



**BrookDean Benefice – The Parishes of Drybrook, Lydbrook & Ruardean**

## **Notices week beginning 25.10.2026**

### **21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Trinity**

**This Sunday we come together at Ruardean for our Benefice Service of Holy Communion at 10.30am.**

Revd Ros will be taking our service this week, and looks forward to welcoming you.

### **Reflection**

This week's message comes from Bishop Robert and is taken from the weekly Gloucester Diocesan bulletin. Apologies that it's quite long, but I thought it was important that you read it in its entirety as it's a very important message as we face the future.

Ros

### **Navigating change with confidence and hope**

A couple of weeks ago Bishop Robert met with Area Deans and Lay Chairs, members of the Bishop's Staff Team and others for a day of thoughtful and constructive conversation about the future of ministry and mission across the Diocese. It was a good day, marked by honesty, wisdom and a shared commitment to the flourishing of the Church in every community we serve.

### **Facing a new reality**

We met because we recognise that the Church of England is entering a period of significant transition. We know that, over the next six to eight years, the number of clergy serving in stipendiary ministry across the country and in our diocese will reduce. This is not the result of any local failing, or even a financial issue, but reflects a national demographic challenge as retirements outpace the number of newly trained clergy becoming available for parish leadership.

While we were clear-eyed about that challenge, the mood was not one of despondency but of confidence, determination and hope. We were not gathering to manage decline, but to consider how we sustain and renew ministry and mission during this period of transition.



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### **Our commitment to parish ministry**

We were equally clear that the Church's mission remains unchanged. We are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, serve our communities and nurture disciples. The question before us is not 'if' that mission continues, but how we organise ourselves to sustain and strengthen it in changing circumstances.

We are starting from a strong commitment to parish ministry. Indeed, we share much of the analysis found in the Windsor Report produced by Save the Parish: that the Church's local presence in every community is one of its greatest strengths and must be nurtured, not diminished. We believe parish ministry matters, local presence matters, and every community matters. The purpose of this work is not to weaken that inheritance but to sustain, renew and strengthen it for the generations to come.

### **Learning from Joseph**

For me, the biblical story that has shaped much of this thinking is Joseph in Egypt. Joseph did not ignore the difficult years that lay ahead. Instead, he prepared wisely so that people could flourish through them and emerge stronger on the other side. In a similar way, we are seeking to plan carefully now, not because we lack confidence in the future, but because we care deeply about the future health and flourishing of the Church.

### **Reasons for hope**

There is also real cause for encouragement. Across the diocese we are seeing positive signs in vocation and discipleship. People continue to respond to God's call, new leaders are emerging and we are seeing renewed energy around identifying and nurturing vocations. At the same time, supporting the wellbeing of those already serving remains a key priority.

Throughout the day we were reminded that the people most affected by the decisions we make are the children and young people who will inherit the Church after us. As Bishop Rachel has often reminded us, we need to view our planning through that lens. The question is not simply how we manage a challenging period, but what sort of Church we are preparing for future generations.

### **What happens next?**

Importantly, this work is not about putting a halt to appointments. We remain committed to appointing clergy where vacancies arise and where ministry is needed.

The conversations we began last week are also only one stage in a wider process. The next phase will take place within our deaneries, where diocesan and deanery leaders will work together to explore what these realities mean in their local context. This will be a shared



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process of listening, reflection and planning, helping us shape ministry for the future while remaining faithful to our LIFE vision and our commitment to parish ministry.

### **Looking ahead**

I left the day encouraged. The years ahead will require wisdom, courage and collaboration, but our hope is not grounded in projections or structures. It is grounded in God. This is not about managing decline. It is about preparing for renewal, so that the Church we hand on to the next generation remains confident, hopeful, missionary and alive in Christ.

As we continue this work, please pray for those involved in diocesan and deanery leadership and, when opportunities arise, join the conversation. Together, we can shape a hopeful future for the mission and ministry of the Church in this diocese.

### **Collect for the Week**

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

### **Readings**

Our readings this week are:

Colossians 3: 12-17

Matthew 24: 30-35

### **For our Prayers**

We pray for Oliver Cotterell, and his parents Hayley and Dan, as Oliver is brought for Baptism at St John's, Ruardean on Sunday afternoon.

We pray for those who are unwell: June and Malcolm Jones, Janet Marrott, Dave Perkins, Sue and Keith Thompson, Mary Webb, Mena Knight.



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We pray for those we have known and who have died: Mavis Baker, Tom Barton (Drybrook Post Master), Joann Stewart.

If you would like us to pray for someone who is unwell, please do let us know by emailing their name (with their consent, and ideally including surname) to [benefice-support@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:benefice-support@hotmail.co.uk). Names will be included for a period of 4 weeks unless otherwise requested.

### **Celebrations**

If you, or someone you know, would like to have their birthday, anniversary or another special occasion celebrated in our weekly notices, please do let us know by emailing [benefice-support@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:benefice-support@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Remembrance Sunday – 8<sup>th</sup> November**

10.45am at St John the Baptist Ruardean

10.45am at Holy Trinity (Forest Church) Drybrook

10.45am at Lydbrook Memorial Hall (NB no service in church)

### **Deanery Confirmation**

Bishop Rachel will be leading a Deanery Confirmation Service on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December in the Forest area (venue to be arranged). If you would like to be confirmed, please speak to Ros.

### **Events**

Every 2<sup>nd</sup>. Tuesday of the month - Meet and Eat at The Pludds, Village Hall. 11am – 2pm. A warm place to meet, chat and share. Light lunches tea, coffee and cakes. Further information from Sue Barber on 01594 861180.

Every Thursday morning, 10:30–12 noon - treat yourself to a cup of tea or coffee with a fresh slice of cake for only £2. Ruardean Woodside Village Hall.



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Fridays, 10am -12noon - Coffee, cake and conversation. Ruardean warm space. Ruardean Memorial Hall. Post office van outside from 10 -11am.

### **Euroclydon**

A small group visit Euroclydon care home, currently twice a month, to hold a short service of hymns, readings and prayers for the residents.

Especially during the summer, people have other commitments and the group would welcome one of two more people to help with supporting the residents with participating in the service.

If you would like to be help, please talk to either Kathy Garlands or Jane Hulbert, or email Jane at [jane\\_hulbert@sky.com](mailto:jane_hulbert@sky.com)

### **Next Sunday**

Our Benefice Service of Holy Communion will take place at Drybrook, where +Christopher looks forward to welcoming you.

Drybrook All Souls Service of Thanksgiving for the Memory of our Loved Ones takes place at 4pm, led by Rev Ros.

Ruardean All Souls Service of Thanksgiving for the Memory of our Loved Ones takes place at 4pm, led by Tony.