

Ruby Country Benefice

The parishes of Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington with Highampton, Clawton, Halwill, & Tetcott with Luffincott

Bulletin February 2026



*"Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD*
Psalm 32:10 (ESV)



December 2025 / January 2026

23rd Dec.

Funeral of Stuart MARWOOD
(North Devon Crematorium)

14th Jan.

Funeral of Elisabeth Clare ENGLAND
(Holy Cross, Tetcott)

CONTACTS

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Tetcott

Sharon Wonnacott

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Holywell Joint Council

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From the Parish Registers image (pg. 2) © Parish Pump,
Cover image: Clapper Bridge photo by Ben Wrigley on Unsplash
Pg. 8, Hut image generated using ChatGPT
Pg 17-21, images from Shirley Richmond
Thanks to Revd. Dr. Paul Fitzpatrick, Nicki Mitchell, Shirley Richmond
and Val Letheren for their contributions.



FEBRUARY

From the Rector's Desk

It is Thursday evening, I have spent the day qualifying a clergy support worker for the diocese, who Henry totally adored. Consequently, as a steel grey mist and drizzle descends (again), and I am sat at my desk writing this, Henry's gentle snoring fills the office.

As this new year begins, 'Mission' is very much at the top of my agenda - as too is our Deanery positioning, clergy support availability, my February sabbatical to look at Christian ethics, and the potential development of a Community Chaplaincy Team.

Although as busy as ever, I have made the time to read more and take a little more down time. I have read several books (volumes) on Christian ethics, multiple books from the period between the wars, including Virginia Woolfs 'To the Lighthouse', and a mass of new histories from the Tudor and Reformation period. Subsequently, I have engaged with some of the most challenging and rewarding theological reflection since I came back to Devon. Thank you all for pushing me to do this (you know who you are).

This new year has seen fresh contacts with two new head teachers who are desperately eager to engage with church and I am actively

following that up. I also want to look at pioneer ministry (see the article on 'hut in a wood'), and I want to look at how the Celtic evangelists founded churches in our benefice which is one of the first to be Christianised in Devon.

All this said and done, what have I learnt, or relearnt, this year? Well, I need more time to pray, morning and evening prayer are a given, but that slower, deeper, reflective prayer, like a friend sat talking at evening in an armchair by a fire; a time of space and awaiting, of honesty and tacit understanding, forgiveness and none-judgement. I have re-found a centre that I had temporarily, in the business of last year, mislaid.

Of course (thank goodness), we all pray differently. God calls us and speaks to us separately, where we are. The dark gloominess of January provides an opportunity to revisit our relationship with God and without 'doing' anything physical, just sit, listen and talk – deeply. We all need to make time for ourselves, Jesus and each other. Without this, we will achieve very little and miss so very much.

You have been a real joy to work with over the last year and I would very much like to take this time to both say a heartfelt 'thank you' and wish you all the very best, blessed, holy, and loving, new year.

Paul.

Ruby Country Benefice

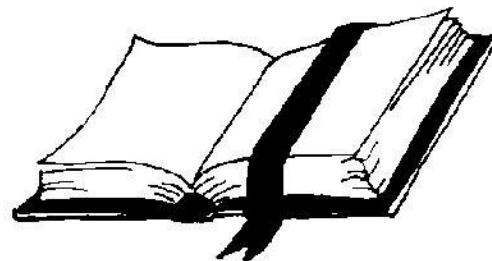
Services for February 2026

Sunday 1st Candlemas	9:30am	Ashwater	Morning Service
	11am	Black Torrington	Holy Communion
	11am	Halwill	Morning Service
	5:30pm 6pm	Tetcott	Tea and Service
Sunday 8th 2 nd Sunday before Lent	11am	Black Torrington	Café Church
	11am	Clawton	Holy Communion
	4:30pm	Beaworthy	Evensong
Sunday 15th Next before Lent	9:30am	Ashwater	Holy Communion
	11am	Black Torrington	Morning Prayer
Wednesday 18th Ash Wednesday	10am	Black Torrington	Holy Communion with Ashes
Sunday 22nd 1 st Sunday of Lent	11am	Beaworthy	Holy Communion with the Venerable Verena Breed, Archdeacon of Barnstaple
	11am	Clawton	United Service
Sunday 22nd	6pm	Black Torrington	Bible Study

