

The Minsterley Parish Magazine

with the Stiperstones church group:

Habberley, Hope & Shelve, Snailbeach



Now these three continue . . .



Of these, the greatest is . . . 1 Cor 13:13

February 2024 www.stiperstoneschurches.org.uk

80p



Holy Trinity Church, Minsterley



Rector: Rev. Greg Smith
(day off - Friday)
The Deanery, Pontesbury
07902 794653
rectorpontstip@gmail.com

Curate: Rev. Richard Lonsdale
(day off - Tuesday)
The New Vicarage, Minsterley
07922 830488
richardlonsdale1@gmail.com

Associate Minister: Rev. Fran Brealey
(days off - Mon, Fri, Sat)
07982 324760
revfran@btinternet.com

Church Wardens
Susan Lockwood 07854 110271
Sarah Edwards 07971 984925

Treasurer
Mike Bowen 07826 061054
mintreasure@btinternet.com

Services in church this month

Sun 4th	10.30am	Holy Communion
Sun 11th	10.30am	Holy Communion
Sun 18th	10.30am	“Minsterley Praise” with the Methodist congregation joining us.
Sun 25th	10.30am	Group Holy Communion at <u>St George’s Pontesbury</u>

Weekly events in the church

Mondays	3.30pm	Youth Café (p7)
Tuesdays	10.00am	Foodbank
Wednesdays	10.00am	Coffee Hub (p26)
Thursdays	10.00am	Trinity Tots (p13)

other events this month (see page . .)

Thur 1st	Knitter Natter (EVERY Thursday) (p13)
Sat 3rd	Trading Post reopens (p11)
Mon 5th	closing date for Eisteddfod entries (p11)
Tues 6th	Ichthus Bible study (p7)
Tue 13th	Oasis meeting (p13)
Tue 13th	Parish Council meeting (p15)
Tues 20th	Ichthus Bible study (p7)
Wed 21st	u3a open meeting (p17)
Thur 22nd	first weekly “Lent Lunch” (p26)
Thur 22nd	St Luke’s Snailbeach annual public meeting (p26)
Sun 25th	Prayer “Retreat” week starts (p3)
Tue 27th	Oasis meeting (p13)
Tue 27th	The Gathering, Marton (p4)
Wed 28th	Hillcrest coffee morning (p7)

The Minsterley Parish Magazine is published by Holy Trinity Church.

e-mail: MinsterleyParishMagazine@gmail.com.

Editor: David Young **Tel:** 01743 537081

Copy date is the 20th of the preceding month

The Long Winter's End

As I write this in mid-January, from my window I can see the roofs and paths are covered with a dusting of snow. Perhaps by now you are looking forward to the return of warmer weather, not least so we can keep our heating bills under control. The Old English word for spring was *lencten*, which comes from the same root as 'long' and 'lengthen.' It is also the word which gives us the name for Lent, the season in the church which leads up to Easter. We are already seeing the days growing longer, even if they are not yet much warmer. The coming of lighter evenings does not of course mean we have seen the back of wild weather – the Old English name for February quite possibly means 'mud-month'!

Yet as the month draws on, we will increasingly see signs of the arrival of spring: daffodils in the supermarket, crocuses in our gardens, and buds in the hedgerows. Anglo-Saxon writings describe the snow and ice of winter as 'frost's fetters'; when spring comes God releases the world from its captivity into new life. C.S. Lewis used this image in his book 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.' When the White Witch is defeated by the lion Aslan, the snow which has covered Narnia for generations begins to melt.

We may not see so often the bitter winters of Anglo-Saxon times, and if we do most of us have the means to protect ourselves from the cold. But,

of course C.S. Lewis, and the Anglo-Saxons before him, were writing about more than the weather. They point us to the state of the human heart, turned away from God, imprisoned by sin and needing his rescue. As we begin Lent in the middle of February we are invited to spend time reflecting on our own lives, acknowledging our need of forgiveness and transformation. It is this, rather than the giving up of luxuries like chocolate or alcohol which is the real point of Lent.

On Ash Wednesday we are encouraged to look deep into our own hearts, acknowledging our frailty and inability to live the life we are called to. We receive the mark of the cross in ash on our foreheads, and hear these words: 'Remember you are dust and to dust you will return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.' Each year this is for me an extremely sombre and yet very joyful moment.

For God is good, and he will forgive our sins when we turn to him. What's more, he promises to walk alongside us and to help us to be faithful. During Lent we don't stop with our failures, we look on towards the cross where Jesus gave himself for our freedom. I encourage you to share in this year's Group Ash Wednesday service which will be held at St George's Pontesbury on February 14th at 7pm. There, together, we will begin the journey which will end with the sadness of Good Friday and the celebrations of Easter Sunday.

Rev Fran

"A Retreat in Daily Life"

**A week to walk more closely with
God through accompanied prayer**

25th February – 2nd March 2024

The week starts with a 90-minute introduction at 4pm Sunday 25th February at St George's Church Pontesbury. You commit to praying for 30 minutes each day and then meeting with a prayer companion for up to 30 minutes for five days, Monday 26th February to Friday 1st March. It finishes with a breakfast feedback on Saturday 2nd March at 9am at St Georges Church. There is a charge of £25 to pay for the expenses of the guides, but a grant is available if you cannot afford this.

