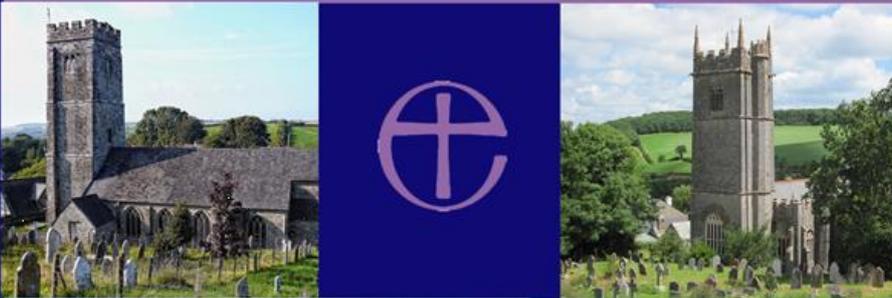




*Totnes Ministry Team
Newsletter
September 2021*



Monthly Reflection: Icon of Hope - Sam Wernham



Nature's first green is gold,

Her hardest hue to hold.

Her early leaf's a flower;

But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.

So Eden sank to grief,

So dawn goes down to day

Nothing gold can stay. Robert Frost

August began with the festival of Lammas and giving thanks to God for the first fruits of the harvest. In our mostly rural mission community, I imagine many of us have been gathering the gifts of the earth from our gardens, while farmers have been bringing in the hay and watching the grain ripen to gold, ready to be gathered in. As August gives way to September, autumn is in the air and, as the poem above reminds us, everything changes and this involves loss, letting go and is a natural time to pause and reflect.

There is a difference between a harvest, when life comes to fruition and draws naturally to a close, and the shock of an untimely end. Recently the news has seemed full of the latter: democracy dying in Afghanistan, a young man in Plymouth shooting his mother, a little girl and others, including himself. Some of us may have read about the new IPCC report on the stark realities of climate change and how many people in the world are feeling its impact through wildfires, flooding and failing harvests. In the face of such suffering, where can we look for inspiration and hope?

In Orthodox spirituality, the transition from August to September marks the end and beginning of the Christian year. The final festival of the year falls in mid-August and is the Feast of the Dormition, the 'falling asleep' or death of Mary the mother of Christ. While the first festival of the new year in early September celebrates her birth. Since the Reformation, Mary has often been rather overlooked in the Church of England and yet as a recent Church Times article title expressed, she is the 'Mother of all examples' of living a faithful, hopeful, loving Christian life. Among her traditional titles are theotokos – 'God bearer' and hodigitria - 'the one who shows the way', reminding us that 'to carry the Word of God, Jesus Christ, within us is the calling of all Christians: to bear Him spiritually within us during our lives, and shine with His glory.'¹

¹ <https://iconreader.wordpress.com/2010/08/15/the-dormition-icon-of-hope/>

I find these inspiring words and also hopeful ones.



They are expressed visually in icons of Christ's nativity, that show Mary carrying the Christ child, while the Dormition icon also reminds us of another source of hope. One of its details (below) shows the soul of Mary being carried by Christ. This is an image I try to remember in challenging times, that the soul of each of us, in both our living and dying, is held by God for eternity.

Team Services this month

We are having two team services this month, both at St John's, Totnes.

August 29th at 10am – Climate Sunday.

Along with many other churches nationwide we are holding a climate-focused service to explore the theological and scientific basis of creation care and action on climate, to pray, and to commit to action. This is part of the lead up to COP26 in November.

September 12th at 10am – Welcome Service for Chris Harris, Curate

We are delighted to be welcoming Chris as curate to our Ministry Team. Do please join us to extend Chris and Hannah a very warm welcome and to pray for his spiritual journey and calling to service.

