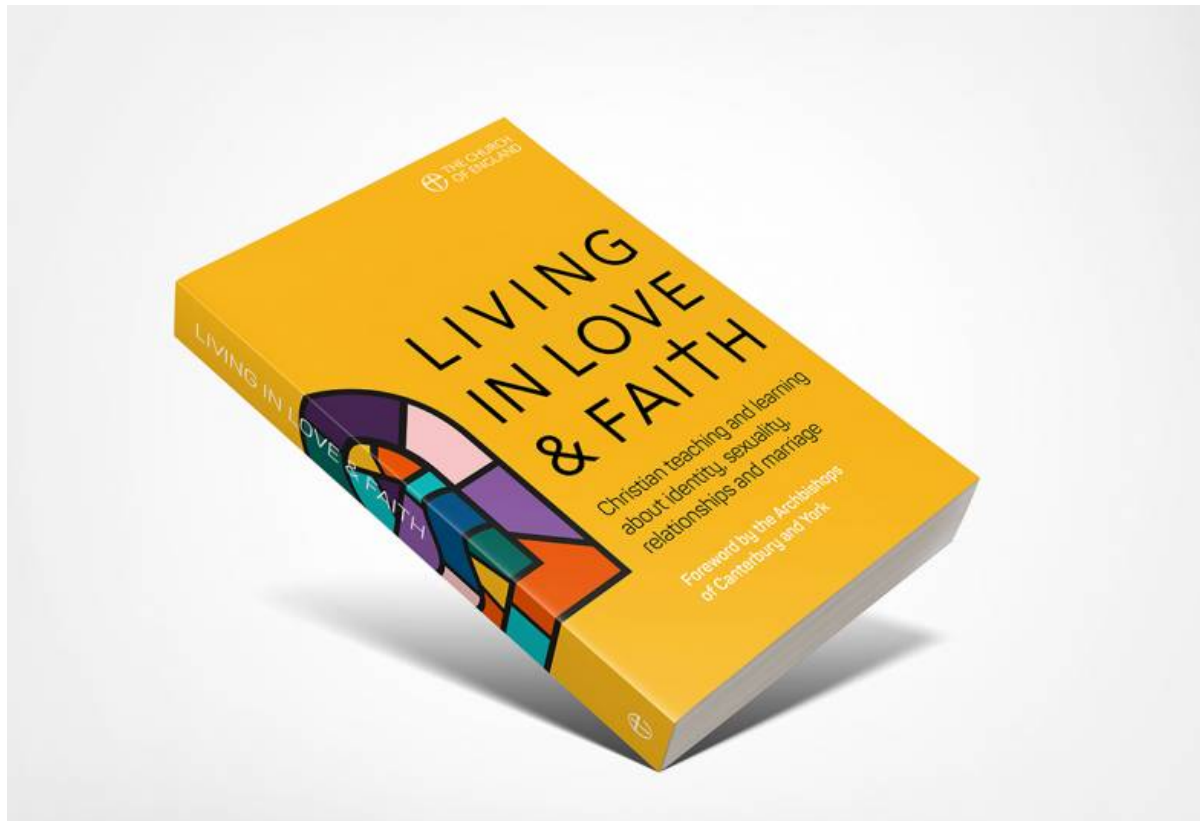


Sarah Tapp, a curate of a charismatic and evangelical church, is encouraging others to take part in Living in Love and Faith (LLF) following the completion of courses in her parish.



LLF is a set of resources exploring questions of human identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage, launched on 9 November 2020.

The resources – which include a 5-session course for local groups – are designed to facilitate open, honest, and gracious learning and discussion among churchgoers across the country.

Sarah ran two courses online at St Mary of Bethany, Woking, Surrey. Each course – attended by around 10 people in each – allowed participants to scratch the surface of deeply held views together.

– There should be no fear in doing the course. Its purpose seems not necessarily to change people’s minds on the subjects, but to help them to understand better and to accept as still faithfully Christian, views that differ from their own, she said.

– It’s incredibly worthwhile. Just the existence of LLF has created a space for people to talk about something that is rarely discussed in church.

– I have had conversations with people on and around the subject that may never have arisen if it weren’t for LLF.

– Even if entire churches have yet to become completely safe for people to be themselves, it has certainly made space for people (even those too hurt to do the course) to find and talk to – safe people – with less fear than perhaps before. ^

– For us, it has brought into the light the differing views and experiences of Church that already harmoniously coexist in our evangelical setting.

The two groups that Sarah led generally held different views when they began the course. But, despite the groups being diverse in age and views, all came to learn.

Sarah said: "I did not get the impression from anyone in either group that they felt as if they had nothing to learn, on the contrary, I believe they all came to be challenged and to learn."

She added that LLF was not about changing minds. She said: "Friendships have deepened, and discussions have opened up, that are sure to be growth areas for faith and fellowship."

"I am not aware that anyone's view has changed, but they are certainly more sympathetic to each other (and the 'other'), as it has become about relationships and people, rather than just a point of view or position."

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