



# The Two Rivers Mission Community



Praying at the foot of the cross on Good Friday in Huntshaw

## Information Pack for two positions:

- A House for Duty Team Vicar to act as Focal Minister for Tawstock and Mission Community Leadership Team Member
- A Mission Enabler

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## A message from Bishop Jackie, Bishop of Crediton:

These posts present an imaginative opportunity to work with a committed group of parishes seeking to deepen their working together as a Mission Community, to build focal ministry, and to grow in faith and discipleship. We would hope that the right candidates will bring experience, energy and innovation to the House for Duty Team Vicar and Mission Enabler roles, as part of a committed team of clergy and laity.

### Our Diocesan Vision

We seek to be people who together are:

#### Growing in Prayer

Prayer is conversation with God and is part of a healthy Christian life. Prayer is a life-giving activity that opens up deep places within us to God's transforming grace. It is essential if we are to become the people and the Church God calls us to be.

#### Making new disciples

As the Christian story is less and less known, we must find new ways of telling the story, of explaining the faith and giving a reason for the hope that is in us. With Jesus Christ as our companion and guide, we can travel through life differently.

#### Serving the people of Devon with joy

As followers of Jesus Christ, we want to make a difference in the world and make God's love and justice known. In our church life, we seek to be local, participatory, and outward-looking.

Further information regarding our Diocesan Vision can be found in our Next Steps document at [www.exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/vision-strategy](http://www.exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/vision-strategy)

### Living in Mission Communities

Our strategy centres on Mission Communities - parishes working together to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ more effectively in Devon. The phrase Mission Communities sums up what we need to be as a Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: **mission-orientated, community-focused, and locally-rooted.**

Mission Communities help us to work together and support one another better. They enable us to be more flexible in our mission and more responsive to the different contexts and cultures of Devon.

A Mission Community aims to express the fullness of the life of the Church **locally**. This will include:

- regular prayer and worship
- pastoral care
- evangelism and mission, often in collaboration with ecumenical partners
- opportunities for learning, teaching, nurture and growth for disciples of all ages
- youth and children's work and worship
- equipping members for ministry in the community and the local Church
- connecting with the local community, especially in service to the poor
- good administration and stewardship of time, resources and buildings

If our Mission Communities are to flourish, they need to be more than just a structure. They need to live and embody the life of Jesus Christ and to share that life with others. Jesus came so that we can have life in all its fullness. That is our vision and our hope for the Church in Devon.

In this Profile, you will find something of the vision and challenges of this Mission Community. I commend it to your study and prayer as you seek to discern your next step in ministry.

### **Deanery & Diocese**

The Mission Community falls within the Archdeaconry of Barnstaple, and so under my care as Bishop of Crediton and that of the Archdeacon of Barnstaple (The Ven Verena Breed). The Mission Community is in the Torrington Deanery whose Rural Dean is The Rev'd Tracy Doyle. Tracy is a member of the Two Rivers Ministry Team.

In the Diocese of Exeter, we are working together to live out our three diocesan priorities to grow in prayer, to make new disciples and to serve the people of Devon with joy. We aim to be a diverse and truly representative diocese, and particularly welcome applications from women and those from black and minority ethnic groups. Not only is Devon a beautiful place to call home, but we believe the Diocese of Exeter is a great community of which to be a part.

You are warmly invited to contact me directly if you would like a confidential conversation about the post.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Diocese.

+Jackie

The Rt Revd Jackie Searle,  
Bishop of Crediton

## A message from the Rector

Thank you for taking the time to consider whether God might be calling you to join us in North Devon.

We are praying for two new team members

- A House for Duty Focal Minister for Tawstock and Mission Community Leadership Team Member
- A Mission Enabler



Rev Gary beside the Taw river

Both posts are crucial to our vision “to build a Christian community in each village, which will worship, pray, grow and reach out with the Gospel”. Instead of reducing services to accommodate reduced clergy numbers and expecting parishioners to travel we are resourcing lay people to lead locally and revitalise the Christian presence in their village.