Please Note: Covid safety considerations:

We hope that these services will be well attended and therefore there may not be as much room as usual to physically distance from others. We encourage people to continue to wear masks and observe Covid safety. Numbers will be limited, but the church may well be quite full (we hope so at least!). Both services will be streamed live on Zoom – so if you prefer to join us remotely (by telephone or on screen) that option will be available to you and details will be sent out in the weekly email

Services in our churches this month

	August 29 Climate Sunday	Sept 5 Trinity 14	Sept 12 Chris' Welcome	Sept 19 Trinity 16	Sept 26 Trinity 17
St Mary's Totnes	Team Service at St John's 10.00	11.15: MP 5pm Vespers	Team Service at St John's 10.00 5pm Vespers	11.15: HC 5pm Vespers	10.00: Joint Harvest Festival at St John's
St.John's Bridgetown	Team Service at 10.00	10.00: HC	Team Service at St John's 10.00	10.00: MP	10.00: HC Joint Harvest Festival
Ashprington	Team Service at St John's 10.00	11.15: HC	Team Service at St John's 10.00 4.30pm: Pet Service	11.15: HC Joint at Ashprington	9.15: VW Joint at Cornworthy
Berry Pomeroy	Team Service at St John's 10.00	11.15: MP	Team Service at St John's 10.00	11.15: HC	11.15: HC
Brooking	Team Service at St John's 10.00	9.15: HC	Team Service at St John's 10.00		10.30: Joint HC Dartington
Cornworthy	Team Service at St John's 10.00	5.00pm: Wild Church Vespers	Team Service at St John's 10.00	11.15: HC Joint at Ashprington	9.15: VW Joint at Cornworthy
Dartington	Team Service at St John's 10.00		Team Service at St John's 10.00	10.30: MP	10.30: Celtic HC
Marldon	Team Service at St John's 10.00	10.00: HC	Team Service at St John's 10.00	10.00: HC	10.00: VW
Stoke Gabriel	8.15: HC Team Service at St John's 10.00	8.15: HC 11.15: HC	8.15: HC Team at St John's at 10.00	8.15: HC 11.15: HC	8.15: HC 11.15: HC
Telephone	No service	No service	No service	No service	No service
Zoom	10.00	No Zoom	10.00	<i>tbc</i> 6.30pm Sacred Space	<i>tbc</i>

HC = Holy Communion, MP = Morning Praise, VW = Village Worship

For *Wild Church* please contact Sam Wernham on livingspirit3@gmail.com

'Desert Island Discs' – Rev Pauline Lewis



**Pauline is usually to be found at St Mary's, Berry Pomeroy.
Here we get to know a little more about her!**

What is your ideal summers day?

My ideal Summer's day would be in the garden, in the sunshine with our family, running around and playing games with Guy and Miranda. Perhaps Harriet, Mark and Elwyn might join in too!

You spent many years in the Army, was it ever hard to know a loving God in situations of stress and difficulty?

Have I ever railed at God when tragedy has struck? I don't know. I have shed tears, loads of them. However, to live without God in such circumstances is unimaginable.

Berry Pomeroy Church is often associated with the weddings of the Dashwood Girls in the film of Sense and Sensibility – what should it be known for?

Our little church is centuries old. Sense and Sensibility was just a 'happening' in its long history. St. Mary's is imbedded with the prayers of its people and I hope anyone getting married there would feel the amazing presence of God's love for them.

Which three people would you like to invite to a dinner party?

My guests at the dinner party and it would have to be a very small gathering would be: Nelson Mandela, he doesn't need any introduction.

Charlie Lewis, our elder son who died on the Feast of The Transfiguration in 2012. He was married to Harriet and they had a three year old son and a baby of just a few months old. She is an exceptional mother and the children love her beyond measure. Charlie was ordained a Deacon in Rowcroft Hospice.

Mark Lewis, our younger son. Charlie was his best friend, since his death he has found faith in God difficult.

I know I could only have three guests but since the party is to be very small I would like to invite two other guests and that would be Charlie's son Guy and his daughter Miranda. It would be a blessing for them to meet their father and be able to feel the warmth of his love. I'm assuming that Elwyn, Harriet and I would be amongst the other guests!

