



THE TWO RIVERS MISSION COMMUNITY



PARISH PROFILE FOR A
PROSPECTIVE TRAINING POST

General Information

Mission Community: The Two Rivers Mission Community

Archdeaconry: Barnstaple

Deanery: Torrington

Training Incumbent name:	Gary Owen
Current post:	Team rector
Contact details for incumbent:	The Rectory. High Bickington Umberleigh EX37 9AY
E-mail address:	revgaryowen@gmail.com



GARY'S THE ONE ON THE LEFT!

Length of time in present parishes: Since September 2019

Other responsibilities and duties currently undertaken by incumbent:

Training an SSM distinctive deacon until June 2024

Placement supervisor for licenced lay ministers

CPAS patronage representative in North Devon

Previous posts and experience of incumbent, including details of experience with previous curates:

Curate of Welshpool with Castle Ceareinion 1998-2002

Team Vicar in charge of St John's Church, Wrexham 2002-2010

Rector of Eynsford with Farningham and Lullingstone 2010-2019

Trained two ordinands, one of whom remained in the parish as curate

Various placements of ordinands from SITE

Things you might like to know:

Originally from Kent, I studied Banking at City University in London where I met my wife at the Christian Union. After two years as a lay assistant, I trained for ordination at Ridley Hall. I've experienced ministry in rural mid-Wales, the suburbs of Wrexham and commuter belt Kent. I'm a keen follower of Kent cricket and Watford FC but am happy watching most sports. Much of my spare time is spent with the two of my four children who still live at home, often walking on Dartmoor or Exmoor, or bodyboarding off the beautiful beaches of North Devon.

I'm passionate about building Christian communities which share the good news of Jesus and help church members grow the kingdom of God through their daily lives.

Nature of post

Training post for a deacon who expects to be ordained priest

We offer the chance to train in a rural, multi-parish benefice at the cutting edge of oversight/focal ministry development. We are pioneering new forms of ministry, seeing growth in the rural church, and lay people are being raised up for ministry and mission. A curate will have chance to gain valuable experience of pastoral ministry based in a single parish and also oversight leadership across a variety of churches. He/she will develop the ability to lead creatively and missionally in a rural context. The broad context of our mission community means a curate will be able to use their gifts and talents from the outset and have the opportunity to make a real impact for the kingdom.

There is the possibility that a curate may be able to remain in the benefice as team vicar for a further 3 years after completing a curacy and then leave prepared to take on a team rector role.

The context: the mission community setting



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 Croyd, Woolacombe and Westward Ho! are just a short drive away and national parks of Dartmoor and Exmoor are within easy reach.

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 South East 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. 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.



PRAYER WALKING THE SOUTH WEST COAST PATH AS PART OF THY KINGDOM COME



RUSH HOUR ON THE WAY TO TAWSTOCK

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!

Julia, our SSM distinctive deacon-curate writes:

This benefice has plenty of scope for a curate, and Gary is an excellent Training Incumbent.

Gary made sure that I had experience of leading all the Pastoral offices, and he is good at ensuring his curate experiences the broadest possible range of ministry without overburdening him or her.

Gary is very thorough regarding supporting his curate to fulfil all the IME requirements and he has given me supervision time every fortnight plus time for meeting with the consultant. He is pastorally sensitive and I have not felt 'used' but rather 'mentored'.

The Mission Community

The mission community is made up of 10 parish churches and a chapel of ease. We've been together now for over 20 years and are happy and confident as a group. An informal mission council has now become a Joint Council and whilst parishes retain responsibility for their own building, finances and local mission the joint council enables us to take counsel and plan together. It also enables us to reduce admin and free church members for ministry.

We believe passionately that we are called to build Christian communities in each parish which will worship, pray, grow and reach out with the Gospel. For the last two years we've been working towards holding a "service" in each church each week. Pastoral and missional work grows out of this weekly meeting. We've adopted an oversight/focal ministry model of resourcing the churches, with each parish having its own member of the leadership team acting as a focal minister and local team leader. We also enjoy the support of 4 PTO priests and a PTO reader. We are delighted that, despite covid, we have seen growth in several of the churches, and others have held their own.

