



# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2026

*“He is not here, he is risen, just as he said.” Matthew 28 v 6*

**Praise him for all that is past and trust him for all that’s to come.**



**Belstone** held its closing service on the afternoon of January 11<sup>th</sup>. People came from across the circuit to give thanks for the life and witness of this little Dartmoor chapel. We heard stories of the past, remembering the faithfulness of people such as the Reddaway family who had loved and served the life of the chapel over many years. In more recent times there was a monthly fellowship service in the Tea Room, with delicious refreshments made by Marion Walpole who retired at the end of 2025. She was presented with a bouquet from the Circuit by Circuit Steward Heather Smallacombe.

Rev Chris led the congregation in prayers which incorporated the various areas and items in the chapel, recognising the blessings and meaning of each one. The congregation enjoyed singing some great hymns accompanied by Cathy Leffler on the organ. There



were also solos. It was a lovely service followed by refreshments in the Tea Room. We wish Marion a happy and relaxed retirement and give thanks for all the Belstone blessings over the years.



Jim Causley sang “The Archangel Way”, about the pilgrim route over Dartmoor.

# INFUSION

children | youth | families



Over fifty children with their parents/carers enjoyed making pancakes at Fairplace for Shrove Tuesday Stay and Play. There were various activities and much fun was had. We need more volunteers please to help facilitate this brilliant event. It's not difficult, it's really rewarding and uplifting,

and as Angela Banfield said, “Strangely addictive”! The next Stay and Play is on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 11am – 2pm and then Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May. Get in touch with Sarah Balsdon if you would like to know more about how you can help.



Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 5pm – 8pm at The Clinton Hall, Merton a reunion for those who have been to Stowford Camp and taster session for those thinking about going. Games, food, worship and more. Year 5+ Tickets are available through

[westdevonmethodists.churchsuite.com](http://westdevonmethodists.churchsuite.com)

Next Busy Bees dates are 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April, 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> May. We keep seeing new faces so word is getting around that it's a good place to be.

The logo for "Busy Bees" features a cartoon bee with a yellow and black striped body, a smiling face, and blue wings. A dashed yellow line trails behind the bee. Below the logo, the text "Busy Bees" is written in a large, bold, black font. Underneath that, in a smaller black font, is "Hatherleigh Baby and Toddler Group". Further down, the meeting times "9:30 - 11:30am" and the location "Hatherleigh Methodist Church" are listed. At the bottom, the meeting frequency "Meeting twice a month during term time." and the fee "£2 for the first child, £1 per additional sibling" are provided.

**Busy Bees**  
Hatherleigh Baby and Toddler Group  
9:30 - 11:30am  
Hatherleigh Methodist Church  
Meeting twice a month during term time.  
£2 for the first child, £1 per additional sibling

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*“Where there are bees there are flowers, and wherever there are flowers there is new life and hope.”* Christy Lefteri (The Beekeeper of Aleppo)

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A new men's group (18+) aimed at rural and agricultural workers. Meeting multiple times throughout the year for **FREE** nights in and nights out to unwind, socialise and recharge. The first event held on February 27<sup>th</sup> with a bowling trip to Trethorne Leisure Park which was fully booked and a great success. The "Nights in" don't have a tight limit on capacity and the next one is on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 7.30pm at Madworthy Methodist Church with a fire pit. Book via [westdevonmethodists.org.uk/youth/ruralrecharge](http://westdevonmethodists.org.uk/youth/ruralrecharge) or contact Sarah 07354 636524

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*"There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship"*

Thomas Aquinas

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## Bridestowe

There is a monthly charity coffee morning which supports various good causes. The one held on February 14<sup>th</sup> was very close to home for the folk at Bridestowe as it raised funds towards travel expenses for a little lad called Jacob. He is having to go to Bristol Children's Hospital regularly for treatment, and his home village rallied round to help. Jennifer Thorne said, "It was amazing, we were so busy. There were even people who didn't stop for coffee, they simply came in to add their donation." A stunning total of £540 was raised to help. Thank you everyone who contributed to helping this family feel cared for in what must be an anxious time.

The next charity coffee morning is on 14<sup>th</sup> March in aid of Mercy Ships.



## Madworthy

**Open Community Lunch** Second Wednesday of the month. All ages invited for a time of friendship, community and good food. Hot lunch and a sweet included. 12.00 with lunch served at 12.15. Suggested donation £7.00 Please book with Beryl 01409 221389 or Barbara 07974 109505

**Memory Café** Fourth Thursday of the month. Offering practical and emotional support and most importantly, the hand of friendship to people living with dementia and their carers. 2.00 – 3.30pm Contact Barbara for more information.

