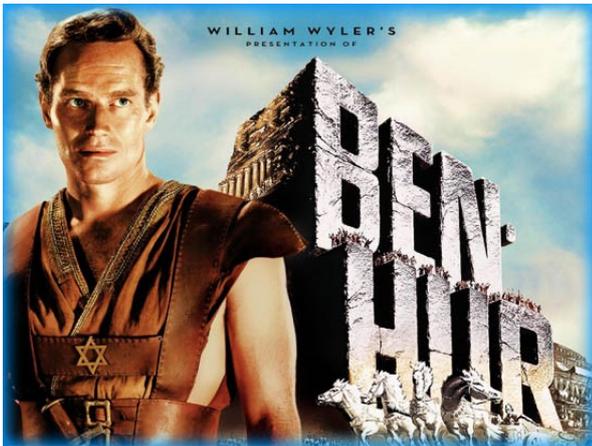


**Wye Brooks Group**  
**Update for 22nd August**  
**Trinity 12—GREEN**

**FROM THE VICAR**  
**BEN HUR**



I found an article recently, which I thought you might like to hear about.

Usually at Christmas or Easter the film Ben Hur will be on tv. It was originally written by an American Civil War General, Lew Wallace, in 1899, and was turned into an Oscar winning film starring Charlton Heston. It is a story of love, of suffering, of the struggle of good against evil, and of triumph.

Judah Ben Hur, the story's hero, is a wealthy Jewish prince growing up at the start of the 1st century a.d. As a boy he has a very close gentile friend, Marsalla, Judah is the heir of a very great and wealthy house in Jerusalem, and Marsalla is a promising military man. Marsalla is sent away to Rome for military training, but returns to Jerusalem as the leader of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem, accompanying the new governor. The two men meet, and find that they have moved a long way apart. Messala asks Judah for help rounding up locals who oppose Roman rule; Judah refuses and the men part as enemies.

During a parade, Judah's sister Hirzah climbs up onto the roof of her house to get a better view, but dislodges a tile which falls and frightens the Roman governor's horse, throwing him off. Messala then frames the family for attempted assassination; sends Judah to be a rower in a Roman galley, and has his mother and sister imprisoned. Judah, from the belly of the ship, vows that he will free his mother and sister.

The chance comes after three years when his ship is sunk in battle, but Judah rescues the commanding officer, who is the most senior officer in the Roman

**LECTIONARY**

1 King 8:1,6,10-11, 22-30, 41-43  
Psalm 84  
Ephesians 6:10-20  
John 6:56-69

navy, powerful and wealthy. He both frees Judah and adopts him as his son.

In due course Judah is able to return to Jerusalem with all the wealth and power of his new identity, and confronts the astonished Marsalla, whose assumption has been that Judah was long dead. Judah demands that Marsalla find and release his mother and sister from prison. Marsalla finds them in prison, but they have leprosy, so he whisks them away to the leper colony outside Jerusalem to live out a pitiful existence. Judah is told that they are dead.

His hate for Marsalla grows, and in a chariot race in which Marsalla and Judah are the primary figures, Marsalla is killed. With his dying breath, Marsalla, out of spite, tells Judah the truth about his mother and sister.

Judah retreats into bitterness and depression, but eventually, in desperation, he goes to the leper colony he goes to the leper colony to get his mother and sister in order to take them to Jesus, this great preacher who has been performing miracles. But when they get to Jerusalem where they think they will find Him, they discover that He has just been crucified.

All hope is gone. But then in the earthquake which accompanies the death of Jesus tles over them. However, in the hours and earthquakes rocked the city, Judah's mother and sister are healed of the leprosy, and Judah's heart, along with his mother's and sister's, is turned to Jesus. Their faith, their health and their lives are restored.

So why did I tell you the story?

It was because of Lew Wallace, the writer of Ben Hur. He was completely antagonistic towards Christianity and decided that he would study the story of Jesus so thoroughly, and because of it write so convincingly, that he would be able to kill off the story of Christ completely. He wanted to prove that Jesus, if He had lived, was not God, but merely a man, that He never rose from the dead, and that Christianity was a hoax.

