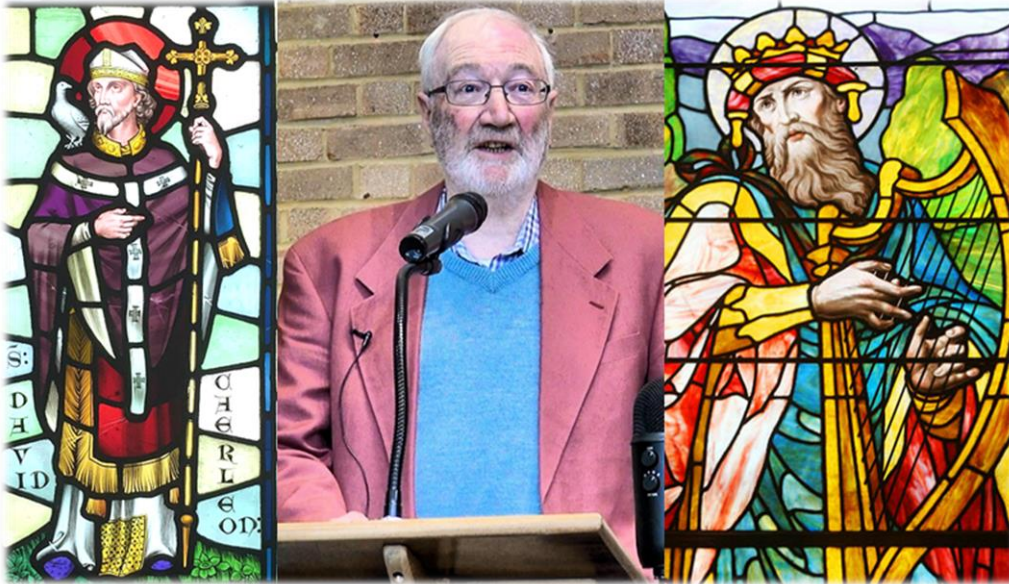


# Communion Service Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March – led by David Ramsay

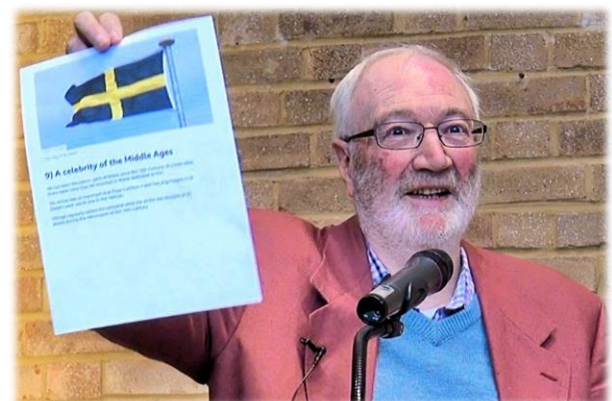


*It was St. David's Day, and David had placed a leek and a daffodil on the table - traditional Welsh symbols worn by Welsh soldiers to distinguish themselves from the enemy. His talk was to be about 'Two Davids' but actually there were three; a saint, a king, and a fun worship leader – and was there was a certain resemblance?*



St David, the Patron Saint of Wales was best known for founding numerous religious communities. His image had evolved over time from the saintly figure with a halo and dove depicted in stained glass, to a humble, scholarly hermit in recent portrayals. And David gave us ten widely held beliefs about St. David:

1. St. Patrick was said to have foretold David's birth thirty years before it occurred. Some claimed David lived over a century, but he died on 1st March 589.
2. According to legend, his mother, Non, had given birth to him during a storm atop a Pembrokeshire cliff, and a bolt of lightning split the rock at his birth. There was a holy well nearby reputed to have healing powers.
3. He had come from aristocratic roots—his father was said to be a prince and his grandfather a king. His mother had become a nun and was later canonised.
4. He was not baptised David; his given name was Dewi, the Welsh diminutive form of David.
5. He'd studied at a monastery, become a minister, and spread Christianity throughout Wales, founding many monasteries, settlements, and churches. He once rededicated Glastonbury Abbey and donated a travelling altar with a great sapphire.
6. He'd made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, returning with a stone that was now on the altar at St. David's Cathedral, on the site of the original monastery.
7. He and his monks practised extreme asceticism—they were teetotal vegetarians, said to subsist on just leeks and water. They'd pulled the plough themselves when ploughing their fields. No animals!
8. He was credited with miraculous acts, such as curing his tutor's blindness and reviving a dead boy with his tears. One famous story had told how the ground rose beneath his feet as he spoke to a crowd, and a white dove settled on his shoulder.
9. By the Middle Ages, St. David had become a celebrity, with over sixty churches in Wales dedicated to him. Pope Callistus had declared that two pilgrimages to St. David's shrine equalled one to the Vatican. St. David had his own flag: a yellow cross on a black background.
10. St. David's final message to his followers had been to "be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things" they had seen him do—a phrase still cherished in Wales today: "Gwnewch y pethau bychain mewn bywyd"



David had also compiled ten key facts about King David of Israel.

1. King David had been the second king of Israel and had begun life as the youngest son of Jesse in Bethlehem, working as a shepherd, defending his flock against wild animals.
2. He'd famously defeated Goliath, the Philistine giant, with a slingshot and become a national hero. Some scholars speculated that Goliath's poor vision may have contributed to his defeat.
3. He had been a talented harpist and songwriter, serving in King Saul's court and soothing the king's troubled spirit.
4. Despite being the youngest son, the prophet Samuel had anointed David as the future king of Israel.
5. David first became king of Judah in Hebron, later uniting all twelve tribes of Israel and reigning for forty years. The tribes were named after Jacob's twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Joseph, and Issachar.
6. He'd conquered Jerusalem, making it the political and religious capital of Israel.
7. Despite significant flaws, David had been described as "a man after God's own heart" and was remembered for his devotion.
8. He was traditionally credited with writing 73 of the Psalms, which expressed worship, repentance, and a range of human emotions.
9. David's life had been marked by grave sins, notably his adultery with Bathsheba and the arranged death of her husband, Uriah.
10. In Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, David's lineage was significant, believed to include Jesus Christ.

Reflecting on these two remarkable figures, it was striking how different their lives had been. King David a powerful leader and warrior who had also committed serious transgressions. St. David, by contrast, a gentle, devout man who had built churches and monasteries, blessed and preached to the people, and led a humble life. Both were important to the Christian tradition. Their legacies continued to inspire and remind us of the diverse ways people could shape faith and culture.

The name David itself was ancient and meaningful, translating as "beloved" or "gift from God."

*Chris tells me she often calls David "beloved" – generally when he's not deserving it!*

*And we have to thank Laurence Williams, our organist for the day, who had flown in from Canada to play for us. His claim for travelling expenses at £19.40 appears modest under the circumstances.*

