# **Ruby Country Benefice**

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

# Bulletin May 2023



"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

James 1:17

## <u>APRIL</u>



# CONTACTS

## Interim Vicar (part time)

Revd. Stephen Skinner (until 15<sup>th</sup> May) 07554 142 264 Revd. Dr. Paul Fitzpatrick (from 24<sup>th</sup> May)

## **Contacts for Churches:**

Ashwater		
Beaworthy	<b>Richard Prior</b>	01409 221 986
Black Torrington:	Sheila Grabham	01409 231 581
	Val Letheren*	01409 231 430
Clawton:		
Halwill:	John Lawlor	01409 221 987
Highampton	Mrs. M. Dayman	01837 810 435
	Mrs. A. Knight	07407 042 840
<b>T</b>		

Tetcott:

#### Safeguarding

07484 880 770

\* or as above

From the Parish Registers image (pg. 2) © Parish Pump, Cover image: by Carlos N. Cuatzo Meza on Unsplash Ukraine graphic on the back page from pixabay.com, by chiajo-18290215 Thanks to Revd. Stephen for sending the poem on page 22-23 (from *Summer* by Ruth Burgess, Wild Goose Publications, pg. 148-9) Thanks to Revd. Stephen and Paul for their submissions and Alma Knight and John Lawlor for sending contributions.

Val Letheren



# May

#### "FLOURISHING – especially in hard times"

National research shows that our country is experiencing an epidemic of longerterm Depression. All sections of our society are affected, with our greatest concern for younger generations. It seems to me that there are quite a few churchgoers who experience depression, so having a Christian faith does not seem to offer automatic immunity. All of us feel downhearted sometimes as a result of disappointments in life (for me it was a low level of attendance at our Holy Week Services), but the high number who are on medication to help handle depression is surely a cause for concern. It is something that many people (especially Christians) keep quiet about, arising from a sense of shame. As with all of life's issues, it would seem wise to discover <u>positive</u> ways to overcome depression.

Christians believe, at least in theory, that under God's guidance we can live a life of joy and happiness – 'abundant life' as Jesus calls it. This is a major theme of John's Gospel, as for example:

Chapter 11: 25 - 26. Jesus tells Martha: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, for the whole world."

Chapter 10:10. Jesus tells the crowds: "My purpose is to offer everyone life in great abundance."

The theory sounds wonderful, but how can we in practice enjoy more of this promised spiritual life, that can help us deal with the causes of our bouts of depression? How can we truly enjoy to the maximum our precious allotment of time on planet earth, at a deeper spiritual / psychological level?

During 'Easter Week' I've been reading a book called **"Flourish"**, by Martin Seligman. He has been a renowned Professor of Psychology at various prestigious Universities around the world, and has written over 20 books, including "Authentic Happiness". He is the founder of what has become a very influential branch of psychology called "Positive Psychology". The lovely word "Flourishing" has entered our vocabulary, including even by our Anglican Archbishops! Justin Welby says that he wants our ministers to flourish whilst fulfilling their callings – by which he means that whatever we do in life ultimately gives us life-giving energy and joy. He aspires to enable the Church of England to flourish, even in the midst of the challenges of general long-term decline. Personally, I think that his public persona authenticates his deep-rooted desire, which we'll have the opportunity of experiencing more closely when he visits Exeter Diocese around Remembrance Sunday.

Seligman claims that people flourish and at least **diminish** their negative feelings about life when they learn to grow the following characteristics:

a. Feeling <u>positive emotions</u> through a general state of happiness in life's experiences;

b. Entering a <u>fuller engagement</u> with life's opportunities, by learning new things;

c. Discovering a sense of <u>meaning or purpose</u> in life – that what we do feels to be valuable;

d. Having a sense of <u>self-esteem</u>, through feeling positive about one's essential nature;

e. Generating a mood of <u>optimism</u>, by feeling hopeful for one's own and other's future;

f. Growing stronger <u>resilience</u>, that when things go wrong one is able to overcome them;

g. <u>Positive relationships</u> – a sense that there are people around who really care for you.

