



Pontesbury & Stiperstones Family of Churches Newsletter

14th to 28th August 2026

Dear friends

Did you watch the eclipse on Wednesday? Watching the photos of the total eclipse in other parts of the world made me imagine what it must have been like for people in ancient times, plunged into darkness and perhaps wondering if the light would ever return. No wonder many of them worshipped the sun, which brought them warmth and light.

The writers of the Old Testament are clear that the sun is not itself a god, but is part of the creation which points us towards the creator God.

Palab Ghosh, commenting for the BBC, said this of the eclipse which he watched in Spain, 'It reminds us of what it is to be human, that we are a small planet in a vast cosmos, and we are seeing the sun in its beautiful, hidden form. Amazing.'

When we look at the wonder of creation it does remind us how small we are, but it also reminds us of the amazing God who made it all, including us. And when we look at Jesus, we are reminded that small as we are, the creator wants us to know his love and his presence always.

Rev Fran

Jan Pither

Following the sad death of Jan Pither, St George's is hosting a Memorial Service for her on Friday August 28th at 2 p.m. All welcome to attend.

Confirmation

Preparation for confirmation is soon to begin, with a three-week course, co-led by Greg and David Moss. The dates for this are Mon 2nd Sept, Tues 8th and 15th. Anyone interested in attending should contact Greg as soon as possible to find out more information.

Ian Williams

We are delighted to have Revd Ian Williams as part of our team. The primary focus of Ian's ministry will be at Hope/Shelve. His email address is revian01@outlook.com (please note that the wrong address was given initially) and telephone number 07557 340174. Ian's day off is Monday.

Holiday

Please note that Greg and Fran will be on holiday from 14th-27th August inclusive. Any queries should be directed to one of the clergy or to your churchwarden.

Fran Brealey

There will be a farewell service with and for Fran on Sunday August 30th at 10.30 a.m. at All Saints Shelve. Please note that there will be refreshments afterwards but no lunch. Fran's last service in Pontesbury will be on Sunday August 16th at 10.30 a.m. which will be followed by a lunch.

Holy Trinity Minsterley opening times

Caroline Holloway is currently opening and locking up Minsterley church, usually opening around 9ish and locking up between 6.30 and 7pm.

If there is an issue please contact her on 07754 773 548. During the last week in August, it will be Helen Pitt.

Ride & Stride

This year, as a benefice, we will be participating in walking for Ride & Stride on Saturday Sept 19th. We have had a rethink about the route, and now plan to take in churches in Cound, Acton Burnell and Frodesley. The total distance is approximately 12 miles, but you are welcome to do as much or as little as you wish. Please speak to Sarah Edwards or Stephen Winwood if you would like to know more about it.

Bible Study

The Monday night Bible Study group will be taking a late summer break and will reconvene on Monday September 21st to study the Book of Esther.

Deanery Picnic

St George's is hosting a Deanery Picnic on Bank Holiday Monday August 31st at 12 noon (see attached poster). Please bring your own picnic and chairs. All welcome.

Soiree Evening at St George's

A lovely 3-course meal with menu choice and great company! Please note the date has changed from the 19th September to Saturday **26th September**. The evening begins at 6.30 pm, maximum 20 diners. Tickets £25 per person, payment due by 13th September, available from Marianne marianmccall.17@gmail.com or Marion mepontesbury@gmail.com

An Evening of Songs with Stuart Carter

Also on 26th September, Stuart will be giving a concert in aid of Minsterley Parish Hall (charity No 522551) which is used by many people and community groups in the neighbourhood. 7pm start. Tickets £10 in advance from Minsterley Flower Shop, Hignetts or Stuart (see attached poster) or £12 on the door. All proceeds going towards the Hall.

Musical Bingo evening

There will be an evening of Musical Bingo in Habberley Village Hall on Thursday 8th October. Hall opens at 6.30 Eyes down at 7.00. Light refreshments during a mid-session interval. Tickets £10 available from: Robert Currie (robert.h.currie@gmail.com) Tel 01743 790123. Pearl Hannigan (pearlhannigan@gmx.co.uk) Tel 01743 790495. Pauline Stopford (pauline.stopford@outlook.com) Tel 01743 790784. Prizes for the winners, all proceeds to St Mary's Church.

