

Linking Parish Churches around Bridgnorth **CROSS+LINK**



St Mary Magdalene
Bridgnorth



SS Peter + Paul
Tasley



St Calixtus
Astley Abbots



St Nicholas
Oldbury



St Mary Magdalene
Quatford



St Leonards Hall
Bridgnorth



Bridgnorth
St James' Hall

Acton Round
St Mary the Virgin

Aston Eyre
Aston Eyre

Monkhopton
St Peter's

Morville
St Gregory the Great

Upton Cressett
St Michael's



From Rt. Revd. Dr. David Thomason (Acting Bishop of Hereford)

The New Year is underway, and I am standing in for Bishop Richard while he is on sabbatical. He has given us themes for recent years: Prayer, Faith, and now it's Engagement – with Celebration to come! There's a lovely sense of flow between them, I think. Let me say what I mean...

Our church is rooted in Christ, and our relationship with him in prayer is where it all begins. Without the roots, nothing else will grow. St John loves to use the word "Abiding" for this relationship – one of peace and permanence, of being where we belong. "Abide in me as I abide in you." (John 15.4) When we find our place, we find our peace and become people of peace. We are seeing a global increase in anxiety, and "We are Farming Minds" has shown how that is true locally, too. If we can be people of peace and offer places of peace, we can make a difference in real, local lives.

Out of the roots of prayer come shoots of faith: "I am the vine; you are the branches." (John 15.5) As we abide in Christ, so we come to trust him more as the well-spring of our life. We seek security in all sorts of things, some good, some less so; but also realise that what they offer is limited and sometimes deceptive. I sensed this Christmas afresh how fundamental the Christmas presence of Christ was compared with any of the presents life can bring, right here, in a broken world of lost homes and lives. I have friends on my heart for whom Christmas brought bad news not good, and my longing for them is that they will know Christ's presence in their predicaments.

Then, the shoots of faith lead to the fruits of engagement, as lives are touched and changed for the better. "Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit." (John 15.5) It may well be that the need to find peace and solace in a disastrous world first draws us to the church. But as Christ grows in us and we in him, we realise that the church is not an escape craft from the world but a landing craft into it. God's great desire is that the whole world should be saved. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John 3,16) And that is worth a Year of Engagement in God's mission with the world around us now, and a Year of Celebration when it comes! **+David**

**A Part-Time(16hrs) Team Administrator
is required for the Bridgnorth and Morville
Benefice
based at the Team Office in Tasley**

The Team Administrator runs a busy office that provides administrative back-up for the nine parishes which comprise the Bridgnorth and Morville Benefice.

The role involves preparing material and notices required for weekly services in the parishes, booking Weddings and Christenings, and liaising with funeral directors and the Priest-in-charge regarding booking funerals and the related fees. Further, it involves dealing with a wide variety of postal matters, phone calls and emails from the parishes, their congregations and members of the public. A monthly Benefice magazine is produced by the office, with parish news and information, and a team website is also updated.

Please contact Rev. Suzan Williams for an application and further information
rectorbridgnorthandmorville@gmail.com

**Winning tickets for
ST MARY'S 200 CLUB**

December draw
£20 Christopher Gill 173
£10 Kay King 161
£10 Helen Howell 43
£10 Laura King 166
£10 Margaret Parker
£10 Blake Bromley 100

ST MARY'S CONNECT

Our next lunch and get together is on **Tuesday 18th February** in The function room at **The Shakespeare Pub at 12.30**

If you would like to join us please contact Catherine Wilson 01746 761786 to book your place, these are limited and will be allocated on a first come first

ST MARY MAGDALENE BRIDGNORTH COFFEE SHOP

St Mary's Coffee Shop Every Saturday—10.00am—12.30pm



Music Director - Steve Cooper
Accompanist - Oliver Clarke

**St Mary's Chamber Choir
SOS! Sing on Saturdays**

(Choir founded in 2005)
Rehearsals resume on **Saturday 18th January 2025** in
preparation for our Easter Concert
on **Saturday 19th April 2025 at 7pm.**

These rehearsals take place at 10.00am - 11.30am
in church (St Mary's - East Castle St).