This is quite a List to work through, and Seligman invites us to apply ourselves to our major task in life through participating in various practical (but not athletic!) Exercises. Here is one that he suggests in his book, that achieved great success amongst his students:

The Exercise is labelled **"The Three Blessings".** It is a considerable improvement upon the old-fashioned "Count your Blessings", because it helps us analyse the reasons why things have gone well in our lives! Crucially it also helps us learn from the reasons and apply them to our flourishing:

- 1. Every night for a determined period set aside 10 minutes reflecting upon and writing down in a Journal three things that have gone well during the day. These can be big or small!
- 2. Ask yourself: "Why did those good things happen?"
- 3. Reflect upon what this means for you and your state of mental / spiritual health.

- 6. Ask yourself what this might reveal of your **"Signature Strengths".** Examples listed by Seligman include: Honesty, Loyalty, Creativity, Kindness, Wisdom, Courage, Perseverance.
- 7. Consider: "How can you gain more of these positive, life enhancing experiences, for your own well-being and for the benefit of others (humanity, and all of the natural world)?"

Seligman and his fellow psychologists have found that by accentuating our positive experiences and emotions in life people undertaking such exercises have found that their levels of depression have significantly decreased, and the need for medication also reduced. This seems really good to me, because this process is tackling many of the deeper causes of depression. However I must add that at least some of the social conditions causing depression, anxiety and fear should be addressed (eg poverty, poor physical health, crime, discrimination, oppressive power, environmental degradation).

Thank you for reading thus far! I want to conclude with a **Christian postscript**. I believe that we are each placed by God on this planet in order to flourish (even in the midst of any suffering). This is not only to enjoy Jesus' promise of 'eternal life', and to enable others to also experience God's blessings. This will ultimately be for the greater glory of God. We all have "Signature Strengths" to offer for our world, and I believe that God's Pentecostal Spirit can inspire and empower us to deploy them well. Focussing upon the 'positives' (also called "Appreciative Enquiry", amongst organisations) is also crucial for the future existence of our churches. It will help us overcome the many challenges that we face in each of our churches – and not succumb to the pervasive depressive spirit that is around us. I hope and pray that, guided by Paul Fitzpatrick, you will all <u>flourish</u> in the future across "Ruby Country" in your own unique manner! Please believe that this really is God's desire for you all!

Stephen



# Stephen's Farewell Service

Benefice Communion at St Mary's Church, Black Torrington

# Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 11am

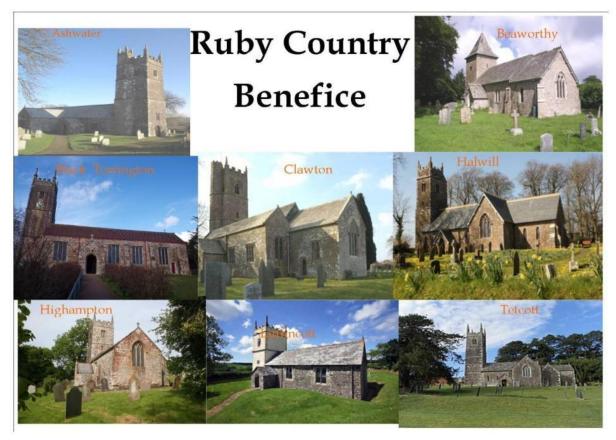
Followed by a bring and share lunch in the Village Hall

Stephen will be leading the Coronation Services on 7<sup>th</sup> May at Ashwater, Halwill and Tetcott/Luffincott however the service on April 30<sup>th</sup> will be his proper "goodbye" celebration. The Licensing of Revd Dr Paul Fitzpatrick to Rector

of

Ashwater, Black Torrington, Beaworthy, Clawton, Halwill, Highampton and Tetcott:

#### The Ruby Country Benefice



The Benefice Churchwardens cordially invite you to the licensing of Revd Dr Paul Fitzpatrick to the Ruby Country Benefice by the Bishop of Crediton. The Church of Saint Mary's, Black Torrington Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 7.30 pm Refreshments to follow the service, in the village hall.

RSVP: val.letheren@btinternet.com or s.grabham@btconnect.com

before the 1<sup>st</sup> May please.

#### A quick message from Paul Fitzpatrick, the new Vicar

Hello everyone, this is just a quick introduction and a bit of a potted history just so that you know a little about me. I served in the Royal Navy for twenty years, ten in Nuclear Submarines and ten in ships with a two year stretch supporting Royal Marines in a specialist role. I came to ministry in 1996 and served my curacy in Okehampton, where I coordinated rural support during and after the Foot & Mouth epidemic. I then moved to become Vicar of Whipton and Exeter Rural Dean (having been a Chaplain of a special needs school and Prison on route).

