holy Communion, Pray Grow Serve 2035 and Maundy Thursday's Cathedral Chrism service.

[Click here](#) to read his Ad Clerum.