So he studied - and was drawn in more and more to this great person of Jesus Christ, until one day, apparently, he dropped to his knees and cried out to Jesus to be his Saviour and his Lord. Then, instead of writing a book to prove to the world that Jesus was not God, he wrote *Ben Hur*, to try to prove to the world that Jesus was God.



## HOW TO GROW YOUR CHURCH

Here of course we are having a series of snippets from Neil Hudson's Book *Imagine Church* to get us to think about how we might grow our churches.

This week, it is a simple quotation, followed by my own ponderings..

**"If you don't take seriously the question of culture, then it is unlikely that you will see any long term differences."**

*I am always asking myself questions about the culture within which we are operating. How would you describe our national culture? Here are a few, in no particular order:*

- *Changing more and more rapidly*
- *Technology driven*
- *Unsettled, and suspicious of authority*
- *Multi racial, multi cultural, multi religious*
- *Into personal autonomy*
- *Secular*
- *Highly judgmental and blaming*
- *Ecologically minded*
- *Sex obsessed*
- *Child centred*
- *Image conscious*

*How would you describe church culture? What would you put in a list of, say ten points? Where does church culture touch secular culture? How can the gospel be spread in secular culture?*

*The Christian message of salvation in Christ does not change, but how it is interpreted for and presented to this or any other society do change.*

*It is worth asking whether Church culture helps or hinders the gospel. When people do come to faith, do they do so because of what we are or despite what we are? How can things improve?*

## THE BENEFICE THIS WEEK

### SUNDAY AT LLANGROVE

Benefice lay led service at 10am  
Commissioning of Churchwardens towards the end

### HOUSE GROUP

Tuesday 10am  
Zoom invitation issued with this Update's email.

### PRAYER GROUP

Tuesday , 7.30pm  
Zoom invitation issued with this Update's email.

### SUNDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> AT WELSH NEWTON

Benefice service with Baptism at 10am

## COMING UP

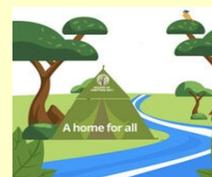
Services in September are proving a challenge due to having to have different arrangements for Harvest festivals. Here's what we have for the first two weeks.

- 5 Sept 10.00 Llangrove All Age Praise (lay led)  
11.00 Llangarron (Revd Penny Powdrill) HC
- 12 Sept 8.30 Marstow (Revd Jill Stephens) HC  
11.00 Goodrich Lay led
- 19 Sept 10.00 Llangrove Trial 1/2 hour HC  
11.00 Marstow Harvest  
5.00 Welsh Newton Harvest

**There will be TWO services per week in the Benefice, one from 19 Sept. From 5 Sept there will a service or act of Holy Communion somewhere every week. And soon we will begin a midweek Holy Communion.**

## CREATIONTIDE

We are keeping the annual season of Creationtide throughout October and ending on 5th September. Expect the services to be Creation themed.



This, of course, includes our harvest festivals. Harvest festivals are as follows

Marstow	Sun 19 Sept	11.00am
Welsh Newton	Sun 19 Sept	5.00pm
Llangarron	Fri 24 Sept	7.00pm
Goodrich	Sun 26 Sept	6.00pm
Llangrove	Sun 3 Oct	4.30pm

**All subject to confirmation.** Details to follow



If Covid still makes you worried about coming to church, then why not look online or on tv? Here are some suggestions.

### Local

Our own 'Light Bite'. The third in a series on awkward questions you might be asked as a Christian. Today's is the second of two dealing with the question: "Doesn't evolution do away with the need for God. Go to <https://youtu.be/16ZKotXjyw0>

### Our Diocese

There isn't now a message from the Bishop till September, but there is still access to online worship in the diocese.

