

Year of Engagement Dates for Your Diary

Bishop's Teaching Events

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 Day

Wednesday, 22nd October, 2025

10am-3pm

St. Peter's Church, Hereford

Spiritual Question Times

Tuesday 8 July 7:00pm Bridgnorth

Tuesday 21 October 7:00pm Hoarwithy

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**

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



July Archdeacon's Visitations

It is a legal requirement for ALL Churchwardens, whether newly elected or continuing, to be sworn into office each year and this happens at an Archdeacon's Visitation Service. The last few JULY dates for 2025 Visitations are listed below.

You can learn more about the role of a churchwardens here: <https://hereford.anglican.org/parish-support/parish-officers/churchwardens/>

Hereford Archdeaconry

Tuesday, 1st July, 7 pm

Kingstone: St Michael & All Angels

Ludlow Archdeaconry

Wednesday, 2nd July, 7 pm

Clungunford: St Cuthbert

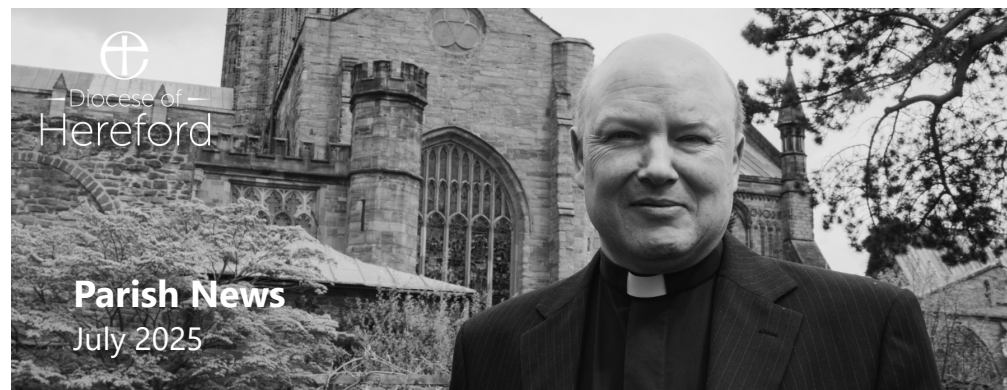
Tuesday, 8th July, 7 pm

Cleobury Mortimer: St Mary the Virgin

Wednesday, 9th July, 7 pm

Bridgnorth: St Mary Magdalene

Sarah Hedley in the diocesan office administering the Visitations. Please email **annualreturns@hereford.anglican.org** to book in with Sarah.



Darkness and light

by The Venerable Derek Chedzey, Archdeacon of Hereford

Darkness and light are often a shorthand in our western popular culture for the forces of good and evil. We know instantly in films and television who the heroes and villains are often by the colour of their clothes. So often arguments in our culture are often presented as binary choices between right and wrong, good and bad, left wing or right wing, etc. Just look at the reporting in our news media about world events and you quickly see that we are presented with clear choices rather than any sense of nuance. I was listening on the radio as I prepared to write this, and what was being suggested was that when it comes to political debate most people would prefer nuance to bold binary statements.

In many other cultures too, darkness represents evil or hidden unsavoury activities. Alongside this we may find that many of our human fears revolve around darkness and what hides in it. Yet what has struck me recently is that in scripture the idea of darkness is not always so binary. I want to challenge you to look again at what the writers of the bible say and begin to understand darkness with the eyes of faith rather than through the lens of culture. In

Psalms 139 the psalmist talks about darkness from God's perspective:

"Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You." Psalm 139:12

God does not differentiate light and dark in the way we do, after all he created both of them. We do not live in a 'yin and yang' universe of two equal powers of good and evil or opposing forces of light and dark like a celestial chess set. We don't live in a Star Wars like universe with mystical forces at play that are held in balance with a constant struggle of the dark side and the light side!

The bible however does use the ideas of light and dark to differentiate between those who love and follow God and those who do not. Isaiah in his prophecy about the coming Messiah reminds them that when God comes to live amongst them then the light of the kingdom will shine on them. The prophet reminds them in a powerful metaphor that the light of the kingdom will dispel and overcome the darkness.