For more information or if you'd like to talk it over please speak to Mary Worrall or me.

Greg Smith

Deanery of Pontesbury

Rural dean: Rev. Bill Rowell

01938 552064 email: wkrowell@btinternet.com

Dear Friends

My oldest son's in-laws supposedly left their Methodist Church in South Wales and have subsequently been dechurched because they were always being asked for money. I know nothing of that church's circumstances, but inevitably my sympathies are with their Minister. It's true: the Church always needs money. We have to pay our ministers (not very much I promise you); mend leaky roofs and attend to the repointing of buttresses (I didn't know that was a thing until I was ordained); pay increasingly extortionate energy bills, insurance and all those consumables (bread, wine, candles, paper, coffee and biscuits).

Sometimes we ask for money directly. I suspect the days when the Rector has the temerity to pass the plate around twice because there are insufficient contributions the first time round, are now gone. However I once spent a sabbatical attending a Pentecostal Church in Bedworth and recall that the exhortation prefacing the passing round of the plate was as long as the sermon (and they preach for a long time in Pentecostal churches). We produce leaflets, publish targets, and mention casually in sermons how much the church is affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Indirectly, the message can be even louder. An exhausting programme of social events often proclaims not so much that we are a church that likes to have fun, but rather we are a church that needs money. The inevitable raffle is the clincher.

And so it is that people who never set foot in church will proclaim confidently that "the church is always after our money".

What if we were to be more effective in telling a different story? In response to a God who gave us everything including His own Son (Romans 8 v.32) we are a church that overwhelmingly gives to our community rather than takes from it. This generosity is exemplified by the building being available for funerals and weddings irrespective of whether a family attends church or makes a financial contribution to it. That building is likely to

have been lovingly cleaned and decorated with flowers arranged by a team of volunteers, freely giving of their time.

By the same token, the church runs toddler groups and foodbanks; offers bereavement support and drop-in groups. Its ministers visit the sick, support our schools, counsel the distressed and pray for their people, all freely given. These are things that people take for granted or are unaware of. How do we therefore persuade people to say, "the church is always after our money so that it can continue to exhibit such reckless generosity to our community"?

Greg Smith

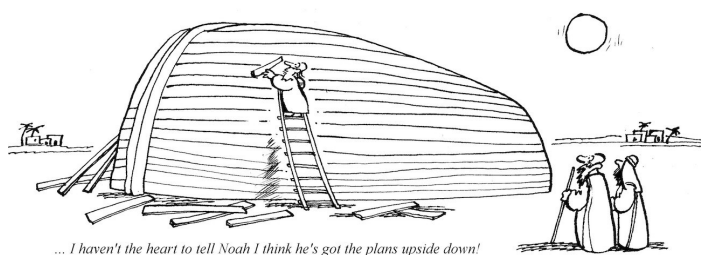
The Gathering
An evening of Praising & Worshipping God

"Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing"
1 Thessalonians 5.11

Everyone welcome

Refreshments from 7pm | **Tues 27th February 2024, 7.30pm start**

Marton Village Hall



Deanery News editor: Alison Bebb, Keepers Cottage, Cruckmeole, Shrewsbury, SY5 8JN
email: alisonbebb5@gmail.com. Copy to be submitted by 10th of previous month please

World News

. . . .or “some of the items you are not likely to see this week on the TV news”

Christians in Mauritania arrested for apostasy are released by authorities

Christians in Mauritania are thankful for answered prayer after believers arrested for apostasy from Islam and proselytism were released on 18th December 2023. At least fifteen believers were arrested after a video of a baptism ceremony held in November was posted on social media and led to protests calling for their killings.

Mauritania is almost 100% Muslim and is one of the few countries in the world where apostasy is punishable by death in line with sharia, although no known executions for leaving Islam have occurred in recent years.



Praise God for the Christians' release. Ask God for protection for the small but growing number of Christian converts in Mauritania and pray for the repeal of laws that make both blasphemy and apostasy from Islam mandatory capital offences.

Pakistani Christian widow acquitted of “blasphemy”

Musarrat Bibi, a Christian widow, along with Mohammad Sarmad, a Muslim man, have been acquitted of “blasphemy” charges relating to their work at the Government Girls' Higher Secondary School in the Pakpattan District of Punjab, Pakistan. They were asked to clear a storeroom and discarded and burnt some wastepaper. As both employees are illiterate they did not know what was written on the papers.

On 19th April 2023 they were arrested and charged with “blasphemy” for desecrating the Quran, which their accusers said they had been burning pages from. On 8th December the judge at the district Court of Additional Sessions dismissed the charges. Give thanks for this significant ruling proving the innocence of Musarrat and her colleague. Pray that they will be protected from any backlash from extremists and will be able to resume their employment unhindered.

