



Ashwater Beaworthy Black Torrington Clawton Halwill Highampton Tetcott

St. Peter Ad Vincula St. Alban St. Mary St. Leonard St. Peter & St. James Holy Cross Holy Cross

## Benefice Bulletin

# January 2022



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*Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory  
of the LORD is risen upon thee.*

Isaiah 60:1

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## FUNERALS

2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Stella Endersby (Ashwater)
3 <sup>rd</sup> December	Bill Bowden (Highampton)

## CONTACTS

### Priest in Charge (part time)

Revd. Stephen Skinner 07554 142 264

### Contacts for Churches:

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

**Safeguarding Val Letheren 07484 880 770**

\* or as above

# January

## “HAPPY EPIPHANY!”

I am sure that you have been wishing each other “Happy Christmas!” many times in recent weeks, but I expect very few would offer the greeting “Happy Epiphany!” To be honest, I don’t do this either, except to surprise people and get a reaction. But nearly all of January is, in religious terms, the season of Epiphany. So what is this all about?! A poem might make it a bit clearer:

“**M**agi, wise men with the wisdom to know  
that light comes by searching, by following,  
and a touch of magical other-worldly majesty in a simple manger.

**A**ll men, all folk lacking wisdom stumble around in the dark,  
in and out of the abyss, hoping for light, hunting for angels,  
for revelation, looking everywhere but in the manger. “

Epiphany is the name given traditionally to the time of year when we consider at leisure the story of the pilgrimage of the Magi (Wise Men or Astrologers) to search for the child Jesus. They were guided on their long journey from Iran by an especially bright star, angels and Jewish prophets. They diverted to Jerusalem and nearly got entangled in the evil plans of King Herod, who felt threatened by the prospect of a greater King than himself usurping his despotic rule.

The Wise Men of course most likely never met the Shepherds at the stable in Bethlehem, but the scene makes for a pretty nativity tableaux,

with more parts for the boys! But there is a message in this myth: the Shepherds represent the local Jewish folk, coming to acclaim Jesus, and the Magi represent the rest of humanity coming to recognise him as the 'Chosen One'. The overall meaning of the 'journey of the Wise Men' is that Jesus is 'Light for the whole world', This divine light is sent by God to help us to see more clearly the way ahead for ourselves and the world – and surely we need it more than ever in these perilous days! In addition, this divine light, if received by us with enthusiasm, can also enlighten us with more of the divine qualities of love, purity and truth.

The word "Epiphany" actually has a wider meaning than to do with the journey of the Wise Men to offer their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to Jesus as one of the wisest men in human history. To have an 'Epiphany' is to have a moment of 'realization' and greater clarity about something that we need to understand better. This could be regarding the purpose or direction of our life, in a specific or perhaps more general way. At the beginning of a new year, I suspect that many of us will be seeking for this – wherever the source. If you Google the word "Epiphany" then you might locate an article by "Huff Post" that lists eight Epiphanies that the author claims that we all should enjoy. For example - Number 4: "The journey is more important than the goal". Maybe this was at least in part true for the Magi. They would have learned a great deal on their journey: about the stars, biblical prophecies, each other's personalities, and themselves and their response to danger. I hope they would also have learned more about Jesus and about God along the way!

I pray that 2022 will be a year when you experience new 'epiphany moments' which reveal more of life's hidden meanings with greater clarity. If you greet each other with the words "Happy Epiphany!" then you are hoping that others will enjoy the same! I'll conclude with the rest of the poem (by Caroline Morris) – it takes the form of an acrostic:

“God weeps grace over the world, leading wise men on to glory,  
offering all folk possibilities; pours grace upon us,  
pours out grace to the weak and despised but beautiful.  
Grace and glory in the manger.

I struggle to be wise, but I get in the way,  
and find myself in the dark with everyone. It’s a long way up to God . . .  
.  
It’s a long way down to the manger.”

*Revd Stephen Skinner (Priest in Charge)*



Social Distancing in Church

**A bright light is shining**  
(Tune: 'Brightest and best')

On the horizon a bright light is shining,  
Calling on magi to travel afar,  
Leaving behind all the known and familiar,  
Risking their future to follow a star.

Harsh is the way, very long is the journey,  
Crossing the borders of custom and doubt;  
Seeking a new prince, not found in a palace,  
What has this pilgrimage all been about?

Led to the stable, they're filled with elation:  
God is revealed in a small baby's face.  
Humbled, they're kneeling in silent devotion,  
Sensing within an outpouring of grace.

Gold is presented and laid on the stone floor,  
Costly and precious, a gift for a King;  
Ruling his people with love and compassion;  
Freedom and justice, Christ's Kingdom will bring.

Incense so rare, is placed gently beside him,  
Fragments of fragrance, a gift for a priest;  
Lifting the prayers and hopes of his people,  
Valuing those who are poorest and least.

