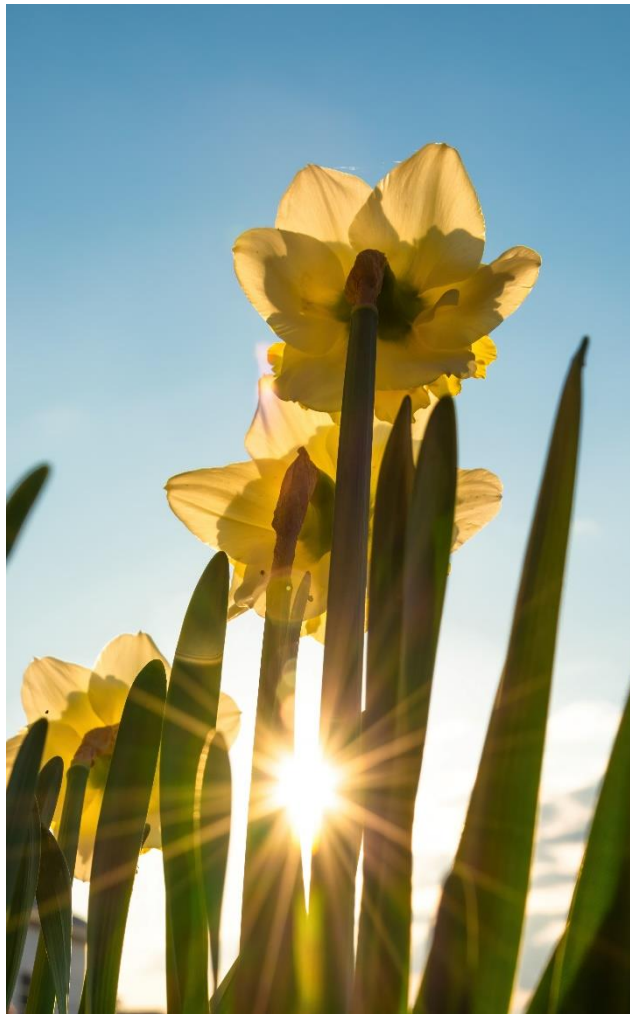


Ruby Country Benefice

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

Bulletin February 2023



*“Exalt the LORD our God
and worship at his holy mountain,
for the LORD our God is holy.”*

Psalms 99: 9

The logo is a circular emblem. At the top, the text "From the Parish Registers" is written in a curved path. Inside the circle, there is a profile of a person's head facing right, with a halo around it. Below the head, there is a lit candle with a flame. To the right of the candle, there is a small cross. The entire emblem is rendered in a stippled or dotted style.

JANUARY

CONTACTS

Revd. Stephen Skinner 07554 142 264

Ashwater	Terry Darby	01409 211 229
Beaworthy	Richard Prior	01409 221 986
Black Torrington:	Sheila Grabham	01409 231 581
	Val Letheren*	01409 231 430
Clawton:	Irene Ellis	01409 271 371
Halwill:	John Lawlor	01409 221 987
	Kay Napier	01409 221 321
Highampton		
Tetcott:	Nicki Mitchell	01409 271 381

* or as above

From the Parish Registers image (pg. 2) © Parish Pump,
Cover image: Photo by Leo Chane on Unsplash
Ukraine graphic on the back page from pixabay.com, by chiajo-18290215
Thanks to Revd. Stephen for sending the poems on pages 9 and 10
(from *Eggs and Ashes* by Ruth Burgess, Wild Goose Publications)



February

“FAILURE!”

I hope that the title of my February Article has caught your attention. I think that it will, because we all go around in life with some sense of failure, arising from many different causes. As I look back upon my own life and ministry, I become acutely aware that some of my attempts as a Vicar over 40 years have failed, despite my best (or worst) efforts! Let me give just two examples:

- ~ Trying to resolve a major difference of opinion in one church between the Robed Choir and Music Group. Ultimately the Music Group dissolved when their leader left the area, and I had to disband the Choir because of the way they treated the Organist (who also had resigned!).
- ~ Trying to persuade the five churches of the Local Ecumenical Partnership that I led to settle their differences over church government, priorities and worship styles, so that their undoubted energy could be directed towards a much stronger missionary outreach in their area.

Of course, I also wonder just how successful or not I have been in my three years of ‘Interim Ministry’ here! To be honest, there have been undoubted failures as well as some inspiring successes. What would be your honest and balanced assessment of this strange period?