Attacks on Christian communities in Borno and Yobe states, Nigeria, leave more than 20 dead

Fourteen men were killed in co-ordinated attacks by Islamist militants on Christian communities in Chibok Local Government Area in Borno State, north-eastern Nigeria on New Year's Day 2024. The attacks in Gatamwarwa and Ntisha followed a raid in Pemi on 19th December in which three men were killed. One woman was abducted in the Ntisha attack. Several shops were burned down in the raids.

In neighbouring Yobe State Islamist terrorists Boko Haram are suspected of murdering Pastor Luka Levong in Geidam on 5th January. Pastor Luka was shot dead at around 2am along with Maina Abdullahi, the church's treasurer. Four others were also killed. Several houses and a church were burned down when the terrorists invaded the community. Pray for the Lord's comfort for the bereaved families and for the church deprived of its shepherd. Ask that they will know God's strength and protection despite the ongoing violence.

Another Iranian convert summoned to begin her sentence

Another Iranian Christian convert received notice to begin her sentence in Evin Prison, Tehran, on 3rd January. Mina Khajavi, 60, was summoned to begin a six-year sentence for “acting against national security by promoting ‘Zionist’ Christianity”. This is typical of the kind of accusation made against Iranian believers just for being active in “house churches”. She was arrested in 2020 and sentenced in 2022 alongside Malihe Nazari, also sentenced to six years, and Pastor Joseph Shahbazian, who received a ten-year term.

Both Joseph and Malihe were released early from their sentences in 2023. However, Mina was deemed unfit to begin her sentence when her ankle was broken after she was run over by a car. She was required to present herself to the prison within five days of the notice. Ask the Lord to sustain Mina in this ordeal. Pray that He will intervene to bring about her early release and that her medical needs will be fully addressed.

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If you buy your copy monthly from The Flower Shop or church you might like to know that you can save money (and guarantee your copy) by taking out an annual subscription for just £9 - saving you 60p on the year! Please contact me for details.

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David Young, Editor
01743 537081

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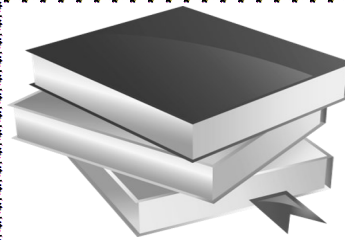
HTM A youth group at Holy Trinity Church, Minsterley

Hillcrest Manor Nursing Home

warmly welcome you to join us for a
coffee morning
10.30am-12.30pm
Wednesday 28th February

We look forward to seeing you there!

Sally
Activities co-ordinator
Hillcrest Manor



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Liz Jackson 01743 791352



“By your words I can see where I’m going, they throw a beam of light on my dark path.”

Psalm 119:105 (The Message Bible)

6th February	Brookfield Waterwheel	Mark 9:2-9; 2Kings2:1-12; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
20th February	Brookfield Waterwheel	Mark 8:31-38; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25

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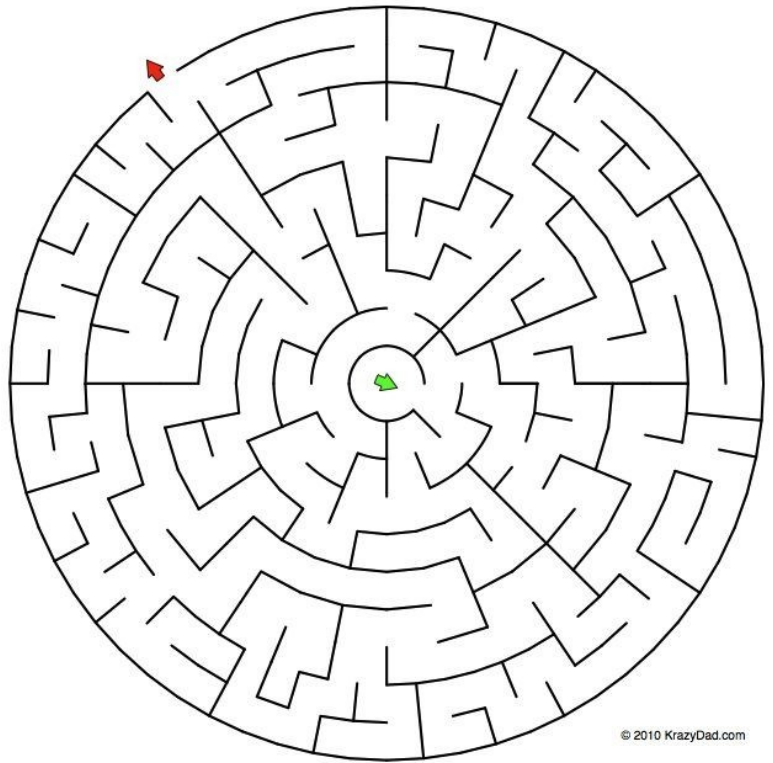
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Puzzle Page

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How do you decide who to marry?

You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the crisps and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, age 10

When Adam stayed out very late for a few nights, Eve became upset. "You're running around with other women," she charged.

