

# **Wye Brooks Group UPDATE for 12 FEBRUARY 2 BEFORE LENT GREEN**

## **FROM THE VICAR SEX AND THE C of E**



The General Synod has voted to allow priests to bless same sex unions, but not to perform same sex marriages. In other words, from July if they get the detail worked out, if you are a gay couple, your vicar can't do your wedding in church, but can bless your 'marriage' or civil partnership, a secular ceremony.

For those of us who don't pretend to be part of the debate that might seem to be a reasonable compromise, especially since an amendment to the motion was carried, to the effect that any such prayers must not go against existing Church of England doctrine on marriage. According that, marriage is between one man and one woman.

The decision doesn't go nearly far enough for those who want to see homosexual marriage in the Church of England fully adopted, but is a long way beyond what is acceptable for those who advocate a traditional, and they would say biblical, view. One of London's most prominent churches, All Soul's Langham Place, voted to pause its parish offer to the London Diocese, saying all this is moving the Church away from its historic position *in practice*. I expect that other churches will follow suit.

What is it fundamentally all about?

Those who say the Bible *is* the Word of God (let's call  
**See next page**

## **READINGS 2 BEFORE LENT**

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Psalms 136

Romans 8:18-25

Matthew 6:25-34

## **(ALTERNATIVE) COLLECT FOR 2 BEFORE LENT**

Almighty God,  
give us reverence for all creation  
and respect for every person,  
that we may mirror your likeness  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **Advance Notice**

Wye Brooks Benefice

## **Joint APCM**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April

Llangrove Academy

Refreshments from 6.30pm

Meetings from 7.00pm

## **BISHOP'S WEEKLY MESSAGE THE SYNOD DEBATE**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsPCuSNP6X4>

## **OUR OWN LIGHT BITE NONE THIS WEEK**

## **HOUSE GROUP/PRAYER GROUP**

The next **Zoom House Group** will be on Tuesday 14th February at 10.00am

The next **Zoom Prayer Group** will be on Tuesday 14th February at 7.30pm

## **CHURCH COFFEE MORNINGS**

2nd Saturday of the Month      Llangarron. 10.30

2nd Wednesday of the month      Llangrove      10.30

4th Saturday of the month      Welsh Newton 10.30

## SEX AND THE C of E (contd)

them conservatives) on both the conservative evangelical and Catholic sides of the theological fence, claim that the Bible is quite clear: that we were made male and female in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and that He immediately gave them the job of reproducing (Genesis 1:28). In Genesis 2:24 it says that a man will leave his parents and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh, which was affirmed by Jesus. One jokey way of putting is that "God created Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve!"

Moreover, the Bible mentions homosexual sexual acts a couple of dozen times and there isn't even a hint of approval. The most severe is in Leviticus 20, where the death penalty is prescribed for those participating in such acts. In the New Testament, in Romans 1:26-27 Paul describes homosexual activity as a 'dishonourable passion' which, along with other dishonourable passions, will attract God's wrath.

In this view, the claim is that we are told by God pretty clearly what is acceptable behaviour and what is not, and homosexual acts are not.

But people who are more theologically liberal may come at it from a different angle. They start, really, with us. *My rights, my body*. We are made in God's image; God loves us; he created us to be fulfilled; he stated in Genesis that it is not good for us to be alone; and we are sexual beings. Sex is unitive and beneficial. Moreover, those who are homosexual almost certainly can't help being so. Most claim that homosexuality is genetic (the scientific evidence doesn't really back that up) or because of our family or other environment.

Our loving God, it is claimed, would not want us to be denied one of his richest gifts. In fact, it is unjust to do so since homosexual sex is not harmful. Moreover, all of those Biblical verses condemning homosexual acts or stating consequences can, with not too much effort, be explained away - as anachronistic, or unworthy of us, or as part of ceremonial law not moral law, or as expression of a less tolerant culture in a bygone age, or as over-strict, prejudiced or simply mistaken translation of key words in our own biblical history. They may tell us that actually the Bible *is not* God's word, but that it rather *contains* God's word, and his word for us today needs today's interpretation, also that the Bible never addresses sexual *orientation* but only sexual activity, when orientation is the key thing. And so on.

