

Year of Engagement Dates for Your Diary

Bishop's Teaching Events

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 With Bishop Richard and Dean Sarah

Tuesday 21 October 7:00pm

Hoarwithy, New Harp Inn.

Tuesday, 25th November

Bromyard with Phil Miller

To discuss holding a **Spiritual Question Time** for the Year of Engagement in your parish, 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 bit.ly/HfdDioYOE or scan the QR Code



Bishop's Teaching Event in Madley

About 50 people joined Bishop Richard and other speakers at St Michael's,

Madeley in July, for the second Bishop's Teaching Event of this Year of Engagement. Workshops included:

- Children, Youth and Intergenerational Ministry
- Caring for God's Creation
- Inspiring and equipping churches to welcome everyone, especially adults with learning disabilities

There are two remaining opportunities to attend a Bishop's Teaching Event: **Sat, 13th September, Ledbury**
Sat, 8th November, Ross-on-Wye



Happy New (School) Year!

by The Venerable Dr. Fiona Gibson, Archdeacon of Ludlow

Dear friends,

Despite the adverts in the shops suggesting that parents buy new school uniform in July, the new school year is just beginning. Education has been part of my life and vocation from when I left school myself. I spent eight years teaching in primary schools, then worked as a lay children's minister, with involvement in our local church school. Then I swapped sides of the teacher's desk as our children entered their school years, and I had the novel experience of receiving reports rather than writing them!

Ordination brought ongoing opportunities to support the spiritual growth of children and staff alike in the parishes where I served, and since becoming Archdeacon of Ludlow I have had the enormous privilege of chairing our Diocesan Board of Education which oversees the wonderful work of our 78 church schools and academies and supports the diocesan Education team in all that they do.

Our church schools and academies are not just places of learning information and life skills, but of putting

down roots and building foundations so that each child and young person in our care has a chance to explore the Christian faith and experience the life in all its fullness that Jesus Christ promises.

There are so many ways we can all support this life-giving and life-changing work. Some may be called to become Foundation Governors, supporting and upholding the Christian foundation of the school. This is a vital lay ministry role. Yes, it can be demanding, but it is also immensely rewarding. If you'd be willing to explore what that might mean for you in your context, do contact me or our Diocesan Director of Education, Gemma Martin.

Others may be willing and able to support collective worship in our schools, perhaps by joining an Open the Book team if there is one in your benefice, and helping a new generation to hear and understand the stories of our faith. You could talk that through with your parish priest, who could let you know the safeguarding and training requirements.

contd on p2

CREATING COMMUNITY Year of Engagement 2025



contd from p1

And all of us can pray for our church schools and academies, for children, young people, staff, parents, governors, and Multi-Academy Trust teams. 24/7 Prayer has a downloadable PDF guide to praying for schools, available here <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/pray-for-students-and-teachers/>

However you may be able to support the life of our church schools and academies, I pray that it may be a blessing and encouragement to you as you bless and encourage others. Happy New (School) Year!

Archdeacon Fiona

Diocese News

Parish Finance Roadshow rolls out this Autumn

The Bishop will be hosting a series of conversations about parish finance this Autumn at venues across the diocese. In a recent letter to parishes, Bishop Richard said: "At the heart of our vision is the firm and repeated commitment: to maintain and nurture the clergy numbers needed to serve our communities faithfully in this diocese..."

"Like dioceses across the country, we are experiencing difficulties with recruitment, higher vacancy rates than we would wish, and the ongoing challenge of ensuring that ministerial roles remain sustainable and life-giving rather than overwhelming..."

"We are also mindful that the national shortage of ordinands means we must be creative and strategic in how we deploy the ministry resources we have..."

"Central to our vision is a renewed commitment to clergy wellbeing... we are working to create sustainable patterns of ministry that allow our clergy to flourish in their calling while serving our communities effectively."

"The roadshow meetings will provide an opportunity to hear more about our plans, ask questions, and share your own

perspectives on the future of ministry in your benefices and deaneries."

Hereford Archdeaconry

29th September - St Paul's Church Hall, Hereford

8th October - St Michael & AA, Ledbury

14th October - St Mary's, Pembridge

21st October - The Hub, Peterchurch

10th November - St Dubricius,

Whitchurch

19th November - St Michael & AA, Kingsland

Ludlow Archdeaconry

2nd October - Leebotwood Village Hall

15th October - Chelmarsh Parish Hall

20th October - St George's Church, Pontesbury

6th November - Aston-on-Clun Village Hall

24th November - St Laurence's, Ludlow

The full list of dates and venues including sign up links can be found at:

<https://www.hereford.anglican.org/parish-support/finance/finance-roadshow.php>

Caring for God's Acre

By Harriet Carty



Our two smallest birds

By September many of our summer migrants have left the UK and we are starting to notice shortening days. It can be a good time to reconnect with the birds that don't migrate and which we can enjoy watching all year round. A churchyard classic is the tiny goldcrest. Goldcrests can be found in the canopies of evergreen trees, particularly yews and cypresses. It's rare to find a churchyard or cemetery without any yews or other evergreens and it's also rare to find one without any Goldcrests too!

It can take patience to spot one, they are tiny, about 9cm from beak to tail tip, and well camouflaged apart from their namesake – a striking black and yellow stripe on their heads, their gold crest which they can raise giving them a punk style hairdo! Their Latin name is *Regulus regulus*, which can be translated as little prince, perhaps due to this golden crown. If you are not able to see a Goldcrest you may hear one, they have a repetitive call, sounding like zee, zee, often on the edge of one's hearing due to the high pitch.

Our Goldcrests do not migrate to warmer climes or join flocks of other small birds moving through the landscape searching for food as many other small birds do in winter. They stay put in their trees with needles, possibly living

their whole lives in a few trees within one churchyard. They are always on the move, busy gleaning small insects and other invertebrates, using a thin beak to pick them out from between tree needles or bark cracks. Although they do not migrate you may however see an increase in Goldcrest numbers in the winter, mainly along the east coast of the UK, as they are joined by Goldcrests from Scandinavia, particularly in hard winters, when large numbers will cross the North Sea. This is quite a flying feat as Goldcrests weigh about 5g.

There is another similar species that you may also spot, the Firecrest. These can be thought of as Goldcrests on fire, brighter colours, fiery orange-gold crown and the black head stripe accentuated by a white one below it. Firecrests are increasing in the UK, the first record of breeding birds was in Hampshire in 1962, they are now moving north and are breeding in the Midlands and Wales, with a few pairs in the north of England. There are now over 2,000 breeding pairs. It seems likely that they are responding to changes in climate.

Look out for both Goldcrests and Firecrests in your local churchyard, chapel yard or cemetery and as always please record what you see and hear, ideally using the iNaturalist app. It may be easier to record their song rather than photograph this restless little bird, hidden within the dark canopy of needles.

Harriet Carty, *Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor*, harriet@cpga.org.uk,

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code **diomem22**