On your desert island you can have one piece of music, one luxury and one book (you do have the Bible). What would they be?

I don't listen to music very often but when I do I realise what I'm missing! I think I would choose Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony. When I was 10 years old I read The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett, I remember it was the first book to make me cry, so on my island I would be reminded of my wonderful parents and brother and the freedom I enjoyed when I wasn't at school. My luxury would be Elwyn's 'Rock Cakes'.

Restricted Giving Campaign to support our ministry team

We are continuing to run our individual Administration Support appeal this month. This is purely voluntary and is designed to help ALL our Clergy and Ministry team to focus on pastoral, mission and spiritual duties.

Running our ministry team creates hundreds of tasks daily – small and large. There are increasing amounts of paperwork and formalities to ensure that we observe safeguarding, report effectively, communicate with families and other agencies at times of bereavement and celebration, answer enquiries and deal with local issues. This is a huge team effort – so many of you already give SO much in service locally. Sadly, many tasks have to be done centrally, and this is falling on our Ministers. It is not ideal, but we have to risk asking!

This is not a sustainable solution, but that is being explored. This is to ensure we continue to have a Ministry Team as we move into the winter months.

There is no obligation to give – and any amount will help.

Mark it '**Admin Support**':

Account Name: Totnes with Bridgetown PCC Building Fund

Account Number: 10028304. Sort Code: 20-60-88

For details of how to contribute please contact Sue Stabler or see details in last month's newsletter. You can also **boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid** for every £1.

Sue Stabler: suestabler@sky.com, phone: 01803 849425, 07803 894542

Please note that the Totnes with Bridgetown PCC bank account is being used purely for the purposes of being able to reclaim Gift Aid. Donations made to this account will be held in a restricted fund and will be used solely to provide Administration Support to the Totnes Team.

Dartington and Brooking News: We are OPEN for services!



Good News! We take pleasure in welcoming our new curate Chris and his wife Hannah to live in the Vicarage in Week. Chris Harris will be ordained as a Deacon on 11 Sept 2021 and will be in training across the Totnes Team Ministry. Do look out for them and say hello as the new faces in the village.

As we move towards the autumn months and, dare I say, Christmas, remember to look out for the posters for the Harvest Festival. We are hopeful that we will be able to hold our popular Brass Band Carol Concert and our Christingle Service this year. All information will be put up as usual in the Church porch.

Don't forget to try your hand at completing our inside Dartington Church Trail this summer. You will find the paperwork just inside the door on the right! Children enjoy this. Please feel free to take your question sheet away with you and possibly share it with your school as a project. You will be pleased to know there is an answer sheet as well which we would be grateful if you'd leave behind for others to use. Please take a photo of it if you still need answers.



Thank you to all who volunteer to make our Churches the friendly places they are and if you would like to volunteer to help, I would be pleased to hear from you on my email below. If you would like to help us fund any of our projects the bank account for our 'Fabric of the Church' support fund is 11270990 and the sort code is 40-44-24. Raising money for replacing the Church Boiler is a priority along with the cutting of the Church Yard grass.

A prayer of hopefulness as we move forward out of our C19 restrictions

Lord, help us live this day quietly, easily.

To lean on your strength trustfully, restfully.

To wait for the unfolding of your will, patiently, serenely.

To meet others peacefully, joyously.

To face tomorrow confidently, courageously. Amen

God Bless. Sue Robertson ~ Dartington Church Warden

ianandsuerobertson@btinternet.com

**You can also book the Church Hall through Angela at
dartingtonchurchhall@aol.co.uk**



Church Suite Updates

If you are on one of our existing email lists, you may have already received an email from Church Suite about being in our new system. The basic system is very easy to use – and we can provide help. You will have control over your data. It is really important to ensure that you keep the **'receive general emails'** option ticked – otherwise you may not hear from us for a while!

There are still a few places left for our training day on Tuesday September 7th, 9.30am to 4pm at St John's, Bridgetown. Our professional trainer will guide us through the basic Church Suite system. You will need to bring a laptop.

