

The Two Rivers Mission Community, North Devon Parish Nurse



Due to the forthcoming retirement of our current parish nurse The Two Rivers Mission Community, in partnership with Parish Nursing UK, is seeking to appoint a parish nurse to offer holistic health care across 55 square miles of rural north Devon. She/he will work on behalf of, and in collaboration with, the local Anglican churches and partner with other statutory and voluntary organisations.

We seek to appoint a parish nurse who is qualified to support young families antenatally, postnatally and in the early years and ideally who is also able to offer support for the elderly, sick, dying, bereaved, and their families.

We see parish nursing as an integral part of a broad and holistic mission to reach out to our local communities with the love of God and to serve their needs in practical ways. It is therefore a genuine occupational requirement that our parish nurse is a practicing Christian and is able to sensitively and appropriately explore spiritual issues raised by service users and to pray with them if requested.

Parish nursing is already well-embedded in the life of our parishes. Our current parish nurse has established excellent links with other local health care professionals. A new nurse would not be starting from scratch. He/she will come with a desire to build on the existing work and find ways to meet the ever-changing challenges faced by our small, beautiful, but often under-resourced communities.

Terms of employment: our genuine desire is to find the right person for this role and to make it possible for them to fulfil it. Funds are available to meet full expenses. We are in a position to offer a salary for up to 7 hours per week. For someone able to offer more hours we would look creatively at funding, including giving from existing church members.

For an informal conversation about the role please contact: Rev Gary Owen on revgary@tworiversmissioncommunity.org, 07947358050 or 01769560792

Provisional date for interviews: Thursday 3rd December

Role description

We recognise the following particular areas of need:

- Support of young families, including pre- and post-natal care
- Support for the elderly, sick, dying, bereaved, and their families
- Mental health support

We wish to appoint a parish nurse who is competent in the first of these areas and ideally can offer some measure of ability in the second and an awareness of the third.

The Two Rivers Parish Nurse will:

- Take referrals from the Two Rivers Mission Community Leadership team and local health care agencies, assess needs and work to provide health care personally and/or in collaboration for people in need, regardless of faith or other characteristics, with special concern for the marginalised and those struggling to access other services.
- Be a visible presence in the villages, especially at local groups or in local spaces where healthcare can be promoted and offered.
- Build relationships with other local agencies working to provide health care in the parishes with a view to improving health outcomes for all who live within the Two Rivers parishes.
- Encourage and support church members and other parishioners to love and care for their neighbours; building teams to increase capacity and effectiveness.
- Prayerfully discern, in collaboration with the 2RMC leadership team where new opportunities for health care and support can be offered.
- Pray for the work in which they are engaged.

Person specification

- Registered Nurse (RN) on the NMC register with relevant post-registration qualification or equivalent experience (e.g. community nursing, primary care)
- Completion of the Preparation for Parish Nursing Practice course or willingness to work towards it.
- An ability to
 - see all people with compassion and offer holistic health care that respects peoples' identity as human beings made and loved by God.
 - build relationships, and work collaboratively with, statutory and voluntary organisations to maximize health outcomes within our parishes.
 - inspire and facilitate church members and other parishioners to play an appropriate part in caring for their neighbours and communities; to build and oversee teams where these can safely and appropriately increase effectiveness.
 - maintain and promote the highest safeguarding standards, and work within the policies and procedures of the Two Rivers Mission Community, Diocese of Exeter and Church of England
- Personal qualities
 - evidence of a lively relationship with Jesus and growing in the Fruits of the Spirit
 - self-motivated, resilient and able to work effectively as both a lone practitioner and with others.
 - self-aware and reflective, with a desire to grow personally and facilitate growth in others.
- Other
 - A clear enhanced DBS check (or one cleared by the Diocese of Exeter safeguarding team)
 - A driving licence and access to a car
 - Willingness to work flexibly (some evenings and weekends)

Requirements of the role:

- Maintain the Parish Nurse Accreditation Standards, reviewing annually with PNMUK coordinator.
- Continuing professional development to ensure up to date with nursing best practice and safeguarding.
- Supervision meetings with a line manager (usually the rector) and participation in annual review .
- Meeting with a spiritual supervisor to ensure care of your own spiritual health and ability to fulfil the spiritual aspects of the parish nursing role.

Occasional attendance at 2RMC leadership team, mission council and parish churches to build relationships, discuss aspects of parish nursing and promote the service.