"You're being unreasonable," Adam responded. "You're the only woman on earth." The quarrel continued until Adam fell asleep, only to be awakened by someone poking him in the chest. It was Eve. "What do you think you're doing?" Adam demanded.

"Counting your ribs," said Eve.

Wordsearch for February

February is the month of romance. Millions of Valentine cards will be sent in the next week or two, as we celebrate our romantic love for that special person in our lives. But there are other kinds of love to celebrate: and on Candlemas we remember Mary and Joseph taking their baby son to the temple to present Him to God. Jesus' whole life was a loving present to us from God. Through His death for us on the cross, and His resurrection, His love can now transform anyone's life. Romances can die, but God's love for us is always there. But it won't do us much good – unless we accept it!

Valentine	Kiss	angels
Rose	hug	baby
Romance	girlfriend	temple
Love	boyfriend	Mary
Present	fiancé	Candlemas
Restaurant	worship	presentation
Hearts	repentance	



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The Trading Post re-opens on Saturday 3rd February. We are situated in the Old Station Buildings on Station Road; open every Saturday from 9.30am to 12 noon, from now until the end of October.

We have a good stock of seed potatoes as well as pea, bean and beetroot seeds, onion and shallot sets, plus plenty of all the other materials that you will need to get sowing and growing. The bulk delivery of multi-purpose potting compost has arrived and the usual offer of a reduced price for a multiple purchase is in place; we also have peat-free multi-purpose compost but this isn't on special offer due to the ongoing difficulty in obtaining sufficient supplies. The government ban on the sale of peat takes place at the end of 2024 so this year could be your opportunity to compare composts with and without peat.

As usual there will be people on hand to help carry the heavy stuff to your car.

Some dates for your diary:

- 5th March Annual General Meeting, 7.30 pm in the Public Hall.
- 16th May Spring into the Garden, 7.30 pm in the Public Hall.
- 19th May Pontesbury Garden Trail.
- 24th August Annual Show, 2.30 pm in the Public Hall
- 26th October Last Trading Post for 2024.

A reminder: subscriptions for 2024 are now due: they are still £2 for the year, or £1 if you are retired.

Rob Dixon
 robedixon@btopenworld.com
 01743 791901

Marriage requires falling in love many times – always with the same person. - Anon

Marriage is like twirling a baton, turning handsprings, or eating with chopsticks; it looks so easy till you try it. - Helen Rowland

Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction. - Antoine De Saint-Exupery

MINSTERLEY EISTEDDFOD

WRITING COMPETITIONS

MARCH 16TH, 2024



CLASS: OPEN POETRY
 AGE: KS2, KS3 & KS4

CLASS: ORIGINAL SHORT STORY: 'OLD SHOES'
 AGE: OPEN

CLASS: ORIGINAL POEM: 'IN THE MIST'
 AGE: OPEN

CLASS: LIMERICK: 'THEY WANTED TO DRILL FOR MORE OIL'
 AGE: OPEN

CLASS: HYMN WORDS
 AGE: OPEN

CLASS: ORIGINAL
 MUSIC COMPOSITION
 AGE: OPEN

CLASS: HYMN TUNE
 AGE: OPEN

CLOSING DATE: FEBRUARY 5TH, 2024
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Minsterley & District

61st Annual Eisteddfod

Saturday 16th March 2024



The closing date for written work is 5th February and all details can be found on our web-site minsterleyeisteddfod.com.

You can also find all of the details about vocal, instrumental and spoken classes on the website, and the closing date for these is 12th February.

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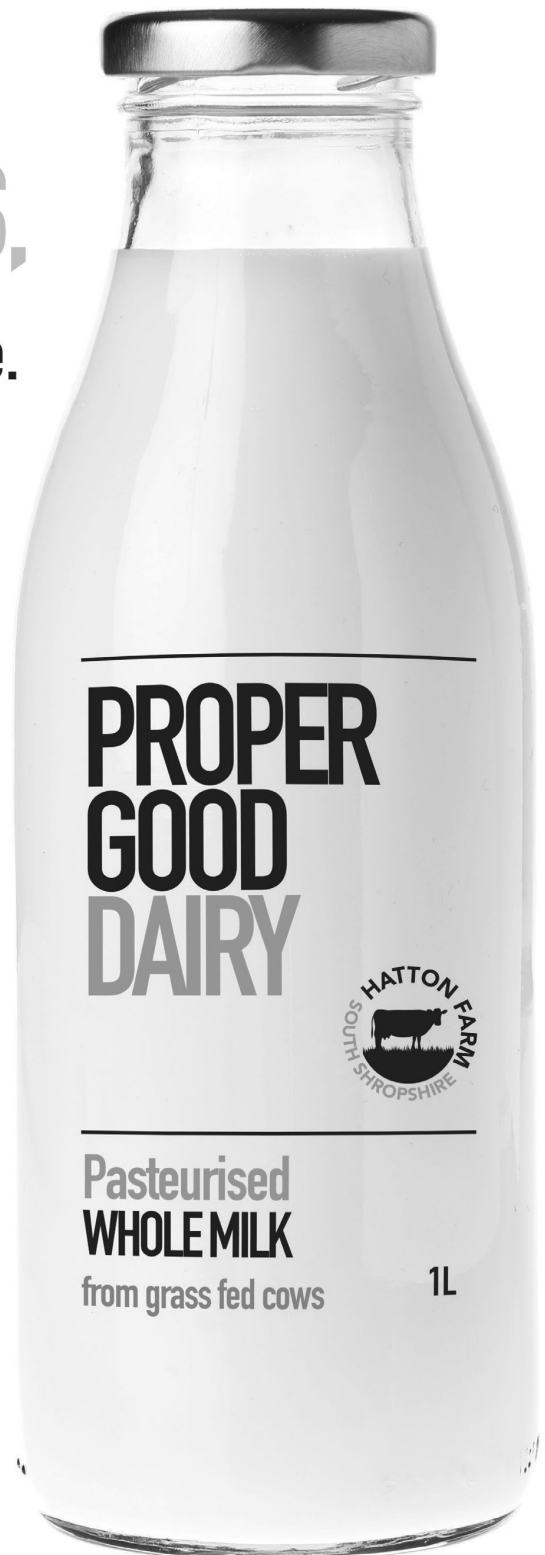
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Answers