**Creative Faith** Fourth Saturday of the month. Breakfast starts at 9.30am with journaling from 10.00am. Suitable for all ages and levels of experience. A time to slow down, meditate on scripture and get creative.

**Spring Walk** Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup> 11.00am – 3.00pm The church is open for food, fellowship and fun activities. Bring sensible footwear for a lovely walk in a beautiful location. Dogs on leads welcome.

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*“My walk on the moon lasted three days. My walk with God will last forever.” Charles Duke*

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A poster for Forest Church. It features a stylized tree icon with a cross inside. The text reads: "Forest Church - exploring God's creation - Join us every 2nd Sunday, to meet, explore and worship in God's Creation. 2-3pm Meet at Evergreen Farm, Beckett, Ashwater, Devon, EX21 5HE Come prepared for whatever the weather. Hot chocolate at the end. Dogs on leads welcome. Suitable for all ages. Toilets available at the meeting point." At the bottom, it says "West Devon Methodist Circuit" and "westdevon.methodist westdevonmethodists.org.uk" with social media icons.

**Forest Church**  
- exploring God's creation -

Join us every 2nd Sunday, to meet, explore and worship in God's Creation.  
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Come prepared for whatever the weather.  
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West Devon Methodist Circuit  
westdevon.methodist  
westdevonmethodists.org.uk

## Petrockstowe



There is a fortnightly fellowship group hosted by Les & Kate Cutter and I found a very warm welcome when I joined them for a lovely evening. The coffee and conversation flowed. Les had prepared scripture readings for us to discuss. We looked at Matthew 8 and what Jesus did directly after the Sermon on the Mount and how his actions were linked to the sermon.

Everyone contributed, offering insights and experiences to the discussion.

Why meet outside church service times? "It fills a gap when I can't get to church." said Viv. Everyone agreed it was a beneficial thing to do. "An evening with my friends helps me grow and learn" said Lise, "I made a conscious decision to come, it feels right."

Kate offered the analogy of keeping the coals in the fire, if you remove one, it loses its flame. Encouraging one another and praying together strengthens faith. "It's important to continue through the week, we get to know each other better and can delve deeper into subjects than we are able to in a Sunday service."

Les agreed, "Meeting together is important, I would say a priority. It builds friendship and fellowship and enables us to grow in our faith. It's a small group but we would be very happy for more to come along."

We ended with a prayer time, and I left feeling encouraged, uplifted and keen for a return visit. Details of the next meeting are on the Petrockstowe notice sheet which can be found online or contact Les & Kate direct.



## Fairplace

Brenda Hockridge writes: “In November 2023 a Home Group started at 7, The Chantry. It's a group for fellowship and Bible Study.

It's a small group, but we would welcome and encourage others to join.

At the time of writing, we have just finished a time working through some of the Old Testament. We stopped at the end of the book Deuteronomy.

We are about to start on a study by Tom Wright entitled 'Lent and Easter for Everyone'. We look forward to learning what God is saying to us.”

Helena Haywood continues...

“Our friendly fellowship group meets once a fortnight, and we discuss a varied range of topics. We have engaging conversation and a lot of laughter along the way.

For the next few weeks, we are on a transformative journey through the Gospels as Tom Wright explores the life and impact of Jesus: the highs and lows of His earthly ministry, the power of his teachings and his victory over sin and death.

Lent and Easter for Everyone enables us to relive Christ's journey from his temptation in the wilderness to the darkness of the cross and beyond into the glory of Easter.

Each fortnight we will focus on a reading and reflection and discuss the topic of the reading.

Our next meeting is on the 17<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm

If you would like to join us, just drop me an email

[helenajhaywood71@gmail.com](mailto:helenajhaywood71@gmail.com)

## Chilla

On Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Chilla held a new kind of service called “New Testament on a New Day”. Led by Angela, it was a time of “Contemplative Presence” with worship, prayer and scripture. Using tactile visual aids as a focus, considering the natural world, God’s presence and our place in it all. It was a gentle, quiet time to pause in the rush of the day and be with others in a sacred space.

There was a lovely friendly time of chat and refreshments afterwards. Thank you to the maker of the delicious lemon drizzle cake! Watch out for details of the next service...



