

Events and Training

**Hereford Diocese
Environment Conference**
Saturday 28th September
St Laurence's, Church Stretton

**Year of Faith
Bishop's Teaching Event**
Saturday 5th October
St Peter's Worfield, nr Bridgnorth

**SPACE by Luxmuralis
A light and sound show**
16th-19th October
Hereford Cathedral
Info: www.herefordcathedral.org

**Year of Faith
Bishop's Study Day 2**
Thursday 24th October
St Peter's, Hereford

**Year of Faith
Spiritual Question Time**
Tuesday 12th November
Stokesay Inn, Craven Arms

**For more information about Diocese
events, see our Eventbrite page here:**
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/>

What does 'growing the church younger' mean in practice?

Growing younger is a key goal for the Church of England, and the diocese too, but what does it mean in practice? For Joe Barnes, a new youth worker in Pontesbury deanery, it means working outside the church walls, with young people with little to no religious experience, who, he says, "ask tough questions".

"They're all good questions," says Joe. "What these young people need is to be listened to and to hear about Jesus' love in return." Besides leading two youth cafes in the deanery, Joe mentors children in the nearby secondary school. "My answer starts with building a rapport with the young people and then answering their questions openly, from a Christian point of view, inviting them to think about Jesus and a God who knows suffering first-hand. At our after-school Youth Cafes in Pontesbury

and nearby Minsterley, we have more of a focus on spiritual development, talking about what we believe. It's working, I can see God re-building his church, through these young people who come to it with completely fresh eyes. It's in God's hands, all he asks is for us to be willing."

Revd Greg Smith is Rector of St George's, Pontesbury and Rural Dean. He led the bid to fund Joe's post: "The funding for this work has been achieved through the commitment of St George's, generous financial support from Hereford Diocese over three years through its Strategic Mission Fund, a grant of £10,000 from Pontesbury Parish Council, plus a major commitment from Shrewsbury Youth for Christ. It's recognition of the Church's ability to deliver, and of the dearth of youth work being undertaken locally."

Find out more: <https://bit.ly/4cyA8nT>



Interpreting the signs of the times...

by The Venerable Derek Chedzey, Archdeacon of Hereford

One of the challenges of our present age is our understanding of history. This August marks 90 years since the death of President Hindenburg and Adolf Hitler becoming dictator of Germany, which led to the events of the Second World War. 70 years ago Alexander Fleming received the Nobel prize for discovering Penicillin. 50 years ago in August 1974 Richard Nixon resigned as President of the United States after the Watergate scandal. Each of these dates we understand to be part of history but, arguably, they all still influence our lives today.

Yet history is certainly more than remembering dates, places and names, although if you are a child in school it might seem it is all about the Tudors! The book '1066 and All That' and the TV show 'Horrible Histories' take a sideways glance at British history and in a humorous way try to make it both memorable and fun. Some historians write from the perspective of a neutral observer, others make no bones of the fact that history is inevitably political.

When we approach the Bible, we should recognise that it is written for a purpose just like history. When we look at the

Old Testament, we find that it was written by numerous authors, who interpreted events through the perspective of faith, religion and even politics. The so-called history books like Kings and Chronicles are as much about God's interaction with His people as they are about recording factual events. Although perhaps surprisingly for a religious text we find that on occasion it fits perfectly with the archaeological record, but even then, events are interpreted for an audience of faith. It certainly is not history, as we would now define, because it is telling the story of salvation. It is history from the perspective of a people's interaction with God.

I love history and I believe we should continually look back to learn from the past and this in turn helps us discern the future. It is only when we understand where we have come from that we can truly understand the present and future. The writer of Hebrews understood this as they lay out for the early church the whole of the history of salvation and God's interaction with his people.

"And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak,

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Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ... These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect." Hebrews 11:32-40

History is never neutral, people will inevitably look back in years to come and interpret these days in ways we cannot imagine. The appointment of a new Prime Minister, the War in Ukraine or the violence between Hamas and Israel and countless other events, which are part of our everyday experience and appear to us normal, may well be reinterpreted by future generations through the cultural lens of a

different time.

As Christians our anchor and fixed point is the cross - the death and resurrection of Jesus and we need to interpret the actions and activities of our time through this lens. We need to learn to see history, politics and culture through the eyes of faith and if we are Christians, we cannot pretend that we are neutral. Jesus accused the religious people of his time of failing in their responsibilities because whilst they understood the environment, they missed the spiritual realities of life around them.

"He replied, 'When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times." Matthew 16:2-3

So, whether you love history or prefer to think about the future, make sure you know how to interpret the times.



Environment Conference a boost for Net Zero 2030 goals

The diocese held its first Environment

Conference in June, with a focus on helping churches and schools make progress on Net Zero 2030 and other environmental goals. Revd Steve Hollinghurst, Mission Enabler for Environment, who organised the event, said, "This was a fantastic day for our church and school attendees, led by eminent speakers who gave us a lot of great insights. We're looking forward to the next event on 28th September in Church Stretton."

Find out more about the next date or book free at <https://bit.ly/4f1EsxR>

Diocese News

2024 Ordinations



Five Priests and Five Deacons were welcomed into the diocese last month in joyful services at Hereford Cathedral

Hereford Cathedral provided a stunning backdrop to two Petertide services of Ordination last Saturday, led by Bishop Richard, our two Archdeacons Fiona and Derek, the Bishop's Chaplain Revd Nicol Kinrade and the Diocesan Director of Vocations and Ordination Revd Neil Patterson, as the Diocese joyously wel-

comed five Priests and five Deacons into its folds in the presence of families and friends. Congratulations to all!

Priests:

Andrew Falconer, Fiona Honeysett, Dr Owen Pembery, Rose Roberts, Freddie Strong

Deacons:

Angela Forster, David Hall, Tracy Jones, Samuel Rigby, William Talbot-Ponsonby

[Photo credits: Caroline Potter, Nicol Kinrade]