If you would like to join our mailing list and receive regular news about our Ministry Team, please let us know by emailing ttmcomms@gmail.com

Writing letters to support Amnesty International – Julian Hall

In these troubled times, reports of human rights violations by governments around the world abound. They are rightly mentioned in Intercessions and, in many cases, prayer seems the only option open to us. However, in 1961 the British lawyer Peter Benenson famously quipped that 'it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness'.

After two Portuguese students were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for drinking a toast to freedom during the fascist Salazar regime, Benenson wrote a letter of protest to the Observer newspaper. The letter 'went viral' and resulted in the founding of Amnesty International, with its iconic symbol of a lighted candle encircled with barbed wire.



Since then, countless letters to foreign governments have been penned by Amnesty International members protesting about human rights abuses of all kinds. Whilst the majority have, no doubt, fallen on deaf ears, they have resulted in a significant number of releases of prisoners of conscience, victims of torture and 'disappeared' people etc. Indeed, there have been many testimonials from released prisoners attributing their releases to the Amnesty campaigns.

In the 1970s, I joined a local Amnesty group in Lymington, Hampshire. The then group Chairman, Dennis Woodman, had briefly been the Treasurer of Amnesty International UK in the very early days and thus had been a colleague

of Peter Benenson. He was passionate about Human Rights and I think some of this must have rubbed off on me. When I moved to Totnes in 1986, I joined the local Amnesty group and subsequently became the Hon. Secretary. Writing to foreign governments on behalf of human rights victims can be quite challenging and, after a while, I devised some time-saving 'short cuts'. Having a background in computer services, I eventually developed these into an 'App' that could churn out differently worded letters on the same cases umpteen times.

In 1991, the Amnesty group advertised the service and over the next four years, tens of thousands of letters were sent out. These days, my duties as a churchwarden take up nearly all my time but I still run a scaled-down version of the service with just one part-time office worker. The loyalty of my subscribers, together with occasional news of a successful appeal, is really what has kept me going.

Among my subscribers have been the late lamented Helga Watts of Dartington, who wrote a wonderful series for the Parish Magazine and was a tireless champion of the homeless and destitute. Also Rev'd Ralph Scrine, who used to take services at St Mary's Totnes, and many clergy and people from all walks of life, including a former Bishop of Bath and Wells. In all, at least a million letters have been sent by subscribers from all over the UK and a few from *expats*. In an effort to involve more people, I now have a facility whereby anyone (not necessarily Amnesty members) can download individually worded letters completely free of charge. All they need to do is spend a few minutes editing in their home address etc., then print and post the letters to the governments concerned.

I believe that, as Christians, we should be pro-active in campaigning for justice as well as praying for it. As St James says in his Epistle, '[if] you come across an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say "Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ, be filled with the Holy Spirit!" and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup, where does that get you? Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?' [*The Message Bible, James 2.15-17*] And in Matthew Chapter 25.40, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." [KJV]

If you'd like to find out more, you can visit: <https://www.appealsww.com>
also my Facebook page at:
<https://www.facebook.com/Writing-for-Rights-made-easy-106562801662492>

Parent and Toddler Group at St John's, Bridgetown – Help Needed!

Tony and Carolyn Stilwell hope to start the Parent and Toddler group again on Monday mornings from September 13 in the upstairs hall and Meeting room at St John's.

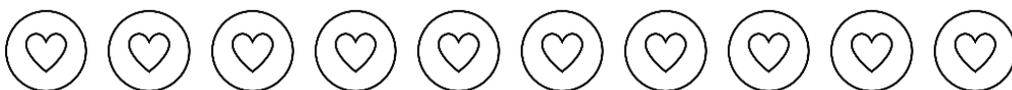


Before Covid it was a very popular group for parents, carers, grannies and grandpas with their preschool children and babies, an opportunity for them all to socialise that has been much missed, especially by babies born in the last 18 months and their parents! (nb. parents stay with their children). We have a wonderful selection of toys which are scientifically packed away in and on various cupboards! Parents pay £2.50, and £1 for every additional child. (Extra babies under 12 months are free!) This covers the cost of snacks, a donation towards church expenses and occasionally purchasing new play equipment.