But this side seems unsatisfactory because it seems to make Christianity morality dependant on society's whims, or airbrush out of the picture the righteousness

**See next page**

## CHRISTIANITY IN THE NEWS

### YORK MAUNDY SERVICE

King Charles III will host his first ever Maundy service at York Minster. He will meet 74 men and 74 women to thank them for their service, both to Christianity and to their communities.

Each year, the monarch travels to a different cathedral for the service. Last year, the King travelled to Yorkshire to unveil a new statue of the late Queen, which now sits outside the Minster.

### ANOTHER ARREST FOR PRAYING

A Catholic priest was charged for by police "intimidating" visitors to an abortion clinic by standing nearby with a placard stating 'Praying for free speech'.



Father Sean Gough, from Birmingham, was approached by police because he was breaching a PSPO, known as a buffer zone, which stops people from doing anything which may intimidate someone attending a clinic.

This can include protesting, handing out support leaflets and even praying.

The charges have since been dropped.

### 200 MILLION SHOEBOXES

Christian humanitarian aid organisation, Samaritan's Purse, says has now sent out 200 million shoebox gifts worldwide, through Operation



Christmas Child to more than 170 countries. This year's UK share was over 250,000 shoebox gifts. This year, Samaritan's Purse says it delivered its milestone 200-millionth shoebox.

Each box contains toys, school supplies and hygiene items

## SEX AND THE C of E (contd)

of God and the seriousness of sin. It seems to ignore the fact that sin is not about avoiding what is harmful, but about keeping God's rules (stealing £5 from a billionaire is wrong even if he won't notice it missing!). And Christian faith *should* cramp our style. How else will we express our commitment to God. "I urge you brothers, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. This is your spiritual worship," says Paul. We are all called to make sacrifices, and for some that sacrifice may be the sacrifice of celibacy.

So we have the two sides lined up against each other. The theological liberals accuse the theological conservatives of bigotry and injustice whilst the theological conservatives accuse the theological liberals of playing fast and loose with scripture and side-lining God's sovereign will.

Liberals, noting that these are actions of love not hate, will argue that the Church, for its own sake, only needs sexual rules which are relevant in a postmodern society, but to be honest our shrinking churches are likely to have more to do with pompous, self-important and archaic worship than anything else.

The Archbishops and bishops are desperately trying to find compromises, to keep both the Church of England and the worldwide Anglican Communion from splitting, which may or may not be possible. In the Church of England we are used to putting up with people, whom we think aren't proper Christians, but that may not be true elsewhere in the world. The fastest growing and most morally conservative parts of the Anglican Church are in Africa and we can't boss them about any more!

It might, I suppose, be commented that the Church is providing no leadership, no guardianship on this matter, but it can't do that without attracting the attention of what I call the 'howling mob' - those inside and outside it, whose way of winning the argument is by attacking and undermining anyone whose view is not in line with theirs. It has to be said that this comes more from the liberal, pro-gay, side. Stonewall is very unsubtle, but this week we have had Sandy Toksvig accusing conservative bishops of sacrificing LGBTQ people for the sake of what they believe. We'll probably find that clergy are pretty unwilling to speak out for traditional marriage because of a demanding and unfriendly press or the howling mob generally.

We shall see.

In the meantime, we are not in a comfortable place, and these waters are uncharted. By all means, anyone, engage me in conversation about it all.

## LENT COURSE THE KING'S SPEECH

The last Lent course I attempted to run, on the film *The King's Speech*, was cut off by Covid after only one session. In my opinion the King's Speech is one of the most outstanding films ever to be made, and I have decided that I want to have another go, repeating the first session.