Application process

Application for the post should be made by sending a covering letter of no more than 1000 words explaining why you are suitable for the post and why you would like to apply, along with a CV. The CV should include both a work referee and a personal referee who can comment on the Christian commitment of the candidate, and clearly state whether either or both can be contacted once an interview has been offered and accepted. Candidate suitability will be judge against the person specification and role description so particular care should be taken to explain how you meet these.

An orientation morning (if desired) and interviews will be conducted for suitable candidates.

Covering letters and CVs should be emailed to revgary@tworiversmissioncommunity.org

Additional information

The following information is included to help you understand the context of the Two Rivers Mission Community. It is not written specifically for the role of parish nurse, but rather for anyone considering applying for a role with us.

Our context

Our mission community is made up of 10 parish churches and a chapel of ease, spread over 55 square miles of beautiful Devon countryside. We've been together now for over 20 years and are happy and confident as a group.

The total population of the mission community is around 4,300; High Bickington being the largest parish with around 1,000 people and Horwood and Huntshaw the smallest with under 200. There is no obvious 'centre' to the mission community, with some churches looking to Barnstaple, others to Bideford or Torrington as their local town.



Our congregations vary in size; with average Sunday attendance between 8 and 20. There are 11 members of the leadership team; 6 clergy, 3 licensed lay ministers and 2 commissioned focal ministers. The rector is full-time stipendiary and all others are self-supporting.



Rev Gary by the river Taw, one of the two rivers from which our mission community takes its name.

Four primary schools sit at the four 'corners' of the mission community: High Bickington, Beaford, Lovacott and Tawstock.

Who we are and what we are about

God has laid on our hearts to create lively, vibrant Christian communities in each of our ten parishes; church families where all Christians in the parish can find a spiritual home and play their part in God's mission where they live. We long to see people of all ages find a saving faith in Jesus as Lord, grow as his disciple and minister to his glory.

Hence, our mission statement:

We are called by God to build a Christian community in each village, which will worship, pray, grow, and reach out with the Gospel.

Our emphasis is on helping each parish to thrive. We are working towards a focal minister in each parish (lay or ordained) who will facilitate the development of a local leadership team (PCC) to facilitate the ministry and mission of the church. We are close to reestablishing weekly worship in each church as the main opportunity for Christians in the parish to meet and from which other activities will flow.

Whilst each parish retains its PCC, a legally constituted mission community council oversees collective vision and planning. Focal ministers form a leadership team, a subcommittee of the council, meeting weekly with the rector for prayer, planning and mutual support.

We have made a conscious effort to place prayer at the heart of our common life. Termly days of prayer and fasting (or feasting!) are now well established. We take part in local and national prayer initiatives and are trying to embed the idea that 'every meeting is a



*A meeting of Huntshaw PCC...
it was warmer in the sunshine
than in the church building.*



Undeterred during decorating work, the St Giles prayer group met on a bench in the churchyard!

prayer meeting'. Each mission council meeting starts with 30 minutes of prayer. St Giles and High Bickington have started their own prayer meetings to pray for their parishes.

Four homegroups meet to help adults engage with the scriptures, pray and enjoy fellowship mid-week. We regularly hold lent groups, one off 'mission community days', short series looking at different topics and we've enjoyed weekends away to Lee Abbey. Teaching consistently on Sundays has proved difficult, but this is something we are looking to address.

We are working on our provision for children and teenagers and have now built up to an out of school club (school years 1-6) and two youth groups (aged 8-12 and 10-14). Relationships with schools are good and each of the four schools in the Mission Community welcome church assemblies, support with RE and celebrations of key events such as Easter, harvest and Christmas.



The youth group in Newton Tracey

We are investing heavily in launching a weekly Bubble Church in September in an attempt to share Jesus and create Christian community for babies, toddlers and young families. This is part of a longer-term strategy to grow younger from the bottom up.



The good shepherd looks after his sheep

A parish nurse-deacon leads the pastoral work of the parish. She is involved in local toddler groups and offers support to new mothers. She also offers support to the sick and elderly and end-of-life support for the dying and their families. We are actively seeking to appoint a successor to continue her work when she retires.

We seek to take every opportunity to build relationships and share Jesus. Some churches still attract considerable numbers to special services (eg harvest, Remembrance and Christmas). Opening our churches for Halloween with a warm, positive environment, refreshments and Trick or Truth boxes of goodies has proved remarkably good for being good news and sharing good news. Alpha is our enquirers course of choice. So far, the success of the course has largely been in helping Christians become more confident in explaining their faith, although there have been a small number of people come to faith.



