



Contact

A magazine for our community

Happy
Christmas

St James' Church, Exeter - Winter 2024



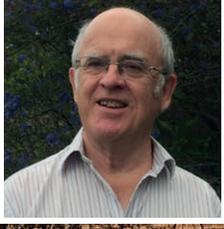
Rector
Fr Henry Pryse



Licensed
Lay Minister
Joan Ridgway



Churchwarden
Rachel Martindill



Churchwarden
Andrew Mimmack

Parish Office

Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter. EX4 7AH.
01392 420407. office@stjamesexeter.org
www.stjamesexeter.org

Please contact us here for baptisms, weddings, hall bookings and any other Church-related matters.

Regular Services

Sunday	8.00 am	Holy Communion (said)
	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist
	6.00 pm	Evening Prayer with Benediction (1 st Sunday)
	6.00 pm	Evening Worship (3 rd Sunday)

Wednesday 12.00 noon Holy Communion

Daily 8.30 am Morning Prayer

Online: Monday and Wednesday

In the church: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

At www.stjamesexeter.org/services/web-services-and-reflections you can find the **Parish Eucharist** on Sundays available to watch live or later.



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From the Lay Minister

Christmas is fast approaching and it's nearly time to be dashing into town in search of last-minute presents, checking to see whether you have any cranberry sauce in the cupboard, looking in the loft to dust off the decorations and check whether the fairy lights are still working, making sure you can find the giant stockings to hang up, and all the other hundred and one preparations that may have to be done before Christmas Day is upon us.

In the Church, these few weeks before Christmas, known as the season of Advent, are a time of expectant waiting and preparation. Many people place an Advent wreath on the front door at this time, and we have an Advent wreath with four candles around a central candle in the church. We light one more candle on each of the four Sundays before Christmas, and finally we light the central candle on Christmas Day, in celebration.

But what will we actually be celebrating? As Christians, we at St James', along with millions across the world, will be celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ more than 2000 years ago. The Christmas story is a story of earth-shattering, universe-shaking, mind-blowing proportions; it is the story of God himself coming down and becoming one of us. As part of his eternal plan, he stepped down out of heaven and became human, so that we can look at Jesus and say, 'That's what God is like.' The Christmas message is that God himself came among us, as a baby and as a man, so that we can know God and have a relationship with him. We light the final candle on our Advent wreath to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

Please do come and join us at St James' for any or all of our Christmas services; details can be found on page 15.

A joyous Advent, and a Happy Christmas to you.

Joan Ridgway



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Puzzle Page

7				9		2	
4	9			2		7	3
				8	5		
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Sudoku: Hard

Fill in the blanks, so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contains the numbers 1 to 9.

O	P	E	N	O	O	P	S	P	O	O	R
S	E	K	E	V	A	W	O	R	C	I	M
K	N	I	F	E	O	R	E	T	A	R	G
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W	I	C	O	L	A	N	D	E	R	N	N
E	S	O	F	E	N	E	G	D	I	I	T
R	E	L	L	A	D	L	E	I	R	F	A

Word Search

Can you find these kitchen items in the grid?

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|---------|
| Air fryer | Kettle | Skewer |
| Can opener | Knife | Spoon |
| Colander | Ladle | Toaster |
| Fork | Microwave | Tongs |
| Fridge | Oven | Whisk |
| Grater | Pan | |

Solutions on page 15

Parish Profile: The Szabo-Kriston Family

The Szabo-Kristons have been a part of St James' family since late 2023. Dr Ildiko Kriston, Gergely Szabo and their two sons, Benedikt and Oliver, came to Exeter in 2020 when Ildiko was appointed to a role in the Greenpeace operation at the University Innovation Centre. As a qualified chemical engineer who completed her PhD thesis on polymers and plastics, she was delighted to be selected for the post and to make the move from her previous position in the Hungarian capital, Budapest.