Our emphasis is on helping each parish to thrive. This means providing some ministry at mission community level which parishes can access. We provide most training at mission community level, although we also offer more personal or targeted training locally. Some activities which take place across the whole mission community are marriage prep, confirmation prep and special events such as involvement in Thy Kingdom Come.



THE YOUTH GROUP IN NEWTON TRACEY

homegroups meet fortnightly to help adults engage with the scriptures, pray and enjoy fellowship mid-week. 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). We trust that more provision will be in place soon. Relationships with schools are good and each of the four schools in the Mission Community welcome church assemblies. A parish nurse deacon leads the pastoral work of the parish. She is involved in local toddler groups and offers support to new mothers. There is an active social/fundraising life to most of the churches. Coffee mornings are frequent and well attended.

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 (training incumbent) is evangelical/charismatic, and a curate would need to be willing to work with someone of these convictions.

There are approximately 20 baptisms, 15 weddings and 20 funerals each year.



WISE MEN AND WOMEN ARE FOR MINISTRY...
NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS

We are working to provide something for every age group in the mission community to help people hear the gospel and grow as a follower of Jesus. Evangelistic efforts are focused on Alpha. 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. We are presenting nine candidates (eight adults and one teenager) for confirmation in May 2022. Six

Our parishes

Our curate will get to enjoy working with not one, two or even three parish communities, but ten. Surely that's more than most curacies can offer! Here's a just a brief flavour of each:



St Giles in the Wood is one of our largest buildings and is home to a congregation that has grown from 6 to 20 in the last two years. Coffee Cake and Company, pictured here, is a great meeting place for church and community. A homegroup meets bi-weekly and a pastoral visiting team has just been launched. Sunday worship is informal in style and led by a variety of congregation members.



Roborough is a small farming community. Animals and farm machinery are frequent visitors to church. Activity mornings on special occasions prove popular with families and the monthly biscuit club ensures no one in the parish lacks sugar.



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. A new monthly muddy church in the local woods is attracting young families not normally in church. There's a bi-monthly homegroup, monthly coffee morning and seasonal choir. A recently added toilet and tea station make the church building more welcoming.



Yarnscombe is a tiny community in the centre of the mission community. A homegroup meets bi-monthly.



Tawstock is our most popular church for life events, with an average of 10 weddings and five baptisms per year. A growing family service is developing links with local families, as well as those who have enjoyed marrying and having children baptised in the church. There are good links with the village church school.



Huntshaw is a tiny rural parish. We're looking at creative uses of the building, including 'champing' – church camping!



Newton Tracey is our smallest church building, but excellent facilities and no pews is 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 pub for coffee mornings and outreach events.

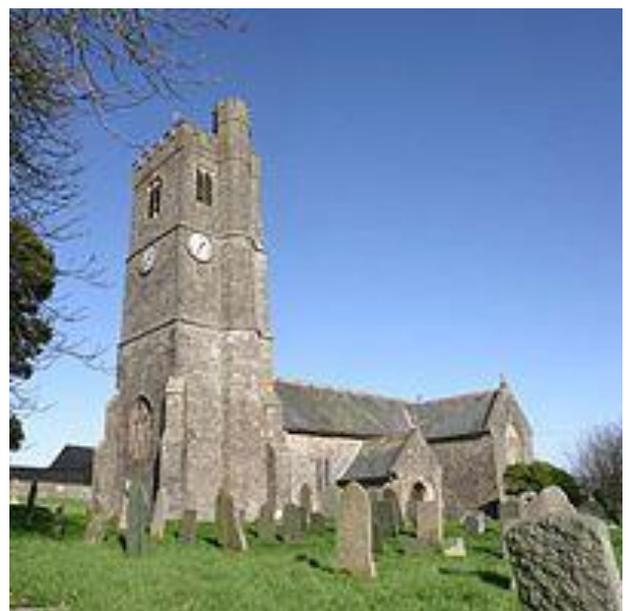


Beaford is one of the larger communities; the village boasts a school, pub, garage/shop and village hall. A recently launched family service is growing involvement of younger people. Ten people are about to complete a Monday morning Alpha course and we are praying about future outreach activities and provision of a toddler church.