Festivals are always popular and well attended.

There is an active social/fundraising life to most of the churches. Coffee mornings are frequent and well attended. Increasingly churches are moving to offering these events for free. We want to be known for what we offer, not what we ask for. However, there is still considerable goodwill in the villages towards 'their' church and giving people to opportunity to 'fundraise' helps involve local people as well as raise money.

In terms of theology, we are typical village churches, seeking to provide a Christian home for people of all church traditions and none! The leadership team hold a variety of theological convictions, but we are united in our love for Jesus and our common aim of making disciples and supporting them to live for Jesus. The rector is evangelical/charismatic, and conservative on issues of human sexuality, and a vicar would need to be willing to work with someone of these convictions.

Like the Church of England across most rural areas, we face challenges. Our buildings, whilst beautiful and much loved, are expensive to maintain and not all have toilets, or even running water. It's hard to appoint church officers; not all churches have a warden. The rector covers around 400 miles



Enjoying a coffee after prayer walking the South West Coast Path as part of South West Awake

each month just getting around the mission community. Perhaps, most crucially, our congregations are aging and whilst new members are joining all the time they tend to be over 50. We trust that God has good plans for us, but we are realistic that the future of maintaining ministry in these rural parishes is going to be hard work. We need a team vicar who is realistic about the challenges, but who has faith that the rural church has, by God's grace, a future.

Positively, we can point to an increase in participant numbers of around 50% since 2019 (before covid). In this time three local church members have been ordained and remained with us; two currently serving curacies. We've trained a fulltime stipendiary curate who is now settled in a neighbouring parish. Additionally, two lay church members have grown into focal ministers. People are stepping up to the plate. Progress has been made on making buildings fit for purpose, with reordering in five church buildings in the last 10 years. Our finances are sound and we pay our common fund request in full. We trust that the input of a mission minded team vicar will help us make further progress, particularly in terms of conversions to Christ, growth in discipleship and impact in the wider community.

Our Mission Action Plan

Updated Spring 2026 and under constant review

The Two Rivers Mission Community The journey ahead...

Values

Love
Faith
Word and Spirit
Generosity
Mission focus

What does the destination look like?

Growing, authentic, attractive, all-age Christian communities, doing life together.

People being converted to Christ, growing as disciples and equipped to live as whole life disciples, intentionally working to build God's kingdom.

Our communities and the wider world being transformed by the love of God, through Jesus in the power or the Spirit.

Finances, administration and buildings directed towards these goals.



This version created: 13.05.26



The sign on the front of our bus
We are called by God to build a Christian community in each village, which will worship, pray, grow and reach out with the Gospel..

The bus and crew Next steps...

Develop local ministry teams. Intentional succession planning. Exit strategy for ministers

Support Sue and Jen through ordination and curacy

Strategy for pastoral care when our parish nurse retires; explore the possibility of employing a parish nurse.

Seek to ensure every PCC has a warden, secretary and treasurer to manage the 'institution' and building

Which route do we need to take? What are the stops along the way?

Continue to work on the grid above to help us make and grow disciples

	Connect	Hear and respond	Grow	Lead
Under 5				
Primary				
Youth				
Adults				
All-age				

Develop preaching /teaching ministry on Sundays. Use of seasons service sheets and recorded sermons to enable more people to lead

Develop Bubble church from September 2026, monthly in four churches, so people who want to can go weekly.

Set up an evangelistic course to help people explore faith

Work out next steps to support youth in their faith development

Help congregation members develop the habit of regular planned generous giving

Churches develop missionary giving and action beyond the local parish

Think through our response to LLF and how we can prepare well for the Future

Develop strategy for churches without a focal minister

Our parishes



St Giles in the Wood is one of our largest buildings and is home to a congregation that has grown from 6 to 15 in the last four years. Coffee Cake and Company, pictured here, is a great meeting place for church and community. Church members are very active in the local community and offer much



Roborough is a small farming community. Animals and farm machinery are frequent visitors to church. Church members each take responsibility to pray for and look after different parts of the



High Bickington is the largest parish. Church and school work closely together and a monthly out of school club attracts around half the school pupils. There's a twice-monthly homegroup, monthly coffee morning and seasonal choir. A

Tawstock is our most popular church for life events, with up to 10 weddings and five baptisms per year. Tawstock is a farming parish and agricultural festivals are important. A fantastic friends group keeps the impressive church building well maintained. A newly created exhibition area is being used to display work from

Yarnscombe is a tiny community in the centre of the mission community. A monthly café church is attracting new worshippers and a new monthly community coffee morning has started in



Alverdiscott is a chapel of ease to the parish church of Newton Tracey. An active Friends group organises a varied program of social events and keeps the church in beautiful condition. A weekly 8.00am BCP communion service attracts a small congregation from across the mission community.