We can set up the play areas and toys on a Sunday but could really do with help from one or two other people on Mondays in school term times from 9.15am - 11.45. Finished by 12 noon, and only in school term time.

Help could be on a rota basis, so if you could help even just once a month that would be great, even if for a short while.

Please contact Carolyn and Tony Stilwell 01803 863030 or cas273@yahoo.co.uk



Thank you from Liz Chandler

Liz sends love, thanks and warm wishes to all those at St John's Church who contributed to the very generous leaving present and card. She has decided that, as she already has a sizeable stash of yarn, she is going to spend it on a new wheelbarrow and a load of logs to keep herself cosy in the winter!

It's just another thought – from Rev'd Cliff Berdinner

Do you dream? I am sure that you do. Sometimes my dreams are in colour and so vivid they feel like the real world, but of course it's just a world of illusion. I used to dream I was standing before a congregation but could find no words to say! Now did you ever come across a Rev who was short of a word or two?!

No, our dream world is not a real world. Most people will agree that the real world is this material world we live in and know through our senses, seeing, hearing and so on. At the moment of writing the events in our world are tragic – fire, floods and earthquakes as well as the death and destruction of war and disease. Sadly, our real world wraps itself around us in such a way that we hear voices asking, 'Where is this God of love in our world today?' And I have to say it may seem easier to not believe than to believe amidst such Armageddon like events. But I believe there is yet another world, just as real as the one we live in, where God and his blessings can be found. It is the world within our own consciousness. You may ask if I am sure and I will say, 'Yes I am sure'.

I was reading the other day about an English lady while in India being taken by a friend to see a holy person. She was a little woman of lowly upbringing seated in a large tent heavy with the scent of sandalwood incense. Devotees crowded around the holy woman for a blessing. The English woman describes later how she found herself being moved forward, and how she felt a quietness and peace as she waited for her turn; and how, when the little holy woman smiled and lightly embraced her, she felt filled with a deep inexplicable sweetness. At that moment she tells of how the little woman became the way to a meeting with the divine deep within her own self-consciousness.

We do not have to go to India to experience this other world within. I have a friend who, while walking alone in the silence of the Scottish mountains, experienced the mystery of a divine encounter which changed the focus of his life. I could recount more tales of this other inner world. I recall the day I was with a group of church folk gathered outside their church. Their minister, casually dressed, lifted up his little child in his arms and in simple words began to pray and thank God. Then there came the experience of the presence of another in power and peace which no words can describe. These may be only glimpses of the reality of our inner world of consciousness where we can discover the divine presence; but they are not dreams or illusions.

May the good Lord bless you, and come to you in the still centre of your being -
Be still and know that I am God

Friday 24 September 7 - 9pm St John's Church

'Seeking Refuge' - film and discussion



St John's Church is partnering with Beyond Borders Totnes & District, to show this film of the journey of two asylum-seekers travelling from Africa to Europe in search of refuge, showing the hazards and trials they encounter, including their arrival in the UK. The film contains imaginative and moving imagery and voice-over by the filmmaker, Hasan Suida. After the film, there will be a live discussion with Hasan Suida via zoom, including questions and answers.

Entry by donation, refreshments available. Profits will be donated to local asylum seekers and refugees.



Communal Pot Luck Lunch – Sept 25th 1pm St John's Church

More details of this event to follow soon. This event is being coordinated by Claire Allford and supported by St John's Church, Totnes.

Our aim is to invite people who may normally lunch alone or who are feeling a little lonely or isolated. Just bring some food and come along.

If you are interested in finding out about this event, please contact Claire on eagleowl1429@gmail.com

St Mary's and St John's Totnes will be joining together to celebrate **Harvest Festival** at 10am on Sunday September 26th at St John's Church.

Please bring donations suitable for Food in Community; thank you.



