

Events and Training

Year of Faith Bishop's Teaching Events

Saturday 13th July

St Michael and All Angels, Ledbury

Saturday 5th October

Bridgnorth Deanery (venue tbc)

Training Workshops for Parish Volunteers

Tuesday 16th July, Church Stretton

Thursday, 18th July, Hereford

Thursday, 25th July, Ludlow

Diocesan joint training workshops for parish volunteers on managing parish finances, living generously, encouraging giving, grant funding and the faculty process.

Hereford Diocese Environment Conference

28th September

St Laurence's, Church Stretton

Year of Faith Bishop's Study Day 2

Thursday 24th October

St Peter's, Hereford

For more information about all of these events, see our Hereford Diocese Eventbrite page here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/hereford-diocese-58965689593>

Annual Churchwarden Visitations 17th June to 17th July

Every Churchwarden is required by law to be admitted annually to office by the Bishop or the Archdeacon and they must be admitted before 31st August 2024. They are welcome to attend whichever Visitation is most convenient in terms of date and time, wherever it is taking place within the Diocese. Churchwardens who have not yet confirmed their choice should email Sarah.Hedley@hereford.anglican.org. The dates and locations for this year's Visitations by Archdeacons are as follows:

Ludlow Archdeaconry (all at 7pm):

- 17/6 Pontesbury - St George
- 25/6 Cleobury Mortimer - St Mary the Virgin
- 1/7 Church Stretton - St Laurence
- 3/7 Bishops Castle - St John the Baptist
- 16/7 Sutton Hill Church

Hereford Archdeaconry (times vary):

- 18/6 Whitchurch - St Dubricius 2pm
- 19/6 Tupsley - St Paul 7pm
- 2/7 Eardisley - St Mary Magdalene 2pm
- 8/7 Kingsland - St Michael & All Angels 7pm
- 10/7 Ewyas Harold - St Michael & All Angels 7pm
- 17/7 Bishops Frome - St Mary the Virgin 2pm



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Oh Lord, it's election time again...

by The Very Revd Sarah Brown, Dean of Hereford

Many years ago I attended a girl's grammar school. Most of the young ladies of this excellent institution wore a smart navy blue uniform right down to the nether garments (by which I mean socks). The rebellious girls wore their ties fat-knotted and at half mast, daringly adapted the standard pleated skirt in a way that endangered the morality of the entire town and sported (*Quelle horreur!*) pierced ears and wedge shoes. The scruffy oiks, of which I was one, technically wore all the right things but in a manner that was at least as subversive of the dignity of the school and its policies. The rebels rebelled. We just didn't care.

In the 6th form despite my total disregard for matters sartorial I was elected Head Girl. Clearly my peers and staff were not voting on external appearances!

The day my head girliness was announced I was surprised to have abuse shouted at me from the top of the tower block. Confused, I climbed 6 flights of stairs to face an enraged 4th form mob. When I besought the reason for their hatred it emerged that they had heard

that I was going to change the school uniform policy so that everyone would have to wear white knee socks with ankle frills. Anyone less likely to care what sort of socks anyone wore could not be imagined. I disabused them of this heinous untruth and went on my way.

I am reminded of this as we endure our current National and local electioneering. Slander is justified by allegedly righteous anger; winning arguments are valued more than truthful ones; soundbites trump nuance; personal attacks abound and dissension and vitriol are stirred up by people who want to destabilise rather than work for unity. So here are a few thoughts about how Christians might engage better in all this.

Media owners get rich when headlines instil fear. Check the facts. Take the ideology with more than a pinch of salt and make decisions based on fact not gossip and opinion. There may be no white socks conspiracy at all.

We are called to love our neighbours, even if they have poor taste in hosiery. This is not justification to vilify and hate them.

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What's working in the Year of Faith?

Focusing on simple things that make a difference.



Generosity amid the Spring floods

When floods inundated the church in Bodenham, volunteers turned out with sandbags and the church, while damaged, was saved. Despite the floods, Bodenham is among several PCCs that have already decided to make a Parish Offer over and above their target, demonstrating the call from God to live generously and support other parishes in the diocese. Similarly, the PCC teams in Tenbury Wells, Great Hanwood, Canon Pyon, Leominster Priory, Holmer, Ledbury, and Ross-on-Wye are among those who have sought to make gener-

ous offers this year. These are gratefully received by parishes which are unable to cover the costs of parish ministry.

Rev'd Paul Roberts, Team Rector, explains: "We have committed to a campaign of encouraging increased and more generous giving over the coming year. It's important to support each other, especially those parishes which might be struggling to pay."

Our Parish Giving Advisers, Rosa Speyer and Mark Simmons, are always happy to help PCCs with their Parish Offer decisions. Stephen Herbert, the diocese's Finance Director explains "The plans for our diocese are ambitious. We want to see our churches grow, to enable young people to come to faith, as well as to maintain our beautiful church buildings. At the same time, we want to stabilise our current clergy numbers and make ministry possible throughout the diocese, even in small, rural communities. The challenge for Parish Offer is simple: how can we help one another?"

Oh Lord, it's election time again... contd from p1

Thinking your party's platform is unflawed is folly. Manifestos are made by ambitious people feeding tribal fears and things change. White socks might be the right way to go these days.

Scripture tells us to pray for our leaders and respect those in authority. Deriding them on Facebook is wrong. Pray for their wisdom and that their hearts may be right and perhaps they will see the light and abandon the white socks manifesto.

Do not be paranoid. The world will not end if your candidate loses and white socks are temporarily back in fashion.

Whatever your preferred sock colour in this election may you know that you are for Him before party and be filled with God's peace.

Dean Sarah

Diocese News

Contactless giving generates extra income for churches



Rosa Speyer and Mark Simmons, the Parish Giving Advisers at Hereford Diocese, are celebrating after successfully supporting the roll-out of 51 contactless giving devices to churches, achieving a significant milestone in modernising how congregations and visitors to churches can support local parishes. Since the installation of these devices, the Diocese has seen a remarkable increase in donations, with some churches reporting an unexpected financial boost to income. In the last year, the overall income raised exceeded £52,000, with people typically giving more than £8 per card donation.

Rev'd Preb Matthew Stafford, Team Rector of the Wenlock Ministry, explains the benefits of the new technology: "Since we installed the contactless giving device, we've generated over £4,000 in additional income. This has been a fantastic development for our church, making it easier for people to give and support our mission".

In such a rural diocese, the roll-out was not without challenges. Rosa Speyer highlighted some of the initial obstacles: "One of the early challenges was that many of our churches did not have a

reliable Wi-Fi signal, which is essential for the devices to function. It took some time to resolve these issues but, with perseverance and support, we overcame them. The time Mark and I spent has been worth every minute. Our parishes can see the financial benefits and are astonished that people give their money so willingly. We have lots of churches that are regularly visited by tourists so we're excited to see how this will affect giving levels."

With the contactless giving devices now fully operational, the team is looking forward to the continued support and the positive impact on church activities. Diocesan Finance Director Stephen Herbert is optimistic about the future: "It is excellent news that the Diocese has beaten its financial target for the first 12 months of rolling out these devices, due in part to the proactive and tireless support to participating parishes from our Parish Giving Advisers, Mark Simmons and Rosa Speyer. With fewer people today carrying cash, the contactless card readers enable many more visitors and parishioners to make a donation towards the upkeep of our beautiful church buildings and towards the life and work of our churches."

If you are interested in learning more about a contactless giving device for your church, get in touch with Mark or Rosa for an informal chat.

<https://www.hereford.anglican.org/generous-giving-team>