I moved to my university in Cardiff 16 years ago where I was head of Chaplaincy & Cultural Inclusion and also headed a psychological research team exploring bereavement, grief and loss (I am also a Psychologist). During this time I was also appointed as a pastoral advisor, and clergy training officer, for the Archbishop of Wales.

After leaving my university, I worked in Holsworthy Benefice, as an Associate Priest. Whilst we remain in interregnum, I have been supervising routine parish and benefice admin with our administrator and engaging individual parish mission plans. I have, with BRF nationally and our diocese locally, been developing a six months research package for community chaplaincy for possible runout across our benefice and mission community.

Married to Sarah, an accountant (and incredible cook), we live to the north of the Benefice, our children have grown and are happily working around the world, and we have a very friendly, and incredibly lazy, Labrador. I am an avid ornithologist, Penguin book club member and as a member of the Church Conservation Trust, I am also a Trustee for the British Trust for Ornithology.

I applied to be your Vicar because I love the churches and the history you hold, the richness and openness of the community and people of the benefice. I see so much warmth, potential, and vision in what you want to become and what the church might be here; I wanted very much like to be a part of that. I look forward to meeting you at my licensing at Black Torrington on the 25<sup>th</sup> May and in the years to come.

Paul & Sarah

Lectionary Readings for May 2023

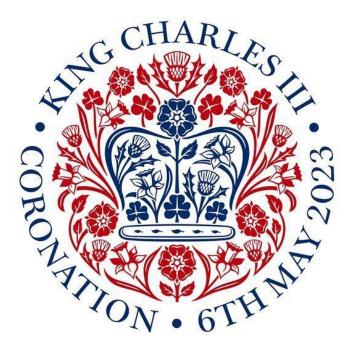


Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> (Easter 5)	Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> (Easter 6)	<b>Thursday 18<sup>th</sup></b> (Ascension)
Acts 7: 55 – end Psalm 31: 1 – 5, 15 – 16 1 Peter 2: 2 – 10 John 14: 1 – 14	Acts 17: 22 – 31 Psalm 66: 7 – end 1 Peter 3: 13 – end John 14: 15 – 21	Acts 1: 1 – 11 Psalm 93 Ephesians 1: 15 – end Luke 24: 44 – end
Services at Ashwater, Black Torrington, Halwill, Tetcott	Services at Beaworthy, Black Torrington, Clawton, Halwill (Chilla Chapel)	
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup>	
(Sunday after Ascension)	(Pentecost Sunday)	
Acts 1: 6 – 14	Acts 2: 1 – 21	
Psalm 68: 1 – 10,	Psalm 104: 26 – 36	
32 – end	1 Corinthians 12:	
1 Peter 4: 12 – 14,	3 - 13	
5:6-11	John 7: 37 – 39	
John 17: 1 - 11		
	Services at	
Services at	Beaworthy, Clawton, Highampton	
Ashwater, Halwill,		

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

# Ruby Country Benefice Services for May 2023

Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am	Ashwater	Special Service
			<b>L</b>
Easter 5 /	11am	Black Torrington	Morning Service
Accession of			
King Charles III		2. 200.	
	11am	Halwill	Special Service
	6pm	Tetcott	Special Service
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	11am	<b>Black Torrington</b>	Café Church
St Matthias /	11am	Clawton	Café Church
Rogation			
	11am	Chilla Chapel	Halwill Churches
			Together Service with
			picnic
	6:30pm	Beaworthy	Rogation Evensong
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>	9:30am	Ashwater	Morning Service
Sunday after	11am	<b>Black</b> Torrington	Communion with
Ascension		0	Archdeacon Verena
	11am	Halwill	Morning Service
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup>	11am	Beaworthy	Communion
Pentecost	11am	Clawton	Communion
Sunday			
	3pm	Highampton	Pet Service



Ashwater Black Torrington Clawton Halwill Tetcott

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May
9:30pm Special Church Service
11am Morning Church Service
4 for 4:30pm Coronation Sunday Tea
11am Special Church Service
2pm Walk and Cream Tea followed
by service (6pm) at Luffincott
Church