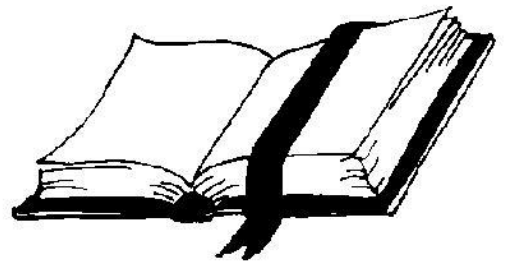
Myrrh is the last of the wealth to be offered,  
Oil for embalming, a gift for his death;  
Sold and denied, he will know crucifixion;  
Love will be shown 'til his very last breath.

Magi head homewards with no star to follow,  
Finding new meaning, it's hard to depart.  
Christ is for seekers, he still journeys with them,  
Christ is for all who have given their heart.

Avis Palmer

Pg 259 in *Winter*, ed. Ruth Burgess, Iona.

# Lectionary Readings for January 2022



<p><b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup></b> Epiphany</p> <p>Isaiah 60: 1 – 6 Psalm 72 Ephesians 3: 1 – 12 Matthew 2: 1 – 12</p> <p>Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill, Luffincott</p>	<p><b>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup></b> Epiphany 1</p> <p>Isaiah 43: 1 – 7 Psalm 29 Acts 8: 14 – 17 Luke 3: 15 – 17, 21 – 22</p> <p>Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Clawton, Beaworthy</p>	<p><b>Sunday 16<sup>th</sup></b> Epiphany 2</p> <p>Isaiah 62: 1 – 5 Psalm 36: 5 – 10 1 Corinthians 12: 1 – 11 John 2: 1 – 11</p> <p>Services at, Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington</p>
<p><b>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup></b> Week of Prayer for Christian Unity</p> <p>Nehemiah 8 Psalm 19 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 31 Luke 4: 14 – 21</p> <p>Services at Ashwater, Madworthy, Clawton, Highampton</p>	<p><b>Saturday 30<sup>th</sup></b> Candlemas – Presentation of Christ in the Temple</p> <p>Malachi 3: 1 – 5 Psalm 24 Hebrews 2: 14 – end Luke 2: 22 – 40</p> <p>Benefice Service at Black Torrington</p>	

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

# **A Word from Your Reader (now retired!)**

Dear friends across the Benefice,

Farewells are never easy and this isn't a final goodbye, as it were. However now I've retired from being an active Reader or Licensed Lay Minister, as we are also called, Stephen suggested that I write a few words for the Bulletin this month.

Last week, having given formal notice of my intention to hang up my blue scarf, the visible sign of a Reader's permission from the Bishop to officiate at various services, I received a certificate granting me the honorary title of 'Reader Emeritus' This, although being purely honorary, means a great deal to me after quite a few years spent in the Lay Ministry in this diocese and previously in Guernsey, where I expect most of you know, I was born and bred. It has certainly been a great honour to serve the Churches here and to get to know a lot of you and even to remember most folk's names eventually!

Pam, my wife whose wonderful support I would like to publicly acknowledge here, and I are not quite disappearing off the face of the earth exactly, and will still be around for the time being anyway, and Stephen has asked if I will continue to lead some compline services and write occasionally a thought for the weekly pew sheet.

I have many happy memories of the different tasks I've been

asked to fulfil over the last ten years or so, including the leading of funerals, school assemblies, and also the leading of worship in the many and varied Churches around the Benefice and even further afield. in the wider Mission Community or Deanery. It has also been an honour for me to lead worship sometimes at Madworthy and the Halwill Baptists chapel where I have made some good friends.

I wish Stephen, who I have enjoyed working with immensely, the very best for his remaining time as Priest in Charge here and my hope and prayer is that the Benefice will eventually be able to obtain a full time Rector to carry on Stephen's good work.

Many Blessings, Jim.



## **Benefice Choir**

For more information or to join, please  
contact Shirley Richmond (01409) 231 764

## Ashwater with Black Torrington Benefice Services for January 2022

<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	9:30am	Ashwater	Communion
Epiphany	11am	Halwill	Communion
	11am	Black Torrington	Café Church
	7pm	Luffincott	Candlelit Service
<b>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup></b>	9:30am	Ashwater	Morning Service
Epiphany 1	11am	Black Torrington	Communion
	11am	Clawton	Methodist / Café Style Service
	4pm	Beaworthy	1662 Evensong
<b>Sunday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	9:30am	Ashwater	Communion
Epiphany 2	11am	Beaworthy	Morning Service
	11am	Black Torrington	Communion
<b>Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	9:30am	Ashwater	All Age Service
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	11am	Madworthy	Ecumenical Service
	11am	Clawton	Communion
	3pm	Highampton	Evening Service
<b>Sunday 30<sup>th</sup></b> Candlemas	11am	Black Torrington	United Benefice Candlemas Service

**Black  
Torrington  
Church**

**Soup and Sweet**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 12.00 noon – 2.00 pm  
To be held in the village hall in aid of the Church  
Donations welcome