Living in Love and Faith Course

Starts in September

The “Living in Love and Faith Course” is a five-session course and aims to help us think more deeply about what it means to be human and about how to live in love and faith.

All around us we see changing understandings of human identity, changing patterns in relationships and families, changing sexual attitudes and activity. What does it mean for followers to walk in love, faith and holiness today? Each of the five online sessions runs for 90 minutes and explores a particular topic. An opening reflection about learning together is followed by two sections of teaching, time for discussion and a Bible study. The sessions end with an invitation to reflect on our learning, bringing it to God in prayer. The dates are Monday 13th Sept, Monday 27th Sept, Monday 11th Oct, Monday 25th Oct and Monday 8th Nov on zoom between 2.00 -3.30pm

It is hoped that those who experience the course might wish to offer it as a Lent course in their own community. If you would like to participate in the course please email deborah@totnesrectory.co.uk The course will be offered via zoom and a link with instructions about preparation for the first session will be offered nearer the time.

Revd. Preb. Deborah Parsons

Interfaith Group Meetings – Thursday evenings at St Mary’s, Totnes

The Thursday evening Interfaith Group meets in St Mary’s, Totnes from 6.00-7.00pm. Each week a speaker gives some input from a particular tradition with some time for silent reflection and an opportunity though not an obligation to share how the input has resonated.

On September 9th Revd. Preb Deborah will be sharing a little about Mary the Mother of God as an archetype for our spiritual journey.

All welcome!



TOTNES HERITAGE TRUST - FREE EVENT!

Exeter Cathedral Comes to Totnes - Saturday 2 October 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

Totnes Heritage Trust and the Totnes Museum have been working with Exeter Cathedral to bring a piece of history to the town for us all to enjoy.

Be sure to make time on the first Saturday in October to come along to the Exeter Cathedral Roadshow with loads of things to see and do for all the family. The roadshow will be based at St Mary's Church and the Totnes Museum and the staff at Exeter who look after the cathedral archives are digging out all sorts of interesting treasures to bring along, including things that they keep in Exeter which are all about Totnes.

The cathedral staff are working closely with the Totnes Heritage Trust and our own local Totnes Museum to make this a really enjoyable day, full of interest and entertainment for adults and children. Meet the roving actors in character and costume who will be telling their stories and watch the Exeter stonemasons demonstrating their fantastic skills, take a look at the displays from the cathedral library and archives and find out all about the cathedral's conservation work.

All this and more! ... and watch out for details of a special Evensong service in St Mary's Church on Sunday October 3rd with the Exeter Cathedral Choir! Lots of treats in store. See you there!

www.stmarystotnesheritagetrust.org

Marldon Apple Pie Fair – Saturday September 4th

 Since 1888 there has been a celebration of apples in Marldon – plus many other local activities and traditions.

Why not go along and enjoy the fun – and pop into St John the Baptist's Church whilst you're there Not too much cider now!

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Newsletter News

We are delighted that our newsletter is starting to get a wider readership, and please do send in contributions – however small – so that we can continue to grow.

We are now doing a limited print run of the newsletter – but we don't have the funds to continue to do this. In the past we have asked for a modest contribution of £5 per year from people able to contribute. Please could churchwardens consider asking for that in local churches to see if we can raise some funds that way? Any other suggestions are gratefully received.

Alternately, why not **advertise here!** We have a growing circulation of 300+ local readers, plus website visitors. We are delighted to have two advertisers this month. Here are the rates – so do please get in touch.

Size	Months	Cost
Full Page		On enquiry
Half Page	One Off	£10
	6 months	£20
	12 months	£30
Quarter Page	One Off	£10
	6 months	£15
	12 months	£20

October Newsletter Deadline: September 20th
ttmcomms@gmail.com or Diana on 07773551030

May the raindrops fall lightly on your brow.
May the soft winds freshen your spirit.
May the sunshine brighten your heart.
May the burdens of the day rest lightly upon you
And may God enfold you in love.

An old Irish prayer