## Boasley

It's coming around to the time of Boasley's annual Scrap Metal fund raiser. A quirky but genius idea which serves the community and is great fun too.

Diana Sizmur tells us more...

Our first scrap event was on November 24th 2012 when we served Soup and Rolls to warm people as they delivered their scrap metal! We filled an empty farm trailer, parked at the chapel for the day, and people brought along anything metal, from frying pans to rusty corrugated roofing sheets .... it was a small, one off, morning event.

Since then, it has become an annual expectation which is held over several days.



We get a skip on site for at least a week, and people bring their accumulations from far and wide....one year we had so much delivered that we ended up filling 3 skips! We now get asked when goods can be brought along, before we have even planned the date! The skip is then filled, and collected when we decide we can't get any more in, and it goes to be sorted at the yard near Tavistock. Metal has varying values with copper and lead attracting a bigger revenue.... we haven't had any gold donated yet...but silver teaspoons are possible!

It is always intriguing as to what is going to be donated to us each year.

The skip is weighed to ascertain the value, so heavy things are even more welcome! The biggest thing brought along was an agricultural trailer chassis which had to be loaded into the skip with a tractor.

One year a whole collection of cobblers metal 'lasts' arrived.... each very heavy... Last year bucketfuls of nails came from where someone's workshop was being emptied.... they too were very heavy. And then of course we found people wanted to buy the donated goods. One Mans' trash is another mans treasure!  
That's what started off the Saleroom at Boasley!  
We had wrought iron gates, metal garden tables and chairs, aluminium vessels, Horse Brasses, garden tools, a garden roller.... all too good to put in the skip.  
People bought them.  
The room is now packed with things.... not only metal things.  
So, we have now progressed to having some of the week manned from 10am until 4pm



when the Saleroom is open (and we have tea and cake available, of course!).

### **Boasley Scrap & Salvage Event**

From Thursday May 21<sup>st</sup> (Soup & Sweet on launch day) to Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Sale Room open 10am – 4pm

Skip on site for the whole week

No fridges/freezers/microwaves & tyres removed if possible

Any queries ring 01837 871763 or 07841 836018

## From the Circuit Leadership Team

CLT points for prayer and consideration.

For those who haven't heard already. Following the recent re-invitation consultation we undertook for Rev Chris Jackson, we are very pleased that Chris has been invited and accepted another five-year period in the West Devon Circuit as Superintendent Minister. This term will run from 1st September 2026 to 31st August 2031.

Please continue to pray for Chris and Jo.

At the end of August this year Dean James and Ruth James will have served six years as Circuit stewards and so will step down from this role. The Circuit will therefore be looking for at least one person to join Alan Marshall and Heather Smallacombe as a Circuit Steward.

Please pray about this. If you feel you might like to fill this role or put someone else's name forward, please contact one of the stewards or Rev Chris.

Also, after quite a few years as Circuit treasurer, Alan Partridge will be stepping down from that role from 1st September. Please pray about this position, and again, if you feel you could fill this position or would like to nominate someone else, please contact a Circuit steward or Rev Chris. It would be good to have someone shadowing Alan for a couple of months before he finishes.

Any other business at church meetings.

It has been the policy for meetings in many contexts for some time that anyone who would like to raise something at the end of a meeting under Any Other Business should inform the Chair and secretary of the meeting of the item to be raised at least 24 hours before the meeting. This allows the Chair to consider the item before the meeting. It also stops numerous items being raised extending the meeting.

As we approach our spring Church Councils could we all please keep this in mind, and if we have something we would like to raise, inform the Chair or secretary 24 hours before the meeting. This is not to stop things being discussed, but to allow the meetings to run smoothly and not run on too long.

Circuit Stewards

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*“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”*

*1 Peter 4 v 10*

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## Easter Services

**Maundy Thursday – Bridestowe Agape Meal 7.00pm**

**Fairplace 7.00pm**

**Petrockstowe 7.00pm**

**Good Friday – Bridestowe 10.00am**

**Okehampton Churches Together 10.00am at St James**

**Fairplace “Words and Music” 7.00pm**

**Petrockstowe 7.00pm**

**Easter Sunday – Boasley 11.00am (Communion)**

**Northlew 9.30am**

**Bridestowe 11.00am (Communion)**

**Chilla 2.30pm (Communion)**

**Madworthy 11.00am**

**Exbourne 11.00am**

**Hatherleigh 11.00am**

**Iddesleigh 10.00am**

**Fairplace 10.30 (Communion)**

**Circuit Service 6.30pm Easter Praise**

**Petrockstowe 11.00am**

**Winkleigh 11.00am**

## Hatherleigh

Hatherleigh is known for its Tuesday coffee mornings and regular Soup & Sweet or Summer Light Lunches which follow (March 24th & May 5th)

Beginning on March 14th the church will be open from 10.00 – 12.00 each second Saturday of the month. Called “You and a Brew”, the intention is to simply provide hospitality. It is not a fund raiser, just a service to the community providing a cuppa and a chat. Everyone welcome.



