

CHURCH NEWS

Monthly Edition

PERSHORE BENEFICE

January / February 2026

Welcome to our first Monthly Edition of 2026

The weekly bulletin in our regular service sheet will keep you up to date with what's happening week by week.

CANDLEMAS: We will be observing The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, otherwise known as Candlemas, on Sunday 1 February. This marks the end of the season of Epiphany, when Jesus was offered to his Father and revealed as the future Saviour of all people. These events are part of the liturgical calendar and include a variety of feasts and holy days throughout the year, each with its own significance and observance, each providing an opportunity to worship. Worship lies at the heart of Christian life. It is in worship we express our theology and define our identity, and it is through encountering God within worship that we are formed and transformed as his people. Are you ready to embrace worship this year? Are you ready to encounter God and to be transformed?



IN THIS EDITION:

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - LENT 2026 - BIRLINGHAM'S BULB SUNDAY

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PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE ON 01386 552071

LENT IN THE PERSHORE BENEFICE



Churches Together in England is the national ecumenical instrument supporting and encouraging churches from a wide range of traditions to work together in unity. The vision being to create a space in which fruitful collaboration and mutual understanding can grow, so we can work together to make the gospel of Christ known in our communities. During Lent, Churches Together in Pershore will be coming together for the following:

SHROVE TUESDAY: Everyone is invited to St Andrew's Centre at 1530 on Tuesday 17 February for pancakes followed by a presentation about Friends of the Holy Land, a non-political, humanitarian agency which we, as Pershore Together in Pershore, are supporting as this year's chosen charity.

PRAY ONE FOR ME: Members of Churches Together in Pershore plan to meet in the Abbey's Apse on Ash Wednesday before going out on to the streets of Pershore between 1100 and 1200 to gather prayers from the community to be offered at the Ash Wednesday 1930 service. This is part of the Worcester Diocese 'Pray One For Me' initiative that seeks to reach out to people and offer them the opportunity for their prayers to be heard. If you would like to join the team, please speak to Claire.

Please leave your old palm crosses in the marked box at the back of the Abbey, so we can recreate the ash in the traditional way at this year's Ash Wednesday services.

PERSHORE BENEFICE ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES: Joining a service on Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent. Everyone is invited to come forward and have a cross made out of ash is marked on their forehead, as a sign of our penitence and God's forgiveness. Our services will take place at the Abbey on Wednesday 18 February at 0830, 1000 and 1930. The 1930 service will be livestreamed.

LENTEN LUNCHESES: This year Churches Together in Pershore will be organising four Lenten Lunches, beginning the week after Ash Wednesday on Wednesday 25 February, 4 March, 11 March, and 18 March. All Lenten Lunches will take place at the Pershore Baptist Church between 1200 and 1330. There is no need to book, just to turn up. All welcome. Donations will be go to Friends of the Holy Land. *Please see page 3 for requests of help.*



LENT IN THE PERSHORE BENEFICE

LENT TALKS - "COME TOGETHER - SAME BUT DIFFERENT": Hear from the different church in our Churches Together group and discover how each church worships, what traditions it believes are important and how it reaches out and supports its congregation and the wider community. Each talk will be from 1930-2030 and will take place at: 26 February (Pershore Abbey), 5 March (Pershore Baptist Church), 12 March (Holy Redeemer Church) and 19 March (Pershore Community Church at The Banking Hall). The final talk will take place on 26 March at St Andrew's Centre, and will be entitled *Together with God* and will involve all four churches. All welcome.

LENT & HOLY WEEK COMPLINE BY ZOOM: Join us via Zoom for this opportunity to share in the quiet and peace of Compline during Lent, with a reflection. Our Zoom sessions will take place on Mondays in Lent from 23 February and then on Monday 30 and Tuesday 31 March and Wednesday 1 April in Holy Week. The half-hour services will begin at 1900. Please contact Claire at vicar@pershoreabbey.org.uk for a Zoom link each week.



CAN YOU HELP?

We are so fortunate to have a brilliant group of volunteers who are always willing to provide sustenance for our congregation. However, with a busy month ahead, the wonderful team that are Pershore Abbey and St Andrew's (PASA) would appreciate the following help:

PANCAKES: With the Abbey hosting the Shrove Tuesday Pancakes event in St Andrew's Centre at **1530** on Tuesday 17 February, if you are able to make approximately 8 plain pancakes, please contact Jane Knox on 01386 556981. Thank you.

SOUP: The Abbey are also providing soups for the Lent Lunch at Pershore Baptist Church on Wednesday 25 February. If you can make a large pan of soup, please contact Jane Knox on 01386 556981. All help is gratefully received.

There will be sign-up sheets at the back of the Abbey from the beginning of February for offers of help of pancakes/soup. On behalf of the PASA Team thank you.