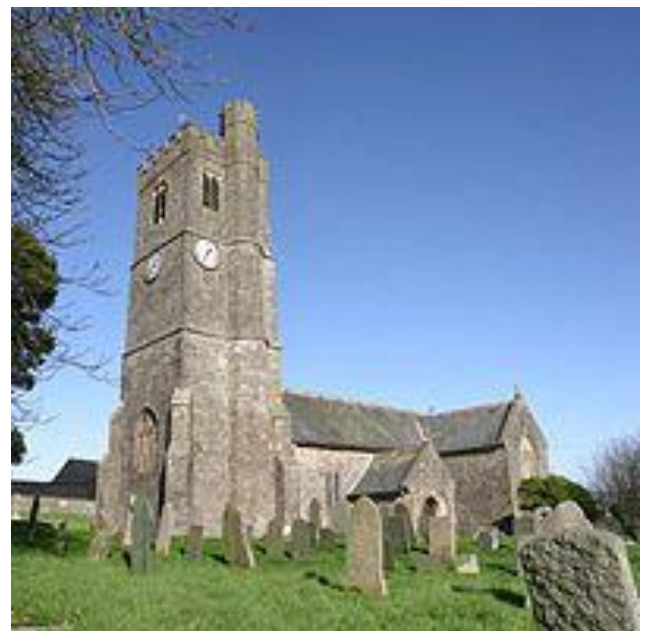


Newton Tracey is our smallest church building, but with excellent facilities and no pews it's a fantastic resource. The first Sunday of the month is a breakfast service set around tables and the third Sunday a family service. Its also home to a monthly youth group. Full use is made of the local



Beaford is one of the larger communities; the village boasts a school, pub, garage/shop and village hall. A weekly homegroup supports many in growing in their faith. Links with the village school are growing, and the school now regularly uses the church building for special services. A mission

Huntshaw is a tiny rural parish. We've relaunched a monthly service and are building a congregation of locals, many with little church



Horwood works closely with Newton Tracey and the two parishes share a school and village hall. It produces the biggest signs in the benefice! Celtic prayer has been introduced on a Friday morning, attracting up to 10 people (around 8% of the total parish population!) Monthly tea afternoons prove a useful contact with the

Atherington works with High Bickington, with which it shares a school. Newly installed heating and lighting is opening up the possibility of more church and community use. A small but growing bible

The leadership team



Carol: Reader and focal minister of Yarnscombe

Carol is an experienced reader who brings a creativity to her focal minister role. Café church is attracting new people. Carol has a pastoral heart and particular ministry to the elderly and frail.



Caroline: PTO priest

Caroline offers priestly support, helping enable communion to be celebrated at least monthly in each church as well as conducting baptisms and funerals. She offers a deep spirituality rooted in the liturgical tradition. Caroline has a real concern for the marginalised and those in need.



David: Reader

A dedicated and passionate disciple with a true and steadfast servant heart, David takes the Christian faith into the community through involvement in many community groups. He has a real strength in hosting and leading small groups. He lives with his wife Julia in a small intentional Christian community in High Bickington



Gary: Team rector

Gary came to the team via a curacy in mid Wales and incumbencies in north Wales and Kent. He loves to dream dreams and have visions, is great encourager and enjoys preaching and teaching. He is married to Helen and has four children, two still living at home. A keen follower of Barnstaple FC and Kent CCC he is used to the disappointments of life but retains a sense of hope and even optimism.



Jen: Curate and focal minister of St Giles

Jen is a real encouraging and organiser, and under her guidance St Giles has grown from average attendance of 6 to 15, with most church members playing some part in the church's ministry and outreach. She has a prayerful faith and sees opportunities rather than problems. Jen was ordained in June 2026 after training on the Exeter Ordination Pathway.



Julia: Parish Nurse-Deacon

Julia was ordained as a permanent deacon in September 2021 and combines this role with that of parish nurse. She has a heart for taking the love of Jesus to those outside the church. You will often find her weighing babies at toddler groups, visiting the sick and taking communion to the housebound.