Weekly – all welcome from the benefice

Every Wednesday	10am	Black Torrington	Morning Prayer
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Lectionary Readings for February 2026



<p>Sunday 1st Candlemas</p> <p>Malachi 3:1-5 Psalm 24:1-10 Hebrews 2:14-end Luke 2:22-40</p> <p>Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill, Tetcott.</p>	<p>Sunday 8th 2nd Sunday before Lent</p> <p>Genesis 1:1-2:3 Psalm 136 Romans 8:18-25 Matthew 6:25-34</p> <p>Services at Black Torrington, Clawton, Beaworthy</p>	<p>Sunday 15th Next before Lent</p> <p>Exodus 24:12-18 Psalm 2 2 Peter 1:16-21 Matthew 17:1-9</p> <p>Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill</p>
<p>Wednesday 18th Ash Wednesday</p> <p>Service at Black Torrington</p>	<p>Sunday 22nd 1st Sunday of Lent</p> <p>Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11</p> <p>Services at Beaworthy Clawton.</p>	

*To help you prepare for one of our services or to
read at home-*

Mission Matters: A hut in a field

My fourth school Carol Service done, one more to go plus five parish and one Hunt service, to follow.

I am driving the twenty miles to Okehampton to pick up a book. Amazon would have been easier, but I wanted to support the little indie book shop.



The air this 17th day of December, is dark-pouter, stained by rain. mud everywhere. Forested trees in the midday bleakness, wet and crumbly.

I slow down. What is on the road is speeding and angry; there is little Christmas cheer on the back lanes today.

Then I see it.

A hut. half hidden in a field behind a bare hedgerow, no visible access. A tiny caravan, once white, but now an off shade of algae-green. A tiny tin stack and a puff of smoke telling me that someone hidden, lost, lives in a hut no bigger than my office and sleeps in a frozen, wet, caravan, in a muddy corner of a field, unknown, and in my Benefice.

As I drive, I look now. I always knew that we had a lot of people passing through; yurts and vans, midsummer bonfires, discarded bottles and illegal cars. But as I drop my speed (and annoy those behind me) I find eleven more; huts, caravans, horseboxes and stables (how appropriate in advent). A range of people unknown and unwanted.

I thought about this community of the lost. There is a ton of wonderful work done in towns and cities by our churches for the homeless. In in our rural areas, market and rural chaplains care for our farmers.

But who is there for these people, who cares, or even notices?

Such a ministry would garner little financial support. Rural churches struggle (a lot!) just to manage their share; the Diocese is (rightly) focused on growth and outreach.

Here in an unpopulated and neglected part of North Devon where the nearest small town is 20 miles away; there is no one.

I think about Brigid, Petroc, Kevin and Patrick, who all passed this way in the sixth century, reaching out to tiny warlike settlements and people dispossessed, frightened and alone. People they cared for, trusted, shared good news of a better life, baptised and led to Christianity. Giants in humanity and service to Christ.

Our church looks very different now.

I have been reflecting, after a diocesan training day on Pioneer Ministry, what that might look like where I am; I think it is starting to take shape. I also remember, as I start to think about retirement, what I vowed at my ordination, to find the lost sheep, to care for, and to feed, them. Amen+

Paul

St. Mary's Church, Black Torrington

The theme of our next
CAFÉ CHURCH is...

COME ON DOWN!

The Price is Right

(Yes like the game show)

11am

Sunday 8th February 2025

We hope to see you there!

Donations toward food and Church upkeep appreciated but not expected

Part of Ruby, Holywell Joint Council, registered charity no. 1216130

Photo by Erik Mclean on Unsplash

The background of the poster is a light blue color. It is decorated with several stylized fried eggs. Each egg has a white, irregularly shaped border and a bright orange yolk in the center. Some yolks have a small yellow crescent shape on them. The eggs are scattered across the background, with some partially cut off by the edges of the poster. A solid black circle is positioned at the top center of the poster, above the main title.

