



Pontesbury & Stiperstones Family of Churches Newsletter

19th December 2025 and 26th December 2025

Dear friends,

I had always considered the carol “In the Bleak Midwinter” a rather mawkish, anachronistic affair until I read a commentary that pointed out that it was written by a poet (Christina Rosetti) and that we should not think that she is getting carried away with the idea that the shepherds had to wade through snowdrifts in order to access the stable. There is, after all, nothing in Scripture that suggests that Jesus was born in the winter.

Rosetti’s idea is that we can expect Jesus to come when we are in the darkest places in our lives, when everything seems hopeless and when we feel a very long way from the fire of God’s Love. Moreover, the repetition of “snow on snow” conjures up a world made new again in the immediate aftermath of a snowstorm, when all that can be seen is the virgin snow. This is what Jesus comes to do: to make the world new again – to wash away our sin so that we are whiter than snow.

Our response, she suggests at the end of the carol, is to give him our hearts.

**Rev Greg Smith
Rector of Pontesbury and Stiperstones**

Thank you!

To all those who have worked so incredibly hard in the build up to Christmas: churchwardens, vergers, singers, organists, sidespeople, coffee servers, cake makers, readers and many more.

PCC Officers

From next Spring’s APCMs, we will be looking for new church officers. St George’s is seeking a PCC Secretary and Holy Trinity Minsterley a new churchwarden. If you would like to know more about either role, please speak to Greg about this.

Time Out

The support group for those with mental health challenges, Time Out, is taking a break over the winter and will likely relaunch in the Spring.

Monday Night Bible Study

The Monday night Bible Study will recommence on Jan 5th at 7 p.m. at 3 Earls Court. All welcome. We will be looking at Daniel Chapter 4.

Wednesday Tea Breaks at St George's – Christmas pause

Wednesday Tea Breaks will not take place on 24th and 31st December, but will restart on 7th January 2-4pm

Rea Valley Foodbank

Rea Valley Foodbank would be pleased to receive any Christmas treats that you feel able to donate. We are not offering Christmas parcels this year but are seeking to supplement the ordinary food parcels to our clients. The foodbank which will only be closed on Christmas Day, also requires Tim tomatoes - whole and chopped Biscuits

Long life milk

Tin veg

Meat for sandwiches and for meals

Tin fruit

Tin fish

Christmas Donation Appeal

The Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service (SDAS) protects and supports victims of domestic abuse and violence.

To help ensure the families staying in SDAS refuges have a special Christmas, we are asking for donations, and the easiest way to support is through the Amazon Wish list. Items purchased from the wish list are delivered directly to SDAS, making donating simple and stress-free.

Amazon Wish list (preferred option): <https://bit.ly/4rp2R6s>

More information / alternative donation options: <https://bit.ly/4odV0G1>

When you go to the check out, the delivery option will be Emma Price, Craven Arms, Gift Registry.

Alternatively you can donate towards the gifts needed by giving cash to Sarah or Marie who will liaise with SDAS.

Thank you for helping us bring joy and comfort to families who need it most this Christmas. Your kindness truly makes a difference.

Transport Scheme

The Rea Valley Transport Scheme which takes people to medical appointments and wellbeing groups now has a telephone number **07468 115939** as well as an email address reavalleytransportscheme.info@gmail.com. Please give as much notice as possible.

Group Service

There will be one service in the Benefice on Sunday December 28th, at Holy Trinity Minsterley at 10.30 a.m. This will be a service of Holy Communion.

Christmas Services

Sun Dec 21st at 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion at Minsterley

Sun Dec 21st at 10.30am Holy Communion at Pontesbury

Sun Dec 21st at 4 p.m. Christingle at Shelve

Sun Dec 21st at 7 p.m. Benefice Carol Service at Pontesbury

Weds Dec 24 th at 10 a.m.	Holy Communion at Hope
Weds Dec 24 th at 5 p.m.	Carol Service at Habberley
Weds Dec 24 th at 6 p.m.	Carols on School Green
Weds Dec 24 th at 11 p.m.	Midnight Communion at Minsterley
Thurs Dec 25 th at 9 a.m.	Holy Communion at Snailbeach
Thurs Dec 25 th at 9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion at Shelve
Thurs Dec 25 th at 10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion at Habberley
Thurs Dec 25 th at 10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion at Pontesbury

Christmas Holidays

There will be no newsletter next week, with normal service resumed the following week. There are clergy around over the holiday period, but please only disturb them if necessary.

Readings for this Sunday, Advent 4

Isaiah 7. 10-16
 Romans 1. 1-7
 Matthew 1. 18-end

Readings for Sunday Dec 28th

Jeremiah 31. 15-17
 1 Corinthians 1. 26-29
 Matthew 2. 13-18

Calendar for the Week

Fri 19 th	Coffee Stop from 10-12 noon
Sun 21 st	Holy Communion at Minsterley at 10.30 a.m.
	Holy Communion at Pontesbury at 10.30 a.m.
	Christingle at Shelve at 4 p.m.
	Benefice Carol Service at St George's at 7 p.m.
Tues 23 rd	Foodbank at HTM 10-12
Weds 24 th	See above
Thurs 25 th	See above
Sun 28 th	Group Service at Holy Trinity Minsterley at 10.30 a.m.
Tues 30 th	Foodbank at HTM 10-12

Weds 31st Coffee Hub at HTM 10-12

Thurs 1st Jan Foodbank at St George's 10-12

Fri 2nd Coffee Stop at St George's

Sun 4th Holy Communion at Shelve at 9 a.m.

Holy Communion at Pontesbury at 10.30 a.m.

Tea-time Service at HTM 4 p.m.