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10am-11.30am
Thursdays
term time

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Trinity TOTS

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HTM A pre-school group at Holy Trinity Church, Minsterley

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Thursdays 10.00am—11.00am
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Contact Dan Lewis on 07904 338 791

or

Minsterley Parish Council

A public meeting has been held by Middle Marches Community Land Trust to gauge public opinion on whether there would be interest in launching a fundraising appeal to purchase Minsterley Meadows as a community asset. The 13.5 acres have been put on the open market for £225k and is a protected SSSI site, which borders Callow Lane. It is special because of the rare Green-winged Orchids – the largest Green-winged Orchid site in Shropshire. Over 100 people attended the meeting and a small number agreed to form a Working Group, to see if the project can be progressed. The Parish council agreed to discuss supporting the funding for Hall meeting fees and publicity, but have no capital funds to put towards a fundraising appeal.

Problems caused by recent heavy rainfall would be reported to the relevant authorities.

The missing Highway lighting columns should be replaced during the next few weeks.

Homes Plus Housing Association would be asked if they would reinstate the parish walk-arounds again which look at village issues, with the various agencies.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 13th February at 7.00pm in Minsterley Parish Hall.

Geoff Rogers
Chairman, Minsterley Parish Council
www.minsterley.org.uk

To contact the parish council please e-mail:
clerk@minsterley.org.uk



THE PONTESBURY PROJECT
Person Centred • Community • Kindness • Trust • Inclusion

The Pontesbury Project provides 24 hour care for 17 people who are in need of support. They live in houses owned by the Project but which are their homes. These homes are scattered through Pontesbury and Minsterley.

The Project has always been Christian led. Dr Ian Bradley and his wife Beryl had the vision; a vision brought to fruition with the assistance of people from different local churches.

We want to remain Christian-led and are now looking for volunteers to join the current Trustees. The Project provides homes and care to those in need of support, thus enabling them to stay local to their families and friends and giving the reassurance of excellent local care to their relatives.

Do you think you might be interested in joining us? If so, please take a look at our website (www.pontesburyproject.com). If you would like to chat informally please contact us on: jane.cooke@pontesburyproject.com or philip.bradley@pontesburyproject.com

Jane Cooke
Chair of Pontesbury Project – Special Needs

Philip Bradley
Chair of Pontesbury Project - Housing

MINSTERLEY 59 CLUB WINNERS

Draw 51	20 th December	No. 16	Lynn Evans
Draw 52	27 th December	No 42	Lynn Evans
Draw 1	3 rd January	No. 55	Jan Brain
Draw 2	10 th January	No. 2	Jeannie Buckle
Draw 3	17 th January	No. 35	Jean Airey

Bible Readings in Holy Trinity Church this month

Here are the Bible passages we plan to read in our church services this month:

Date	OT Reading	Epistle	Gospel
4 th February	Proverbs 8:1,22-31 p641	Colossians 1:15-20 p1182	John 1:1-14 p1063
11 th February	2 Kings 2:1-12 p367	2 Corinthians 4:3-6 p1161	Mark 9:2-9 p1012
14 th February (Ash Wednesday)	Joel 2:1-2,12-17 p913	Psalms 51:1-18 p573	John 8:1-11 p1073
25 th February	Psalms 22:23-31 p554	Romans 4:13-25 p1131	Mark 8:31-38 p1021



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A Parliament of Rooks



Although February usually feels far from spring, it is the month when rooks usually start to build their nests, although sometimes they start in January. Many churchyards contain rookeries, situated within tall deciduous trees and a great deal of fun can be had in watching the antics of the rooks. Rooks make their nests from small branches and twigs and can be seen flying in with suitable material but also pinching particularly nice ones from the neighbours! A winter storm can seriously disrupt this nest building activity and send them back to the beginning with a great deal of chatter and fuss.