No voice test just come along and join 50 other singers both men,
women and students as we begin to prepare music for Easter.

New members are always welcome.

For further details: contact Jane Downing via email
jane.downing60@gmail.com

More details about the choir can be found on our website:

www.stmaryschamberchoir.co.uk



Quatford News

Already into the second month of the year with the Christmas festivities fading away.

Our Christmas services were pleasingly well attended, especially the carol service. With the church decorated and candles lit it made for a warm welcome for our extra visitors, most of whom stayed to enjoy the usual offerings of sherry, mulled wine, mince pies, shortbread and an interesting assortment of Christmas tasty treats.

Thanks to Carol, Naomi, the choir and William our chorister for their input to the service and of course to Marjorie for leading a most enjoyable service.

My thanks to all who helped with the decorating of the church, tree, windows and the crib, the church looked lovely.

January and February are usually quiet months, mainly due to weather restrictions, but hopefully we will be able to continue with the outside painting of gutters and downpipes once the weather settles. Our main project this year will be major repairs to the lift, which includes replacing the main winding cable.

We have a couple of social fund raising events in the early planning stages so more details as things progress.

I close with the very sad news that Anne and David Wenlock lost their son Andrew, who died on the 17th January after losing his battle against cancer. Our thoughts, love and prayers are with Anne and David and all their family. Please remember them in your prayers.

Rachel

St. Nicholas, Oldbury & Eardington – News

Although the decorations are packed away, the Christmas season continues with Epiphany bringing joy, light and warm Christmas memories to our congregations in this very chilly new year. Both Quatford and Oldbury enjoyed well attended carol services on Sunday 15th and Monday 16th December. Thanks go to Carol, the choir and all those who decorated the churches and prepared refreshments. The celebrations were beautiful and a magical lead up to Christmas which was celebrated at Quatford on Christmas Eve and Oldbury on Christmas morning. We thank Marjorie for leading us through thick and thin over the past few years and braving the icy and foggy elements to lead our worship into 2025. Having welcomed Suzan Williams we now await the arrival of Vickie Dunlop to the Bridgnorth team ministry and look forward to seeing them both in our churches later in the year.

We will be celebrating the lives of John Broad and Marjorie Betts during January. John died on Boxing Day and his funeral is at St Nicholas, Oldbury on the 21st January and Marjorie's is on Wednesday 29th January. Marjorie died the weekend before Christmas and was our neighbour and parishioner. She will be sadly missed by many who knew her in the St Nicholas congregation.

As the days grow longer and warmer we have a happy event to look forward to. The John Moore Quire is returning to St Nicholas on Saturday 1st March to entertain us in concert after which we will be sharing supper together – a date to mark in your diaries!



**Elizabeth
Obadina**

St Nicholas in February. Soon our churchyard will once again be full of sunshine and spring flowers.

In Frost

In frost that drew my breath in smoke,
That straight away froze,
I reached the top of a familiar path;
There met a man who might have spoke
My name, but, turning, chose
To walk another way; his face awoke
For me, some childhood time
We must have shared.
My thinning hair his grizzled beard,
Our boyhood looks could not disguise;
But to speak something, neither cared,
And we passed with averted eyes –
Knowing how our paths had crossed
In winter year's of life's grey frost.

Roger Taylor

A Frosty Non-Reception

Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were restrained, so that

They did not know Him. Luke 24:15-16

My apologies if you have already seen enough of frosty weather this winter but it was such a hard, frosty day which reminded me of the accompanying poem which I wrote several years ago which had something in common with the Emmaus Road account shortly after Jesus had risen: it is very possible that the post-resurrection Jesus was altered so that Cleopas and his travelling companion saw, but did not perceive the identity of the Risen Christ.