### Around the Country—Lively.

10.30 or 6.30 St Nick's Bristol on <https://www.stnicholasbristol.org/online>

My favourite: 9.30, 11.30 and 5.30 All Souls Langham Place on <https://allsouls.org/Groups/337797/Watch/Watch.aspx>  
St Andrew the Great in Cambridge ([stag.org](http://stag.org))  
Holy Trinity Combe Down ([htcd.church](http://htcd.church))

### Traditional

A choice of over 80 traditional services <https://www.pbs.org.uk/churches-and-services/-1>

**The National Church of England - at 9am.**  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

**Songs of Praise** is about Fossils, Faith and Science, with hymns from the beach at Swanage. It's on BBC1 at 1.15pm



**If you see online worship that you like, TELL US.**

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

- a) We don't have to wear masks
- b) We can sing hymns
- c) We can share the Peace
- d) We can take communion

For the time being I am NOT going to invite the sharing of the Peace beyond a nod or a thumbs up.

At Holy Communion wine will be consecrated in one vessel, but then decanted into taster cups. This will be trialled at Marstow on the 15th August.

No-one should feel compelled to take communion.

## PROVISIONAL ROTA

There is a LOT of discussion going on about how to get back to a sustainable normality. From September we are more than doubling the number of services so that there is one communion service in the benefice per week, one other service and one midweek service.

This is considerably more challenging than you might expect and I'm grateful to the Wardens' and Reps Group for their input.

*The rota below is still VERY provisional.*

### **1st Sunday**

10.00 Llangrove	All Age Praise service (lay led)
11.00 Llangarron	Benefice Communion

### **2nd Sunday**

8.30 Welsh Newton	Benefice Communion
10.00 Marstow	
11.00 Goodrich	Lay led service

### **3rd Sunday**

10.00 Llangrove	Benefice Communion
11.00 Llangarron	Iona service

### **4th Sunday**

10.00 Marstow	Iona service
11.00 Goodrich	Benefice Communion
6pm Welsh Newton	Village Service

The precise format of the services will be decided locally BUT remember that *if* your church was declining before the lockdown, it's not doing to start expanding after it on the same diet!

THESE MAY CHANGE

### **Every Tuesday**

10.00 Marstow	Informal Holy Communion, then coffee and chat.
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BUT THIS IS NOT YET FINALISED

## LIGHT BITES

For anyone who hasn't tumbled to it yet, a *Light Bite* is a home produced 'event' of about 20 minutes on You Tube. It will consist usually of an introduction, a bible reading, a talk a hymn and a blessing. They are supposed to TEACH you something about your faith or challenge you.

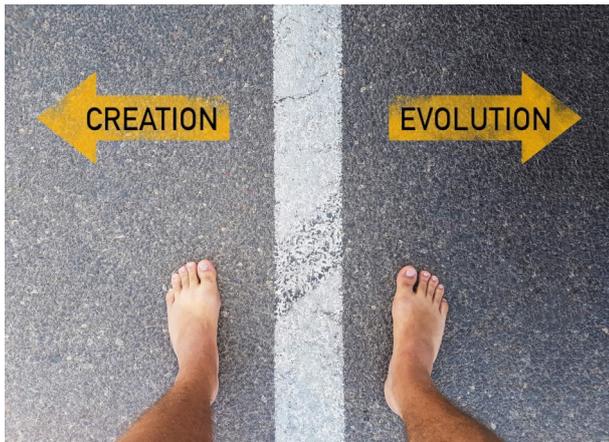


### THEMES FOR AUGUST

Our Christian learning is never complete and there are always some awkward questions we don't like to be asked. This month we'll be dealing with some of those. By all means give me an awkward topic to deal with.

15 Aug	Awkward Questions (3)
22 Aug	Awkward Questions (4)
29 Aug	Awkward Questions (5)
5 Sep	No Light Bite
12 Sep	No Light Bite

### THIS WEEK'S LIGHT BITE



This is the second in a series of two talks about creation and evolution. Put simply the question is something like, "Hasn't evolution made thought of God unnecessary. We don't need him do we?"

So this talk is fairly narrow in its scope. It deals with the existence of protein molecules themselves, the most basic carriers of life, and then also with molecules as the carriers of information—DNA.

