



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

### **Newsletter**

**23rd January 2026**

Dear Friends,

I will be leaving my post as Associate Minister in Pontesbury and Stiperstones at the end of August, as this summer I will celebrate my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. The last few years have flown by. Mike and I have so enjoyed getting to know you, and sharing with you in worship in each of the 6 churches of our group of churches. But soon it will be time to retire.

We will be moving to Broome, near Craven Arms. In a strange turn of events the home we have recently bought is only a few yards from where we stayed on our very first visit to South Shropshire some 40 years ago. The village is much changed since then, but there is still a railway line with an operational station. It's a short trip to Shrewsbury, and a very long, slow journey to Swansea!

So we will not be too far away, and I hope, with the Bishop's permission, to continue to lead some services at Hope and Shelve.

Changes can be unsettling, both for those who go, and those who stay. It is good that we have such a faithful God who promises never to leave us, and I know that, when the time comes, he will hold both you, and us, in his loving arms, for whatever comes next.

Rev Fran

#### **Congratulations**

To Richard who has officially completed his curacy this week and has been signed off by the Bishop. He will remain with us for a few more months while he seeks his next post.

#### **Youth Stats**

Some of you will have heard Joe Barnes, the Pontesbury Youth Worker, speak recently about encouraging statistics which demonstrate the interest that the youth generation have in the Christian faith. If you would like to read more about this, visit the link below, enter your name and email address and the findings will be emailed to you immediately.

[Unlock Insights Growing Spirituality Z-A Part 1 & 2 - Youth for Christ](#)

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

Rev Butler-Gallie will be at St George's Church, Pontesbury on Thursday 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.

## **PCC Officers**

From next Spring's APCMs, we are still 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 concludes this 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 Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m. at 3 Earls Court. All welcome. We will be starting a new series on the Book of Kings. This is a good time to come along for the first time.

## **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.

## **Lent Lunches**

St George's will be hosting Lent Lunches in Pontesbury throughout Lent, commencing on February 18<sup>th</sup> from 12-1 p.m. in the West End Room. All welcome.

## **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>!

## **Ash Wednesday**

There will be a service of Ashing with Holy Communion on Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at St George's Pontesbury. If you have palm crosses from last year, please return these by Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> Feb.

## **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 this Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> before or after the 10.30 service at St George's (there is an additional £10 charge if you would like to join the guided tour). If you are not able to make payment at the service, you can post/deliver to Sadie at 1, Jubilee Cottages, Main Road, Pontesbury (next to the pharmacy).

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

Jeremiah 1. 4-10

Galatians 1. 11-16a

Matthew 19.27-end

## **Calendar for the Week**

Fri 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Coffee Stop at St George's
Sun 25 <sup>th</sup>	Holy Communion at Hope at 9 a.m. Family Service at Pontesbury at 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion at Minsterley at 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion at Habberley at 5 p.m.
Mon 26 <sup>th</sup>	Youth Café at HTM at 3.30 p.m.
Tues 27 <sup>th</sup>	Foodbank at Minsterley from 10-12 Little Dragons at St George's 10-11.30 a.m. Oasis at Minsterley Methodist Chapel 12-1.30 p.m. Ichthus at The Blessing, Snailbeach at 2.30 p.m.
Weds 28 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee Hub at HTM 10-12 Tea Break at St George's 2-4pm Rea Valley Prayer Group at 7 p.m.
Thurs 29 <sup>th</sup>	Foodbank at Pontesbury 10-12 Trinity Tots at HTM 10-11.30 a.m.
Sat 31 <sup>st</sup>	Bingo at St George's at 7 p.m.

Sun 1<sup>st</sup> Feb     Holy Communion at Shelve at 9 a.m.

Holy Communion at Pontesbury at 10.30 a.m.

Tea-time Service at Minsterley at 4 p.m.