Time changes us all; in the case of Jesus just a few days were enough to give Him a Resurrection Body which was and was not like the master they knew.

With my own experience, over sixty years had intervened so that we were and were not like the school boys we remembered.

The poem 'In Frost' was a one-off experience and probably never to be repeated: the opportunity however to act upon the recognition of Jesus in our lives is a daily and ongoing one: sometimes people do need help to have their eyes opened to Him and as Christians we have the privilege to help them with that. Amen.

Roger



**Tell our story
Dream with God**

**Saturday 8th of February 9.30-4pm
Astley Abbots village hall**

**Come and take part in a day where we begin to explore the
what, when and the how to get to where we'd like to be.**

Contact Suzan for more details

rectorbridgnorthandmorville@gmail.com

'Priestly Ponderings'

Valentine's Day: A Celebration of Love, Tradition, and Modern Connections

Every year, on February 14th, millions of people around the world come together to celebrate love, affection, and companionship. Valentine's Day, with its heart-shaped symbols, flowers, chocolates, and declarations of love, is a tradition that has evolved through centuries, blending ancient customs with modern expressions of romance. But how did this day come to be, and what does it mean for us in today's world?

The Origins of Valentine's Day

The roots of Valentine's Day stretch deep into history, with connections to both ancient Roman rituals and Christian martyrs. One popular theory traces the holiday to *Lupercalia*, a fertility festival celebrated by Romans in mid-February. During this celebration, priests would sacrifice goats and dogs, and young men would draw the names of women from a box to pair up for the festivities. While these customs sound a far cry from the romantic image we associate with Valentine's Day today, they laid the groundwork for the festival of love.

The association with St. Valentine comes from several legends surrounding early Christian martyrs named Valentine. The most widely accepted story is of a priest named Valentine, who defied an emperor's ban on marriages for young soldiers in ancient Rome. He continued to perform weddings in secret and was eventually executed for his disobedience. His acts of compassion and love for others became symbolic of the kind of affection we celebrate today.

In the Middle Ages, Valentine's Day began to take shape as a day dedicated to lovers, fuelled in part by the writings of poets like Geoffrey Chaucer. By the 18th century, exchanging cards, flowers, and gifts became widespread in England and France, creating the romantic holiday we recognize now.

The Symbols of Love

Valentine's Day is filled with iconic imagery, from roses and chocolates to Cupid and love letters. Each of these symbols carries its own rich history and significance:

- **Roses:** As the quintessential symbol of romance, roses have been associated with love for centuries. The red rose, in particular, represents deep love and passion. In ancient Greek and Roman mythology, roses were linked to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and the red variety was believed to be the result of her tears mixed with the blood of her lover, Adonis.
- **Cupid:** The mischievous Roman god of love, often depicted as a chubby, winged child with a bow and arrow, is another key figure. According to myth, anyone struck by Cupid's arrow would fall deeply in love, a concept that remains a playful part of modern Valentine's Day celebrations.

Cards and Love Letters: The tradition of sending written expressions of affection began in the 15th century, and by the 19th century, mass-produced Valentine's cards became a staple of the holiday. Today, over 145 million cards are exchanged each year in the United States alone, making Valentine's Day the second-largest card-sending holiday, after Christmas.

Whether you spend the day with a partner, friends, family, or enjoying your own company, Valentine's Day will continue to be a moment to reflect on the most important aspect of human existence: love. As long as people are willing to show kindness, compassion, and connection, the holiday's essence will remain timeless.

Jesus said in John 15:13 '*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*' Love is sacrificial and puts the needs of others before our own. Let's be challenged today to explore what that might look like practically as we seek to connect with those around us.

This February 14th, take a moment to celebrate not just romantic love but the many forms of love that make life rich and meaningful. Because at its core, Valentine's Day is a reminder that love—no matter how it's expressed—is always worth celebrating.