To quote from the Greenpeace website: 'The Greenpeace Research Laboratories form the Science Unit of Greenpeace International. Based at the University of Exeter in the UK, the laboratories provide scientific advice and analytical support to Greenpeace offices worldwide, over a range of disciplines. The laboratories are equipped with hardware for the analysis of heavy metal and organic contaminants in a range of environmental samples. An extensive database of scientific



literature has been built up since 1986 and serves as a core information resource.' Ildiko's role focuses on the identification of chemical compounds from environmental samples and on radiation protection topics.

Gergely has a background in media and previously worked for the Hungarian Royal TV company. After the family moved to the UK, he was a stay-at-home dad for a while, and he is now developing a video production business. His work, including with Greenpeace, can be seen on YouTube.

For the family, the move to Exeter has been a major success. All four have rapidly come to love the city and they have been amazed by the warmth of the welcome here. Benedikt and Oliver are respectively in years one and three at the Stoke Hill schools, where they have rapidly fitted into the multi-cultural setting. After coming from a land-locked country, they are delighted to be now only a few miles from the beach.

Hungary is a predominantly Roman Catholic country, so Ildiko and Gergely had been used to Church attendance. As they were walking past St James' one day and saw the banner advertising the monthly coffee morning, they ventured inside and found a warm welcome – 'Everyone was so nice.' This was followed by a visit to Messy Church, and the family now regularly comes to Sunday services. They particularly enjoy the music, and Ildiko has become a valued member of the alto section in the choir.

Andrew Mimmack

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‘Ring Out Wild Bells’

An education in bell ringing: there’s more to campanology than you might think.

This was certainly what a group of our young people discovered when they visited St Michael’s Church, Heavitree.

Their education started in the nave with a chance to look at a working model bell hanging in a frame. Within each cycle the bell can be rotated through 360 degrees and back again by the person operating the rope.

After this brief familiarisation with what the bell does, it was time to climb the steps to have a go at ringing one of the bells in the church tower. Coordination and technique were crucial here; it’s not easy to pull a rope attached to a bell that weighs the same as a small car.

A further ascent of the winding staircase brought the group to a doorway from which everyone could watch the bell ringing full-circle whilst the rope was pulled by an expert below. Eventually, at the top of the stairs, we emerged on the roof and were able to look out across the city and beyond.

Teamwork is essential in bell ringing, and our young people were introduced to the art of change ringing using handbells. Standing in a circle to ring in sequence, they had their first attempts at ringing Rounds, which is the term bell ringers use for the familiar sequence of a descending major scale.

To find out more about church bell ringing, go to <https://devonringers.org.uk/education/learn>, where you will see interesting information and contact details. Our thanks go to Dr Ian Campbell, Tower Captain at St Michael’s, and to Tim Bayton, President of the Guild of Devonshire Ringers, who facilitated our visit.

Jill Mather



A Christmas Lamp Tableau

You will need

- Milk bottle (1- or 2-litre)
- Scissors
- Plasticine or Blu Tack
- 3 dolly pegs or lollipop sticks
- PVA glue
- Cloth or crêpe paper
- Wool
- 4 or more LED tealights
- Large plate
- Greenery or tinsel

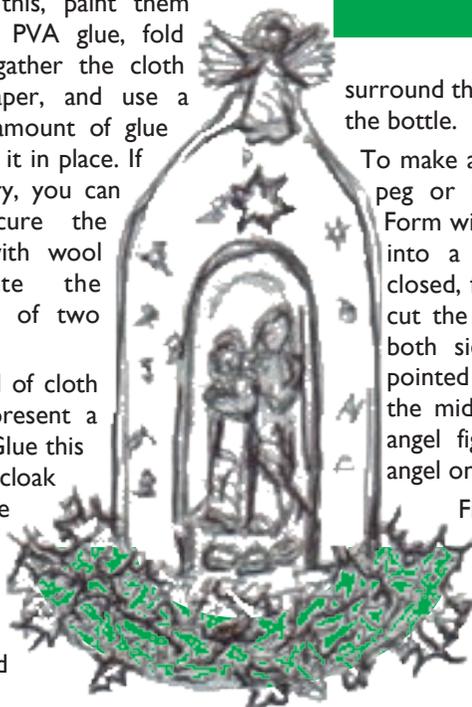


To make the Christmas Lamp Tableau

On the opposite side from the handle, cut a tall arch in the front of the milk bottle. This will form the door to your tableau. To make the floor, keep the base of the bottle intact and cover the inside with a 1-cm layer of Plasticine or Blu Tack.

