

## Year of Engagement Dates for Your Diary

### Bishop's Teaching Events

**Saturday, 31st May, 2025**

**9.30am-1pm**

St. George's Church, Pontesbury

**Saturday, 19th July, 2025**

**9.30am-1pm**

St. Michael's Church, Madeley

**Saturday, 13th September, 2025**

**9.30am-1pm**

St. Michael & All Angels, Ledbury

**Saturday, 8th November, 2025**

**9.30am-1pm**

St. Mary's Church, Ross-on-Wye

### Bishop's Study Days

**Tuesday, 24th June, 2025**

**10am-3pm**

Craven Arms Community Centre,  
Shropshire

**Wednesday, 22nd October, 2025**

**10am-3pm**

St. Peter's Church, Hereford

To discuss holding a **Spiritual Question Time** for the Year of engagement, please contact Rev'd Stephen Hollinghurst by email at [Stephen.Hollinghurst@hereford.anglican.org](mailto:Stephen.Hollinghurst@hereford.anglican.org)

**Everyone is welcome to these events. For more information about or to register for these and all our events please visit our diocese Eventbrite page online at <https://bit.ly/HfdDioYOE> or scan the QR Code**



### Workshop leaders announced for Bishop's Teaching Events

Some of the workshop leaders have been announced for two of the Bishop's Teaching Events being held as part of the Year of Engagement.

On 31st May, in Pontesbury, we are delighted to welcome Helen Brown from the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance (SFPA) to talk to us about the work that they do and why it is so important. The SFPA is a coalition of diverse organisations united by a single goal: to eradicate food poverty within Shropshire. This collaborative approach ensures that its strategies are well-rounded, in-

clusive, and impactful.

On 19th July in Madeley, one of the three workshops will be led by Rev'd Andy Ackroyd from St Michael's Madeley, and will be about Count Everyone In. This is a registered UK charity focusing on inspiring and equipping churches in England and Wales to be welcoming and accessible to everyone, especially adults with learning disabilities. Reverend Andy is a trainer for the charity, and parent of a 19 year old with LD.

See above for booking information.



### Parish News

April 2025

### God's love is stronger than all our faults, fears and failures by The Very Rev'd Sarah Brown, Dean of Hereford

We talk a lot about failure. It is something we are super sensitive about. We have all had our failures. I am no exception and struggle most days with a fear of failing family, colleagues, church and God. Fear of failure is the reverse of what the gospel teaches but we are all extremely susceptible. It causes leaders to become risk averse and instinctively protect the institution, sometimes shamefully at the expense of the vulnerable. Farmers have told me that they don't want to be the one that lets the farm go under and church people vow to battle on because 'this mustn't fail on our watch'. The pressure of the ancestors, of tradition, of the sheer hard work of those who have gone before is colossal. Believe me, I do not want to be the Dean of Hereford under whose leadership a millennia of cathedral life goes horribly wrong. When Christ's Church fails, it is particularly heartbreaking, for it implies to others the failure of God.

The shame that accompanies personal and institutional failure scars us and trains us to count the cost, play it safe, and fear the unknown. Yet we know

from experience that often failure leads to change and growth. Fear of failure among those called to live by the Spirit in the discomfort of risk leads to a lack of trust in God that literally asphyxiates His ability to create fresh possibilities, the most powerful of which is resurrection.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus sweated over His anticipated cup of suffering, begging the Father to take it from Him. In the end, he chose to enter into the tragedy of his crucifixion. The long-awaited Messiah ended his mission in what looked like abject failure. Yet His willingness to trust God and submit to that failure led to the unimaginable expansion of God's kingdom. Even if our model of mission today also seems doomed to failure, we are called to step into it and trust in a fruitful future because that is what God promises and what Jesus did.

The physical resurrection of Jesus on Easter morning is both concrete testimony that God accompanies His people into the very depths and a blueprint for



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)

# CREATING COMMUNITY Year of Engagement 2025



## Contd from P1

his plan to show that His love is stronger than all our faults, fears and failures. The Resurrection shows His capacity to redeem and make new life even out of death itself. In these difficult times let us live and die as people who believe in Resurrection not out of

naïve optimism but because we have seen the Risen Christ. If God can do that then all bets on personal and institutional failure are off and as Peter Pan observed, 'to die may be an awfully big adventure.'