Every Blessing
Suzan

NEWS FROM ST. MARY'S

We at St. Marys like all the churches in our benefice are enjoying a very exciting time. Not only have we had the usual joy and excitement of all the Christmas services where we have the opportunity to welcome so many people into our churches but this year we had the extra excitement of hosting the Licensing service for our new priest Suzan Williams.

The Licensing service was very special and I think everyone present was moved by it . We have all waited a long time for our new priest in charge and this service seemed the perfect start to this next chapter of ministry for our benefice. We now welcome Suzan to St. Mary's and look forward to her ministry with us.

Although Christmas is behind us now just have to mention the lovely concerts that we were treated to over the Advent and Christmas period . Firstly the chamber choir who treated us once again to a wonderful concert a real start to Christmas. Unfortunately it was held on that very stormy Saturday which meant that audience numbers were a little lower than usual but those of us that were lucky enough to be able to get there were given a real treat. The Chamber Choir have already started rehearsals for their Easter concert which we eagerly await.

This Christmas we were really spoilt as not only did we have the chamber choir concert we had a lovely Christmas Concert given by Hugh Walker and his colleagues. Again another real treat for the start of the Christmas period.

We have had a busy start to the New Year with January seeing us at St. Mary's hosting the Happiness Lab course which is being well received from those who are able to attend.

January also saw another new initiative with a different type of worship being held to celebrate Epiphany. The service included refreshments and opportunity for craft and then a short service of worship. I understand that this was the first of a series of events which are intended to offer different forms of worship. We look forward to experiencing more of these as time goes on.

Catherine. Wilson

Tasley News

Welcome to our 1st edition of the 2025 Cross+Link.

We hope that you all had a good Christmas. I know many of us were affected by these awful coughs and colds prior to and over Christmas and New Year and hope that you are all on the mend as we look forward to a Happy, Healthy and a Peaceful New Year.

Our annual Parish Christmas Lunch on the 14th December was again a great success and enjoyed by all that attended Thanks again to Norma, John and the team at The Bulls Head Chelmarsh for another brilliant meal.



Our Christmas Services were very successful and our thanks to everyone for their contributions.

On Sunday 19th January as we welcomed Revd Suzan to Tasley we said thank you to Revd Clive Parr who has been a huge support to us at a time of need enabling us to continue our weekly Services. Clive has made the decision not to renew his licence and therefore enabling him and Mary to enjoy a well earned retirement.



We wish them well and look forward to our continued friendship in Church and the Parish.

Our next Service at St Peter and St Paul's, Tasley will be :-
Holy Communion on **Sunday 16th February at 10.30am.**

Bob's now collecting your 100 Club memberships for 2025.

Looking forward to seeing you at the next coffee morning which continue on the 1st Monday of the month 10.30 to 12md.

Events

Sat 15th Feb - "Flicks in the Sticks" with Fish & Chips £12 in the village hall at 7pm

Monday 3rd March Coffee Morning & Fire Safety Talk – 10-30am

Margaret

ASTLEY ABBOTTS NEWS

A bright "Hello" as we step into February with lightening nights and and a positive feeling about the coming year. We welcome our new Priest in Charge Suzan and look forward to regular communions once more, the first of which will be on the 2nd February at 9am!

We had a wonderful Christmas season starting with cafe church, which doubled up as Christingle, many thanks to all our organisers especially Judy who arranged the children's Christingles, but also

Juanita and Michael in the kitchen and Rosemary Graham and Helen doing "front of house". Carols by candlelight was beautiful, the church looked so attractive and the choir led the carols. The village came to Astley Abbots House and drank and sang lustily on the friday, again thankyou to the choir for leading everyone .Finally on Christmas Eve we had our crib service lead by Simon Boxall who was a very enthusiastic "Star from the East", helped by various members of the congregation and accompanied by Peter on guitar and Helen on violin he lead us round the churchyard and into the church to the crib! A great success, a big thankyou Simon!



Moving forward on Saturday 8th February "Tell our Story" is taking place in Astley Abbots Village Hall from 9.30-4pm please see page 8.