Dress the dolly pegs or lollipop sticks with the cloth or crêpe paper to make the figures of Mary and Joseph. To do this, paint them with PVA glue, fold and gather the cloth or paper, and use a small amount of glue to hold it in place. If necessary, you can also secure the figures with wool to create the appearance of two cloaked figures.

Form a small roll of cloth or paper to represent a baby in a shawl. Glue this partly into the cloak of one of the figures. Now plant the figures in the Plasticine or Blu Tack base, and



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surround them with some LED tealights inside the bottle.

To make an angel, dress the remaining dolly peg or lollipop stick in cloth or paper. Form wings by folding a rectangle of paper into a fan shape. Next, hold the fan closed, fold it across the centre, and then cut the folded outer edges diagonally on both sides, so that the wings become pointed when the fan is unfolded. Glue the middle of the wings in place on the angel figure, and finish by securing the angel on the top of the bottle.

Finally, stand the tableau on the plate and decorate this with greenery, tinsel or further LED tealights.

Anne Killingback





Could you open your garden for Hospiscare in 2025?

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Caring in the heart of Devon

News from the Choir Stalls

Both in number and in ability, St James' Church choir continues to go from strength to strength.

In mid-October, on the choir's first outing since its formation in 2021, twenty musicians sang choral Evensong at St Peter's Church in Tiverton. With canticles by Charles Villiers Stanford and an anthem by William Billings, this truly uplifting service proved a wonderful way to share talents from St James' with friends further afield.

As Christmas approaches, the choir is now looking forward to St James' annual carol service, on Sunday 15th December. Preparations are also underway for several special pieces of music during Advent. In the new year too, there will be anthems, Psalms and more.

Would you like to join the singers, regularly, occasionally or for one of our special services at Christmas? The tenor section currently has space for an additional member, so please do

get in touch via the parish office. For Sunday mornings and special services, there is a varied selection of music to enjoy, which the choir rehearses intensively on Monday evenings. Furthermore, the members are especially fond of social events, when food, drink and good company are a testament to the strong friendships within the group.

St James' is additionally blessed with a number of instrumentalists who offer their musical talents. In January we hope that our series of mini concerts on Sunday afternoons will brighten up the dark winter days. Join us at 2.30 pm to hear free performances by some of our musicians.

- Sunday 5th January: Marco Bresolin
- Sunday 12th January: Tim Bayton
- Sunday 19th January: Tom Salmon
- Sunday 26th January: Matthew Clark

Tim Bayton

Charity Focus: InFocus

Exeter is rightly celebrated for its ancient Cathedral, Premiership rugby team, the Met. Office, the University of Exeter, and so much more. But did you know that, for over 180 years, it has been the home of a specialist charity for people who are blind or partially sighted? Based at Countess Wear, the organisation has been known by several names over the years and it is now called InFocus Charity.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to live life to the full. InFocus is dedicated to making this a reality for young people across the UK who have vision impairment and complex needs. These people often face a multitude of barriers as a result of the combined impact of vision impairment, other disabilities and additional support needs.

Imagine growing up without being able to use your voice to express decisions about your life. How would you feel if you needed regular hydrotherapy or physiotherapy just to be able to go to college, or if you required a communication aid to ask to go to the bathroom or to choose your evening meal? Many of us will have problems with our vision as we grow older, but we cannot imagine what it is like to be a teenager struggling with impaired eyesight and other disabilities.

InFocus runs residential and daytime care for teenagers and young adults. There is also a specialist college adapted to the complex

needs of people who are in education. At the InFocus centre here in Exeter, young people have access to water therapy pools, physiotherapy equipment and Braille resources. A nurse-led health centre supports their medical needs and hosts numerous visiting clinicians. There are even adapted training spaces to help with learning daily living skills such as cooking and gardening.

