

## Year of Engagement Dates for Your Diary

### Year of Engagement Launch Event

**Saturday 4th January, 2025**  
3.30-4.30pm  
Hereford Cathedral

### 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/4ebcnCL>**



### Diocese sees year-end surge in youth confirmations

The Bishop has been busy with Confirmations across the diocese in an end of year

flurry, with many young people coming forward. Seventeen were confirmed just last week at All Saints, Broseley and a further eight in Acton Scott. Pictured with Bishop Richard are some of the Broseley confirmands with Rev. Dawn Taffinder, IM Beckie Dotson & Rev'd Ernest Okeke, Rector of Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge and Little Wenlock.

For details of all deanery confirmations scheduled for 2025, please see our website here: <https://www.hereford.anglican.org/our-faith/life-events/confirmation/>



**Parish News**  
January 2025

## Welcome to the Year of Engagement by The Venerable Dr. Fiona Gibson, Archdeacon of Ludlow

Dear friends,

January marks the beginning of our Diocesan Year of Engagement. Let me explain, in case this conjures up images of medieval betrothals with year-long festivities.

Our core values as the Diocese of Hereford are prayerfulness, Christ-likeness, and engagement. In 2023, our Year of Prayer, we explored how to deepen our prayerfulness. In 2024, our Year of Faith, we were given opportunities through teaching events and local gatherings to deepen our confidence in the Bible and our Christian faith and challenge ourselves to tell our own story of faith.

Now, in 2025, we hope and pray that the foundations of those two years will come together in a Year of Engagement, during which we consciously pray for and take opportunities to reach out and engage in mission in our parishes.

For some, the idea of missional work is frankly terrifying. For others, it seems to be an arrogant and outdated way of going about things. It can conjure up images of Victorians in pith helmets, or

people standing on street corners with enormous black Bibles haranguing passers-by or knocking on doors asking people if they've been "washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

Let me reassure you that none of those is what we mean by our Year of Engagement. Our prayer is simply that each parish in the diocese will take time during 2025 prayerfully to reflect on the needs of the community around them and on the gospel and work out how the needs of one and the joy of the other could meet – and then to begin to implement that mission. We'll be using the Church of England's Five Marks of Mission as the framework for Engagement in our parishes:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society

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# CREATING COMMUNITY Year of Engagement 2025



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- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Look for announcements in eNews and other communications about Year of Engagement events, and sign up or visit our web page here: <https://www.hereford.anglican.org/our-faith/year-of-engagement-2025/>

Another recent Church of England vision statement challenged us all to be a simpler, humbler, and bolder church. Our Year of Engagement gives us the collective opportunity to be bolder in our sharing of Jesus Christ and the transformation of lives and communities that comes when His Good News is shared.

## Diocese News

### Fourth Quarter Appointments and Changes

Hereford Diocese is pleased to announce the following recent and upcoming appointments and moves:

#### Clergy Appointments

- ◆ The Rev'd Steven Baggs: Vicar, Frome Valley Group of Parishes now also Assistant Archdeacon, Hereford Archdeaconry
- ◆ The Rev'd Andy Dodwell: Vicar of Tupsley and Hampton Bishop (from March 2025) and Acting Bishop's Chaplain
- ◆ The Rev'd Canon Laura Hewitt: Rector, StowCaple Benefice and Rural Church Missioner (Spring 2025)
- ◆ The Rev'd Preb Dawn Hyett: Rural Dean of Bromyard Deanery (Oct 2024)
- ◆ The Rev'd Preb Kelvin Price: Rector of Ross and Wolford and Brompton Abbotts (April 2025)
- ◆ The Rev'd Martin Quayle: Associate Priest, Cleobury Mortimer Benefice (Oct 2024)
- ◆ The Rev'd Jonathan Roberts: Succentor, Hereford Cathedral (Dec 2024)
- ◆ The Rev'd Belinda Stanley: Cathedral Pastor and Assistant Curate, Hereford Cathedral (Sept 2024)
- ◆ The Rev'd Jeanetta Stokes: Rural Dean of Severn Borders Deanery (date TBC)
- ◆ The Rev'd Preb Dawn Taffinder: Assistant Rural Dean of Severn Borders Deanery (date TBC)
- ◆ The Rev'd Dr Sally Welch: Vicar of Kington Group of Parishes (Nov 2024)
- ◆ The Rev'd Suzan Williams: Priest-in-Charge of Benefice of Bridgnorth and Morville Parishes Team Ministry (Dec 2024)

#### Diocesan Staff Changes

- ◆ The Rev'd Mark Godson: Ministry Development Officer (Oct 2024)
- ◆ The Rev'd Nick Gurney, Youth Pioneer, Bishop's Castle (Oct 2024)
- ◆ Heather Martin, Youth Hubs Co-ordinator (July 2024)

## Caring for God's Acre

By Harriet Carty



### A Song for Winter

January can feel like a cold and grey month so it is very cheering to see a flash of colour and hear a little birdsong. During the winter most birds do not sing, instead making simple calls, one or two syllables which are contact calls, allowing them to keep in touch with others within a flock, whilst they move around, foraging for food. Longer and more melodic songs are generally heard in spring when male birds are using song to communicate that they are present and are holding a breeding territory. These territories will contain nesting places such as trees or shrubs as well as sources of food and male birds proclaim this by song, deterring rivals and attracting females. The Robin however has a proper winter song as it holds a territory over the winter. Robins are not in pairs during the winter so both males and females sing and hold separate territories. These territories are giving them winter shelter and food and they will defend them fiercely, flying at intruders as well as singing.

In winter many Robins migrate from further north into the UK, flying in from Scandinavia, Russia, Poland and else-

where. This also explains why we seem to see more Robins in the winter as our own summer Robins remain here all year round so numbers increase.

The Robin's song is tuneful and a little melancholy but the reality of Robin life is harsher with an average lifespan of only 9 months. Many do not survive the winter so holding and defending a territory containing good sources food and shelter is vital. The combination of a churchyard with mature, sheltering trees, plentiful berries, seeds and insects as well as soil invertebrates such as worms make them attractive to Robins. Churchyards tend to be rich in insect and other invertebrate life as no chemicals are used within them and the soils have been developing over decades or centuries, full of life. Churchyards are also usually surrounded by gardens so natural food may well be being topped up with mealworms, bird seed and fat balls too.

Why not look for Robins in your local churchyard or cemetery and listen for their winter song, you might like to put up some open-fronted nest boxes for them too, on churchyard trees and within gardens as well. Please let us know if you see or hear a Robin in your churchyard, use the iNaturalist app and photograph it if it will stay still long enough or else record its song, a biological record can be made either way.

Harriet Carty, [Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor](mailto:harriet@cfga.org.uk), [harriet@cfga.org.uk](mailto:harriet@cfga.org.uk),

[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**