# TIME OUT coronation lunch

Fríday 5<sup>th</sup> May Black Torrington Village Hall

# 12.30

Doors open from 12.15

Please further info or to confirm your place contact **Maureen Ellis on 01409 231309** before Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May SUNDAY 7TH MAY FROM 1PM - LATE

COPONATION









# We're Lending a Hand in Holsworthy



# to get involved

# Monday 8th May Between 11am-4pm

For more information contact: Holsworthy Town Council Email: townclerk@holsworthytowncouncil.gov.uk Phone: 01409 253 312



# Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May

Church of the Holy Cross,	
Highampton	2:30 – 3:30pm
St. Peter ad Vincula, Ashwater	3pm
St. Peter & St. James, Halwill	3:45pm

# Sunday 7th May

St. Peter ad Vincula, Ashwater

2:30 – 5pm

12:15pm

# Monday 8th May

St Mary's, Black Torrington

# Ashwater Church OPEN TOWER Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2.30 to 5pm Refreshments available



Escorted trips to the top of the tower

Enjoy the views from the roof



Chime a bell to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III

# Highampton Church Pet Animal Service

# Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023 3.30pm

A welcome to everyone and their pet – if no pet, bring a pet photo!

Meet the new Vicar, Rev Paul Fitzpatrick, this will be his first service at Highampton Church.



# Tea and Coffee available

# MAY MADNESS MUSICAL MAYHEM

# ERIDAY 12th MAY

The Church of St Peter & St James, Halwill.

FROM 8PM. BAR. FREE ADMISSION Donations to the church fund welcome...

Featuring...

JOINED AT THE HIP MEANDER THE LOST MARBLES



RAISING FUNDS FOR THE RENAL UNIT RD&E AND HIGHAMPTON CHURCH

**HIGHAMPTON EX21 5LF** 

HEADLINE ACT



#### **OTHER ACTS**

**EAT THE RICH** 

TRANSPORTERS

BIG AL AND THE WILD STRAWBERRIES

**TOM CORNEILL** 

**THE STEREO PROBLEMS** 

#### **Contact us**

Message on our Facebook page or call Lauren on 07572263129 or Jenny on 07854989597

Camping will be available on Saturday night. Campervans and tents are welcome, just let us know when you book your tickets.

Dogs MUST be on leads NO ALCOHOL to be brought in

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## Senior Clergy Reflection from Rt. Rev'd James Grier, The Bishop of Plymouth

We knew our predecessors had a beautiful garden, but I have to say I was somewhat underwhelmed. We moved in 6 months ago and over winter it looked like they'd killed it all off before they left. I'm not a great gardener but I do know that things die back in the winter. All the same it felt like there was no chance of recovery. Then there were a few signs of life, the expected daffodils and others. But still most bushes were little more than dead twigs. I abandoned all hope of their recovery and then...a week or so later first one then another leaf became obvious. New life began.

For the disciples, they knew Jesus had spoken about coming back to life, but there was no hope of it and certainly no sign of it. They had given up everything to follow him and placed their lives in his hands. One of them had even said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." But then they'd seen him arrested, tortured and killed. They were just left with the words and no hope of life. But then that morning, some of the women said that his tomb was empty. Typically the men hadn't believed them and had gone to check it out. They were right. The first buds of hope. Then one, then another, then groups met Jesus alive again.

Jesus, God, had defeated death. And if he can do that, he can do anything. For many today there is more despair than hope. More to make you think things will never recover. But the historical events of Easter tell us that however hopeless things appear, it is not the end of the story. The risen Jesus is greater than our struggles and can breathe life into the midst of them.

If you've read 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by C. S. Lewis, you will remember that winter wouldn't come to an end, that was until Aslan (representing Jesus) died and rose again. It includes the following allegory of the Easter promise:

"Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight, At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more, When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death, And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again."

#### Rt. Rev'd James Grier, The Bishop of Plymouth

# Goodbye

# (Acts 1: 1 – 11)

A monologue from a disciple, following Jesus' Ascension.

Goodbye. He didn't actually say 'goodbye'. He didn't say, 'I'm going now. I'm leaving you.' He didn't ask if we were ready. He didn't tell us, 'This is it. You won't see me again.' He didn't even try to reassure us with, 'Everything's going to be all right.' For once, he didn't tell us not to worry, not to be afraid; he didn't pull us up for having such little faith.