People from across the UK come to Devon to obtain the support that they need, in order to meet their goals, challenge themselves and enjoy a full life, whatever that may mean for them. InFocus also supports people with life-limiting health conditions, offering them a rich life and the best opportunities whilst supporting them and their families on a difficult journey.

Much of the work of InFocus depends on the kindness of strangers. Most of us will never know a family member who has a learning disability that affects vision or a vision impairment caused by a brain injury at birth. InFocus relies on the help of people here in Exeter to transform the lives of young people. Whether you volunteer in one of the Exeter charity shops, organise a collection of donated clothes, brave a fundraising challenge or make a cash gift: the family of InFocus supporters has a place for you. To find out how you can get involved, please e-mail me at L.Blyth@infocus-charity.org.uk please or visit www.infocus-charity.org.uk/support-us/.



Your help ensures that the charity can continue to make a difference, so that InFocus will remain a key part of Exeter's story for the next 180 years.

Laurence Blyth



3rd Exeter Air Scout Group

At the start of the autumn term we opened Exeter's 3rd Squirrel Scout section. Squirrel Scouts are the youngest part of the Scouting movement, open to children aged 4 – 6. Currently we have six young Squirrels and a lovely team of leaders and helpers, fronted by Red (Niki Jones) and backed up by Raksha and Bagheera. We have spaces for more young ones around age 4 – 5, with the chance to start straight away.

At a recent open evening in the hall we presented another new Scouting venture for the group: in January we hope to open a new Explorer Scout unit for young people aged 14 – 18. This will be based on our 'air' theme and forms a part of the streamlining of Exeter Explorers, as the one existing section in Exeter has become too big. Other sections opening in the city will include Sea Explorers on the quay. The aim of the open evening was to promote Air Scouting and potential activities for Explorers. Several stands were dotted around the hall and garden, offering activities and information on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Ten Tors, opportunities in Scouting for Young Leaders, basic Scouting skills, fencing, an introduction to Air Scout drills, and the county's only portable climbing wall. A question-and-answer session gave parents the chance to find out more, and refreshments were provided.

In the summer, 42 Beavers, Cubs and Scouts had a fabulous time with us at PGL Barton Hall near Kingskerswell. This adventure centre is packed with a huge range of activities, including archery, shooting, crate stacking, raft building, zip wire and climbing/abseiling. The Air Scouts also attended the annual parade for Armed Forces Day in June, at which RAF Brize Norton was given the freedom of the city of Exeter. In the younger sections, work on a host of badges has been rewarded with the presentation of some 300 badges across a multitude of themes.

Various Remembrance Day events took place across the city in November. As in previous



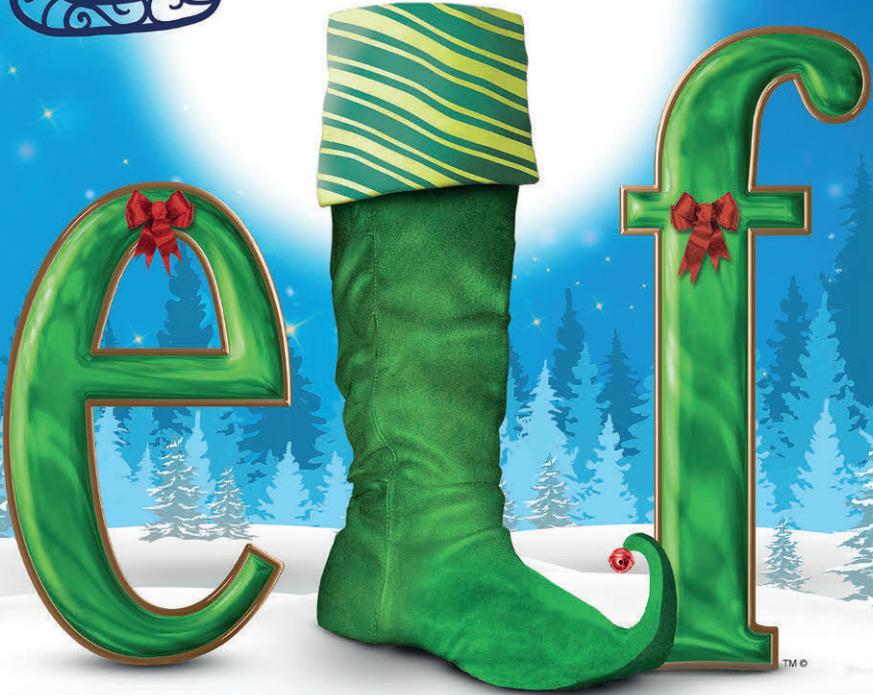
years, the Air Scouts attended Exeter City Council's Service of Remembrance at the war memorial in Northernhay Gardens. The Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs, together with their parents and leaders, took part in the act of remembrance at St James' Church.

