

Upcoming dates

Tuesday 22 September

2.00pm Handbells

St. Mary's, Black Torrington

Wednesday 23 September

10.00am Morning prayer

St. Mary's, Black Torrington

Sunday 27 September

11.00am Holy communion

St. Alban, Beaworthy

11.00am Café church

St Leonard, Clawton

6.00pm Informal bible study

St. Mary's, Black Torrington

Commentary

Over the years I have heard more confusion, anger and arguments about this Gospel today. I have even heard some really poor sermons from fundamentalist pulpits about it which really miss the point. It is a joy to be a child of God. A joy to be forgiven. A joy to be a member of the household of saints. A joy to live in the light. Life outside of our faith is a dark, cold, place. We are chosen and the earlier the better.

Please pray for:

All who have died recently, and their friends and relatives.

Those who are ill, including Helen, Steve, Cathy, Ian, Sandra, Andrew, Sarah, Wendy and Amy.

Our Benefice schools.

All those who give generously to the Foodbank on a regular basis and those who receive food.

All who are living under conditions of conflict, including those in Ukraine, Russia, Palestine, Israel, Sudan, Yemen, Iran, Congo and Syria, Venezuela and the whole of the Middle East.

Mission prayer

You go nowhere by accident. Wherever you go, God is sending you

. Wherever you are, God has put you there. He has a purpose in your being there. Christ, who indwells you, has something He wants to do through you where you are. Believe this and go in His grace and love and power.

Ruby Country Benefice

Sunday 20 September 2026

16th Sunday after Trinity

GRAPEVINE

**The parishes of Ashwater, Beaworthy,
Black Torrington with Highampton,
Clawton, Halwill and Tetcott**

Sunday 20 September

9.30am Holy communion

St. Peter ad Vincula, Ashwater

11.00am Holy communion

St Peter & St. James, Halwill

11.00am Morning prayer

St. Mary's, Black Torrington

Rev. Dr Paul Fitzpatrick. Rector:

vicar-rubycountrybenefice@outlook.com

Ruby people: Worshipping in God's country

First reading

Jonah 3: 1-end

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.” Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day’s journey into the city, proclaiming, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.” The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When Jonah’s warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

“By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. (NIV)

Second reading

Philippians 1: 21-end

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. (NIV)

Gospel

Matthew 20: 1-16

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

“About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ “ ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. “He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’ “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius.¹⁰ So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’ “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.” (NIV)