Big Breakfast

IN AID OF
Tetcott Church

SATURDAY 7TH FEB

9AM-11AM
AT THE ARSCOTT HALL
TETCOTT
ADULTS £12 CHILDR £6

St ALBANS, BEAWORTHY -NEWS

One further step in the refurbishment project _ The oak flooring was laid in the chancel, one step closer to improving the aesthetics and safety .

St Alban's Christmas Draw

The weather couldn't have been worse for ticket selling. Nevertheless the St Alban's team of Kath Prior, Richard Prior and Jane Wonnacott shared the burden of selling draw tickets outside the Halwill Village store on the 6th, 14th and 21st December. .. Even more thanks to the brave souls who ventured out to shop and were persuaded to buy tickets. Thanks to them we raised £220 for church funds

Our Carol service

The Carol Service on the 23rd December was celebrated by in Candlelight. With the tree and plenty of greenery the church had been transformed . The service designed by Richard Prior moved at pace with a mix of traditional and less familiar carols. Kath Brimacombe at the organ accompanied the carols and two Christmas Medleys' by the Stowford Singers had us tapping our feet and rocking to the sound of guitars, keyboard and their voices. The evening retold the familiar nativity story read by members of the congregation and the Stowford singers. The lessons concluded with St John, Chapter 1 – The world made flesh and dwelt among us – and the Service concluded with prayers and the John Betjeman poem, Advent 1955: If you don't recall it, Advent 55 makes very well worth reading with its message so relevant today.

Mulled wine and apple juice plus mince pies provided welcome warmth after the service and once the initial buzz had settled down, the draw for the two large hampers was made.

A young family from Holsworthy won the first and a local resident of Beaworthy took the second prize.

The retiring collection was divided between the Air Ambulance and the Church. Thus ended a very traditional and happy evening.

Sandra Ward , PCC Secretary , 13th January 2026

**Come and join us
- open to all**



**Every 3rd Wednesday
of the month**

**Meet fellow puzzlers, puzzle,
chat, donate, loan, borrow**

Tea, coffee available.

We look forward to seeing you

11am -12:30pm

St. Mary's Church, Black Torrington

Parson Jack Russell

Art, Craft & Photography Exhibition



**June 12th -15th
2026**

**St Mary's Church,
Black Torrington**

For more details:

PJR Exhibition

Little Acorns, Burdon Lane,
Highampton, Beaworthy EX21 5LX
Phone: 07484880770

val.letheren@btinternet.com



Mission Action Plan Consultation: Ruby Country Benefice.

January 2026. Revd Dr Paul Fitzpatrick: Rector & Rural Dean: Holsworthy

Introduction

Holsworthy Deanery, Group, and Mission Community do not have a Mission Action Plan (MAP), nor is there an appetite for one. Therefore, upon my arrival as Rector we developed an MAP specifically for this Benefice with ambitious task and finish actions. This has now been completed.

Ruby contains six churches spread over 50 square miles. Unlike the other two Benefices in the Deanery, we have no central hub or Market Town. There are four small shops, four pubs, five primary schools and the remainder farms and small villages. We less than 2000 people and we are depopulating. We do have a significant (and rapidly growing) population who are not in villages or farms but live itinerant lifestyles in caravans, yurts and huts. Almost 50% of our benefice is now forested or being developed for renewable energy.

Ruby Benefice was formed in 2018 by merging pre-existing, and very different Benefices and over the last three years have made significant progress in working together and in mutual support; not least with the development of the 'Ruby Holywell Joint Council'.

All three Deanery Benefices have very different needs, opportunities and potential; all three Rectors, solidly committed to outreach and growth, will have, by necessity, differing skills sets and unique approaches to the mission requirements in their own setting. Ruby Benefice feels that we need to move at speed to address our own

mission and growth requirements. We are, therefore, acting as an independent Mission Community with its own Mission Action Plan, and are looking at our own situation in relationship to other neighbouring deaneries.

This plan is based upon Prayer, the diocesan five mission priorities and extensive training carried out over the last three years, and after extensive advice from Diocesan officers and SMT members.