Rookeries may contain a few nests or sometimes up to a thousand and, once established, a rookery may last for centuries in the same location. Rooks are sociable and as well as nesting together they often feed in groups, eating a wide variety of foods including invertebrates pulled from the soil by their large, strong beaks. They will also eat fruit, seeds, acorns and grain and can visit


garden bird feeders, taking hold of them with their feet rather like a parrot. Mixed flocks of rooks and jackdaws can be seen flying around, calling prior to going to roost. The collective nouns for a group of rooks are a parliament, congregation or clamour!

Rooks and crows can appear quite similar until you look and listen closely. A rook has a domed forehead and greyish face, its leg feathers give it 'baggy trousers'. Crows are sleeker, tend to nest singly and are often seen in twos or threes but rarely in larger flocks. Both birds have a cawing call, but crows have a harsher note and tend to repeat the call three times, whilst rooks use a wider variety of sounds and pitches including some clicks and wheezing sounds. Rooks and crows belong to the Corvid family which also includes ravens, jays, magpies and choughs. Take a look at the Caring for God's Acre website for a Spotter's Guide to Corvids.

Please let us know if you have a rookery within your local churchyard or cemetery and take a moment to think how many generations of rooks may have nested there.

Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor
www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk



**Photographer Ric Morris,
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February

21

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Pontesbury & Rea Valley

u3asites.org.uk/pontesbury-reavalley 

u3a

Pontesbury & Rea Valley

Pontesbury & Rea Valley u3a invites members and non-members to come along to our next Open Meeting, for an entertaining presentation by **Ric Morris**, who joins us once again to present his most up to date pictures of snowy Shropshire – taken from a hot air balloon.

Many of you will have enjoyed his presentations before (2022 and 2021) and to experience more beauty of Shropshire from the skies then make sure you 'save the date'.

Refreshments will be served afterwards for the chance to catch up.

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Local organisations offering help and support

Here are some contact details you might find useful. This page was updated in January 2022, but if you find anything to be out of date, incorrect or not relevant please let the editor know. Likewise please share details of any other group which can offer support to local residents. Thank you.

Rea Valley Foodbank 07902 794653
Food parcels available locally in Minsterley and Pontesbury. Referral needed.

Community Good Neighbours, Rea Valley
07944 891953

Get in touch with a local Good Neighbour for a friendly chat, small errands and support to stay active and connected within the community.

Pontesbury Community and Care Co-ordinator
01743 790325 or e-mail h.tazewell@nhs.net
Helen Tazewell can give assistance to patients of all ages in need of help, support and advice by signposting to other useful services. She works Monday and Wednesday locally.

Healthy Shropshire 0345 678 9025
Shropshire Council telephone line for information and advice on a healthy lifestyle, including smoking, alcohol, weight, exercise and other matters.

Shrewsbury Food Hub Shrewsburyfoodhub.org.uk
Surplus food share tables across Shrewsbury.
See Facebook page for venue details.

Shrewsbury "foodbank PLUS" 07421 745857
Food parcels, debt advice, returning to work, digital Inclusion, life skills. Referral needed.

Citizens Advice Shropshire 0344 499 1100
Confidential advice and help to solve problems with debt, benefits, housing, legal matters & employment.
Need help claiming Universal Credit? Call their dedicated Help to Claim helpline, 0800 144 8444

Keep Shropshire Warm 0800 112 3743
Advice and grants for people struggling with heating and energy bills.

Shropshire Council Housing Support 0345 678 9005
Support on all housing matters particularly rentals and homelessness.

Shropshire Mental Health Support 01743 368647
Mental health support.

Shropshire Recovery Partnership 01743 294700
Drugs and alcohol support.

Shropshire Rural Support 0300 123 2825
Confidential support during periods of anxiety and stress, and with problems relating to family and business. See website shropshireruralsupport.org.uk.

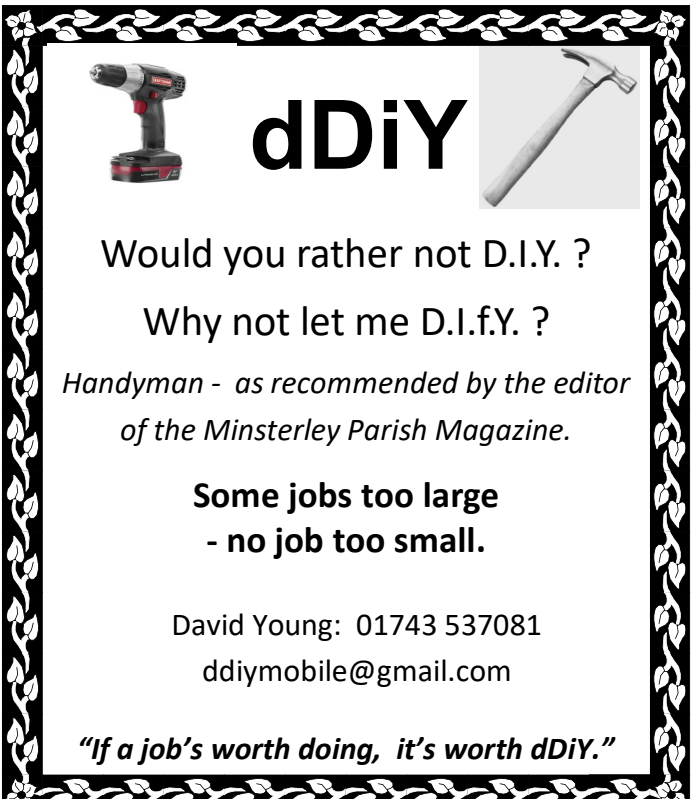
Samaritans 116 123
Free 24/7 confidential support whatever you are going through.