## (ALTERNATIVE) COLLECT TRINITY 12

;God of constant mercy,  
who sent your Son to save us:  
remind us of your goodness,  
increase your grace within us,  
that our thankfulness may grow,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## THE BORDER NEWS

With the easing of the lockdown we are now in a position to start thinking about what we do with the Border News. Do we return to a paper copy, or do we keep it online? Do we keep its format as now, or do we develop it?

Your views are invited.

Churchwardens/PCC Chairmen have all been sent a questionnaire and have been asked to consult. Do get involved.

A meeting is in the offing.

## A BOOK OF THE BIBLE

### ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah is one of those Old Testament books that most of us never visit. It's only 3 chapters long so could probably be read from start to finish in half an hour. It was written during the reign of the good King Josiah, who sought to reestablish true faith in Israel ([2 Kings 22:1–23:30](#)).

Its theme is the approaching Day of the Lord: in which those who follow God are blessed by those sin against God are judged.

As usual with prophetic books, the political situation is in the background. The northern Kingdom, Israel, has been destroyed and its people exiled, but the southern Kingdom, Judah, appears not to have learned the lessons from that. It refuses to keep its covenant obligations to God. Perhaps, Zephaniah speculates, if Judah repents and abandons its evil ways, God will forgive ([2:3](#)). Regardless, God's judgment will lead to renewal for Judah and other peoples ([3:9–20](#)).

The book declares judgment on many nations, all of which opposed God through opposition to his people. The last nation warned is Judah herself ([3:1–7](#)). God is displeased with those who claimed to be his own people.

Zephaniah makes it clear that there is no such thing as a second generation child of God. Every generation must accept God's covenant. Apply that to the UK if you like. Our standing before God is nothing to do with our Christian history - it's about our response to God now.

## CHRISTIAN QUOTES

"To ignore culture is to ignore the cultural institutions that shape people's lives and that will point people either toward Christ or against him."

"We must live Christianly not only as the Church gathered on Sunday morning for worship, but also as the Church scattered into the world in our work, leisure, and community life."

Bruce Ashford

## DIOCESEAN SHARED PRIORITIES

Here is what we the Church are aiming for in this part of God's kingdom.

1. **Spiritual and numerical growth**
2. **Engaging in transforming communities**
3. **Reimagining ministry**

Have a bit of a think about what these might mean. Our churches do not exist for their own sake.

## MINI BIBLE STUDY

### HOW DO PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT GOD?

#### General Revelation

General revelation refers to those things, which we all see and experience, that reveal God's existence and shows what He is like, including

- Nature: Creation itself shows us God's glory and creativity (Psalm 8; Ps. 19:1-6).
- History: God's hand in the events of history reveal His existence and sovereignty (Ps. 75:6-7; Acts 17:26-27; Rom. 13:1).
- Man's conscience: Our ability to know right and wrong teaches us what God is like (Rom. 1:18-32; 2:14-16).

But suppose you had other questions, like 'How can I know God personally?' 'Why do I exist?' 'What is the purpose of life?' We have to see how God has spoken to us more specifically.

#### Special Revelation

Special revelation refers to everything God reveals to us personally, things we would not know otherwise. There is no question that God desires to speak to us (Deut. 29:29; Amos 3:7; 1 Cor. 2:10; Heb. 1:1-2). Some of the ways God has spoken to mankind throughout history include:

- Dreams and visions (Gen. 28:12-16; 37:5-9; Mt. 1:20; 2:13, 19)
  - Theophanies: God appearing and speaking to people (Abraham – Gen. 12:7; Moses - Ex. 3:2; etc.)
  - Prophets: God speaking through individuals (2 Sam. 23:2; Zech. 1:1; Eph. 3:5)
  - Jesus Christ (John 1:1; Heb. 1:1-3)
  - The Bible (Ps. 19:7; 2 Tim. 3:15-17)
- Scripture serves as a trustworthy source for hearing from God at any time and in any place (2 Peter 1:18-21), though of course it does have to be treated carefully and read prayerfully.
- Our personal experience (Ps 34:4,8)

## ON THE COMPUTER



Gone are the days when to publicise the Church or its activities you could just stick a notice on the notice board.

