

West Dartmoor Mission Community
Annual Report for Year Ending 31st December 2023

St John the Baptist, Horrabridge

St Peter's, Meavy

St Mary's, Sampford Spiney

St Leonard's, Sheepstor

St Mary the Virgin, Walkhampton

St Paul's, Yelverton

Legal and Administrative Information

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The Purpose of Each Parochial Church Council in the Mission Community.

Each Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

The PCC (Powers) Act 1956 states that the PCC '*is to cooperate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical*'

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules 2020.

Rector's Report

For my fourth time, I come to the writing of my Annual Report as Rector with much to say of the work, life and prayer of our Mission Community and a reduced space in which to say it.

As the year has unfolded our parent and Toddler group, Poppins, continues to go from strength to strength, and our ministry to children and young people also continues to be supported by now regular Collective Worship in our church schools at Meavy, Walkhampton, and county school at Horrabridge. Our Open the Book team have also been hard at work continuing to be a presence in our church schools, bringing the stories of the bible to life. Our Sunday family worship provision, Toast@10 continues to thrive at Horrabridge Church with a large cross-generational congregation.

Much of our pastoral visiting takes place unseen and unfussed, but many of our parishioners welcome the unbidden telephone call or knock on the door, especially when it's accompanied by the delivery of our superb parish magazine. Pastoral care continues to be at the heart of much of what we do here, and this has borne fruit in many ways, not least in the numbers of Baptisms, weddings and funerals we are asked to conduct. Caring for families at the milestone markers in life, being invited in to their lives is a great privilege, and we are grateful for the opportunity to care and love as Jesus taught us. Our pastoral care reaches out further in the great work that our Ministry Team has done in engaging and offering a pastoral presence in our local care homes for the elderly. In the climate of increased costs of living and fuel costs, the foodbank collection point at St Pauls has been as busy as ever, together with the new collection point being established at Horrabridge church for the local food Hub.

Much of the usual parish life has continued earnestly; the bell ringing, flower arranging, church cleaning, church locking and unlocking, making of music, and much more, all of which I'm extremely grateful for.

This year also saw us continuing to work on our five year mission action plan. The plan will always be a work in progress, but it is hoped that it will continue offer guidance and direction for what we would like to achieve here in the coming years. Much of it will include an element of prayer and worship, and so it's fitting for me to mention here that the worship continues to be offered in all our churches on least 3 Sundays a month, and we come together as a wider community on the 5th Sundays of the month when they occur.

The Ministry Team continues to thrive and I am so very grateful for their support, encouragement and prayer. 2022 has seen the Team working hard and well together across the Mission Community, and whilst we are conscious that Philippa and Scott will be leaving us in the not too distant future, we are in good heart. This past year the Team has been again able in addition to regular Sunday worship, offer Advent and Lent courses of study, in addition to the our regular weekly bible study sessions. The end of the year also saw the full timetable of All Souls, All Saints, Acts of Remembrance, Carol Services, Nativity Scenes, Christingles, and general extravagance.

The year ahead looks exciting and full. The building works on our churches at Walkhampton, Horrabridge, and Sheepstor will continue a pace, we hope the Champing™ bookings at Walkhampton will continue to flood in as they have in 2023, and that our worshipping communities will continue to thrive and grow. Thank you for your support, love and encouragement this past year and I very much look forward to continuing to work and live alongside you all in 2024.

Love and Prayers, Andrew.

Safeguarding Report for the Mission Community

Safeguarding as always is a priority in the Mission Community and each church displays safeguarding details together with useful telephone numbers on their notice boards, and on our web pages.

The Ministerial Team are up-to-date with their Diocesan Safeguarding Courses and all have current DBS certificates.

We continue to work towards completion of DBS checks and appropriate Safeguarding training for all PCC members. There is still a few PCC members who have training to be done, to bring them up to date, and this is planned and in hand.

The Mission Community as a whole has adopted the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and this is reviewed regularly throughout the year, with the three main questions relating to safeguarding itemised on the agenda at each MCC and PCC meeting, these being:-

Is there anyone we wish to appoint to a position who will need to be subject to our safer recruitment procedures and/or DBS checks?

Is there anyone or any situation that is causing us concern from a safeguarding point of view?

Are there any training needs for new members or others in the congregation or refresher training for existing appointees?

The Rev Andrew Thomas - Rector.

Open the Book Report (2023)

Open the Book is a Bible Society project which offers primary school children an opportunity to hear the major stories of the Bible. The OTB team have delivered story presentations as part of the Collective Act of Worship in both Lady Modiford's School, Walkhampton and Meavy School every three weeks during term time. Since September the team have been using new materials written by Bob Hartman on behalf of the Bible Society. To accompany each story, the team creates a PowerPoint presentation using the materials from bibleimages.org.

In the Autumn term the team were pleased to visit Horrabridge School on three occasions with stories linked to their RE Curriculum covering different age groups.

The OTB team members come from different churches across the Mission Community. New members would be very welcome!

Toast@10 (2023)

Our Mission Community Fresh Expressions Service, **Toast@10**, has continued to flourish through 2023. The monthly service at St John's Church, Horrabridge, is open to all and the welcome starts with toast, tea and coffee being served from 9.30 and our all-age service beginning at 10 am.

The Toast Team is made up of people from the different churches in our Mission Community, who are keen for the Gospel to be told in a fresh and challenging way. The team plan a service that is interactive and encourages everyone to be involved in a comfortable way. Children are encouraged to take an active part in the dramatic readings and intercessions. Following the reflection on the reading, it is great to see everyone, old and young, involved in the Active Worship activity. We are grateful to the Mission Community Council for its continued subscription to the resources provided by www.rootsontheweb.com which have proved invaluable in the planning of these services. Also, a huge thank you to David Crocker for his enthusiastic contribution to the music.

Poppins (Mother and Toddler Group) Report 2023

This group meets every Wednesday morning from 9.15-10.45 during term time in St Paul's church hall and is thriving. A great team of 12 volunteers makes this possible. Each week a variety of play equipment is available for the children along with a craft activity, singing and story time, plus refreshments. Parents, carers and their children can meet socially in a safe and relaxed environment. The group is free for all to attend. Donations are often made.

During the year, nature trails around the church grounds have taken place. The group has come into church for celebrations of Christmas, Easter and harvest and to place displays by the Childrens' altar. A Poppins display with the theme of bells was also shown at the Horrbridge Nativity Festival.

Some equipment has been replaced because of wear and tear. A new banner has been purchased to hang in the church grounds.

Deanery Synod Report March 2024

There have been three meetings, in June and October 2023, and February 2024.

These always start with a short act of worship, offered in turn by a member of the clergy or a lay parish representative.

June 2023. Sharon Blythe, 'Children's and Families Mission Enabler' talked about how to get more children and families into church.

October 2023. The Rural Dean talked about Chaplaincy in the Farming community and how to reach out into their world rather than asking them to come into church.

February 2024. The new Archdeacon of Plymouth Jane Bakker took questions from the attendees. They were wide-ranging.

Every meeting has a business section when information from the General Synod, Diocesan Synod and from the Rural Dean is shared and there is also usually space for sharing of ideas and problems. Every meeting has a refreshment break provided in turn by different mission communities or benefices which gives more time for meeting each other from the different parishes. June 2023 saw a new deanery secretary in place – the chair stayed for a further year and is actively looking for a replacement as they will stand down in June 2024.