MINISTRY NEWS

ABBEY MISSION GROUP: For the past few years this group, which meets monthly, has been supporting Sam Andrews in her role as Children and Families' Worker as well as looking at different ways in which the Abbey can reach out into the community. We would love some new people to join the group and share their enthusiasm and ideas for mission! We are in particular need of someone who can take simple action notes of the meeting. Our next meeting is at 1400 on Tuesday 17 February at St Andrew's Centre. If you think you might be able to help please contact me for more details, either in person or by emailing vicar@pershoreabbey.org.uk. Thank you. *Claire*



PERSHORE BENEFICE EXCHANGE VISIT TO SALZWEDEL, GERMANY

You are warmly invited to join the Pershore Benefice on our next exchange visit to Salzwedel, a beautiful and historic town in the German state of Saxony-Anhalt. The visit will be taking place 13-17 May 2026. This special visit continues our cherished friendship with our German brothers and sisters in Christ. Pastor Matthias Friske has confirmed that a heartfelt welcome awaits both familiar faces and new friends, along



with a thoughtfully planned programme of shared worship, fellowship, and cultural experiences.

Our journey will begin with a flight from Birmingham to either Berlin or Frankfurt, followed by travel along the Autobahn to Salzwedel, where we will be welcomed by our hosts.

If you would like to be part of this enriching experience, please register your interest as soon as possible so arrangements and costs can be confirmed. Preparatory meetings will be organised in advance to help us make the most of our visit. Please contact me in person, by phoning 07789860673 or by emailing mh@broadwayplc.com Alternately, email Claire at vicar@pershoreabbey.org.uk *Michael Hodges.*

BIRLINGHAM'S BULB SUNDAY

A warm welcome awaits everyone at this year's annual Bulb Sunday Service which is being held at 1500 on Sunday 22 February in St James' Church, Birlingham.

This special service celebrates the beauty of the snowdrops in the churchyard - a display not to be missed. Canon Claire Lording will be leading the service, and will be supported by Upton Parish's Director of Music, John Holloway, as organist along with members of the Upton Parish Choir.

Refreshments will be available afterwards in Birlingham Village Hall, with proceeds raised going towards the upkeep of the church. Why not arrive a little earlier to admire the snowdrops and crocuses, and perhaps even purchase a pot of snowdrops? We look forward to welcoming you to our beautiful church. *Adrianne Woodward, Churchwarden*

Snowdrop Teas

Throughout February, tea, coffee and homemade cakes will be served in Birlingham Village Hall each Saturday and Sunday between 1100 and 1600. Takeaway options will also be available.

Snowdrop Facts

- It's Greek name 'Galanthus', translates as the 'milk flower'! Known by several different names, it was officially named the Galanthus in 1753, by the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus.
- Snowdrops are symbolic of spring, purity and religion. Poet Walter de la Mare likened the flower to the Holy Trinity.
- Snowdrops are one of the first flowers to appear in the new year, usually flowering between the months of January and April.
- There are more than 2,500 varieties of snowdrop. They vary in height from 7cm to 30cm and are divided into approximately 20 species.



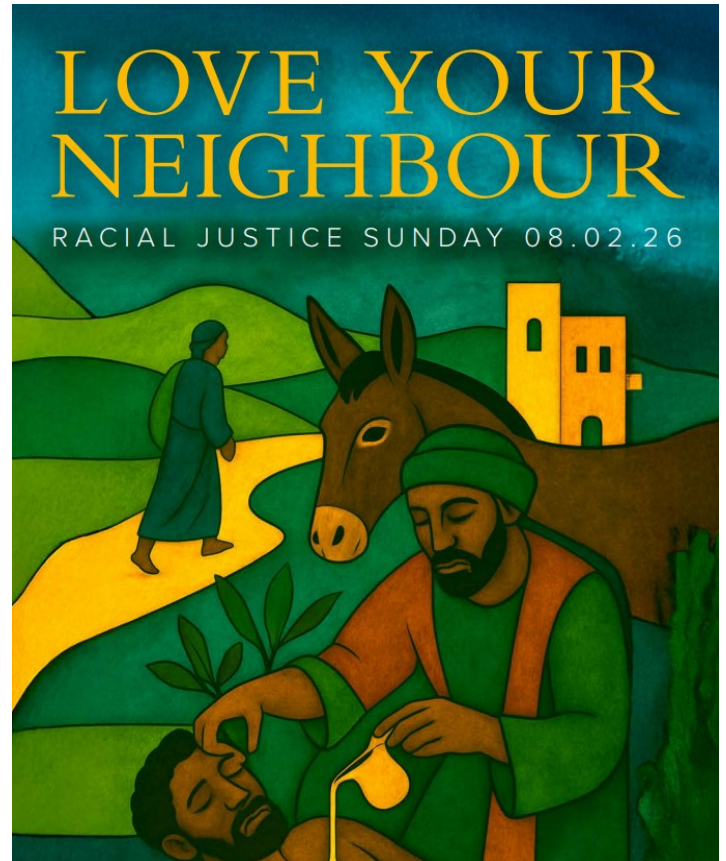
RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY 2026

Racial Justice Sunday is for all churches to reflect on the importance of racial justice, to give thanks for the gifts and beauty of human diversity, and to commit to end racism and acts of discrimination.