The task we believe God is calling us to is not an easy one. But we believe that God has a good and exciting future for the local church in rural England and we are keen to pursue a dream which might help revive the church in rural communities. If God has put on your heart the revival of the church in rural areas please read on, pray and get in touch for an informal chat.

Gary Owen  
Team Rector

## A new House for Duty Focal Minister for Tawstock and Mission Community Leadership Team Member

We are praying for a house for duty priest to join our Mission Community Leadership Team and serve as Focal Minister for the parish of Tawstock. After 3 years progress in Tawstock will be reviewed and the focus of the post may be adjusted to suit circumstances.



The church of St Peter's, Tawstock

### Role Description

Our new Team Vicar will

- Serve as Focal Minister for the village of Tawstock and chair the Local Leadership Team (LLT). His/her primary task will be to build a team which will lead the life of the church and engage in mission to the local community. This will involve calling, training and providing ongoing support. She/he should aim to work her/himself out of a job!
- Oversee Sunday worship and midweek activities; on occasion leading but also supporting others.
- Conduct pastoral offices, involving others in preparation and follow-up.
- Set an example in positive involvement with the local community and seeking opportunities to share the Gospel.
- Work collaboratively with the (to be appointed) Mission Enabler to provide ministry to the local Church of England school and develop outreach and ministry with children and families.

Our new Team Vicar will be a member of the Mission Council Leadership Team and will occasionally help provide priestly ministry in other churches, such as a monthly communion service in Newton Tracey/Horwood, where the Rectory is situated.

### Person specification

- A lively, infectious Christian faith
- A proven track-record in helping people come to faith in Jesus
- A proven track record in developing lay ministry and teams
- An understanding of rural ministry, or a willingness to learn quickly!
- A willingness to get stuck into community life
- A full driving licence and access to their own car – mileage will be paid.
- Ideally be of the evangelical-charismatic tradition



The Rectory in Newton Tracey – a comfortable 5 bedroom house. The home of our new focal minister for Tawstock

### **What we offer**

- Being part of a large, diverse leadership team, committed to building God's kingdom
- The chance to focus on one parish, but with the advantage of support (holidays and time off can be easily covered) and the opportunity to use gifts more widely.
- Full expenses and allowances
- Very little admin and the chance to spend your time on growing the kingdom of God.

### **The Rectory**

The Rectory is a comfortable 5-bedroom house situated in the village of Newton Tracey. It is in a good state of repair and budgeted funds are available for decorating on occupation. There is a large garden, predominantly laid to lawn but with scope for development should the occupant have green fingers.

The study is of good size, accessed through the front door but is not 'separate' from the rest of the house.

Newton Tracey is a small community with a village pub. A primary school and village hall is situated nearby on Lovacott, part of the civil parish. Barnstaple is 3 miles away. The Rectory is close to the parish of Tawstock and a five-minute drive from St Peter's church (tractors permitting).



The view from the lounge of the rectory



## A new Mission Enabler

We are praying for a Mission Enabler to join our Mission Community Leadership Team and help facilitate mission across the Mission Community.

### Role Description

- Our new Mission Enabler will be a full member of the Mission Community Leadership Team and work with the Rector and focal ministers to discern areas for fruitful mission, plan strategies for pursuing them and train and facilitate teams to deliver mission.
- He/she will have a particular focus on mission with children, youth and families.
- She/he may develop a ministry apprentice programme, possibly through New Wine or another nationally recognised scheme.



Ready and raring to go for the crib service in Roborough

### Person specification

- A lively, infectious Christian faith
- A proven track-record in helping people come to faith in Jesus
- A proven track record in developing lay ministry and teams for mission
- An understanding of rural ministry, or a willingness to learn quickly!
- Ideally be of the evangelical-charismatic tradition
- An added advantage would be skills in leading modern sung worship
- The applicant must have a full driving licence and access to their own car – mileage will be paid.