Ruby Benefice Mission Action Plan

1. Community Chaplaincy

We are blessed with three lay ministers who have all undergone different but extensive training and we are looking for this number to grow. Our churches are largely older people with small Sunday service congregations but most churches have shown growth in the last two years and we frequently fill our churches for festivals and occasional offices. We urgently need to develop work with young families, schools, and itinerant communities, including the isolated and lonely. A 'pioneer' approach, with mixed economy which takes church to our people is urgently needed. A rural and locally based 'community chaplaincy' (CC) could address this issue. This approach supports the incredible work already being undertaken, in all our churches, and seeks to build upon it.

2. Rural Adult Evangelism Strategy

In the last two years all the congregations in the Benefice have undergone both 'bereavement and loss' training but have also engaged in 'sharing our stories' modules. We have become more open and outward looking and our ecumenical engagement has been enormously positive. Where we need to be now is with the isolated and marginalised. Our role model for this might be the Celtic Saints who originally evangelised this area and would fit a

chaplaincy engagement process.

3. Young Families and Children

Ruby has no colleges, children's centres or family support units. It does have five primary schools and a strong integrated community focus. The Rector is a Governor at one Church school group but leads assemblies and advices on community cohesion at all five schools. Although there would never be a context in which this would be used for direct evangelism, contact and a very strong willingness to engage in Christian teaching and pastoral support, is being enabled but one person can't do this alone. Two parishes already have very strong links to their local schools and are keen to develop these, but this would be considerably enhanced by a community chaplaincy approach.

Conclusion

Ruby's mission priorities as agreed are distinct from those of the other Deanery Benefices. Our mission area consists of villages and small rural communities and, until now, we have lacked a cohesive identity, which would be best addressed by the development of a community chaplaincy.

Our deanery covers 147 square miles with only three clergy. We are frequently in-quorum, support mechanisms don't function and there is a firm geographical disconnect between Ruby and the other Benefices. We will seek reorganisation this year to further mission and support partners.

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Five Strategic Priorities



Missional Leadership



Missional DNA



Vocations



Children & Young People



Mixed Ecology

TO THOSE WHO SUBMIT TO THE BULLETIN

Firstly, thank you for your contributions, which always shape our Bulletin.

Please make sure you send submissions to

rbycbulletin@gmail.com

Anything not sent to the above email **will not** get into the publication.

Work begins on the bulletin on the 15th of each month, so please get submissions in BY THE FIFTEENTH.

Thank you.

Please feel free to join us!

No experience needed!



Church Tower Bell Ringing

Wednesday evenings

6:30pm – 8:30pm

1st Wednesday – Langtree

2nd Wed. – Black Torrington

3rd Wed. – Shebbear

4th Wed. – Black Torrington

5th Wed. – Roaming!

ST MARY'S RUBY RINGERS



Weekly Handbell Ringing

Tuesday afternoons at St.

Mary's, Black Torrington

2:15pm setup

2:30pm – 4:30pm



St Mary's, Black Torrington

Morning Prayer

Every Wednesday

10am

You go nowhere by accident.
Wherever you go, God is sending you there.
Wherever you are, God has put you there.
He has a purpose in your being there.
Christ, who indwells in you, has something He
wants to do through you, wherever you are.
Believe this, and go in His grace, and love and
power.

Rev. Dr. Richard C. Halverson's Benediction
U.S. Senate Chaplain from 1981 to 1994
Photo by [Francisco Delgado](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Princetown Prison and a 'conchie'

by Shirley Richmond

I knew that my Uncle 'Pop' had been in a prison on Dartmoor during WW1 because he had been a Conscientious Objector.