Actually, I think most clergy carry around a gradually accumulating weight of perceived failure, because the expectations placed upon us and from within ourselves are not fully achieved. It’s not something that we are meant to talk about, and so we have to take it to our spiritual directors.

I expect that many of you have felt degrees of failure in your working life or in church life too. We are all expected to succeed, but find we have to settle for less than perfection.

There are other kinds of failure that we can experience in our lives. For example:

- ~ Failures in relationships, such as in marriage, family life or disappointments in other friendships.
- ~ Failures in settling into a new village or community; finding that somehow, we just don’t ‘fit in’.
- ~ Failures in our health, to perhaps lose weight, fight illness, or overcome a disability.

~ Failures to understand various moral issues in our society, and how they can be resolved.

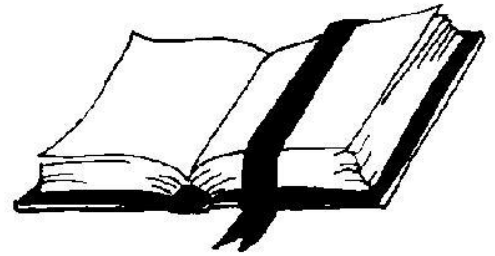
Most deeply, I expect most of us feel we have failed to live up to the expectations of God for how faithful we are in our discipleship, and the depth of our experience of God's loving Spirit.

Now, it's all too easy to say that our failures can be a springboard to success if we learn our lessons well. Management Books are full of wise advice on how to regard setbacks as opportunities, but these can sometimes ring rather hollow in our real, imperfect world. So how do we face 'failure' without getting too depressed, and how does God regard our various failures? How honest are we prepared to be about our failures before God and in our relationships? There are many stories in the Bible of people who failed - what can we learn about how they dealt with failure? Most shockingly (perhaps) one could regard the story of Jesus' life as an ultimate failure; the crowds turned against him, he was betrayed, arrested, tortured, condemned to death, and even his closest disciples abandoned him. Finally, we hear the ultimate cry of failure on Christ's Cross: "My God, My God, why have you deserted me?" We need to feel deeply on Good Friday, the desolation of that ghastly time.

This Lent will provide us with a crucially important opportunity to examine all these issues relating to Failure. We can share with each other in our Lord's presence our honest experiences and even traumas, and to console each other. We will have opportunity to learn how to handle better the sense of Failure in our life, and to discover new resurrection hope for the future. **The Archbishop of Canterbury's 2023 Lent Book is called "Failure" (by Bishop Emma Ineson).** We will have opportunity in a Lent Course series, to share our reactions to the ideas in this book. There will be a Course Booklet called, "Dust and Glory", which we can study together 'in person' if we wish – I suggest on Tuesday Mornings, starting on 21st February. The Church of England will also provide 'on line' daily Reflections and Prayers on this same theme, supplemented by free digital resources and Social Media blogs / posts. This promises to be a hugely valuable Lenten journey – **will you join me on it?**