'Stay in the city. Wait for the Spirit.' That was it. Stay and wait. Did he know how hard it would be to do that? How hard it is to trust we're in the right place, we need to stick together, and what we've been promised will come.

There we were, full of our own agendas as usual, thinking this was his time to overthrow the Romans. And he shot right back at us – no, you don't get to know the times! How can he trust us to stay, to wait, when we still have such half-baked ideas about what he's all about and what he wants from us?

'You will receive power. You will be my witnesses.'

His final words. What kind of power will it be? Will it be obvious? Will it change us? Something will have to change before any of us go witnessing in Samaria, that's for sure! But so much has already changed.

Goodbye, Lord ... goodbye to the sound of your laughter and the look of mischief in your eyes. Goodbye to being able to prod you and nudge you and just sit with you, by the boats and under the stars and round the table. Goodbye to watching how you do things. Goodbye to all our clumsiness being covered by your charisma. We can't hide behind you any more. It's over to us now, isn't it?

And the only way you could stay, is by leaving. And the only way you could always be here, is by going away. It's not really goodbye, Lord, is it? Can we trust you on that?

#### Jo Love, Spill the Beans

## JUNE BULLETIN DEADLINE: 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY

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 **<u>BY</u>** THE 15<sup>TH</sup> **WILL NOT** BE IN NEXT MONTH'S BULLETIN

#### **RUBY COUNTRY BENEFICE**

#### **INTERIM VICAR'S REPORT TO CHURCH ANNUAL MEETINGS 2023**

This is my fourth and final Report for this year's A.P.C.M.s, as my License from the Bishop of Crediton expires on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The good news for everyone is that at long last a full-time permanent Vicar has been appointed: Revd Dr Paul Fitzpatrick. He will be licensed and installed on 25<sup>th</sup> May – a very short 'Interregnum' indeed! I pray that his ministry among you will flourish.

I want to begin by offering my sincere heartfelt thanks to you for the pleasures of working with you in Christian fellowship over the past 40 months. Originally my interim 'post' was envisaged as lasting more like 18 months, but we all know the story of the Covid disruptions to church as well as daily life. Thank you for being such easy-going people to work alongside – your company has been the most pleasurable aspect of all we have done here to get our Benefice reorganised from two separate Benefices into one – with a brand-new title!

I regard this past year as being on of **Consolidation**, in the following ways:

~ We have now an established pattern of monthly Services. Every church has at least one a month, many have two, and one church has three. I realise that several churches would prefer to hold one most weeks, but we are constrained by there being just one priest to serve all seven churches. I salute our currently active Lay Worship Leaders: Lorna Bowden, Terry Darby, Sheila Grabham, Val Letheren, Kay Napier, Richard Prior, Elizabeth Swan. They lead at least one Service each month – we try to meet regularly for prayer, support and a little training. I think we can be proud of the variety of styles of worship that we can offer across the benefice. But attendances often remain discouraging.

 $\sim$  Our Benefice Group has met every 4 – 6 weeks during the year. We have discussed: Our Administrator's Job Description, Special Services, Our Communications (especially the Benefice Bulletin, Pew Sheets and improving our offering to "The Church Near You" websites.), Partnerships with other churches and community groups (arising from the four-week Course "Lightening the Load"), and of course the Benefice Profile / Advertisement etc for a new permanent Vicar. I hugely value the dynamism of this Group, and have upheld its value at our Deanery Synod meetings.

~ Our churches have paid their 'Common Fund' payments to the Diocese of Exeter in full in 2022 (apart from a small shortfall in one parish). I thank our excellent Treasurers for their highly professional work. We hold an online Zoom gathering with our Deanery Treasurer three times a year

~ Our on line Zoom meetings for Bible Study(fortnightly) and Compline (weekly) have continued throughout the year. We have established a strong sense of fellowship, but it is very disappointing to me that despite advertising these on the Pew Sheets so few attend. Their future must be reassessed.

PCCs have continued to meet every two – three months over the past year. I chair almost all these meetings, and to be honest I enjoy doing so!
 I try to engender some light-heartedness into our proceedings, as well as opportunities for more general discussion on issues facing our churches.
 Highampton Church still has no PCC, so I meet with their Treasurer (and her daughter) instead.