### What we offer

- Being part of a large, diverse leadership team, committed to building God's kingdom
- Scope for pursuing areas of interest and passion
- A salary of £22,000 pa plus pension contribution
- Full expenses and allowances
- A promise to set high but reasonable expectations; to respect your personal commitments, time off and space for personal development

**This is initially a three year post, subject to renewal**



## The Mission Community



The Two Rivers Mission Community is made up of 11 church buildings in 10 parishes between Barnstaple and the market towns of Bideford and Torrington. None of the parishes has a population greater than 1500 and many are less than 300. The area covered is large, about 55 square miles, and it takes 30 minutes to drive from one end of the Mission Community to the other.

The area is primarily agricultural and there are many local families who have earned their living from the land for generations. There are also many 'incomers', often from the South East of England, who have escaped the rat race for a slower pace of life. Incomers are welcomed and valued. Communities are close knit and work together for the common good.

There are two church primary schools and two community schools in the Mission Community and all value their links with the Church. Most villages have a hall and (pre-covid) an active social calendar. Secondary schools are located at Barnstaple, Torrington, South Molton and Chulmleigh.

Since the appointment of a new Team Rector in September 2019 the Mission Community has been working hard on a new Mission Action Plan. The aim is to build a Christian community in each village, which will worship, pray, grow and reach out with the Gospel. This is to be achieved by building Local Leadership Teams in each parish, chaired by a Focal Minister. The Rector will chair the Mission Community Leadership Team (MCLT) comprising focal ministers and other specialist ministers (eg Mission Enabler and Parish Nurse). This team will set vision for the Mission Community and offer support and encouragement to focal ministers. Please see appendix 1 and 2 for more detail.



Breakfast and communion in Newton Tracey

The largest of our church congregations is about 20 and the smallest just a handful. All have experienced numerical decline over the last 10 years, but 4 have seen numerical growth since 2016. There are few children attending regularly, but we share our faith with young people through our school involvement (collective worship, Open the Book, after school club pre-covid and during covid via pre-recorded

collective worship) and two youth groups. We are urgently and actively addressing the issue of how we can make each congregation a place where people of all ages can belong, grow and minister.

Alpha is the primary means of explaining the Christian faith and helping people enter a relationship with God. Our recent online Alpha saw eight people attend, four of whom were exploring or new to the Christian faith. Two are now on their PCCs. Homegroups help people grow in faith and offer mutual support and encouragement. These have run online during covid but we plan to resume in person soon.

Christians are actively engaged in their communities as salt and light. In normal times the churches also run a variety of activities to engage with and bless their communities; often involving coffee and cake.

All eleven of our church buildings are listed and require a considerable amount of upkeep. Some of the churches have developed Friends groups to support the maintenance of the building and promote wider community use. The responsibility for funding the mission of the church remains with church members. This is a challenge we are now addressing by introducing a budgeting process and communication with church members. We are currently meeting our Common



An adult baptism during covid. We delight at people coming to faith and committing to Jesus, and pray for more

Fund contribution in full and are committed to doing so in the future. Indeed, in time we want to be a net contributor to Diocesan funds rather than a recipient of subsidy.

The Diocese of Exeter are very supportive of our plans and are working hard to provide support to rural churches and communities. These are challenging times, but we believe that God has a heart for these communities and good times lie ahead.



Coffee, Cake and Company – a free monthly social gathering offered by St Giles to the community

## **The Parish of Tawstock**

Tawstock is a large, rural parish, bordering south-west Barnstaple. It comprises several hamlets (Eastacott, St John's Chapel, Collabear and Harrocott) as well as the village of Tawstock itself. Total population is 700. The village boasts a church primary school and village hall, as well as Tawstock Court, a popular wedding venue.

The Church building is large and of historical interest, being for many centuries the family church for the owners of Tawstock Court. The Church benefits from a tea station and toilet and good disabled access. There is meeting space within the church as well as pewed seating. The magnificent organ has recently been restored. The churchyard is closed and maintained by the local authority. A public cemetery is located next to the church.

The church congregation is predominantly aged over 60. Several families attend on an occasional basis and are keen for more all-age provision. Each year several couples attend in order to qualify for weddings and local families return to church for baptisms and special occasions. There is, therefore, a large fringe to work with.

