



## **Pontesbury & Stiperstones Family of Churches**

### **Newsletter**

**16th January 2026**

Dear friends,

Fran and I had a meal at a large Chinese restaurant in Birmingham over the Christmas holiday period. It was an all-you-can-eat buffet for a fixed price, and the restaurant was jam-packed full. There was a notice on the table that encouraged customers to confine themselves to all that they *could eat* rather than unnecessarily waste food. It was the next comment that puzzled me. By saving food, we could help them make an even greater contribution to the local foodbank, with a photo of presentation to underline the point. This, it seemed to me, was two commendable things (avoiding food waste and supporting the local foodbank) rather spuriously joined together. I didn't see how the connection between the two things worked. I did clear my plate however!

One of the challenges of prayer is that it's not always easy to make a connection between the quietly whispered words that we say to God late at night when we present to Him our most heartfelt concerns and those prayers being answered several months down the line in a way that we hadn't foreseen. I guess we need to take seriously the Bible's repeated encouragement to pray all the time. And trust that God will make the necessary connections for us.

**Greg**

#### **Present Swap**

This Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January from 10-12, there is a present swap being hosted at Pontesbury Pavilion. This is an opportunity to bring along Christmas gifts that weren't quite what you wanted or needed and exchange them for something more suitable.

#### **The Gathering**

The monthly praise and worship evening for Pontesbury Deanery, which takes place at Marton Village Hall is happening this coming Tuesday at 7 p.m.

#### **Revd. Fergus Butler-Gallie**

Rev Butler-Gallie will be at St George's Church, Pontesbury on the 5<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm to provide a talk about his book, *Twelve Churches: an unlikely history of the buildings that made Christianity*, and the thoughts behind it.

With his trademark reverence and revelry, The Revd. Fergus Butler-Gallie travels through time and place to get to the heart of the religion he is so passionate about.

In this book, *Twelve Churches*, he takes us from Bethlehem and the birth of Christ some 2000-odd years ago, to the immediate present and future of Christianity. He brings together a Baptist Church in the segregationist American South with a medieval monastery in the heart of the Greek countryside; the Vatican - beautiful, imposing, vainglorious, the seat of Catholicism - with a sparse, tiny private church above the rocky coastline of Southern Japan.

It is a quest for a new people's history of Christianity, told through the stories of twelve churches scattered across the globe. Through a patchwork of interlinking and varied human stories, Butler-Gallie takes us on a physical and historical journey, exploring the role of hope, faith and beauty in Christianity, but also its fraught relationships with sex, violence and power.

The story of Christianity is, he shows, the story of our modern world: it's a story of who we should be, as well who we sometimes are.

### **Archdeacons**

We have now bid farewell to Archdeacon Fiona, the Archdeacon of Ludlow at a lovely service at St Laurence's Ludlow last Sunday. Interviews for a new Archdeacon will be taking place this coming week. Please do pray that the right person is appointed.

### **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.

### **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

Please note that the week of prayer for Christian Unity will begin on Sunday. There will be no formal events to mark this, but please do remember how important the unity of the Church is to the Lord in your prayers.

### **Monday Night Bible Study**

The Monday night Bible Study will continue on Jan 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at 3 Earls Court. All welcome. We will be looking at Daniel in the Lions' Den.

### **Burns Night**

The planned Burns Night Supper at Hope Village Hall on 24th January to raise funds for repairs for Holy Trinity Church has regrettably been cancelled due to insufficient bookings. Our apologies to those who had booked.

### **Bingo**

There will be a Bingo Night at St George's 7pm on Saturday January 31<sup>st</sup>, £5 entry to include light supper (BYOB), Bingo cards £1 each. Booking essential via Marianne 07944 333830 or Marion 07833 325755

### **Coffee Morning HTM**

Our first HTM social event of 2026 is a coffee morning, to be held at HTM on 7<sup>th</sup> February from 10am - noon. Everyone is welcome so come along and bring a friend! We also need cakes to sell, raffle prizes and helpers so please speak to Sarah if you can help. Look forward to seeing you on the 7<sup>th</sup>!

## Coventry Cathedral

The benefice visit to Coventry Cathedral is going ahead on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April. We have booked a coach, but places are at a premium. To reserve your place, please pay £20 to Sadie Preece either this Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> or the next (there is an additional £10 charge if you would like to join the guided tour).

### Readings for Sunday Jan 18<sup>th</sup>

Isaiah 49.1-7

1 Corinthians 1.1-9

John 1.29-42

### Calendar for the Week

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|------------------------|---|
| Fri 16 <sup>th</sup>   | Coffee Stop at St George's  |
| Sat 17 <sup>th</sup>   | Benefice Council Away Day at Snailbeach Village Hall at 9.45  |
| Sun 18 <sup>th</sup>   | Worship Together at Shelve at 9 a.m.<br>Minsterley Praise at Holy Trinity at 10.30 a.m.<br>Holy Communion and Children's Church at Pontesbury at 10.30 a.m.           |
| Mon 19 <sup>th</sup>   | Youth Café at HTM at 3.30 p.m.<br>Pontesbury Fundraising & Outreach Ctte at The Deanery at 7 p.m.   |
| Tues 20 <sup>th</sup>  | Foodbank at Minsterley from 10-12<br>Little Dragons at St George's 10-11.30 a.m.<br>The Gathering at Marton Village Hall at 7 p.m.                                    |
| Weds 21 <sup>st</sup>  | Coffee Hub at HTM 10-12<br>Tea Break at St George's 2-4pm<br>Pontesbury PCC at 7 p.m. in WER  |
| Thurs 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Foodbank at Pontesbury 10-12<br>Trinity Tots at HTM 10-11.30 a.m.   |
| Sun 25 <sup>th</sup>   | Morning Prayer at Hope at 9 a.m.<br>Family Service at Pontesbury at 10.30 a.m.<br>Holy Communion at Minsterley at 10.30 a.m.<br>Holy Communion at Habberley at 5 p.m. |