A message from the Bishop's Office

In September, Bishop Richard and Deborah will have the privilege of travelling to Tanzania to join in the celebrations marking the centenary of the Diocese of Masasi. It is a significant moment in the life of the Church in Masasi and a wonderful opportunity to express our friendship and partnership with our brothers and sisters there.

As part of their visit, we have offered to take a small number of gifts which will be distributed amongst churches and communities in the diocese. Bishop James Almasi has shared a list of some items that would be a real blessing to congregations and communities across the diocese.

The diocese has asked for donations of:

- Reading glasses
- First aid kits
- Blood pressure monitors
- Pulse oximeters
- Children's craft supplies
- Deflated footballs
- Football pumps and repair kits
- Small gifts and educational resources for children

If you would like to contribute, please could any donated items be delivered to your local church by Sunday 6 September. *Please don't stray beyond this list because we want to honour what they have asked for.*

One of the great joys of belonging to the worldwide Anglican Communion is the opportunity to support one another in faith, prayer and practical care. As the Diocese of Masasi celebrates this remarkable centenary, this is a small but meaningful way for us to share in their joy and strengthen the bonds of friendship between us!

Readings for August

Sunday 16th

Psalms 67

Romans 11. 1-2a, 29-32

Matthew 15. 21-28

Sunday 23rd

Isaiah 51. 1-6

Romans 12. 1-8

Matthew 16. 13-20

Sunday 30th

Romans 12.9-end

Matthew 16.21-end

Calendar for the next three weeks

Fri 14 th	Prayers at HTM at 9.30 a.m. Coffee Stop at St George’s 10-12 noon
Sat 15 th	The Minsterley Show
Sun 16th	Worship Together at Shelve at 9 a.m. Minsterley Praise at Minsterley Methodist Chapel at 10 a.m. Holy Communion with Children’s Church at Pontesbury at 10.30 a.m.
Tues 18 th	Foodbank at HTM 10-12 The Gathering at Marton Village Hall at 7 p.m.
Weds 19 th	Coffee Hub from 10-12 at HTM Tea Break at St George’s 2-4 p.m.
Thurs 20 th	Foodbank at St George’s 10-12
Fri 21 st	Prayers at HTM at 9.30 a.m. Coffee Stop at St George’s 10-12 noon
Sun 23rd	Morning Prayer at Hope at 9 a.m. Family Service at Pontesbury at 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion at Minsterley at 10.30 a.m. Evensong at Habberley at 5pm
Tues 25 th	Foodbank at HTM 10-12
Weds 26 th	Coffee Hub from 10-12 at HTM Tea Break at St George’s 2-4 p.m.
Thurs 27 th	Foodbank at St George’s 10-12
Fri 28 th	Prayers at HTM at 9.30 a.m. Coffee Stop at St George’s 10-12 noon Thanksgiving Service for Jan Pither at 2 p.m. at St George’s
Sun 30th	Group Service at Shelve at 10.30 a.m. (Fran’s farewell)
Mon 31 st	Deanery Picnic at Pontesbury at 12 noon
Tues 1 st Sept	Foodbank at HTM 10-12

Tea Service at St George's at 2.30 p.m.

Youth Team meeting at St George's at 4 p.m.

Confirmation Group at 7 p.m. at St Mary's Westbury

Weds 2nd Pontesbury Standing Committee at 9.15 a.m. in the WER

Coffee Hub from 10-12 at HTM

Tea Break at St George's 2-4 p.m.

Minsterley Messy Church planning meeting at 3.30 at HTM

Minsterley Standing Committee at 7 p.m. at The Deanery

Thurs 3rd Foodbank at St George's 10-12

Messy Church at St George's at 3.30 p.m.

Fri 4th Prayers at HTM at 9.30 a.m.

Coffee Stop at St George's 10-12 noon

Sat 5th Habberley Produce Show 2-4 at Habberley Village Hall

Afternoon Tea at Merrilees 1-4 p.m. opposite Hillcrest

Sun 6th Sept 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.