Services are varied in nature. Communion is celebrated monthly and on other Sundays three members of the congregation lead a service of the Word, with varying degrees of formality. There is a strong desire to restart a monthly family service and children's provision. The church pays its full quota each year and normally outgoings are met by giving.

The Churchwarden writes: "Tawstock is a wonderful church, with much potential. We are excited about working with a Focal Minister and Mission Enabler to grow the kingdom of God in this parish".

## **The current leadership Team**

Team Rector:	Rev Gary Owen
SSM Associate Minister:	Rev Tracey Doyle
SSM Distinctive Deacon curate and Parish Nurse:	Rev Julia Halpin
PTO priest	Rev Caroline Strudwick
Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers):	Carol Wyatt
	David Halpin
	Jacque Ward
	Tim Overton
Warden of St Giles	Jen Steele
To be appointed:	House for Duty Team Vicar
	Mission enabler

## **Leadership from January 2022**

We are currently formally setting up a Joint Council made up of clergy, focal ministers and two wardens from each church. This body will oversee the Mission Community Mission Action Plan.

The Mission Community Leadership Team, a working group of the Joint Council, will be made up of focal ministers and specialist ministers. This group will be responsible for putting the Mission Action Plan into practice across the Mission Community

Local Leadership Teams will be chaired by the focal ministers and take responsibility for implementing the Mission Action Plan in their parish.



## Area profile

The Two Rivers Mission Community, ten parishes over a widespread rural and agricultural community, borders Barnstaple, Bideford, Great Torrington, with the River Torridge in the west and the River Taw in the east - hence our name. Barnstaple provides leisure facilities including a Leisure Centre, a multiplex cinema and a theatre. 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.



Prayer walking along the South West Coast path as part of the South West Wave of Prayer

Bideford, also known as the Little White Town is associated with Charles Kingsley who wrote *Westward Ho!* and *The Water Babies*. From the quay you can travel to the island of Lundy by boat. Both Bideford and Barnstaple are close to magnificent beaches where you can surf or bathe. The Cornish border lies less than twenty miles away.

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. From nearby there are outstanding views of Dartmoor, one of Devon's two National Parks.

To the eastern edge of the parishes lies South Molton, known as the gateway to Exmoor, Devon's other National Park. This busy and growing town features an historic Pannier Market, a livestock market and a swimming pool. There is an artisan chocolate maker, The Quince Honey Farm, and just a few miles to the uplands of Exmoor, with glorious views to Wales and Dartmoor.

All four towns have good primary and secondary schools as well as "Petroc" in Barnstaple, a hub for further education in North Devon. Barnstaple also has a large public library and there are smaller libraries in the other towns.



The riverfront in Barnstaple



**Appendix 1: Our Mission Action Plan, agreed by the Mission Council and PCCs in June 2021**

**Values**  
 Love  
 Faith  
 Word and Spirit  
 Generosity  
 Joy

**What does the destination look like?**  
 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.



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

Authentic, attractive, all-age Christian communities doing life together  
 Meeting together more than just on a Sunday  
 Focused on local community—personal relationships, inculturation

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.  
 Parish nursing; anna chaplaincy, practical action in local communities; support of Christian mission agencies

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

Finances, administration and buildings directed towards these goals.  
 Joint Council  
 Better administration; sharing of skills for faculties, finances, grant applications etc  
 Each church paying its way. Realistic planned giving.  
 All buildings fit for purpose and well maintained. Teams for ongoing maintenance  
 Generous giving of parishes to God's work elsewhere

**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**

Local Leadership Teams (LLTs) in each parish chaired by a focal minister to oversee ministry in each parish

Mission Council Leadership Team (MCLT) made up of rector, focal ministers and specialist ministers to set Mission community vision. A working party of the Joint Council

Form a Joint Council to provide legal oversight of the Mission Community. This will replace the Mission Community Council

Rector to act as chair of the MCLT and train and support focal ministers and local ministry teams. Sundays spent moving around the parishes.