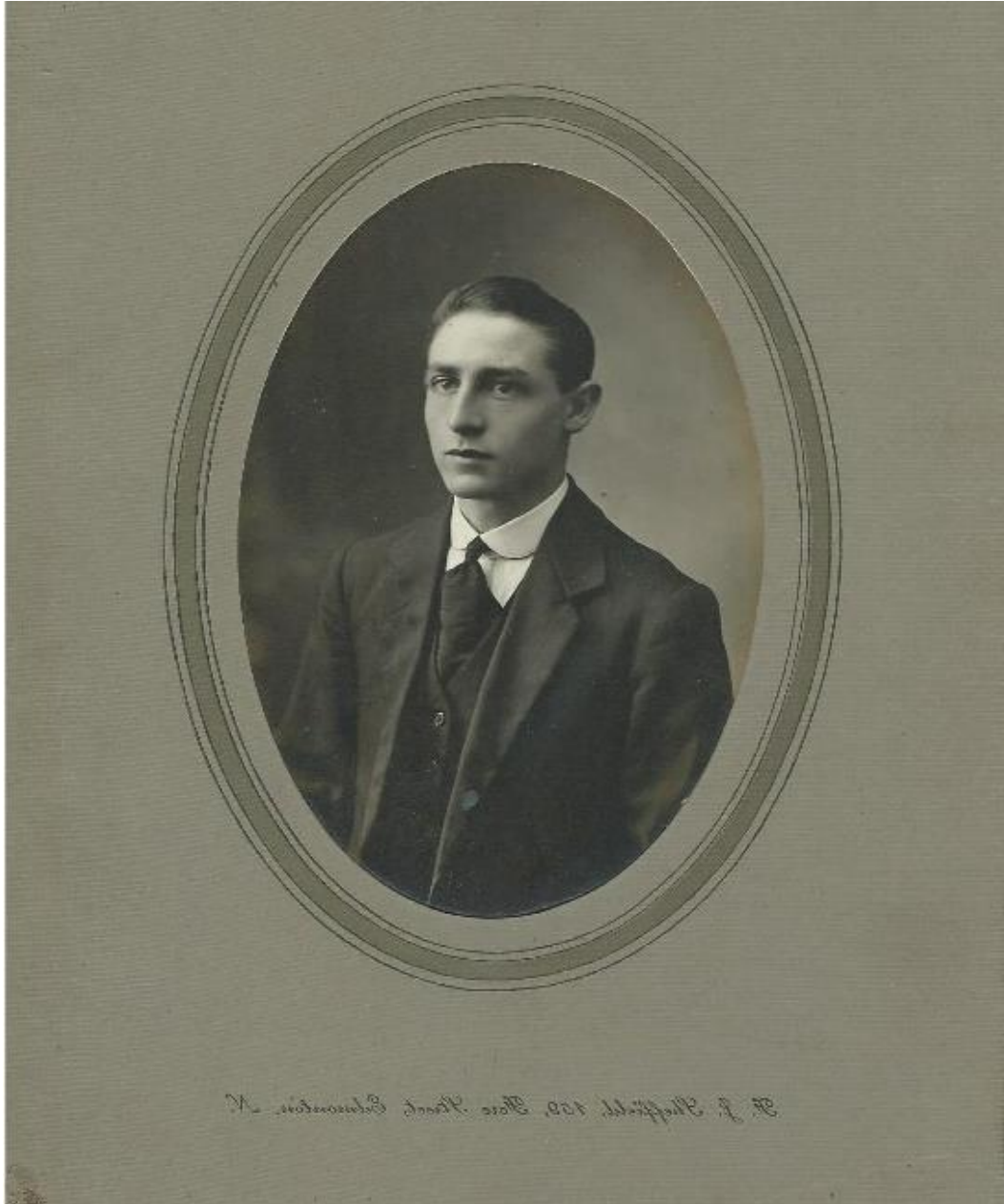


Photo of Pop. Taken before he was sent to New Zealand?

My family was not great at giving explanations and I was the youngest of five children, so it was a kind of mantra for me; no information. I hardly knew him; he came every year to visit for the

day to prune our apple trees. Only in 2002 did I meet his daughter, my cousin Daphne, for the first time.

Charles Egerton Barnes [Pop] was born in 1892, the second son, born after Hazel Francis, followed by Ethel Constance [Jo], Hilda, my Mother Shirley and six years later by Ruby Kathleen. Father was a corn chandler [Master].

In April 1913 Ruby died of diphtheria, my mother had scarlet fever and in the September Pop worked his way to New Zealand and on to Australia. I learned those two facts from the letter he wrote for the Tribunal.