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Helpline 0300 303 1191
Support for anyone suffering from domestic violence.

West Mercia Women's Aid 0800 783 1359
24hr helpline for women and children suffering from domestic violence.

Shropshire Carers' Support Service 01743 341995
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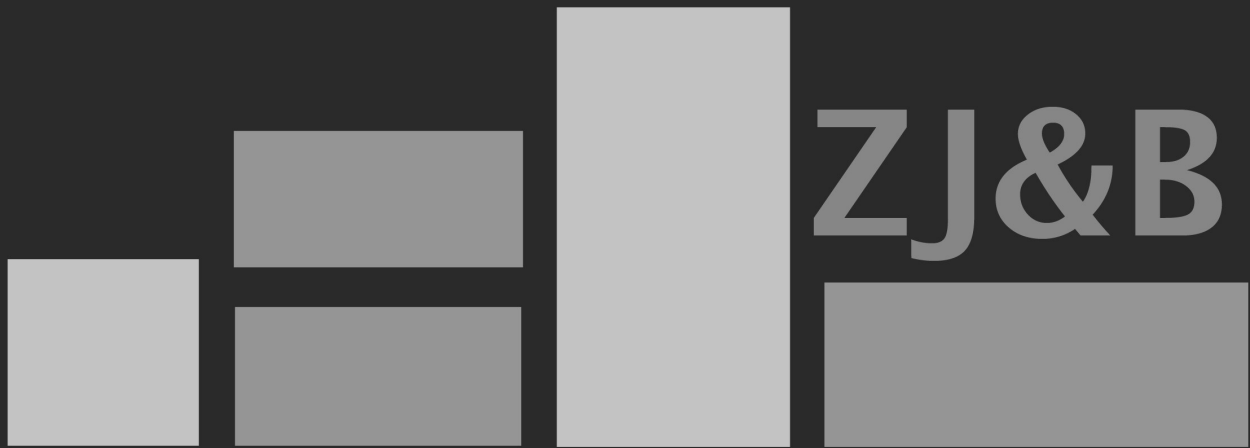
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From the Archdeacon of Hereford

Ash Wednesday this year will fall on the 14th February which of course is also St Valentine's day! Ash Wednesday is traditionally the beginning of Lent and this has been marked over the years as a period of self-discipline, fasting and spiritual journeying. It is a period of penitence and self-examination and seeing ourselves from God's perspective. Even if we don't have a strong faith, we have learnt through the work of Educational Neuroscientists that intentional self-reflection helps us to learn and enhances how we apply, transfer, retain and recall new ideas and information.

The Bible recognises that as we go through life we will be tempted and tested and that our response to those times will help to shape the depth of our spiritual lives.

I am often astounded by the way many Christians have been shaped by sermons and theology that promise good things but never talk about the cost of following Jesus. The writer and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer called this a theology of cheap grace:

"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ living and incarnate."

Lent gives us an opportunity to realign our lives with God's values, it gives us a prolonged and focussed time to reflect and pray and to read the Bible and deepen our faith. The 40-day period is

time enough to build in new habits and actions into our lives, which will have a lasting effect.

With ongoing war in Ukraine, the conflict between Israel & Hamas and so much uncertainty in our world I am finding that there is a great deal of anxiety in society about the future and a sense of aimlessness and general anger and tiredness.

Lent gives us as Christians an opportunity to give these feelings back to God and to ask him to heal and restore us. It is also, as Paul reminds us, a time to recognise that our human experiences are common and that whilst heightened by the personal challenges or world events, are not unique to us; but the difference is that our faith will endure.

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to all. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13).

As Christians, whilst we can use this time for reflection, we also know how the story ends and we have an enduring hope within us because Jesus has conquered death and brought forgiveness to us. We are forever Easter people who live in the light of the resurrection, and we can mark Lent because of his sacrifice for us. The rhythm of the spiritual and liturgical year is a helpful tool to remind us that there is a cost and a purpose to our faith, which is not about self-benefit and self-fulfilment but about generosity, servant heartedness and a simple humbler faith. As Christians, we have a message of hope for a better future, and Lent gives us the perfect opportunity to prepare our hearts and minds to share the good news.