I regard involvement with our local communities and ecumenical partners as being very important, but my attendance is inhibited by my distance away. Some of our churches hold regular fund-raising events (eg Big Breakfasts, Quizzes, Concerts, Coffee Mornings). But I <u>strongly</u> encourage all churches to attempt more, to interact with our communities and build friendships, whilst raising much-needed funds. I urge PCCs to plan these, in partnership with those of goodwill in our parishes.

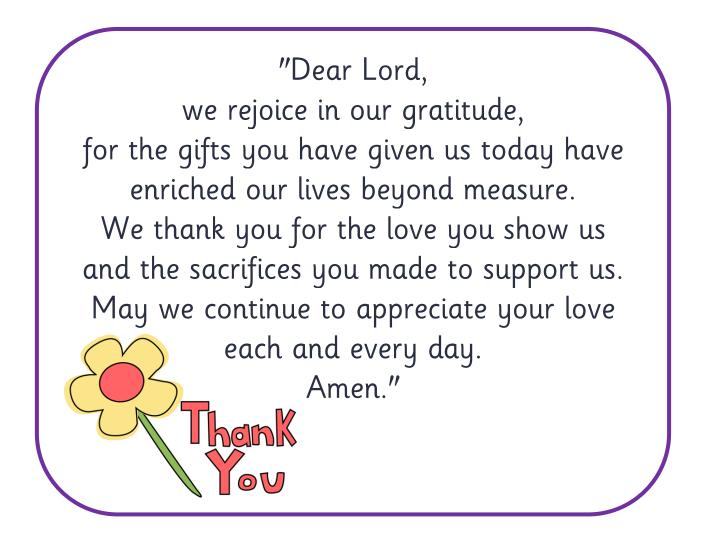
~ I note with considerable sadness the continuing downward trend in the 'Occasional Offices' of Christenings, Weddings and Funerals. This is a common experience around our country as the population becomes more 'Non Religious'. We mount excellent Services which gain very positive feedback, but ultimately that seems insufficient to counter the decline of Christian belief & tradition.

~ I conduct Assemblies in our one Church School (Black Torrington) on a fortnightly basis, and in the other schools once or twice a term (notably at Clawton). In truth I'd like these to be more often!

I will conclude as I began, by thanking you for your kindness, understanding and Christian-spirited love over my time as your 'Interim'. It has truly been a highlight of my life.

## Revd Stephen Skinner.

NOTE: Since Stephen wrote this, Paul Fitzpatrick's licensing date has changed from 25<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May



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:			
Val Letheren – <u>rubycountry.beneficeadmin@btinternet.com</u> – 07484 880 770			
If you cannot reach your Parish Safeguarding Representative, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team:			
Costa Nassaris - Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – 01392 294969 – 07809 339502 costa.nassaris@exeter.anglican.org			
James May – Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – 01392 345910 – 07889 543646 james.may@exeter.anglican.org			
Rebecca Lane – Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser- 01392 294975 - 07889542640 Rebecca.lane@exeter.anglican.org			
For general enquiries – SafeguardingEnquiry@exeter.anglican.org			
IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM			
If you believe someone is at immediate risk of harm or that a crime has been committed, dial <b>999</b>			
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			
Concerns about Adults Devon – Care Direct: 0345 155 1007			
<b>Domestic Abuse</b> Devon Help Line for professionals and individuals: <b>0345 155 1074</b>			
Rape CrisisNational: 0808 802 9999Devon and Torbay: 01392 204174			
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

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St. Peter Ad Vincula, Ashwater EX21 5EY

St. Alban, Beaworthy EX21 5AB

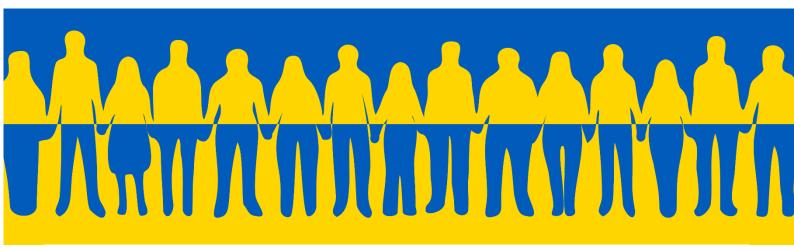
St. Mary, Black Torrington EX21 5PU

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