Looking towards the end of the year, a visit to the Norman Lockyer Observatory in Sidmouth is coming up, and the group will soon be fundraising at The Range on Alphington Road. A Christmas ten-pin bowling party will conclude our activities in 2024.

To find out more about any of our sections – Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts or Explorers – please e-mail info@exeterairscouts.org.uk. Look out for us in a future issue of *Contact* magazine too; we look forward to sharing stories of our exploits in 2025.

Brad Warwick

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Book Review

Zeal for the Faith: An Introduction to Christian-Muslim Dialogue

By Tony Dickinson. SLG Press (2024), 54 pp. £6.50.



In this short but very informative book, Tony Dickinson writes of the need for greater dialogue between the world's two largest faiths, Christianity and Islam, and of the mutual enrichment and respect such dialogue can foster.

That such beneficial dialogue is possible, is shown by the meeting of St Francis and the Sultan, Malik-al-Kamil, in 1219, at the time of the Fifth Crusade. This encounter enriched both Sultan and Saint at a time of bloody conflict. It serves not only as an introduction but as a frame for the book as a whole; the author returns to it in the final chapter.

Before we get there, we learn a great deal about the various expressions of Islam; similarly to Christianity, it has had its fair share of schisms, sects, and heretics. We also

learn about points both of convergence and of divergence between the two faiths. Interesting comparisons are drawn, for example, between Sufis and Quakers, and between the Shi'ite theology of suffering and the crucifixion of Christ. The author, however, also reminds us of doctrinal differences in Islam and Christianity, which are not so easily bridged. Nor does he shy away from criticising those ultra-conservative strains in the two faiths that would make any hope of a deepening understanding impossible.

This excellent book is nonetheless also hopeful that with 'patience, openness, and humility' we can achieve a deeper and richer understanding of one another through interfaith dialogue, as St Francis and the Sultan did all those centuries ago.

Simon Lygo

Exeter Twinning Circle

In 2025 Exeter will celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of its twinning with Bad Homburg in Germany, considered one of the country's wealthiest towns and best known for its mineral springs, spa and casino. The latter, established nearly two centuries ago, is one of the oldest and most famous casinos in Europe. Exeter is very fortunate to be twinned with such a fine town, which has many strong links with England.

One historic connection began in the time of King George III. In 1818, his daughter Elizabeth married Prince Frederick of Hesse-Homburg, the heir to the throne of Hesse-Homburg, one of the smallest states in the German Confederation. Princess Elizabeth was very popular with the people of Bad Homburg; thanks to her large dowry and annual allowance, she had roads built in her new home town and she had the Gothic House constructed in the palace grounds. She also oversaw restoration of Homburg Castle, as well as using seeds and seedlings from England to create an English garden in the grounds.

For the sixtieth anniversary of Exeter's twinning with Bad Homburg, our German friends will visit Exeter from 29th April to 4th May 2025, and a return visit will be made later in the year. Exeter Twinning Circle is preparing a celebratory programme for the spring visit and would welcome more hosts to join us for this special occasion.