## **Appendix 2: Our Plan for organising ourselves to achieve our Mission Action Plan – a paper agreed by the Mission Community Council and PCCs in June 2021**

- To call, train and support a Local Leadership Team (LLT) in each church (could be the PCC), chaired by a Focal Minister (lay or ordained)
- Form a Mission Community Leadership Team (MCLT) made up of the focal ministers and any specialist ministers

### **Initial deployment of leaders:**

- Tracey to act as Focal Minister for HB and Ath.
- Appoint a House for Duty Team Vicar to live in NT and act as Focal Minister for T. Could take communion in NT/H.
- Gary to act as Focal Minister for B with the aim of appointing a curate to live in B and act as Focal Minister.
- Use current Licensed Lay Ministers and wardens to act as Focal Minister in the other churches: Jen in StG, Jacque in R, Tim in NT & Horwood, Carol in Y.
- Appoint a Mission Enabler to work across the Mission Community. Paid for by the half stipend available from the Diocese – probably 3 days per week plus Sunday. This could become a full-time job with additional funding from any parishes wishing to use the extra time. The Mission Enabler would work with parishes to help develop mission initiatives.
- Rector to act as chair of the MCLT and train and support focal ministers and local ministry teams. Sundays spent moving around the parishes.
- Retired priests to celebrate communion and take baptisms. Ideally moving towards a priest in each parish (retired, SSM etc).
- Julia (Distinctive Deacon) to support pastoral care and community engagement across the Mission Community.

### **Development of leaders**

- Explore ordination with those Licensed Lay Ministers willing to do so. Ultimate aim is to have a priest in each parish so each parish can have full access to the sacramental life of the church.
- Develop LLTs so churches are able to progress ministry in their parish. Develop specialisms within each LLT, such as leading worship, pastoral

care, youth and children's work, stewardship, buildings etc. Focal ministers to be called from and by the team to provide continuity.

### **The relationship of the Mission Community Leadership Team and the Local Leadership Teams**

- There will be 'give and take' based on mutual trust and good cooperation. A 'decision planner' will clearly show which decisions can be taken by Focal Minister, Rector, LLT and MCLT and how information needs to be shared between them.
- For example: The MCLT will set the vision for each year, including some sermon series and joint activities. LLTs will apply this locally and take responsibility for non-timetabled times. So, there will be times of year when all churches follow a common theme and other times when churches will be free to do their own thing. The MCLT will continue to provide weekly resources for churches which need it.
- Churches will be free to work together where there is a common interest (eg a shared school) and better resourced churches might offer support to those with less resources available.

### **Formation of a joint council**

Form a joint council made up of two elected reps from each church and all focal ministers. The MCLT would be a working group of the Mission Community Council.

### **Next Steps**

- Seek support of the Bishop and Archdeacon
- Form a Joint Council to allow cooperation between parishes to take place within charity and canon law – eg the joint employment of staff
- Create profile, advertise, interview and appoint House for Duty Team Vicar and Mission Enabler
- Train and support focal ministers to develop LLTs.
- Create a decision planner to enable decisions to be made coming out of lockdown.
- Seek permission to train willing Licensed Lay Ministers as priests, using the Caleb ministry stream

### Appendix 3: Mission Community Statistics (2019/20)

Parish	Population	Electoral Roll 2020	Participation figures 2020	Baptisms 2019	Weddings 2019	Funerals 2020
<b>Atherington</b>	320	15	5		1	1
<b>Beaford</b>	393	9	7		0	3
<b>High Bickington</b>	1600	35	18	0	3	7
<b>Horwood</b>	125	22	7		1	1
<b>Huntshaw</b>	180	5	3		0	1
<b>Newton Tracey With Alverdicott</b>	500	24	15	0	0	1
<b>Roborough</b>	250	18	9	0	0	2
<b>St Giles</b>	568	20	9	2	1	5
<b>Tawstock</b>	700	22	22		8	5
<b>Yarnscombe</b>	330	10	10	1	0	1

All figures are for 2020, except baptisms and wedding figures which are for 2019 (reflecting 'normal' figures when not in covid)