Michael and Clare are once again generously offering a snowdrop walk followed by coffee and cake on Sunday 9th at 10.30, tickets £5 from Juanita 07929729551, (a note for your diary-they are also opening their garden at rhododendron time 18th May)

I finish on a sad note, Ron Painter passed away on 23rd December at the grand age 96, he has been a village stalwart, a real gentleman, our thoughts are with you and your family Angie. His funeral is at St Calixtus on 12th February at 11.30 am.

Idonea



'Music for Easter'

**St Mary's Chamber Choir
will be performing
'Faure Requiem'
& music for Holy Week**

At

**St Mary Magdalene Church
East Castle Street, Bridgnorth
Easter Saturday 19th April 2025
7.00pm**

Music Director : Steve Cooper

Accompanist : Oliver Clarke

Tickets £10 on the door

Includes programme and refreshments

God's Acre

January can feel like a cold and grey month so it is very cheering to see a flash of colour and hear a little birdsong. During the winter most birds do not sing, instead making simple calls, one or two syllables which are contact calls, allowing them to keep in touch with others within a flock, whilst they move around, foraging for food. Longer and more melodic songs are generally heard in spring when male birds are using song to communicate that they are present and are holding a breeding territory. These territories will contain nesting places such as trees or shrubs as well as sources of food and male birds proclaim this by song, deterring rivals and attracting females. The Robin however has a proper winter song as it holds a territory over the winter. Robins are not in pairs during the winter so both males and females sing and hold separate territories. These territories are giving them winter shelter and food and they will defend them fiercely, flying at intruders as well as singing.

In winter many Robins migrate from further north into the UK, flying in from Scandinavia, Russia, Poland and elsewhere. This also explains why we seem to see more Robins in the winter as our own summer Robins remain here all year round so numbers increase. The Robin's song is tuneful and a little melancholy but the reality of Robin life is harsher with an average lifespan of only 9 months. Many do not survive the winter so holding and defending a territory containing good sources food and shelter is vital. The combination of a churchyard with mature, sheltering trees, plentiful berries, seeds and insects as well as soil invertebrates such as worms make them attractive to Robins. Churchyards tend to be rich in insect and other invertebrate life as no chemicals are used within them and the soils have been developing over decades or centuries, full of life. Churchyards are also usually surrounded by gardens so natural food may well be being topped up with mealworms, bird seed and fat balls too.

Why not look for Robins in your local churchyard or cemetery and listen for their winter song, you might like to put up some open-fronted nest boxes for them too, on churchyard trees and within gardens as well. Please let us know if you see or hear a Robin in your churchyard, use the iNaturalist app and photograph it if it will stay still long enough or else record its song, a biological record can be made either way.
All the best,

Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor

REGISTERS

FUNERALS

11.11.24 Gwyn Lewis

29.11.24 David Allen

10.12.24 Phillip Steven Upton

20.12.24 Jennifer Davies

10.1.25 Mary Ford

17.1.25 Vera Dytor

21.1.25 John Leonard Broad

22.1.25 Margaret Rachael Parker



CHRIS HALL

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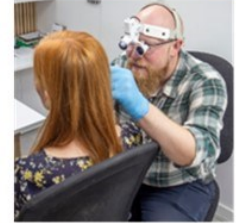
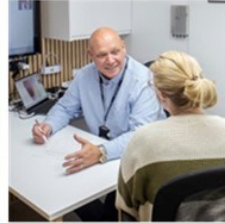


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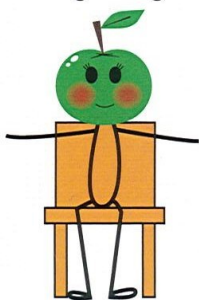


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Oldbury Wells School 765454
St John's Primary School 762061
St Leonard's Primary School 762781
St Mary's Primary School 763455
Castlefields Primary School 764072

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital
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Shropshire Fire and Rescue
01743 260260