Atherington works with High Bickington, with which it shares a school. It's the only church without heating... soon to be rectified when the hall is sold and the church reordered with a toilet and tea station.



Horwood works closely with Newton Tracey and the two parishes share a school and village hall. It produces the biggest signs in the benefice! Last summer a tea tent was erected outside the church and proved a successful meeting point for church and parish and a welcome stop for walkers and cyclists.



People

Members of the leadership team

 <p>Rev Gary Owen <i>Team Rector</i></p>	 <p>To be appointed <i>0.5 Team Vicar</i></p>	 <p>Rev Tracey Doyle <i>SSM focal minister</i></p>
 <p>Julia Halpin <i>Parish nurse deacon</i></p>	 <p>David Halpin <i>Lay reader</i></p>	 <p>Tim Overton <i>Lay reader/focal minister</i></p>
 <p>Jen Steele Focal minister</p>	 <p>Rev Caroline Studwick <i>PTO priest</i></p>	 <p>Jacque Ward <i>Lay reader/focal minister</i></p>
 <p>Carol Wyatt <i>Lay reader/focal minister</i></p>		

Mission Community administrator
Janette Reffell

How does the incumbent understand the role of training?

A curacy is a time to learn by doing and reflecting; to apply what was learned during ordination training, test it out and refine it ready for future ministry. It should be a time of experimentation and making mistakes... and learning from them. It should be challenging but fun.

The role of the training incumbent is to support the curate in this training experience. This will primarily be through a working relationship in which the incumbent and curate pray together, learn together and share ministry together. At times the curate will learn by observing or sharing ministry with the incumbent, or others. At other times the curate will lead, with the support of the incumbent who will then reflect with the curate on the ministry undertaken.



HUNTSBAY PCC MEETING IN CHURCHYARD... IT WAS WARMER THAN IN THE CHURCH!

Ministry is now, rightly, more collaborative than ever. The incumbent needs to involve others in the training experience. It takes a whole mission community to train a deacon/priest. The partnership is also with the Diocese and it is essential that time is given to fully engage with the training provided.

Training a curate is an immense privilege and one which deserves due care and attention. When it works well it is enriching to curate, incumbent and mission community alike.

What is the likely role of the curate in future plans?

We want to make the curacy as varied, interesting and exciting as possible. We won't use a curate to plug gaps, but we will ensure that a curate:

1. Learns the bread and butter of being a parish priest and is equipped to be an incumbent. We'll do this by basing the curate in one parish, probably Beaford, where he/she can get stuck into parish life and act as focal minister... hopefully with the aim of working themselves out of a job by developing a lay focal minister to succeed them.
2. Learns how to oversee a group of parishes; developing the skills of training and resourcing others. This can be tailored around the curate's strengths, but we would like a curate to take responsibility for developing an area of mission community life.
3. Has the opportunity to do outreach, getting beyond the church walls and engaging with groups in the community. This could be in schools, with youth organisations, community groups, or possibly specific groups such as farmers.

Accommodation

We are able to offer a comfortable four-bedroom rectory in the parish of Beaford.



And finally...

We recognise the importance of a good work/life balance and believe it is beholden on ministers to model a holistic lifestyle to those they live amongst. We will do our best to support a curate in making time for God, family and friends, and themselves, as well as being involved in hobbies in the community. The nature of rural ministry is such that ministers are spread out over a wide area. The curate will not be in the incumbent's pocket. The curate will need to be willing to manage their own time well and respond to the high level of trust that will be placed in them. The curacy will involve travel around the mission community. Access to a car is essential. Expenses are met in full and we try to be generous wherever possible.

Contact for more information:

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Mission Community website: www.tworiversmissioncommunity.org

Appendix 1

The Two Rivers Mission Community Action Plan (launched on 1st January 2022)

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, enculturation.

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 facilities, 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.

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OF EXETER



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