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The Diocesan Office • The Palace • Hereford • HR4 9BL

t: 01432 373300 e: info@hereford.anglican.org

www.hereford.anglican.org

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"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." Isaiah 9:2

We should however never equate that with two equal and opposite powers. Instead, it is an analogy which helps us understand that we have choices and God represents the best choices available to us. Many of the New Testament writers talk about the Christian faith as choosing to live in the daylight rather than in the night time. They want the early church to understand that we need to live consistently, transparently and in the open so people can see the difference our faith makes to the way we live our lives. John in the great prologue to his Gospel uses exactly this picture reminding us that God cannot be overwhelmed or swept away by the darkness.

"What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.." John 1:5

It reminds us too that even at the very darkest moments of our lives God has not walked away from us, he is not absent, and he stands alongside us. Matthew in his Gospel recognises this when he records these words from Jesus to his disciples.

"What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops." Matthew 10:27

Jesus wants the disciples to know that he is with them and alongside them at every stage and he will not turn his back or walk away from us. It is the Holy Spirit given to us at Pentecost who whispers to our hearts and guides us in our daily lives, it is the Spirit who will give us the words to speak when we don't know how to pray. If as you read this because of life's circumstances you feel trapped in the darkness, remember that God stands in it with you.

The Venerable Derek Chedzey
Archdeacon of Hereford

New Parish Safeguarding Officer In-Person Training

Understanding Eligibility for DBS Checks, Monday, 18th August 10am

We are delighted to host an in person awareness session at The Diocesan Office, with Jo Wheatley, DBS Regional Outreach Manager. There may be further events later in the year held at Ludlow and Church Stretton, TBD.

PSO Induction Trainings—watch for new dates later in the year

Parish Safeguarding Officer induction workshops will introduce people to the PSO role and provide the tools required to carry out the job confidently. The session will introduce key working practices and relationships. It is intended primarily for new PSOs but any existing PSOs who wish to refresh are also welcome.

Please email Karen.Evans@hereford.anglican.org to book as spaces are limited.

Caring for God's Acre

By Harriet Carty

Q: Where would you find a Hebrew Character, a Camomile Shark and a Striped Wainscot?

A: In a churchyard!

In the UK we have 59 species of butterfly, many of them familiar to us all, but did you know that we also have over 2,500 species of moth? Many moths have fabulous names. Some give a clue to their markings including Hebrew Character, China Mark, Garden Tiger or Orange Underwing. Others suggest possible frustration at identifying them, Uncertain or Clouded Drab for instance! Others give a clue to the food plant of the caterpillar, Appletree Skeletoniser or Bird-Cherry Ermine. And then there are names to let your imagination fly; Hoary Footman, Snout, Dusky Brocade, Scarce Dagger and Clifden Nonpareil for starters.

Most moths have evolved to fly at night in order to avoid predation, although they are the main food of bats, who have also evolved to fly at night. To avoid bats, some moth species can hear the eco-location used by bats and will zig-zag away or drop to the ground from mid-air when bats are close, to 'play dead' until the threat has passed. Whilst daytime predation of night-flying moths is reduced, moths and also their caterpillars are an important food item for creatures active in the day including small mammals, amphibians, spiders, lizards and many birds. Small moth caterpillars are fed in great number to the chicks of many of our common birds including blue tit, great tit, robin, wren and blackbird.

As with so much of our wildlife, moths are in trouble, down 28% in overall numbers since 1968. This is likely to be due to a combination of factors; agricultural change, increased use of garden and farming chemicals, development and also light pollution which has a profound

effect on the lifecycle of moths. Churchyards, chapel yards and cemeteries can be a moth haven however. Many contain a mix of grassland, mature trees, scrub and flowerbeds, lots of different habitats, used by a wide range of moth species. Churchyards and other burial grounds are usually free of herbicides and pesticides which benefits all insects, including moths.

There are also small management changes that will encourage and support moths; similar to gardening for wildlife, be a little untidy! How about leaving areas with leaf litter, dead plant stems and tussocks for overwintering caterpillars and eggs. If you have flowerbeds or planters, how about introducing some night-scented flowers including honey suckle, tobacco plant, evening primrose and stocks. Is there an area of turf that can be allowed to grow long for 3 to 4 spring and summer months, providing meadow flowers and flowering native grasses for pollinators including moths? A particularly helpful change might be to reduce light pollution by keeping any outdoor lights low, pointing downwards and not on all night long.

Running a moth light trap overnight makes an interesting public event, the trap is opened in the morning, moths admired, identified and then released.

N.B If you are starting to identify moths, take a look at Moths Flying Tonight on the Butterfly Conservation website and put in your postcode to narrow down the moths you are likely to find. 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**