



: Cornwall.

Trelawny Benefice / Diocese of Truro

The pandemic forced the community at Trelawny Benefice to worship outside – a move that has since developed into a fully-fledged outdoor ministry, complete with pet services, farmyard nativities and folk concerts.

Covering the remote parishes of Lanreath, Lanteglos, Lansallos, Talland and Pelynt in Cornwall, the Benefice of Trelawny is about as rural as it gets.

Rev Richard Allen began outdoor worship services amid Covid restrictions to allow the community to continue to meet together while safely social distanced.

“We were probably getting twice the numbers we’d have had in church,” he said.

“People felt safe outside, and we could even sing hymns. That’s how we fell upon outdoor ministry – Covid taught us that.”

It’s a form of ministry which he has since continued to successfully pioneer. It includes lambing and ploughing services, services in fields, barns, and on village greens, as well as farmyard nativities.

“It’s absolutely bonkers what we do,” he said, laughing. “We’re just trying to see what we can do in this really quirky environment.”

In June he ran services for pets at Lansallos and Lanreath, and earlier this month held an equestrian service at Pelynt.

“We usually get about eight or nine horses,” he said.



“Of course, the kids love the horses.”

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In addition to their traditional harvest festivals at the end of summer, this June the Benefice ran festivals celebrating the harvest of the sea in Bodinnick, Polruan and Polperro.

The event in Polperro attracted 250 people. Another service was hosted as part of the Polperro festival, with a Cornish folk concert taking place afterwards.

The Trelawny Benefice's popular worship activities also include a series of 'Church on the Quay' events, which will run in Polruan over five Sunday afternoons over the summer. These involve Bible-reading, preaching and prayer, along with hymns and performances by local choirs, on the quayside at Polruan Wharf. They can draw around 150 people each time.

Richard ensures that his outdoor services include a social aspect, in order to help bring together people from isolated rural communities, with a chance to chat and enjoy refreshments after worship.

They even run an annual carol service which takes place on the ferry across the River Fowey.

Richard credits the people in his parishes with these innovative approaches to collective outdoor worship.



“Every day I’m learning.”

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[Find out more](#) about what's happening in Trelawny Benefice.

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