## Letter from the Superintendent

Many years ago, I remember writing a musical called “What’s Easter got to do with Eggs anyway?” It was a very silly sketch driven musical about a group of people trying to write a musical for a production in church and time was short. To be honest I cannot remember much else about it apart from the title.

As someone who is allergic to eggs in general (chocolate and chicken laid) the egg thing at Easter is something I usually steer well clear of. However, I was recently reading John chapter 3, a passage that deals with the whole subject of new birth...or to use the popular term...being born again.

The conversation that Jesus has with the pharisee Nicodemus can sometimes feel a bit comical (it may just be me because I have a strange sense of humour). I can hear Nicodemus’ incredulous response to the idea of being born again as frankly mockery of Jesus’ words...” look Jesus I’ve come to you with some serious questions and you are putting an image in my mind that simply does not work” (read the passage again and you may see what I mean) ...

Jesus is inviting everyone to become adopted into his family by being born from above (again/aneu). A second birth, one that is not of human but of heavenly design.

Easter Eggs are symbols of the rebirth of ourselves made possible by the rising of Jesus on the day of resurrection. Jesus emerging from the dark of the tomb into the light of the world.

I’m not sure whether the intention of a commercial Easter egg was to break through the hard exterior to release the gift on the inside...but it works for me as a metaphor of the breaking out from the tomb on that first Easter Sunday.

The joy of the women who first discovered that Jesus was risen and the joy of the disciples (eventually) led to the whole world hearing the story. The witnesses to the new birth created new birth in others...and so it goes around and around... (a bit like which came first the chicken or the egg...but I digress).

Today people are still being born from above, recognising the truth of the birth, life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ...changing their lives, repenting, turning around to face towards Christ and in their lives, reflecting Jesus outwards to others.

I wish you all much joy this Easter. A time to celebrate the liberation that comes from knowing Jesus Christ and the passion the impels us to be witnesses to the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus.

AMEN

Rev Chris

## A little bit of history



At Sourton Down just off the A30 and A386 between the campsite and the Pump & Pedal stands an enigmatic lump of stone.

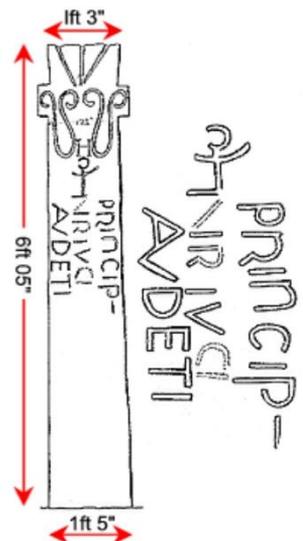
If you look closely, you will see each side has a letter carved into it. H O L and T. It is a very early signpost. The General Turnpike Act of 1773 stipulated that every crossroads had to have a signpost. This one has H for Hatherleigh, O for Okehampton, L for Launceston and T for Tavistock. Rather than construct a new signpost, they simply carved the letters into what was a wayside cross which already stood at the crossroads. The arms of the over six foot cross are very short and were carved well before the Norman Conquest, sometime in the 900s. The wayside cross was erected as a marker for travellers and

pilgrims, especially in sparsely populated areas. Known mostly in the Pennines and the Moorland areas of the Southwest, these crosses provided guidance for the traveller, and perhaps a focus for prayer if you were lost in the moorland fog!