The commitment is to six sessions at the Vicarage. Each session will happen both on a Wednesday evening and a Friday afternoon, to give people the best chance of getting there. You can come to either one. A booklet will be provided.

Tea/coffee and biscuits will be served. Each session will be over in about an hour and a half. It will consist of the showing of two clips of between four and about six minutes, and discussion.

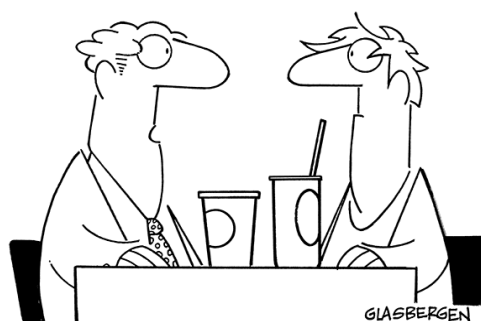
They will run as follows

Thurs	22 Feb	7.00	Film viewing
Fri	24 Feb	2.00	Film viewing
Wed	1 Mar	7.00	Session 1
Fri	3 Mar	2.00	Session 1
Wed	8 Mar	7.00	Session 2
Fri	10 Mar	2.00	Session 2
Wed	15 Mar	7.00	Session 3
Fri	17 Mar	2.00	Session 3
Wed	22 Mar	7.00	Session 4
Fri	24 Mar	2.00	Session 4
Wed	29 Mar	7.00	Session 5
Fri	31 Mar	2.00	Session 5



See you there!

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"On Valentine's Day, 'getting lucky'  
means having some money left  
at the end of the day."

## LENT LUNCHES



Lent lunches raise money for a charity chosen by the host. The cost is a donation.

Please can we have a volunteer from each parish to host, for one

week during Lent, a simple lunch, (many churches call them hunger lunches) comprising soup and then something simply like a sandwich, fruit and a cuppa. The time for each lunch is 12.30 pm. The day of the week isn't too important, but please try to avoid the Friday Lent course.

So far we have

Week

1 wb 27/2 (volunteer needed)

2 wb 6/3 (volunteer needed)

3 wb 13/3 Wed 15th an and Phyll (Marstow)

4 wb 20/3 = Thu 23rd Ian and Jacky (Llangrove)

5 wb 27/3 (volunteer needed)

## WHITCHURCH WEEKLY



10.30 every Thursday at St Dubricius Church, Whitchurch

A simple informal half hour communion without a sermon or a collection, followed by refreshments and some Christian learning together.

It has always been open to anyone from both the Wye Reaches and Wye Brooks benefices.

Please do come. Relax and enjoy God's presence with us.

## PRAYER FOR OTHERS

### The UK

- HM the King and the Royal Family.
- Our Prime Minister and Government
- The hardship caused by rising prices.
- The increasingly important work of food banks.
- Those badly affected by strikes, and those who feel that they have no other option but to strike

### World

- Pray for the people of Turkey and Syria
- Please continue to pray for the Ukraine, and for Russia, and about the countries involved on the sidelines of the conflict.
- Pray for the US and its political chaos and internal anger.
- Pray for efforts to reduce global warming.
- Pray about the issue of migration

### Health

- The NHS, the pressure on front line staff, recruitment and so on.
- The ability of the NHS to cope in a time of both shortages of staff and strikes.
- The ongoing presence and effects of Covid/Strepa A and other infectious diseases
- Those suffering from mental health issues
- NHS chaplains

### Our churches and clergy

- The aftermath of the General Synod, and especially those who feel betrayed by the outcome
- For our encouragement of true discipleship
- For our own attempts to move towards mission mindedness and action
- For the prayer life of our churches, and especially as we continue with our diocesan Year of Prayer for mission.
- For the hard decisions which will need to be made about clergy numbers.

### Our villages

Our pubs, parish councils, local businesses and schools. Pray for all our communities in these difficult times.

### Pray for people

Please pray for all those you know who are sick or in particular need, and those facing big changes in life.