STEPHEN

Lectionary Readings for February 2023

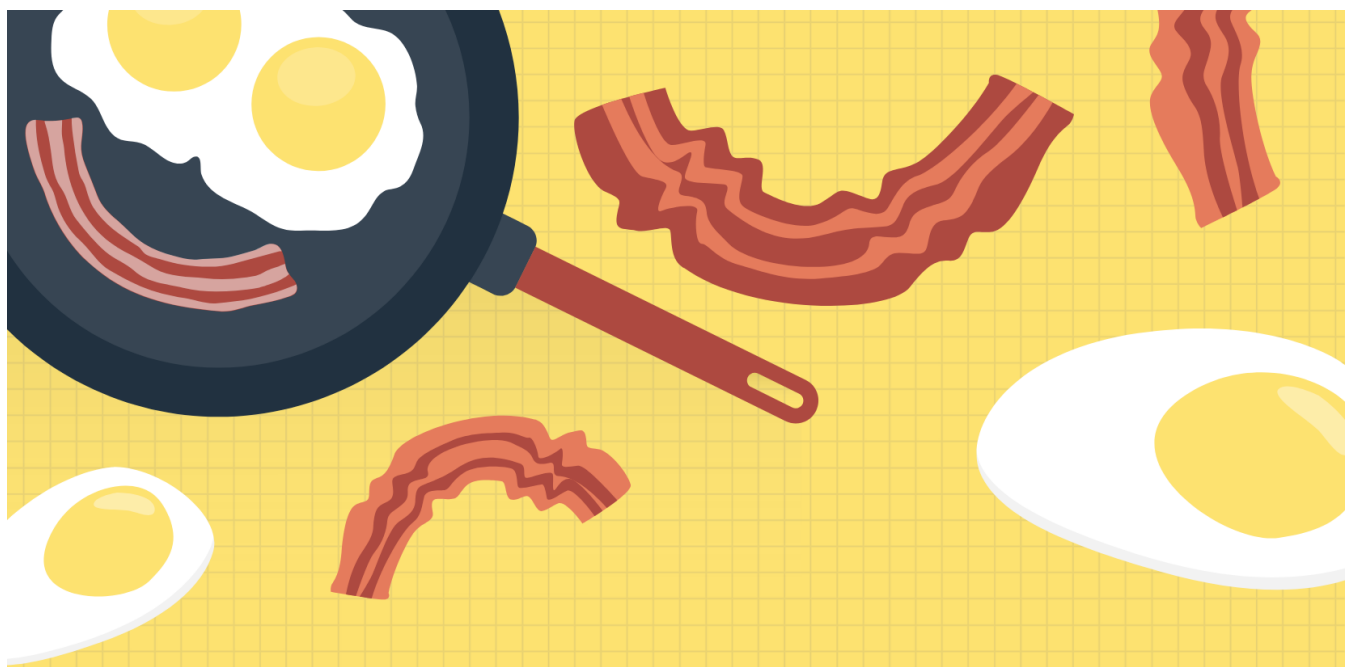


<p>Sunday 5th (3 before Lent)</p> <p>Isaiah 58: 1 – 9 Psalm 112: 1 – 9 1 Corinthians 1: 1 – 12 Matthew 5: 13 – 20</p> <p>Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill</p>	<p>Sunday 12th (2 before Lent)</p> <p>Genesis 1: 1 – 2: 3 Psalm 136: 1 – 9 Romans 8: 18 – 25 Matthew 6: 25 – end</p> <p>Services at Black Torrington, Clawton, Beaworthy</p>	<p>Sunday 19th (1 before Lent)</p> <p>Exodus 24: 12 – end Psalm 99 2 Peter 1: 16 – end Matthew 17: 1 – 9</p> <p>Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill</p>
<p>Wednesday 22nd Ash Wednesday</p> <p>Isaiah 58: 1 – 12 Psalm 51: 1 – 18 2 Corinthians 5: 20 – 6: 10 Matthew 6: 1 – 21</p> <p>Service at Halwill</p>	<p>Sunday 26th Lent 1</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, Highampton</p>	

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

Ruby Country Benefice Services for February 2023

Saturday 4th	9am – 11am	Arscott Hall, Tetcott	Big Breakfast & Informal Service
Sunday 5th	9.30am	Ashwater	Communion
3 before Lent	11am	Black Torrington	Morning Service
	11am	Halwill	Communion
Sunday 12th	11am	Black Torrington	Café Church
2 before Lent	11am	Clawton	Communion
	6:30pm	Beaworthy	Evensong
Sunday 19th	9:30am	Ashwater	Morning Service
1 before Lent	11am	Black Torrington	Communion
	11am	Halwill	Morning Service
Wednesday 22nd Ash Wednesday	10:30am	Halwill	Communion
Sunday 26th	11am	Beaworthy	Communion
Lent 1	11am	Clawton	Café Church
	3pm	Highampton	Evening Service



Please join us for

Breakfast church

FULL ENGLISH BREAKFAST WILL BE SERVED

Saturday 4th February from 9am till 11am

in the Arscott hall Tetcott

adults £10 children £5

Recruitment of a new vicar for our Benefice

Our advert is live in the Church Times once more and we are praying for applicants. Please do feel free to join us on Wednesday mornings at Black Torrington where we are praying for our new vicar.

God our Father,
help us to put our trust in you
to send your chosen person
to lead us on
to where you would have us to be.
Amen.

Senior Clergy Reflection from Canon Cate Edmonds, Canon Steward Exeter Cathedral & Rural Dean, Honiton Deanery

“Why is your nativity still out?” is a question I am often asked by visitors. Many people assume that the nativity scenes should be packed away with all the other decoration after Twelfth Night. But the nativity scene is not just a decoration, it’s a reminder and celebration of God’s incarnation. As such it remains out for the whole of the Christmas and Epiphany season which ends at Candlemas or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on 2nd of February.