Paul: Focal minister in Roborough

Paul is a vastly experienced worship leader and church warden. Having moved to Roborough since covid, he took on the role of focal minister in late 2025. Paul's quiz nights are legendary and invariably include the whole room signing a popular hymn of chorus!



Rob: Focal minister in Beaford

Rob's gifts are encouraging and facilitating others. Since taking on the role of focal minister in Beaford, initially alongside his role as warden, many people have taken up new ministries, and most members of the church are now involved in ministry in some way. Everyone in Beaford knows Rob and he is a friendly point of contact for many people in the village with the church.



Sue: Curate and focal minister of Horwood

Sue was ordained in June 2026 after retiring as a barrister and training on the Exeter Ordination Pathway. She is passionate about growing disciples. She is currently heading up the launch of our new Bubble Church.



Tim: Reader and focal minister for Newton Tracey with Alverdiscott

Tim is a practical and capable member of our team, a great encourager. He has organized and led Alpha courses, informal worship services, Messy church and taken a group to Spring Harvest. Tim is camera shy; hence no photo!



Tracey: Licensed Associate Priest (SSM)

Tracey serves as focal minister for High Bickington and Atherington and rural dean of Torrington. She has a real pastoral heart and loves working with children. With her husband, Mick, she runs a bed and breakfast in High Bickington.

Tracey loves to sing and runs the choir in High Bickington.

The Surrounding area

The Two Rivers Mission Community covers 55 square miles of beautiful Devon countryside between the principal town of Barnstaple and the market towns of Bideford and Torrington. The famous surfing beaches of Croyde, Woolacombe and Westward Ho! are just a short drive away and national parks of Dartmoor and Exmoor are withing easy reach.



The view across the Taw from outside Tawstock church at the start of one of our days of prayer.

The mission community itself is primarily agricultural and there are many local families who have earned their living from the land for generations. However, there are also many ‘incomers’, often from the Southeast of England, who have escaped the rat race for a slower pace of life. Incomers are welcomed and valued, especially when they get stuck into community life. Communities are close knit and work together for the common good. Most villages have a hall and programme of social activities. Church, alongside the local school, pub and shop (where they exist) are seen as part of the fabric of village life and are well supported. There are two church primary schools and two community primary schools in the Mission Community and all value their links with the Church. Secondary schools are located at Barnstaple, Torrington and Chulmleigh and most children access 6th form provision at Petroc college in Barnstaple or in Exeter.

Barnstaple provides leisure facilities including a Leisure Centre, a cinema and a theatre. The rugby club plays to a high standard; the football club has recently been promoted. In the centre of the town there is a Victorian Pannier Market. Adjacent to the Market is historic Butchers Row, a row of specialist food shops, some still open fronted. Barnstaple has a direct

railway link to the cathedral city of Exeter, The Tarka Line, and a link road that takes you to the M5 motorway in under an hour.

Bideford, also known as the Little White Town, is associated with Charles Kingsley who wrote *Westward Ho!* and *the Water Babies*. The pedestrianised high street boasts a number of interesting independent shops, including a Christian bookshop. From the quay you can travel to the island of Lundy by boat.

Great Torrington has an historic centre and Pannier Market, a swimming pool, Dartington Crystal Factory and less than two miles away RHS Rosemoor. The Plough Arts Centre has a cinema, theatre and café.

Barnstaple, Bideford and Torrington are joined by the Tarka Trail; a disused railway line now made into a popular walking and cycling route, with a surprisingly steep uphill climb leading out of Torrington!



The Exmoor coast is just a short drive away from the Newton Tracey rectory.

Mission Community statistics for 2025

Parish	Population	Participation figures	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals/ memorials/ashes
Atherington	320	9.2			3
Beaford	393	15.2		1	1
High Bickington	1005	29.2	2		13
Horwood	125	13.2	1		
Huntshaw	180	8.2			
Newton Tracey With Alverdiscott	500	18.2	1		1
Roborough	250	13.7		1	
St Giles	568	21.2	1		2
Tawstock	700	25.2	3	6	3
Yarnscombe	330	13.7		1	1
Total	4371	167	8	9	24

All ten of our parishes have paid their full common fund request in full for at least the last five years. Most parishes are more than covering running costs from annual giving. Churches are willing to invest in mission where they see a credible opportunity.