- Nigel - the continued fight against cancer. His chemo is over. Further tests are ongoing.
- Bernie Water's elderly and frail parents, while Bernie and Gill are visiting relatives in Australia.
- The family of Pat Parkinson, of Welsh Newton Common, whose memorial service is impending
- Tina—for continued recovery following her operation
- A baby born recently with physical and possible development problems

## MARRIAGE QUOTE

"In sharp contrast with our culture, the Bible teaches that the essence of marriage is a sacrificial commitment to the good of the other. That means that love is more fundamentally action than emotion."

*Tim Keller*

## SERVICES CALENDAR

DATE	TIME	PLACE	SERVICE	LEADER
Sun 12 Feb	8.30	Welsh Newton	Holy Communion	Ben
	10.00	Llangrove	Community Praise	Wendy
	10.00	Marstow	Holy Communion	Ben
	11.00	Goodrich	Holy Communion	Simon
Sun 19 Feb	8.30	Welsh Newton	Meditation/Bib St	Lay led
	10.00	Llangrove	Holy Communion	Ben
	11.00	Goodrich	Morning Service	Jill
	6.00	Llangarron	Evening Service	Penny
Wednesday	7.00	Llangrove	Ash Wed HC with ashing	Ben
Sun 26 Feb	8.30	Welsh Newton	Holy Communion	Penny
	10.00	Marstow	Morning Worship	Hillary
	10.00	Llangrove	Community Praise	Lay led
	11.00	Goodrich	Holy Communion	Ben
	6.00	Welsh Newton	Worship and Prayer	Lay led*

\* NB This is correct. St Mary's meets twice on a fourth Sunday.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE— WILLS



Want to make a difference to your local church?

Why not leave it something in your will? It's easy to do, and helps what you care about.

## BLESS THE NHS

Messages of support for the NHS

For details go to <https://www.frontline19.com/hopeline19/>

## PARISH GIVING SCHEME

To give to your local church in easiest, most efficient way, telephone **0333 002 1271**

You will need a parish reference number, as follows:

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

## CONTACTS

**Vicar: Revd Philip 'Ben' Bentham**  
Tel 01989 770454 Email  
[benbentham@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:benbentham@yahoo.co.uk)

**Associate Minister: Revd Simon Tarlton**  
Tel 07462 893457

**Associate Minister: Revd Penny**  
Powdrill Tel 01600 714096

If you have suggestions for improving this Update, please do let me know.  
To UNSUBSCRIBE, simply drop me a line.

## ST VALENTINE'S DAY



It's St Valentine's Day on Tuesday, when the nation will be celebrating love

and romance.

Want to make a card for the love of your life? Go to this website to learn how.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

## VICAR HOLIDAYS

TBA

## CLERGY DAY OFF

My usual day off is MONDAY



## Benefice Food Banks

The Benefice now has three informal, voucher-free food banks, at the churches in  
**Welsh Newton**  
**Llangrove**  
**Langarron**

Anyone who feels under pressure financially can just slip in and take what they need without having to register anywhere.

Please also feel free to donate food to them yourself.

Do gossip this information to anyone whom you think might find it helpful.

Thanks



## FOR YOUR DIARY HOLY WEEK

Holy Week this year is Sun Apr 2 - Sat Apr 8.  
There is a long established pattern of activities with one important addition.

**Sun** Usual services for Palm Sunday

**Mon—Wed** Morning Prayer  
Compline (Night Prayer)

**Thurs** Morning Prayer  
24 hour prayer

**Friday** Hour round the Cross  
Tenebrae (Service of Shadows)

Details will firm up very soon.



## 24 HOUR PRAYER

In the Diocese we are committing ourselves to a year of prayer.

As part of this the congregation at St Mary's Welsh Newton are hosting 24 hours of prayer for the whole benefice, probably starting on Maundy Thursday.

Currently, if I understand it correctly people will be invited to commit themselves to a specific hour of prayer in church.