Sadly, for many, nativity scenes *are* just part of the Christmas decorations, but for some they represent much more. The history behind family nativity scenes is often fascinating; some are handed down from generation to generation, and some are battered and worn but still regarded with affection. An elderly lady I was talking to recently told me about hers, let’s call her ‘Rose’. Rose’s nativity was very old with wooden figures and had been bought in Germany a long time ago. Rose told me that one Christmas, many years ago when they were living in Germany, they had a visitor from East Germany, who knew nothing about Christianity or any faith. The family shared the Christian story which fascinated their visitor who stayed with them over the Christmas holiday. Just after they had finished eating Christmas lunch, the visitor exclaimed in a loud voice, “baby Jesus hasn’t arrived!”. She was of course referring to the fact that the family had, in the excitement of the day, overlooked putting the wooden Jesus in his stall. Rose related this story to me as an example of the effect God’s wonderful incarnation can have even on those who haven’t been introduced to the faith before.

The nativity scene can have many different effects on people, we do not always understand it’s strength. So, I think it is certainly more than a decoration and we should keep it visible and reflect upon it, at least until Candlemas.

Canon Cate Edmonds

MARCH BULLETIN DEADLINE: 15TH FEBRUARY

Please send any details of services, events, or fundraisers you want publicised, or any contributions – articles, images, poems etc. to Kay by this date, with any emails containing the word “Bulletin” in the subject. **ANYTHING NOT RECEIVED BY THE 15TH WILL NOT BE IN NEXT MONTH’S BULLETIN**

The desert waits (an invitation to Lent)

The desert waits,
ready for those who come,
who come obedient to the Spirit's leading;
or who are driven,
because they will not come any other way.

The desert always waits,
ready to let us know who we are –
the place of self-discovery.

And whilst we fear, and rightly,
the loneliness and emptiness and harshness,
we forget the angels
whom we cannot see for our blindness,
but who come when God decides
that we need their help;
when we are ready
for what they can give us.

Ruth Burgess

Help us turn

Gracious God,
whose steadfast love never ceases:
by your hands we live
and to your hands we return when all our days are done.
Help us turn in our Lenten journey
from hopelessness to hope,
from self-concern to other-concern,
from empty conformity to radical discipleship.
As we bear these ashes on our face,
remind us that you have washed away the ashes on our souls.
Grant that the awareness of our mortality may lead us
not to fear, but to faith.
In our weakness teach us to look to you for strength,
in our failures to turn to you and find forgiveness,
and in our dying
to await the gift of everlasting life.

James Hart Brumm

St. Mary's Ruby Ringers

Playing the restored church handbells



Meeting on Tuesdays

4:15 – 5:30pm

St. Mary's Church,
Black Torrington

All who would ¹⁰like to have a go are welcome!

WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT?

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

Your Parish Safeguarding Representative is:

Name: **Val Letheren**

Contact: **val.letheren@btinternet.com** or **07484880770**

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

Charlie Pitman, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser - 01392 345909

Charles.Pitman@exeter.anglican.org

Stephen Edgeley, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer - 01392 345910 -

Stephen.Edgeley@exeter.anglican.org

Phill Parker, Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser - 01392 294969 -

DBS@exeter.anglican.org

For general enquiries - SafeguardingEnquiry@exeter.anglican.org

IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM?

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

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

Concerns about children

Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): **0345 155 1071**

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

Concerns about adults

Devon - Care Direct: **0345 155 1007**

Domestic Abuse

Devon helpline for professionals and individuals: **0345 155 1074**

Rape Crisis

National: **0808 802 9999** Devon & Torbay: **01392 20417**



St. Peter Ad Vincula, Ashwater EX21 5EY

St. Alban, Beaworthy EX21 5AB

St. Mary, Black Torrington EX21 5PU

St Leonard, Clawton EX22 6PS

St. Peter & St. James, Halwill EX21 5UH

Holy Cross, Highampton EX21 5LE

Holy Cross, Tetcott EX22 6QZ



The Priest in Charge of our churches Revd. Stephen Skinner can be contacted by telephoning 07554 142 264 or emailing sjmskinners@btinternet.com