

Year of Celebration

Year of Celebration Dates for your calendar

Spiritual Question Times

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

Wednesday, 21st October, 2026 — Bridgnorth with Bishop Richard and Rev'd Suzan Williams, 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, 10th October, 2026 10:30 am at Ludlow St Laurence

Celebration of Faith

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

Saturday 10 Oct 2026 2:30 pm at Ludlow, St Laurence

Celebration Days | Pilgrimage

Worship and communion led by Bishop Richard

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

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

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



On being yourself

by The Very Rev'd Sarah Brown, Dean of Hereford

I remember my first day of school in September 1969. "Just be yourself!" exhorted my grandpa - which at the tender age of four made no sense whatsoever but which I have had good reason to think about many times since.

I have learned that 'being yourself' is an important part of living a full and faithful life. Each of us is unique yet we feel continual pressure to fit in with the expectations of others. As my grandpa tried to point out to the anxious four-year-old in the oversized blazer, happiness comes from embracing who God made us to be. When we are comfortable in our own skins, we are able to contribute authentically to our communities and build stronger relationships with others.

It is true of the church too. A church that is unsure of itself can easily drift into simply reflecting the preferences of society. A confident Church that knows who and whose it is can lovingly but clearly proclaim its beliefs even when they are unfashionable and teach the gospel in all seasons even (perhaps especially) at the hour of death.

Which brings me to the horror of what are euphemistically called "Pure Cremations". One might also accurately call them Carcass Disposal. Increasingly, society is sold on direct cremation because it appears simple, efficient and cheap. It is also pastorally destructive leaving families with no space to grieve and acknowledge death. The Church should ask itself why it is handing the business of dealing with death over to the secular and profit-seeking funeral industry and whether something important is being lost on our watch. Christian funerals are not simply about disposing of a body. They are acts of worship in which we commend a loved one to God's mercy, support the grieving, give thanks for a life lived, and proclaim the resurrection of Jesus.

The Church of England is a custodian of the Christian understanding of death, burial, resurrection, and hope. For two millennia, Christians have cared deeply about the treatment of the body because the body matters to God.

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When the Church conducts a funeral, whether culminating in burial or cremation, it is being itself. It is doing what Christians have done for centuries: gathering around the dead and the bereaved, speaking words of hope, praying together, and declaring that death does not have the last word. If the Church becomes hesitant about offering this witness, it risks forgetting part of its own identity.

To be confident in whose we are means

being confident enough to say that people need more than efficiency at the end of life. They need prayer, community, ritual, remembrance and hope. The Church serves society best not by surrendering these things but by offering them generously and joyfully and unashamedly in the way that it knows. Let's be who we are.

The Very Rev'd Sarah Brown
Dean of Hereford

What is Shared Local Ministry?

Shared Local Ministry is about teams of lay and ordained people working together to serve God and their local congregations and communities. At Hereford Diocese, our vision for the future is one that enables flourishing local churches, where people are Prayerful, Christlike and Engaged with their wider communities in mission to people of all ages, where we are Proclaiming Christ and Growing Disciples. Find out more about Shared Local Ministry, and what part you might play in it, on our website:

hereford.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/shared-local-ministry/shared-local-ministry.php

STAND
for
SYNOD

Will you stand for General Synod this autumn?

New clergy and lay members are being elected to General Synod this autumn – and you are invited to stand as a candidate. Nominations close on 7th September. If you've ever considered helping to shape the future of the Church of England, and are a regular worshipper in an Anglican Church, you may be eligible to stand as a clergy or lay member. Find out more on our website:

hereford.anglican.org/news/will-you-stand-for-election-to-general-synod.php

Caring for God's Acre

by Kaitlyn Elverson



NightWatch

As the sun sets over our churchyards and burial grounds, a whole other world comes alive. Using some nifty technology, we can listen in on this hidden world to find out just what kind of wildlife is thriving there.

At Caring for God's Acre, we've recently acquired a fantastic bit of kit called a passive acoustic monitor. These little devices can be set up to record and monitor a whole range of sounds in environments that would otherwise be difficult to survey, helping you discover what species are about. For instance, we've been using our acoustic monitor to survey bats in local churchyards.

The devices can be left out for a few hours, days or even weeks. They utilise a small microphone, to detect and record sound. Once back at home, you can download the data to see what species you've heard. Some models will do this for you, some won't; it entirely depends on the model.

Bats use echolocation to hunt for insects at high frequencies that we humans can't hear. Individual species emit calls that correspond to their size, flight, behaviour, environment and prey types. Each will produce a distinctive call that can be recognised on the acoustic monitor or during sound analysis.

It can be difficult to navigate these tools for a first timer. Never fear; our friends at Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) have made surveying for bats accessible and easy for everyone.

BCT has been running the National Bat Monitoring Programme since 1996. One part of the programme is the NightWatch survey. Taking place between July and October, NightWatch is a community science project helping you discover the hidden world of nighttime nature living in your neighbourhood. To take part you must be over 16 and have a windowsill, garden, churchyard or urban space you have permission to survey.

The process is simple. Choose a date and book your kit via the survey portal. Next, a free kit arrives in the post including an "AudioMoth". This is your mini passive acoustic monitoring device! Switch it on, secure in place and you're ready to go. At the same time, you'll sit with the detector watching and listening for any night wildlife. Whatever you spot, you make a record of. Once you're done, post the kit back in the post and wait to hear back from BCT with your personalised report of the bats you discovered during the survey.

Find out more here:

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/science-research/passive-acoustic-surveys/nightwatch>

Kaitlyn Elverson

Engagement Officer, Nature in Sacred Places Project (NiSP)

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

Individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code diomem22