The Venerable Derek Chedzey

Burglaries and thefts (see Police news on next page)

The beginning of January saw a spike in burglaries, particularly at farms where quads, plant, trailers and 4x4s have been targeted. This mimics a similar spike of local farm burglaries and thefts during January 2023, however the county as a whole and neighbouring counties has seen a similar increase in burglaries over recent months.

Most of the burglaries occurred in the early hours but one of the farm thefts happened rather brazenly during the early afternoon where

opportunistic thieves entered a farm yard and stole a quad with keys.

Targeted patrols are being conducted in rural areas and a dedicated CID team is investigating crimes linked to organised criminal gangs. Please report any suspicious activity or give information to West Mercia Police on 101, online via the West Mercia Police website or to our local team email bccar.snt@westmercia.police.uk (please note this is not always monitored). If a burglary or theft is witnessed occurring at the time then please report on 999.

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CRIME/INCIDENTS TO NOTE REPORTED			
CHIRBURY, WORTHEN, HOPE, SHELVE & STIPERSTONE			
16 th December 2023 – 14 th January 2024			
CRIME REPORTED	DETAILS	LOCATION	NOTES
Burglary	Farm outbuildings entered, chainsaw and leaf blower taken	Worthen	Discovered on the 10 th January, potentially occurred early hours of that morning as other burglaries below occurred on the same night
Burglary	Honda and Suzuki quad bikes along with power tools stolen from within barns, trailer stolen from yard along with a Toyota Hilux ML67MUW and Land-rover Freelander	Chirbury	Occurred 03:30 – 05:00 10 th January. Freelander recovered in Westbury. Linked to burglaries on the same night in Pentreheyling, Sarn and Kerry. Mitsubishi L200 stolen from Kerry left at scene in Chirbury
Burglary	KTM motorbike and power tools including chainsaw and drills stolen	Pentreheyling	Linked to the above
Burglary	Old garage broken into via padlock. Battery chainsaw and charger, rack of spanners and drill with battery stolen	Black Marsh	Unknown when offence occurred at time of writing
Burglary	Farm buildings broken into and large number of power tools and generator stolen. A white Ford Transit BW11UEL and an Ifor Williams trailer also stolen to transport the stolen tools	Stockton	01:30 5 th January
Assault	x 2	Leigh	
Assault & harassment	Incident occurred on a public transport bus	Marton	23 rd December
Malicious communications		Gravels	

Hope & Shelve Church News

Sunday service details are shown on the next page. There are also two special services this month in St George's Pontesbury to which all the congregations are invited:

Ash Wednesday service at 7pm 14th February;
Group Service at 10.30am on Sunday 25th February.

Stiperstones Churches Lent Lunches

The lunches for all the churches in the Stiperstones family are being held on Thursdays during Lent from 12noon - 1pm in Hope Village Hall. These dates are 22nd and 29th February and 7th, 14th and 21st March.

Rev Fran Brealey

07982324760,

revfran@btinternet.com

No man ever said, at the end of his days, 'I have read my Bible too much, I have thought of God too much, I have prayed too much, I have been too careful with my soul.' - J C Ryle

There is a net of love by which you can catch souls.
- Mother Teresa



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Minsterley Methodist Church

10am Sunday services



4th February. Family Service led by members of the congregation.


11th February. Service led by Rev Brian Spencer and will include Holy Communion.

18th February. Minsterley Praise at Holy Trinity - note the later start time of 10.30am.

25th February. Service led by Mr. Wes Morris.

A warm welcome is extended to anyone who would like to come and join us at any of our services and for refreshments afterwards

Sandra Lewis



ANNUAL MEETING FOR ST LUKE'S

ST LUKE'S IS A FESTIVAL CHURCH WHICH HOLDS SIX SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR - THE ANNUAL MEETING IS FOR ALL RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF ST LUKE'S TO DISCUSS HOW THEY WOULD LIKE THE CHURCH'S ACTIVITIES TO CONTINUE IN 2024

22 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 730PM
SNAILBEACH VILLAGE HALL

Our partner churches in the Stiperstones Group —

St Luke's Festival Church Snailbeach



Treasurer

Cheryl Bromhead

St Luke's is a "Festival Church". Services are held on six festival days: Christmas, Easter, St Luke's day, Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday.

St Mary's Parish Church Habberley

Church Wardens

Pauline Stopford, The Kennels, Habberley (01743 790784)

Pearl Hannigan, 9 Yarlington Orchard, Pontesbury (01743 790495)

Treasurer

Robert Currie

Sunday 4th February 5.00pm
Sunday 18th 5.00pm
Sunday 25th 10.30am

Evensong
Holy Communion
Group service at
St George's Pontesbury



Hope & Shelve Parish

Church Warden

Barbara Venables

Secretary

Sara Young

Treasurer

Kevin Bowers

Holy Trinity Church Hope

Sunday 11th February 9.00am
Sunday 25th 10.30am

Holy Communion
Group service at
St George's Pontesbury



All Saints' Church Shelve

Sunday 4th February 9.00am
Sunday 18th 9.00am
Sunday 25th 10.30am

Holy Communion
Morning Prayer
Group service at
St George's Pontesbury

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