## Eco Church Awards flourish in diocese

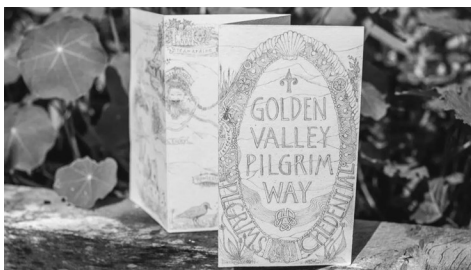
Many churches taking the new Eco Church survey from A Rocha UK have found that they already meet the standards for their Bronze Eco Church Award, and a few even meet the Silver standard straight away! Besides the obvious benefits to the local environment, Eco Church can be a boon for engaging with our communities.

In the diocese, Silver status has been awarded to: St Mary Magdalene, Quatford; St Calixtus, Astley Abbots; Holy

Trinity, Hereford; Holy Trinity, Minsterley; St George's, Pontesbury; St Margaret's, Ratlinghope; St Leonard's, Yarpole; St Michael & All Angels, Kingsland; St Mary's, Ross-on-Wye; St Peter's, Peterstow; Hereford Cathedral; Diocesan Offices, Hereford; St Paul's, Tupsley; All Saints, Claverley; St Lawrence's, Church Stretton; All Saints, Little Stretton.

For more information see the website: <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

## Golden Valley Pilgrimage Route wins tourism award



The Golden Valley Pilgrimage Route has been recognised as Herefordshire's unsung hero at February's Visit Herefordshire Tourism Awards. This ancient pilgrimage path winds through some of South West Herefordshire's most pic-

turesque landscapes, connecting several historic churches and sacred sites. The award acknowledges the dedication of Revd Simon Lockett and Anne Lloyd who have helped to preserve and promote this cultural treasure. The Golden Valley Pilgrimage Route will now be nominated for a Visit England Award of Excellence, potentially bringing national attention to this Herefordshire gem.

For more information see the website: <https://www.abbeydeanery.org/gvpw/>

## Caring for God's Acre

By Harriet Carty



### Charting the Christian calendar through nature

In the past, plants were more important for people in charting the passing year than they are now. Many flowers have names that link their flowering time to that of the church calendar with several associated with Eastertide.

Greater stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*) was also known as Easter Bell and Good Friday Grass is still a commonly used name for Field Wood-rush (*Luzula campestris*). Good Friday Grass is a frequent component of churchyard grassland, particularly in places with either acid or lime-rich soils. It's brush-like flowers are quite subtle but always appear in time for Easter. Another name for it is Sweep's Broom due to the shape of the flowers.

Another small but beautiful plant to look out for at this time of year is Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) which has several names including Cuckoo's Bread and Cheese, Granny's Sour Grass and Alleluia as its delicate white flowers appear between Easter and Whitsun, and its trefoil, shamrock-shaped leaves bring associations with the Holy Trinity.

Pasqueflower (*Pulsatilla vulgaris*) also

blooms at Easter time, the name Pasque meaning 'of Easter'. It is now rare in the wild, found in a few places where there is ancient, undisturbed grassland on limestone. It is often associated with old earthworks such as barrows, hillforts and boundary banks and there was a legend that it grew where the blood of Danes or Romans had been spilt. \*

It's not only flowers that chart the passing months and the Christian calendar. St Mark's Fly (*Bibio marci*) is a long, black, shiny fly which hatches around St Mark's Day, April 25th. Large numbers of flies can be found in woodland edges, hedgerows and fields often mating in mid-air giving then the alternate name of Love Bug! They fly rather aimlessly with dangling legs, usually surviving as adults for about one week and getting eaten in large numbers, providing a ready food source. They are also an important pollinator of early flowering trees such as many fruit trees.

As you watch the spring unfurling, spare a thought for our ancestors who used nature as a calendar and lived much closer to a profusion of plants and animals than we do now. Perhaps this could be an inspiration to get involved in nature recovery in our much depleted land.

All the best,

**Harriet Carty**

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor, [www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk)

Individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code **diomem22**