

Year of Celebration Dates for Your Diary

Spiritual Question Times

Evening conversations with Bishop Richard plus local panelist/s (venues tbc)

Tuesday, 13th January, 2026 — Marton Village Hall
Monday, 16th February, 2026 — Lugwardine, venue TBC
Monday, 20th April, 2026 — Abbeydore Deanery, venue TBC
Tuesday, 12th May, 2026 — Hereford Cathedral with Dean Sarah
Wednesday, 15th July, 2026 — The Garway Moon Inn, Garway with Dean Sarah
Tuesday, 22nd September, 2026 — Bridgnorth with Dean Sarah, venue TBC
Tuesday, 10th November, 2026 — with Chancellor James Pacey, venue TBC

Celebration of Lay Ministry

Worship and Admission of New Readers with Bishop Richard

- Saturday 10 Oct 2026 10:30 am at Ludlow St Laurence

Celebration of Faith

A Service of Confirmation followed by a celebration tea with Bishop Richard

- Saturday 20 June 2026 2:00 pm at Hereford Cathedral
- Saturday 10 Oct 2026 2:30 pm at Ludlow, St Laurence

Celebration Days | Pilgrimage

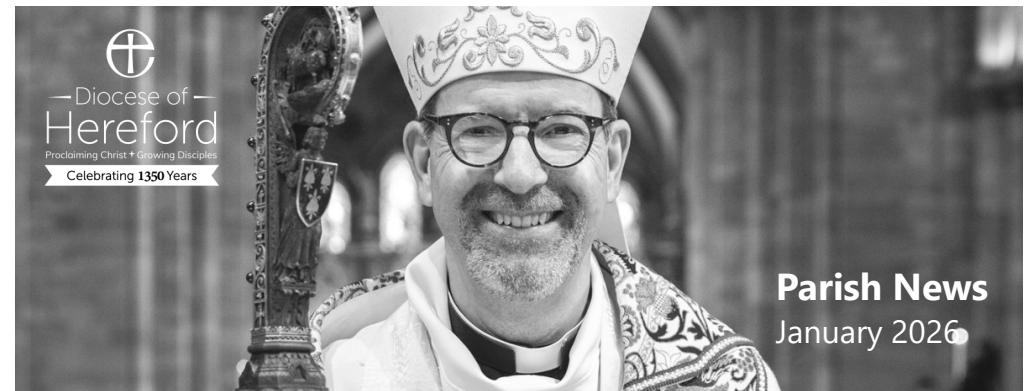
Worship and communion led by Bishop Richard

Saturday, 16th May, 2026
Leominster, honouring St Eadfrith

Saturday, 19th September, 2026
Much Wenlock, honouring St Milburga

Saturday, 17th October, 2026
Golden Valley / Madley, honouring St Dyfrig

For more information and to register to attend, please visit our Eventbrite page at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/united-kingdom--county-of-herefordshire/hereford-diocese/>



Much to celebrate in 2026

by The Rt Rev'd Richard Jackson, Bishop of Hereford

January 12th is designated as Blue Monday, the most miserable of the year. The festivities of Christmas are a distant memory, and winter still holds us in its grip. A few valiant daffodils and snowdrops poking through the mud do little to elevate the mood. At least that is the contemporary narrative.

However, we Christians, especially in the Diocese of Hereford are entering into a year of celebration. We have had three years to explore our central values of Christlikeness, prayerfulness and engagement and now we want to celebrate, not least because the diocese is 1350 years old this year. As Bishop of Hereford, it is an extraordinary thing to walk into the cathedral for a service passing a board that shows you have 105 predecessors in an unbroken line back to 676! Our diocese predates England and was carved out of a corner of the ancient kingdom of Mercia and the Romano-British kingdom of Archenfield. It is hard to see any connection between the wild, rural subsistence society of that time and the modern world. And

yet our year will celebrate an unbroken thread of Christian faith, about the only thing that does link the ancient past to today. From the first Celtic saints like St. Dubricius who brought Christianity to this part of the world in the sixth century, to Putta our first Bishop, expelled from Rochester and finding a home here, to people like St. Aedfrith and St. Milburga who linked this then obscure part of the world to wider Christendom.

