

Year of Celebration 2026 Dates for Your Diary

Spiritual Question Times

Bishop Richard plus local panelist/s (venues tbc)

Tuesday, 13th January, 2026

Monday, 16th February, 2026

Monday, 20th April, 2026

Tuesday, 12th May, 2026 (Hereford Cathedral)

Wednesday, 15th July, 2026

Tuesday, 22nd September, 2026

Tuesday, 10th November, 2026

Bishop's Study Day

Thursday, 5th March, 2026

Celebration of Church School Partnership

Thursday, 12th March, 2026

Sacred Synod at The Palace, Hereford (stipendiary clergy)

Saturday, 20th June, 2026

Confirmation at Hereford Cathedral

Date TBA

Confirmation in Ludlow Archdeaconry

Saturday, 10th October, 2026

Celebration of Lay Ministry, including Reader admissions at Ludlow St Laurence

Celebration Days | Pilgrimage

Saturday, 16th May, 2026

Leominster, honouring St Eadfrith; worship and communion led by Bishop Richard

Saturday, 19th September, 2026

Much Wenlock, honouring St Milburga; worship and communion led by Bishop Richard

Saturday, 17th October, 2026

Golden Valley / Madley, honouring St Dyfrig; worship and communion led by Bishop Richard



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Parish News
December 2025

Not Christmas.

by The Very Rev'd Sarah Brown, Dean of Hereford

I'm not going to wish you a merry Christmas even though this is technically my last opportunity before the great day to infest the whole diocese with my festive cheer, at least in print. Please understand that it isn't that I DON'T wish you a blessed and happy Christmas – that would be unusual and distinctly unclerical, (not to mention untrue). But as I write this, the thoughtful season of advent has not even begun – the time when we God-Botherers ponder how much we need a Saviour – so I don't want to ho ho ho at you just yet. I do hope that despite the chill in the air caused by national and global events you will avail yourselves when the time comes of all the hope and joy that your local church and community can muster.

Advent is about looking at ourselves and at the world and realising just how much we need a Saviour. Christmas would be pointless if we didn't – just a marketing ploy cooked up by sellers of toys, perfumes and frozen party nibbles to get us all to spend as much money as possible. Let's face it, if a fire engine screeched to a halt outside your house with sirens blaring and blue lights flash-

ing you might wonder what it was doing there if your house was not on fire. You might be mildly interested but you would hardly celebrate your salvation! In the same way the baby whose birth we celebrate on Christmas Day and who we hail as Saviour is similarly baffling and underwhelming if you cannot see anything that we need saving from!

Sometimes it seems easier to believe in evil than in God. But if you do believe that evil exists – if you see it in all its brutality in our daily news, if it touches you in grief, fear, loneliness, hatred, jealousy – then you may dimly begin to understand why we need our Saviour. If you look at the impact on individuals of national, international and corporate greed then you may begin to understand why we need our Saviour. If you look at the wars devastating communities across the globe you will understand why we need our Saviour. If you dare to look into the devices and desires of your own heart you may begin to ruefully understand why you need a Saviour.

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CREATING COMMUNITY Year of Engagement 2025



Contd from P1

Perhaps deep inside we all vaguely sense the need for a Saviour because we can all see what is wrong. It is only a step- a stride admittedly- from faintly sensing the need for a Saviour to considering that salvation might come from God and not human endeavour

and then another step again to truly recognizing Him from the Christmas story repeated every year for 2 millennia by those persistent folk in the churches and deliciously enacted by our tiny children with tea towels on their heads.

The Very Revd Sarah Brown, Dean of



Parishes seeing growth in lay ministry

The diocese is seeing positive growth in the numbers of lay people stepping forward to take on important lay ministry roles in their parishes. Rev'd Dr Elizabeth Wild, pictured first from left, is Director of Mission and Ministry for the diocese. She recently commissioned a group of local lay ministers in Wellington just north of Hereford:

"One of the best things about my job is when I am invited out to local parishes or deaneries to commission people into local ministry roles. A recent joy was finding myself at Wellington Church to commission a whole group of Local

Worship Leaders, Local Pastoral Visitors and even to re-commission a Local Minister who had moved parishes. Revd Anne Price had organised training for her team, including going to great lengths to offer in person Safeguarding training, and it was wonderful to see so many people being recognised, some of whom had been active in their parishes for nearly 30 years. There was a wonderful sense of God at work.

"I thank God for all those who are willing to live their lives God's way. As the words of the commissioning service go: They are signs of God at work!"

Caring for God's Acre

By Harriet Carty



The December Moth and the Winter Moth

It seems a strange time of year to look for moths but there are a couple of tough cookies who brave the winter weather! The December Moth and the Winter Moth have different ways to cope. The December moth wraps up warm, it has a coat of hairlike scales, giving a fluffy appearance, which helps it hold heat well enough to be active and to fly. The Winter moth by contrast can fly when at a lower body temperature. It has large delicate wings and a small body, its big wings able to beat less frequently to stay airborne.

Neither moth will feed when on the wing, they rely on food reserves built up as a caterpillar. The moth 'stage' is devoted solely to searching for a mate and, in the case of the females, laying eggs. December moth males and females both fly, with the female larger in size than the male, whilst Winter Moth females are flightless, they emerge from a chrysalis in the soil and crawl up a nearby tree. Once there they emit pheromones to attract males then wait for them to arrive. Both

moth species lay their eggs on the winter twigs of broadleaved trees including oaks, birches, hawthorns and willows. The eggs hatch when the trees are coming into leaf, giving the caterpillars lots of young, soft leaves to eat.

Most people are more familiar with the caterpillars of both December and Winter moths than with the adult. December moth caterpillars are mottled brown, well camouflaged when on twigs and bark whilst Winter moth caterpillars are bright green, the colour of new leaves. You may have seen the holes in leaves caused by their voracious appetites or spotted a caterpillar dangling from the mouth of a parent bird, being taken to feed chicks in the nest. Whilst the adult moths may emerge at a time of year when there are few predators about, with bats in winter roosts, the caterpillars are an important early source of protein in the spring, particularly for breeding birds.

Moths are drawn to lights which may kill them or distract them from seeking mates and laying eggs. Please think about outdoor lighting, keeping it to the minimum need to give safe access and have a look for moths when out and about during the long winter nights. All the best,

Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor, www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

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

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