**Parson Jack Russell  
Art & Photography Exhibition  
“Life in the Country”**

St Mary's Church, Black Torrington

**10<sup>th</sup> June - 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Start creating now!**

**Open exhibition**

**All welcome**

**Send for details**

**Exhibition Secretary**

Parson Jack Russell Animal Art & Photography Exhibition  
Little Acorns, Burdon Lane, Highampton, Beaworthy EX21 5LX  
Telephone: 01409 231430 [val.letheren@btinternet.com](mailto:val.letheren@btinternet.com)



## **New Year's Reflection by the Revered Prebendary James Grier**

### **Diocesan Mission Enabler**

I've never been a great fan of New Year's Resolutions. I'm probably avoiding failure by not trying in the first place. I seek to justify it by saying that if there are things to improve in our lives, we shouldn't wait until new year to implement them? But I think I'm wrong. I could say that I don't need a birthday or anniversary to tell my wife how much I love her. But if I'm honest, I should tell her how much I love her every day and even more on special occasions. I should try to make good life choices every day, but an annual moment is good too.

The most popular resolutions are all things that are great for our well-being and that of the world. Things like: Go to bed earlier...Reduce single use plastic consumption...Create a savings plan...Read more, scroll less...Drink more water...Drink less alcohol...Eat more veggies...Volunteer... Increase exercise...Reduce social media...Give up smoking...Drive less, walk more

The fact that statistically 80% of people give up on at least some of their resolutions could simply be seen as failure. But in fact it means that 20% have created new positive habits and life choices. It's actually better than that, because some of the 80% will have kept up something of their resolutions.

Many people will fail before the end of January, but at least they have more chance of success than those who never started in the first place.

Christians are called to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and love our neighbours as themselves. If we managed to do this the world would be a totally different place and our churches would be full. God realises we're not up to the task and encourages us to allow his Spirit to help us as we seek to grow in our loving. Sheer will power is never enough. If we let him, the Holy Spirit may highlight one area in which we could grow in love. Repentance is central to Christian faith. It's simply admitting that we're not living and loving as we should and stepping back in line with God. It's also receiving the freedom and healing of his forgiveness as we do so. God doesn't say we need to change everything all at once, it's one small step at a time. For some of us, step one may be to try and be more patient. Or to love others by caring for the environment and not using disposable coffee cups.

It's beginning to sound to me like resolutions are a good idea. We could start with a New Year's Resolution but then try mid-year or even mid-month ones too. And a great thing about God is that his steadfast love never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is his faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23). If we fail or give up, he doesn't give up on us, he's there to help pick us up and set us off again. He's there to help us change from the inside out.

We can't change others and we can't guarantee what will happen in the world around us, but with God's help we can change. Wouldn't it be amazing to look back on 2022 and see how God has changed us?

Ashwater with Black Torrington and Highampton Benefice

# Candlelight Service

St James' Church  
Luffincott  
EX22 6RB

7pm  
Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>  
January 2022

Please do bring torches  
and blankets as the  
church does not have  
electricity or heating!



## Upcoming Dates for your Diary

**2022**

<b>January</b>	4th	3pm	PCC meeting	<b>Clawton</b>
	24th	2.30pm	PCC Meeting	<b>Black Torrington</b>
	26th	12pm–2pm	Soup and Pudding	<b>Black Torrington VH</b>
<b>February</b>	19th		Wine and Wisdom	<b>Clawton</b>
<b>March</b>	12th	7pm	Shanty and Quiz	<b>Beaworthy Parish Hall</b>
<b>May</b>	21st		Big Breakfast	<b>Clawton</b>
<b>June</b>	10th–13th		Parson Jack Russell Art Exhibition	<b>Black Torrington</b>
<b>July</b>	31st		Summer Event	<b>Clawton</b>
<b>September</b>	25th		Harvest Festival and Lunch	<b>Clawton</b>
<b>October</b>	15th		Big Breakfast	<b>Clawton</b>
<b>November</b>	26th		Wine and Wisdom	<b>Clawton</b>
<b>December</b>	18th		Carol Service	<b>Clawton</b>

PLEASE LET VAL HAVE DATES OF ANY EVENTS UP AND COMING.

**FEBRUARY BULLETIN DEADLINE: 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**

Please send any details of services, events or fundraisers you want publicised, or any contributions – articles, images, poems etc. to Kay by this date  
zena.napier@gmail.com or 01409 221321

## **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](mailto:Charles.Pitman@exeter.anglican.org)

Stephen Edgeley, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer - 01392 345910 -

[Stephen.Edgeley@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:Stephen.Edgeley@exeter.anglican.org)

Phill Parker, Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser - 01392 294969 -

[DBS@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:DBS@exeter.anglican.org)

For general enquiries - [SafeguardingEnquiry@exeter.anglican.org](mailto: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**

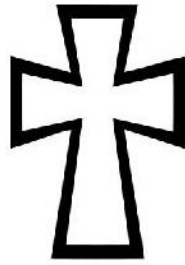
Devon - Care Direct: **0345 155 1007**

### **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](mailto:sjmskinners@btinternet.com)