The Friends' Hostel

When we came down here, I realised that we were near Princetown so we visited the museum. Apparently, it is most unusual for any records to have been kept as they were ordered to be destroyed, but not in Middlesex apparently. I was able to hand on many details.

I do not understand why Pop left home, although he was 21 by then. However, in October that year my Grandfather died suddenly. Pop heard of this from a friend in Australia who had heard the news by letter; did they go out together? Surely by this time the war must have started? Six weeks later Pop boarded a ship and worked his passage back. His mother was in a dreadful state, Hazel was working away and sent money home, my mother and Jo were working in hospitals, Hilda was unable to work.

Conscription began in 1916. Ironically, he was then employed as a Ledger clerk in the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield Lock. He had previously been granted 3 months conditional deferment and in the submission of 12th September 1916 he explains the

domestic problems, also stated he had poor eyesight and some stomach problems, also his objections to war.

His case was dismissed and went to tribunal. One comment he made reminded me of Paul's remark recently: 'War is caused through Greed.'

The appeal was dismissed, mainly because the mother would not suffer monetary loss.

So he was sent to Princetown.



The Prison Football Team. Pop is front row, right.

At some point he was working at South Molton: '15th May 1917 CO returned from South Molton. He is quite fit for any kind of hard labour, including tree feeling etc'

Pop wore pince-nez glasses 'without attachments' at that time. Apparently, if glasses were broken while at work they could be replaced 'at the Public Expense', so the MO enquired whether such "beauty glasses" should be included in the list.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE

The fee for this certificate is 1s. 6d.
If sent by post, it is 1s. 9d. in addition.
A stamp for it is payable in addition.



Given at the **GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE**
SOMERSET HOUSE,

Application Number...246785

REGISTRATION DISTRICT <u>TAVISTOCK</u>								
1917 Marriage solemnized at the Register Office								
in the District of <u>Tavistock</u>			in the Counties of <u>Devon and Cornwall</u>					
No.	(1) When married.	(2) Name and surname.	(3) Age.	(4) Condition.	(5) Rank or profession.	(6) Residence at the time of marriage.	(7) Father's name and residence.	(8) Rank or profession.
152	Twentyfourth October 1917	Clarence Egerton Barnes	24 years	Bachelor	Clerk	The Settlement Princetown	Hazell Barnes (Deceased)	Cos. The Chandler Jeweller
		Daisy Constance Fairpoint	24 years	Spinster		Friends Hostel Princetown	Edward John Fairpoint	
Married in the Register Office according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England by Licence before us This marriage was solemnized between us, <u>C.E. Barnes</u> and <u>D.C. Fairpoint</u> in the presence of us, <u>F. Gamble</u> and <u>G.H. Spiller</u> <u>Thomas Henry Granch</u> and <u>Ernest Warren</u> <u>Superintendent Registrar</u>								

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Marriages in the District above mentioned.
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the 26th day of August 1957

This certificate is issued in pursuance of Section 55 of the Acts 12 & 13 Geo. 6. c. 36 (Marriage Act, 1948). Section 55 (3) provides that any certified copy of an entry purporting to be sealed or stamped with the seal of the General Register Office shall be received as evidence of the marriage to which it relates without any further or other proof of the entry, and no certified copy purporting to have been given in the said Office shall be of any force or effect unless it is so sealed or stamped as aforesaid.

CAUTION.—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

The marriage certificate

Another interesting fact is that on 24th October 1917 Pop and Daisy were married at Tavistock Register Office!! Daisy stayed at the Friends' Hostel and Pop's address was the Settlement Princetown.

Shirley Richmond
January 2026

Morning Prayer

Every Wednesday Morning, the Benefice holds a Morning Prayer service at St Mary's Church, Black Torrington.

10am

This service is Lay led and lasts for about half hour.

Everyone is welcome to attend

If the weather is bad

Please phone Val 07484880770

to check it's happening

Answers to December's Quiz

Similes: 1. Dishwater. 2. A Daisy. 3. A picture. 4. A tack. 5. Nails. 6. A Doornail. 7. Rain. 8. Sin. 9. Apple Pie. 10. A Whistle. **12 Days of Christmas**

Maths: 1. 364 gifts. Tricky: 184 birds (42 swans, 42 geese, 36 calling birds, 30 French hens, 22 turtle doves and 12 partridges in their 12 trees.).