These days, to be seen, all organisations know they need a presence online and/or on social media, and this has been a work in progress for our churches for more than three years. These days our Church Notice Board is mainly online. That's where we get seen most

We have been developing our online presence, and we'll continue to do that as we attempt to respond to the rapidly changing society of which we are a part.

## Benefice Websites

**Wye Brooks Benefice**<https://wyebrooksbenefice.wixsite.com/my-site>

There are links to all the individual church websites, as below.

For individual Churches go to:

#### **St Giles Church, Goodrich**

<https://www.goodrichchurchherefordshire.org.uk/>

#### **St Matthew's Church, Marstow**

<https://www.marstowchurch.org/>

#### **St Deinst's Church, Llangarron**

<https://www.llangarron.info/church>

#### **Christ Church, Llangrove**

[llangrove.org.uk](http://llangrove.org.uk) (village website)

#### **St Mary's the Virgin Church, Welsh Newton**

<https://www.ourcountrychurch.co.uk/>

You can also visit **A Church Near You** for information about each church and an indication of what is happening in it.

A big



from Ian and Jackie Alexander for your thoughts, care and prayer for them. They say it has made a huge difference and they very much appreciate it..

Radiotherapy (weekdays only) is Jackie's daily treatment diet, for the next two or three weeks.



## JUST A THOUGHT WHY NOT...

**leave a gift to your church in your will?**

It's easy enough to do and will help to ensure your church's future.

## COMPANION WORK NEEDED

One of our parishioners would like to find paid work as a companion to someone—cooking, housekeeping, shopping etc.

If you or someone you know might be able to offer this kind of work, please ring me (01989 770454)

## PRAYER FOR OTHERS

### The UK

- HM the Queen and the Royal Family,
- HM Government

### Coronavirus.

- Infection rates and the easing of restrictions
- Covid elsewhere in the world, and travel issues.
- Those who continue to suffer from the Virus and from long Covid
- Those who have lost loved ones or watched them suffer.
- Those who continue to be isolated

### World

- The perceived threats from both Russia and China
- Taliban violence in Afghanistan.
- Famine in Ethiopia and Yemen, Civil war in Yemen.
- The people of Haiti and the relief effort
- The migrant issue and especially, at the moment, those desperately trying to escape Afghanistan.
- The UK/Europe tension over trade, travel and vaccines.
- Violent persecution of Christians in the Muslim world
- Climate change and ecology

### Our churches and clergy

- Clergy—for energy, wisdom, faithfulness, courage.
- Churches—role in the community, finances, adaptability, digital presence.
- The future. What kind of normal (this is really important)
- The weekly services, Light Bites, the Updates, the lay-led services, the Zoom Prayer Meeting, House Groups, Meditation Group, the Worship Group, the Tech working party and the work to give us a proper digital presence; the possibility of starting a benefice choir.
- The Church as it debates *Living in Love and Faith*, which is about our approach to issues in human sexuality.

### Our villages

- Our pubs
- Our parish councils, local businesses and schools

### Pray for people

- Brenda, on a course of chemo, and Graham
- Doris, living with dementia, in a nursing home
- Rosie, with various problems, putting on a brave face, and her husband Nigel, as they prepare to move.
- Anita, her route back to health following operations.
- Margaret, still on the long road to recovery after operations
- Ron, now back home, and Diana, his wife.
- James, a young man with long term illness
- Carol, in a persistent vegetative state.
- Ivor, battling on
- Lisa, still suffering from vertigo
- Jim, recovering after surgery.
- Marlow David Matthews, being baptised at Welsh Newton next Sunday, and his family.

To anyone from the parish of Welsh Newton - please complete the survey.