Would you like to take part? Language is no problem, as most of our German guests speak perfect English, and they love opportunities to practise. To find out more, to join in, or to host a family from our twin town, please contact me on 07971 108846, send an e-mail to secretary.exetertc@gmail.com or visit <https://exetertwinningcircle.org.uk/>.

Beryl Whidden



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Save Sylvania Hall!

If you've passed Sylvania Hall recently, you might have noticed that it's looking a bit neglected, but you might not have realised it has been forced to close completely. When the building was first provided for the community back in the 1980s, it was not expected to be still in use forty years later. Consequently there are now major structural problems, which mean the hall is potentially unsafe in high winds, as the supports are rotting and might be unable to keep the roof up. Because of the age and overall condition of the building, the council is no longer attempting to maintain the existing hall, but it may be willing to hand over the site to the hall committee for a new community building.

So what happens now, and how can you get involved? Awareness must be raised that the hall is no longer in use and will be demolished. A survey has been produced, so that the committee can find out both what the community needs and what the replacement building should provide. To complete the survey, go to <https://rb.gy/zx8tvx> or scan the QR code.



Help is also needed with delivering flyers, ensuring that all suggestions can be submitted and all views heard. You can join regular meetings of the Save the Hall group, as well as a WhatsApp group to stay in touch. Contact sylvaniahall@gmail.com or call our community builder, Ebbie Peters, on 07516 692583.

Stella Cahill



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Dates Ahead

December

Sun 1 st	4.00 pm	Celebrate Together
Wed 4 th	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Thu 5 th	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's house group
Fri 6 th	2.00 pm	Craft group
Sat 7 th	4.00 pm	Christingle service
Wed 11 th	12.15 pm	Friends Who Lunch
Sun 15 th	11.30 am 4.00 pm	St James' Nativity Exeter Nativity at Exeter Cathedral
	6.00 pm	Carol service
Fri 20 th	2.00 pm	Craft group
Tue 24 th	4.00 pm 11.00 pm	Crib service Midnight Mass
Wed 25 th	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist for Christmas Day
Fri 27 th	10.30 am	Coffee morning
Tue 31 st	12.00 pm	New Year's Eve Eucharist

January

Wed 1 st	9.00 am	St Mary's Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church Mass
Thu 2 nd	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's house group
Fri 3 rd	2.00 pm	Craft group
Sun 5 th	2.30 pm	Free concert
Wed 8 th	12.15 pm 3.30 pm	Friends Who Lunch Messy Church
Sun 12 th	2.30 pm	Free concert
Fri 17 th	2.00 pm	Craft group
Sun 19 th	2.30 pm 6.00 pm	Free concert Wholeness & Healing service
Sun 26 th	2.30 pm	Free concert
Fri 31 st	10.30 am	Coffee morning

February

Sun 2 nd	4.00 pm	Celebrate Together
Wed 5 th	3.30 pm	Messy Church
Thu 6 th	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's house group
Fri 7 th	2.00 pm	Craft group
Wed 12 th	12.15 pm	Friends Who Lunch

February continued

Fri 14 th	2.00 pm	Craft group
Tue 25 th	7.30 pm	PCC meets
Fri 28 th	10.30 am	Coffee morning
March		
Sun 2 nd	4.00 pm 7.00 pm	Celebrate Together Parish Eucharist for Ash Wednesday
Thu 6 th	7.30 pm	Fr Brian's house group
Fri 7 th	2.00 pm	Craft group
Sat 8 th	3.00 pm	Celebration of 100 th St James' Messy Church
Wed 12 th	12.15 pm	Friends Who Lunch
Fri 14 th	2.00 pm	Craft group
Sun 16 th	12.00 pm	Annual parish meetings
Fri 28 th	10.30 am	Coffee morning
Sun 30 th	10.00 am	Parish Eucharist for Mothering Sunday with distribution of posies

Puzzle Solutions

Sudoku

7	5	8	3	6	9	4	2	1
4	9	6	5	2	1	7	8	3
1	2	3	7	4	8	5	6	9
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Word Search

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St James' Church
Every Sunday in January
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Free concert



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