**Bridgnorth and
Morville Parishes
Team Ministry**

Team Office: St Leonard's Hall Church,
Racecourse Drive,
Tasley,
Bridgnorth
WV16 4NR
Tel: 01746 767174
Team Administrator: Mrs Avril Bridges

Open to personal callers:
Mon, Tues, Wed and Thurs
8.30am - 11.30am

Email :
bridgnorthteamministry@yahoo.co.uk
Website :
www.bridgnorthteamministry.org.uk

Priest in charge

Revd. Suzan Williams 01746 599529
rectorbridgnorthandmorville@gmail.com

Anna Chaplain/Reader

Mrs Jane Peeler 767043
annachaplainbtm@yahoo.com

Honorary Assistant Ministers

Revd. Marjorie Brooks 01746 761942
marjorie.brooks47@googlemail.com

Revd. Simon Boxall 07788869876
boxbruk@hotmail.com

**St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth
Churchwardens**

Mr David Oxtoby...766053
Mrs Jane Parr...07814908917
Secretary Miss Catherine Wilson...761786
Treasurer Mrs Nicky Cooper762487
Vergers Mr Roger Taylor...767345
Deputy Organist
Mr Oliver Clarke...07545756869

**St Nicholas, Oldbury
Churchwardens**

Mrs Liz Fisher ... 764059
Treasurer Mr Quentin Leiper...764559
Organist Mrs Carol Wall...764365

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Churchwardens**

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Mrs Helen Holding....07813 584469
Secretary Mrs Juanita Gennard...768674
Treasurer Mr Michael Payne....07790 610441
Organist Mr Stephen Lomas...768648

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Tim Morris...789271
Secretary Helen Smith01952 883599
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Vacant
Vergers Mr Bob Curtis...766126
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Treasurer Mrs Marian Newell...765287
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Mr John Andrews 761708
Secretary Ms Lesley Edwards...761847
Treasurer Mrs Irene Rogers...765926
Organist Mr Stephen Lomas...768648

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Secretary Mrs Jayne Madeley...785571
Treasurer Mrs Susan Kennedy...714203

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Mr Terry Fellows...01902 564748
Mr Ed Pugh....01746 789685
Treasurer Mrs Tamsin Preece..01746 765538

St James' Hall Church

Booking Secretary Mrs Liz Fisher...764059
elizabethfisher29@icloud.com

St Leonards Hall Church

Booking Secretary Rachel Connelly...767660

Tasley Village Hall

Booking Secretary Fiona Berriman... 765512

Astley Abbotts Village Hall

Booking Secretary Charles Morris.....762029

Deadline for Cross+Link articles for

March edition

Wednesday 19th February

by 1.00pm

If you would like to contribute to the magazine,
please send to Avril at the Office on
bridgnorthteamministry@yahoo.co.uk.
If you would like to advertise please also
contact Avril on the above details

FEBRUARY '25

<i>HC = Holy Communion</i> <i>MP = Morning Prayer</i>	2nd Feb Candlemas	9th Feb 4 Before Lent	16th Feb 3 Before Lent	23rd Feb 2 Before Lent
St Mary Magdalene Bridgnorth	10.30 HC	10.30 HC	10.30 MP	10.30 FS AND BAPTISM
St Mary Magdalene Quatford		10.30 HC		10.30 HC
St Calixtus Astley Abbotts	9.00 HC	9.30 FS	10.00 café Church (Village Hall)	9.00 MP
St Nicholas Oldbury	10.30 FS/ BAPTISM		10.30 HC	
St Peter and St Paul Tasley			10.30 HC	
St Leonard's Hall Church	10.30 FS		10.30 FC	
St Gregory the Gt. Morville	11.15 MP	11.15 MP	11.15 MP	11.15 HC
Aston Eyre		10.00 MP		10.00 MP
St Mary the Virgin Acton Round		10.00 MP		
Monkhopton	10.00 MP			