To anyone at all - please support St Mary's Welsh Newton by entering the draw

ST MARY THE VIRGIN



WELSH NEWTON

PARISH SURVEY

To complete  
our online  
survey



Website: [St Mary The Virgin | Welsh Newton | Temblar Church](#)

## NEWS FROM THE PERSECUTED CHURCH ROMANIA AND THE WORLD

Last Monday Romania kept a newly created commemorative day, a day to commemorate violence against Christians.

It all dates back to the Brâncoveanu martyrs of 1714, but This National Day seeks to present to the general public, and especially young people, the importance of Christianity in Romania's history and the continued widespread persecution of Christians around the world.

Christians are harassed in more countries than the followers of any other religion (145 out of the total of 197 sovereign states. according to a 2020 study.

Friends of St Mary's

Welsh Newton



Draw

Monthly Prizes

1st : £50

2nd : £20

3rd : £10



£1 per week per number

[Friends of St Mary's Draw | Mysite \(ourcountrychurch.co.uk\)](#)

Email: [stmarysdraw@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysdraw@gmail.com)

## FOR YOUR DIARY

**RBL** ROYAL  
BRITISH  
LEGION

**Centenary Celebration**  
**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September at 3:30pm.**

Herefordshire County Royal British Legion and the Battle of Britain Committee are celebrating the Centenary of the formation of the Royal British Legion at Hereford Cathedral during the evensong service on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September at 3:30pm.

Everyone is welcome to attend this very special commemoration service.

The service commemorates those who have given their lives in service, those who continue to serve and those who have supported our armed services during the last 100 years.

The British Legion was formed in May 1921 to help returning WW1 soldiers and their families.

Today through the Poppy Appeal and many donations, members and volunteers strive to raise money in support of all veterans including those from the Merchant naval service, present day serving armed forces personnel and their families.

**Barbara Leeson**  
**Herefordshire County Chairman.**

# REGULARS

THESE ITEMS DON'T CHANGE FROM WEEK TO WEEK

## THE DAILY HOPE LINE

0800 804 8044

If you haven't done already, this is information to be passed on to those who don't have access to the Internet. It's a freephone number to a Church of England initiative, where there are recorded hymns, messages and prayers.

## PARISH GIVING SCHEME

We are pushing the Parish Giving Scheme because it is the best way of giving to your Church, not just because of *how little hassle* it is to you, but also because of *how safe* and *tax efficient* it is, *how easy it is for treasurers to administer* and how it usually does actually *drive the income of churches up*. And GOOD NEWS—you don't even have to fill in a form. You can set it up by phone. By all means ring your church treasurer for details and fill in a form, or call the number below.

## PARISH GIVING SCHEME

Tel 0333 002 1271

Church	Parish Ref	Church	Parish Ref
Goodrich	180618231	Marstow	180618241
Llangarron	180618239	Llangrove	180618240
Welsh Newton	180618256		

## THE BORDER NEWS

Not currently available as a hard copy.

To get the online Border News:

- Go to [wyereaches.org](http://wyereaches.org)
- Click the What's On tab.

## CONTACT

Revd Ben 01989 770454.

Revd Philip 'Ben' Bentham

Tel 01989 770454

Email [benbentham@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:benbentham@yahoo.co.uk)

If you have suggestions for improving this Update, please do let me know.

To unsubscribe, simply drop me a line.



## ALL AGE CHURCH

Sue Evans' All Age material is attached to the email accompanying this Update.



The Llangrove Milk Shed at the Village Hall, For farm fresh milk and a few other things like butter, cheese and cake.



Our local eateries are important, and without our patronage they risk not being able to survive, especially in this climate.

### Llangrove - The Royal Arms

Phone 01989 770267

### Goodrich - The Hostellerie

Phone 01600 890241

### Goodrich - The Cross Keys

Phone 01600 890692

### Goodrich - Hen and Dot Café

Flanesford Priory, Open Fri to Sun 10am - 4pm

Phone 01600 890506

## CLERGY DAY OFF

My DAY OFF is Monday. I may be around on Mondays, but can't guarantee it.

## CLERGY HOLIDAYS THIS YEAR

30 Aug - 12 Sept 28-31 Dec