

A Selection of Upcoming Events and Training

Year of Faith

Bishop's Teaching Event

Saturday 5th October

St Peter's Worfield, nr Bridgnorth

SPACE by Luxmuralis

A light and sound show

16th-19th October

Hereford Cathedral

Info: www.herefordcathedral.org

Year of Faith

Bishop's Study Day 2

Thursday 24th October

St Peter's, Hereford

Year of Faith

Spiritual Question Time

Tuesday 12th November

Stokesay Inn, Craven Arms

For more information about these and all our events please visit our diocese Eventbrite page online at <https://bit.ly/4ebcnCL>

Parish Giving Scheme sees an upward lift

Average monthly giving through the Parish Giving Scheme in Hereford Diocese has climbed above £12 per person per week for the first time, after a larger-than-usual increase. The increase shows the value of the Parish Giving Scheme, which enables parishioners to sign up digitally (or by telephone or post) to give a regular amount on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. Added benefits include an opt-in to an annual increase in line with inflation, and the streamlined collection and payment of Gift Aid to churches.

Over 54% of givers have opted in to the inflationary increase, which provides a helpful reminder to review our giving to the church every year, and nearly 90% of givers have added Gift Aid to their gifts, representing a monthly payment of nearly £30,000 to churches across the diocese.

Mark Simmons, Parish Giving Adviser at the diocese, comments: "It is encouraging to see this upward trend. £12 per person per week is considerably more than the average gift left in the offertory plate when people go to church, especially if they do not go to church every week. Two thirds of churches in the diocese have already signed up to the scheme, which also makes it easy for people to support their local church even if they are not regular attenders. It's heartening to see the beginnings of a shift in attitudes towards giving and generosity. We will be continuing to encourage the 120 churches in the diocese who are not yet part of the Parish Giving Scheme to sign up over the coming year. The Scheme is free to join."

For support in setting up the scheme for your church please email: Mark.Simmons@hereford.anglican.org



What is faith, really?

by The Venerable Fiona Gibson, Archdeacon of Ludlow

Dear friends,

We're three-quarters of the way through our Year of Faith, which seems like a good point to pause and reflect. Building on last year's Year of Prayer, we've been encouraged throughout the year to develop our confidence in our faith, and in the fact that people are actually hungry to hear the stories of our faith and what it means to us.

Of course, by the grace of God we'll carry on growing in faith and confidence as we go into 2025, just as we've carried on growing in prayer in 2024.

But what *is* faith, really? I reflected on this with Churchwardens at the Visitations in the Ludlow Archdeaconry in the summer. Faith *isn't* believing six impossible things before breakfast. Faith *doesn't* require us to remove our brains as we enter church, leaving them in a box ready to collect on our way out of church and back into our everyday lives. Faith *isn't* a vague nebulous matter – faith has to be *in* something or someone.

Faith *is*, according to the writer of the

Letter to the Hebrews, "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." There's a paradoxical firmness in that. We can't physically see the outcome of the promises we receive by faith, but we can have an unshakeable conviction that they are true, and that what we now receive by faith we shall one day know by sight.

We can be so certain because we know and trust the one in whom our faith is placed. We know God's character and faithfulness. We know, as the well-loved hymn puts it, "As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be." God has proved it time and again in the pages of Scripture, in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and in our own lives.

When we know the one in whom our faith is placed, we know our faith is not in vain. When my children were young, my very adventurous daughter climbed the tree in our back garden. She got stuck. She was only two, and she became scared. She called to me for help,

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but first on the scene was her older brother, aged four. "Don't worry," he soothed his frightened sister. "I'm here. I'll help get you down." My daughter paused momentarily from her crying and then resumed her loud pleas for help. Not because she didn't trust her brother, but because she knew he didn't have the height or the strength to deliver on his well-meaning promise. Only when I rushed down the garden did she begin to calm down, because she knew I could actually help.

Our faith is not in vain because we

know the one in whom we have trusted. We know that he is at work in the seen and in the unseen, and that he is at work building his Church whether we shall ever live to see that time of growth and harvest or not.

So let's keep telling one another and those we meet day-by-day the stories of faith, and of the utter reliability and certainty of the gospel and of the God who makes it all possible. For faith is being *sure* of what we hope for and *certain* of what we do not [yet] see.

Bishop Richard plans sabbatical in early 2025

Bishop Richard has announced that he'll be taking a sabbatical in January 2025. Clergy are encouraged to take a sabbatical from time to time to support personal and ministerial development – and bishops are no exception to that rule. Bishop Richard explains; "I'm planning to take a sabbatical from early January until mid-April 2025. I will be travelling to New Zealand where I intend to explore models of rural ministry and mission from a number of different perspectives. New Zealand is a very secular culture where only 6% of the population identify as Anglicans. This is learning that I hope will support our work here in our rural diocese. I am grateful to episcopal colleagues in the Church of Aotearoa who have already kindly offered hospitality and time to explore these issues. I also hope to spend

time on retreat and to catch up with reading.

"The diocese will be looked after by Bishop David Thomson who will be standing in for me in the day to day operation. He will be supported by Archdeacons Fiona and Derek who will take on some additional duties and will be granted additional episcopal responsibilities during my absence. I look forward to returning refreshed and ready for our journey together as we seek to proclaim Christ and grow disciples here in Hereford Diocese."

All clergy are entitled to apply for a sabbatical every seven to ten years. The principle is taken directly from the Bible. The Bishop last took a sabbatical in 2016 when he was Bishop of Lewes.

Proclaiming Christ ✦ Growing Disciples

Diocese News

2024 Order of St Ethelbert Awards



We are delighted to announce the names of this year's recipients of the Order of St Ethelbert. The Order was founded in 2015 to recognise and honour women and men from the parishes of the diocese and beyond who have supported and nurtured the Christian ministry of the diocese in many and devoted ways.

Bishop Richard presents the awards at a special service which will take place on Sunday 6th October, at 3.30pm during Evensong at Hereford Cathedral. The service will be followed by light refreshments. Each recipient receives a signed certificate from Bishop Richard, a St Ethelbert medal and ribbon and a copy of the book *St Ethelbert, King and Martyr*.

The recipients for 2024 are:

Ms Beryl Andrews, Stretton Sugwas
Mrs Elaine Andrews, Sutton St Michael and Sutton St Nicholas
Mr Kenneth Auty, Bishops Castle
Dr James Ayres, Ford and Alberbury

Mrs Gillian Bilbrough, Elton
Ms Annabelle Brown, Kinnersley
Mrs Joy Conlon, Colwall
Mr Robert Curtis, Quatford
Mrs Margaret Darlington, Coalbrookdale
Mr Colin Edwards, Minsterley
Mrs Marie Edwards, Minsterley
Miss Susannah Hall, Ashford Carbonel
Mrs Cynthia Hartland, Grandstand Road, Holmer
Ms Diane Hodgson, Coddington
Mr Simon Hudson, Hereford Cathedral
Mr Geoff Jarrett, Smethcote
Mrs Donna Jones, Credenhill
Mrs Elizabeth Jones, Diddlebury and Corvedale
Mr Tony Lewis, Lydbury North
Mrs Mary Morgan, Llanfair Waterdine
Mr Edgar Moss, Mordiford
Miss Christabel Panter, Ledbury
Mr Anthony Penn, Tenbury Wells
Mrs Janet Penn, Tenbury Wells
Mr Douglas Simkin, Coalbrookdale
Mr Brian Speakman, Wellington Heath
Mrs Dianne Tomlins-Davies, Westbury
Mrs Maureen Turner, Bishops Frome