But not just our founders. Christians are described by the Apostle Paul as Saints. The witness of some remains through the centuries. For some there might be a stone memorial, but I doubt anyone will remember much about me as a Bishop in 50 years time when they walk past my name on the board. Over the last 1350 years the Gospel has advanced as much by ordinary people living it out in their homes, workplaces and communities as it has by the few preserved by history.

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CREATING COMMUNITY Year of Engagement 2025



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That remains the case today. We would not have the healthcare system, education, good working conditions in factories, the abolition of slavery and countless other benefits but for such Christian witness and activity. We may feel we are struggling as a church today, but whether acknowledged or not

much that is good in the modern world owes its origin to the Gospel. That is well worth celebrating.

+Richard

The Rt Rev'd Richard Jackson
Bishop of Hereford

Diocese News and Events

Leominster Food Bank honoured at Westminster Abbey



Kathy Bland, Manager of Leominster Food Bank, pictured front-left, was honoured to be invited to the Princess of Wales' Together at Christmas carol service at Westminster Abbey in December.

When we spoke to Kathy, she was painting the new Food Bank premises near the Old Priory with some bright yellow paint. "It's a joyful colour," she says. "When people come to the Food Bank, they are often not feeling joyful. They're usually at the end of their resources, both in terms of food and emotionally. They may feel unloved, unworthy and it can be a huge stigma to take this step and ask for help.

Our job is to offer joy and hope while giving out food. We share a welcome, a big smile, a kind word – and often practical advice – that makes it okay for them to go home with a bag of food to get them through the week ahead.

"It's part of the Anglican calling to transform the unjust structures of society – whatever it is that leaves people without enough to eat. As a follower of Jesus, that's just my job!" she laughs.

She laughs a lot, in fact, it's infectious. "We'd rather not be needed," she says, "poverty should not exist in the UK. But where I find joy is that people keep turning up to life despite circumstances that would drive me to despair!"

If you are considering supporting Leominster Food Bank, besides donating food at local supermarkets, or volunteering, please consider making a regular financial gift.

<https://www.leominsterfoodbank.org>

Caring for God's Acre

By Harriet Carty



Thinking about Carbon

It seems fitting, as we start a new year to focus on larger issues, trying to make positive changes to tackle the global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. But how about climate change and carbon — is there anything we can do about that on a local level?

Well, yes there is, there is a great deal that we can do.

Firstly, care for your trees. Trees and shrubs store carbon in wood, be it the trunk, branches or roots. Trees store more carbon than other plants owing to their size and long lifespan. Hedges too can store carbon for a long time. Many churchyards and cemeteries contain ancient trees as well as trees planted in Victorian times, often conifers with a shorter lifespan as well as the longer-lived native broadleaves. These conifers may be coming toward the end of their life so keep an eye on them, carry out an annual inspection using [The Caring for God's Acre sheet on inspecting trees](#) as well as having professional surveys by a skilled arborist. The life of a tree can be prolonged by care and prompt action as problems arise, (which can save money too). Perhaps you can think about planting young trees to replace those nearing the end of their lives. Young trees grow quickly, laying down carbon-based wood as they do so.

Secondly, think about your grassland. Rather surprisingly grassland is actually great at storing carbon with most of it out of sight. Whilst carbon is stored in the visible, above ground plants it is within the soil that most if held in fact it is estimated that up to 30% of the earth's carbon is stored in grassland soil.

Soil carbon comes from decomposing plants, animals and fungi. When things die, they are broken down and used as food by insects, worms and other invertebrates, fungi, bacteria and other microbes. Whilst some carbon dioxide is released most carbon is incorporated into the soil. A mature, complex, undisturbed soil has a wide range of life within its soil, all of which contain carbon.

Taller grassland rather than short lawn has a deeper zone of active soil due to deeper plant roots. This active soil is full of carbon-based life.

So look at your local churchyard with new eyes, seeing it as a carbon store and seeing if you can improve this. Care for your trees, plant replacements and when trees need to be felled try to leave some deadwood on site. Is there scope to increase the grass length in some areas to increase the depth of active, carbon-rich soil? Finally, can you reduce the use of petrol machines such as lawn mowers and strimmers replacing with electric ones or maybe using them less often.

All of these actions will benefit wildlife too so it really is doubly worthwhile.

All the best,

Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor

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www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk