

Press Release – 16th August 2014

for immediate use

Evangelical support for Vicky Beeching

Following Vicky Beeching's public announcement that she is gay, Accepting Evangelicals is proud to fully support her and salutes her courage and openness in talking about her sexuality.

Vicky is a Patron of Accepting Evangelicals, which is working towards the acceptance of same-sex relationships and LGBT people at every level of church life.

AE Director, Rev Benny Hazlehurst said,

"It is hard enough to 'come out' to your family and close friends – so how hard must it have been for Vicky Beeching to talk publicly about being a lesbian for the first time? Her Twitter following alone is 50,000 strong, many of whom are conservative evangelical Christians from the American Bible belt. I know her public stance is already giving hope to many LGB&T Christians who have felt unable to be themselves in church."

Her fellow Patrons have been quick to back her and to draw attention to implications for the Church which has caused her and others such pain and isolation.

Fellow Patron, Rev Steve Chalke said,

'Vicky's bold and brave statement – filled with courage, honesty and vulnerability – asks deep questions of our churches, at the same time as pointing the path to the future. How have so many of us ended up as another dimension of people's exclusion rather than a deliverance from it? We need to find new ways of offering the always-given welcome and embrace of God to all'.

Bishop David Gillett has also drawn attention to the hurt and pain which many LGBT people face in church,

'Vicky Beeching has done an enormous favour to the Church by stating so winsomely and convincingly that to be gay is OK because that is how God made her. Many LGBT people who have been hurt by attitudes within the Church will be greatly encouraged by her stand. For the rest of us, I hope it will more quickly spur us on to journey together to accept and celebrate the presence and relationships of LGBT people within our congregations.'

Vicky Beeching will be speaking about faith and sexuality at our 10th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday 18th October at St John's Church Waterloo. The event starts at 2pm.

ENDS

Note for Editors:

Accepting Evangelicals is an open network of Evangelical Christians who believe the time has come to move towards the acceptance of faithful, loving same-sex partnerships at every level of church life, and the development of a positive Christian ethic for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. www.acceptingevangelicals.org

Vicky Beeching is a well known broadcaster, songwriter, and writer on religion and ethics. She studied theology at Oxford and is currently doing doctoral research at Durham with a focus on Christianity, gender and sexuality. Appearing on national TV and radio several times a week, she comments on religious and current affairs and regularly presents Radio 4's Thought For The Day.

Rev Steve Chalke is a Baptist minister, Founder of Oasis Global & Stop The Traffik, and a United Nations Special Advisor on Community Action Against Human Trafficking. He is Church Leader at Oasis Waterloo and was awarded the MBE in 2004 for services to social inclusion.

The Rt Rev David Gillett was Bishop of Bolton until his retirement in 2008. David has huge experience in evangelical theological education having been Principal of Trinity Theological College in Bristol for 11 years, and the first Director of Extension Studies at St John's Nottingham. He trained for the ministry at Oak Hill, and has also been a travelling secretary for Pathfinders and CYFA. He is now honorary assistant Bishop and interfaith advisor in the Diocese of Norwich.

Accepting Evangelicals 10th Anniversary Celebration – for more information visit <http://www.acceptingevangelicals.org/2014/05/announcing-our-10th-anniversary-celebration/>

Tickets are available free from: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/accepting-evangelicals-10th-anniversary-celebration-tickets-11630211275>

For further comment and enquiries, please contact:

Rev Benny Hazlehurst
Director, Accepting Evangelicals
07788 426090
benny@acceptingevangelicals.org