Nativity: 1. Joseph. 2. Shepherds. 3. Gabriel. 4. Jesus. **Questions:** 1. 4 ghosts (Marley + 3 spirits). 2. White. 3. William I (the Conqueror).

Senior Clergy Reflection from the Rev'd Canon Deborah Parsons, **Canon Chancellor, Exeter Cathedral**

Lent: A Journey of Renewal and Hope

When I was eight, I gave up sugar in my tea for Lent. My first experience of fasting. Years later, reflecting on the experience, I realised that my motivation for giving up sugar wasn't a desire to draw closer to God but to avoid conflict with my parents. I was afraid to tell them that the drinks they made for me were too sweet.

Lent invites us into a season of honesty and self-examination.

As we prepare to begin these forty days, we're called not to impress God with spiritual effort, but to return to the One who knows us fully and loves us deeply.

Many people choose to mark Lent with prayer, fasting or acts of generosity. These practices are not meant to be burdensome, but life-giving. They help us refocus our attention on what truly matters: Loving God and loving our neighbour.

In parishes and communities across Devon, people will gather for Lent groups, shared worship, and charitable action, reminding us that faith is something we live out together.

Lent's not simply about giving things up, but about making space – space to listen to God, to deepen our faith, and to notice where change is needed in our lives and in the world around us.

It also speaks powerfully into the challenges of our time. As we face uncertainty, injustice, and environmental concerns, this season encourages honesty, repentance and hope. It assures us that transformation is possible – not through our own strength alone, but through God's grace.

As we journey through Lent, may we do so with open hearts, trusting that God is at work within us and among us, leading us towards the joy, renewal and resurrection hope of Easter.

by Rev'd. Canon Deborah Parsons, Canon Chancellor, Exeter Cathedral

Worried about a Child or Vulnerable Adult?

Please speak to your Parish Safeguarding Representative if you have any concerns for the wellbeing of a child or adult, or about the behaviour of someone towards a child or adult.

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative is:

ASHWATER: Not Known.

BEAWORTHY: Not Known.

TETCOTT: Sharon Wonnacott Sharonwonnacott@hotmail.co.uk 07980 989 262

HOLYWELL JOINT COUNCIL (Black Torrington with Highampton, Clawton and Halwill)

Val Letheren rubycountry.beneficeadmin@btinternet.com 07484 880 770

If you cannot reach your Parish Safeguarding Representative, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team:

Costa Nassaris Head of Safeguarding and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 294 969 costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org 07809 339 501

James May Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 345 910 james.may@exeter.anglican.org 07889 542 646

Rebecca Lane Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
01392 294 975 rebecca.lane@exeter.anglican.org 07889 542640

David Cross Deputy Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
david.cross@exeter.anglican.org 07572 923 242

General Enquiries: safeguarding enquiry@exeter.anglican.org
01392 294 929

IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM

If you believe someone is at immediate risk of harm or that a crime has been committed dial **999**.

If you have serious concerns about an individual's wellbeing, you should contact the relevant agencies:

Concerns about Children	0345 155 1071	Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Concerns about Adults	0345 155 1007	Devon Care Direct
Domestic Abuse	0345 155 1074	Devon Helpline for professionals & Individuals
Rape Crisis	0808 802 9999	

Please notify your Safeguarding Representative and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team after contacting any of these agencies.

All information in this bulletin correct at time of publication

Ruby Country Benefice

RUBY PEOPLE WORSHIPPING IN GOD'S COUNTRY

St. Peter Ad Vincula, Ashwater EX21 5EY
St. Alban, Beaworthy EX21 5AB
Holy Cross, Tetcott EX22 6QZ

Ruby Holywell

Charity Number: 1216130

St. Mary's, Black Torrington EX21 5PU
St. Leonard, Clawton EX22 6PS
St. Peter & St. James, Halwill EX21 5UH