Want to be part of it? Let Patricia know on  
[patriciacarswell@gmail.com](mailto:patriciacarswell@gmail.com)

More details out soon.



### **A notice from St Mary's, Welsh Newton**

We would like to host Growing Good workshops in the New Year for anyone in the benefice who might be interested in attending.

It's a series of six workshops about using social action to benefit the community and grow the church, using the Growing Good Toolkit provided by the Church Urban Fund.

Each session will last about 75 minutes and include a Bible text and reflection, a short film, a group activity and time for prayer.

We have heard from other churches (including a small rural church) that it's an incredibly valuable resource. Anyone interested in joining it or finding out more should email me at [patriciacarswell@gmail.com](mailto:patriciacarswell@gmail.com).

**The first session is on Saturday 18th February  
10.00am—11.30am**

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### How do I find out more?

If you have any questions please contact:

Marion Forrester [marion.r.forrester@googlemail.com](mailto:marion.r.forrester@googlemail.com) / 01568 780188

Sue Foster [s.foster779@outlook.com](mailto:s.foster779@outlook.com)

Catherine Benbow [benbowcatherine@gmail.com](mailto:benbowcatherine@gmail.com) / 01746 785440

Pat Helm [pat@thehelm.me.uk](mailto:pat@thehelm.me.uk)

Pat Macrae [patfmacrae@gmail.com](mailto:patfmacrae@gmail.com) / 01981 580438

**Bishop Richard writes:** "I warmly commend the week of accompanied prayer. In my 11 years as an incumbent, the week of accompanied prayer was the most significant time of spiritual growth for those who participated. Some said it was the most significant week in their entire spiritual journey to date. The opportunity to speak in complete confidence about our spiritual lives with a confidential and experienced guide proved revolutionary and enriching. I heartily recommend this programme for anyone whatever your spirituality or stage of the faith journey."

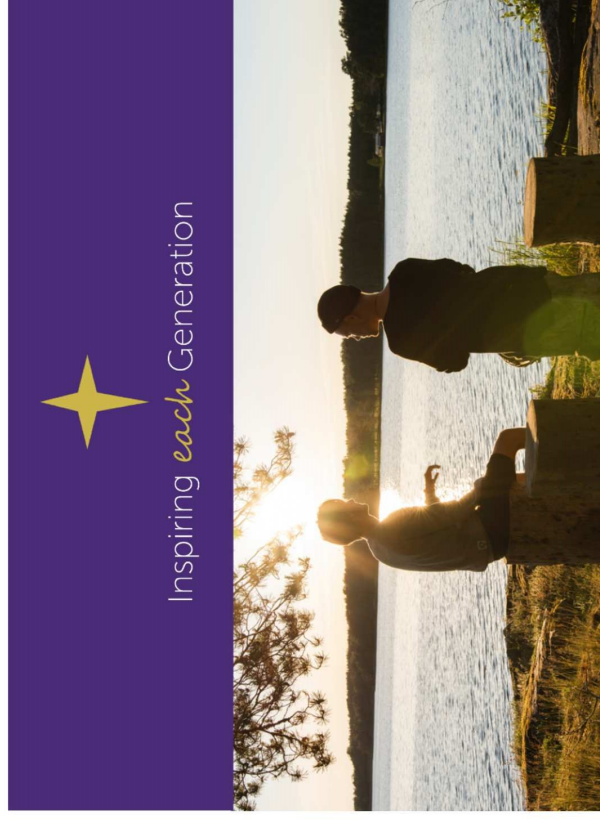
**Closing date for booking: Sunday 12th February.**

### Book a place:

<https://bit.ly/onlineWAP>



The Diocesan Office • The Palace • Hereford • HR4 9BL  
t: 01432 373300 e: [info@hereford.anglican.org](mailto:info@hereford.anglican.org)  
[www.hereford.anglican.org](http://www.hereford.anglican.org)



## An online Week of Accompanied Prayer

26th February – 4th March 2023



[www.hereford.anglican.org](http://www.hereford.anglican.org)