There is something even more special about this cross, whoever carved the arms was recycling a much older marker. There are earlier carvings from the mid-500s, now difficult to see, easier to feel. A Latin inscription *Principi Iurivoci Audeti* (*Principius* son of *Audentius*) and a Chi-Ro indicates a Christian presence well before St Augustine went to Canterbury. Indeed, we are talking about the time of the Celtic missionaries who came over from Wales and Ireland. St Petroc, St Brannoc and St Nectan are of this time and Bridestowe is named after the Irish Abbess St Brid who died in 525. It was a time of myth and mystery with the origin stories of King Arthur getting their first mention by a Welsh monk called Gildas. And here, still standing nearly 1500 years later, is a witness to Christian presence in our community, once prominent, now tucked away but still solid and strong. So, if you're near Sourton Down, pop by and visit this rare and important witness to our faith.



*The Chi-Ro is one of the earliest Christian symbols, superimposing the Greek Chi X and Rho P, the first two letters of Christos.*



## Winkleigh Methodist Chapel

You are invited to  
Tea & Puddings  
On the  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month  
At the Chapel  
3pm-4.30pm



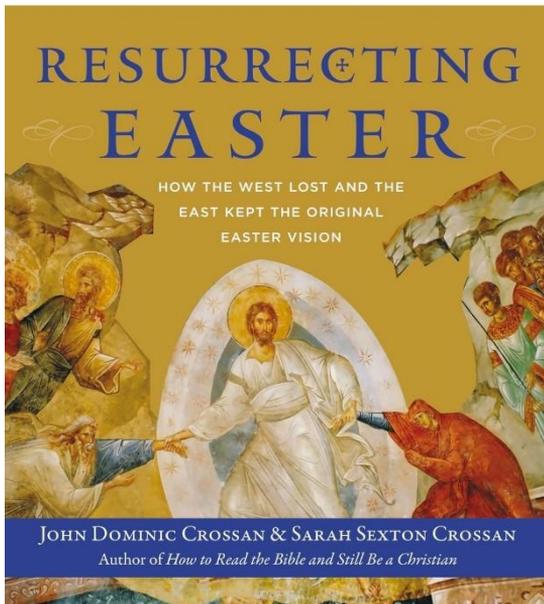
**£3 per tea & pudding**

Proceeds for Winkleigh Methodist Chapel

**WORDS AND MUSIC FOR  
GOOD FRIDAY  
FAIRPLACE CHURCH 7.00PM**



## Book Review



A beautiful book with 130 colour images, part travelogue, part art history and part spiritual awakening. John Dominic and Sarah Crossan discover a different perspective on the Resurrection in the Eastern tradition. Intriguing, challenging, thoughtful and joyous, the message of Christ's victory over death is given a fresh perspective. It is good for us to recognise that there are many strands of Christianity around the world, and we can all learn from each other. The Crossans take us on a fifteen-year investigation across Egypt, Italy, Turkey, Syria, Israel and Russia and find their understanding of the Resurrection transform into something much bigger.

## Editor's Note

Spring is springing up fast around us, lambing time is in full swing and for the bleary-eyed sheep farmers among us, a spring in their step is probably unattainable due to lack of sleep.

Spring is a time of newness; it's my favourite season. The bright green of fresh leaves, bees buzzing round colourful flowers. Roadside blossom as we travel, cheering us on our way.

This year has already seen endings as we said goodbye to Belstone chapel. Even though it had to be, it was still bittersweet. I will always remember the photographic witness to Christian kindness which was featured in last summer's magazine. God has not left the village, all who follow Christ are salt and light, flavouring and illuminating their communities with the goodness of God.

Later this year we will see more change with the stepping down of two Circuit Stewards and our Treasurer. The Holy Spirit may already be whispering to those who are called to serve in this way. As with any other calling, test it by speaking to someone. Ask a Circuit Steward what is involved, ask Alan about his role as Treasurer, you may well find confirmation that it is a good fit for your gifts and talents.

There are other new things happening, Rural Recharge is responding to a long recognised need for farmers and agricultural workers to meet together and support one another in what can be a very isolating job. We're delighted to say that it launched with great success.

Other new ventures at Chilla and Hatherleigh may be quieter but still have a beneficial influence. In John 3, Jesus talks about the imperceptibility of the wind, but the evidence of its action being experienced. So it is with the evidence of the weather's effect on the Sourton Down Cross. It still has a tale to tell, a witness through the centuries.

What will the effect of our lives be? Are we being salt and light in our communities?

As we experience the spiritual pilgrimage of Lent, travelling with Jesus to the Cross, may we reflect on the nature and cost of service. With Easter resurrection, we praise God that with him nothing is impossible.

How good is the God we adore! Happy Easter!

Vicki [foreva26@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:foreva26@hotmail.co.uk)

### Superintendent Minister

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