Racial Justice Sunday is an ecumenical observance which began in 1995 in Britain and Ireland. The catalyst for this observation was the murder of Stephen Lawrence, a black teenager in South London, on 22 April 1993. In 2017, Racial Justice Sunday moved from September to the second Sunday of February.

Racial Justice Sunday is more than an annual reminder of the Church's commitment to the task of anti-racism. In the words of Richard Reddie from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, this Sunday represents "a call for Christians to engage in the righteous struggle for racial justice because racial justice is everyone's business".

The gospel calls all Christians continually to confront the idolatry of racism and the evils in our world and to proclaim justice and mercy as we seek to walk with our God (Micah 6:8). Our worship unites us to Christ, transforms us in Word and Sacrament, and sends us out into the world to uphold the dignity of all in Christ. Racism and racial discrimination are issues of justice because they deny



basic human dignity to men and women made in God's image. Wherever and whenever we treat another "as lesser, or other, our theology fails to celebrate the dramatic nature of our transformation as people who find their primary identity in Christ. In Christ, our differences are not simply erased but rather embraced, valuing the unique ways we each reflect the image of God."

We will be marking Racial Justice Sunday at the Abbey's 1030 Sung Eucharist Service on Sunday 8 February.

Racial Justice Prayer

Merciful God, you are righteous and love justice:
stir the hearts of your people that, rejoicing in our diversity, we may repent of the wrongs of the past, and, by your grace, seek the peaceable kingdom of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2026

World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. Everyone (not just ladies!) is welcome to a special service at Pershore Baptist Church at 1400 on Friday 6 March to mark World Day of Prayer.

Through the World Day of Prayer, women are encouraged to become aware of other countries and cultures. They are also encouraged take up the burdens of other people, to sympathize with the problems of other countries and cultures and pray with and for them. The 2026 World Day of Prayer brings a powerful invitation drawn from Matthew 11:28-30. At a time when people worldwide are carrying heavy burdens, we are offered a profound insight into finding rest in God.

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

REQUEST FOR HELP: If you would like to take part in this year's World Day of Prayer Service, by reading a short piece or just helping on the day, please contact Carla at Pershore Baptist Church on 01386 556088 or by emailing a.c.auger1973@gmail.com Your help would be much appreciated.



ABBHEY ECO CHURCH

If you are keen to care for the environment in which you live, why not join our Eco Church community. We always enjoy welcoming willing volunteers to attend meetings and litter picks. Eco Church is a scheme run by a Rocha UK, equipping churches to care for god's creation through their worship, buildings, land community engagement and individual lifestyles. Visit www.pershoreabbey.org.uk/eco-church for more details.

NEXT ABBEY ECO CHURCH MEETING:

WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2026 1915
ST ANDREW'S CENTRE UPPER ROOM
Please come and join!

NEXT ABBEY LITTER PICK DATE:

Join the Abbey Litter Pickers (ALP's)
WATCH THIS SPACE FOR 2026 DATES
Meet at the West End of the Abbey
All Welcome - Equipment Provided



As part of our commitment to the care of the environment, this publication is printed on recycled paper. Once you have finished with it, please recycle.

PERSHORE ABBEY BOOKSTALL



Did you resolve to try something new in 2026? If so, you might consider becoming a welcomer at the Abbey.

Welcomers play a simple but important role: being present, offering a greeting, helping visitors find their way around, and supporting the calm, respectful atmosphere of the Abbey. You don't need any special knowledge or experience. What matters is a willingness to engage with others, and an appreciation of the Abbey as a place of beauty, and spirituality.

The commitment can be as little as 2 hours a month, with the aim that as much of a day can be covered to welcome people when they visit. For some, volunteering as a welcomer is a way of giving something back. For others, it's a chance to be more closely involved in the life of the

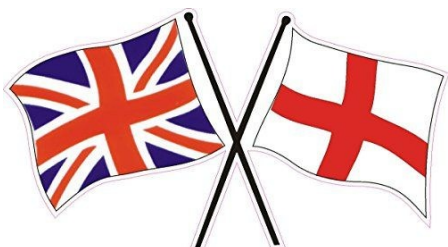
Abbey while doing something concrete and useful. If trying something new in 2026 means contributing time and presence, I would be glad to hear from you. Please contact me, Sally Whyte, on 07858 506218 or by emailing pershoreabbeybookstall@gmail.com

FLAG DAYS

Have you ever wondered why the Abbey flags are flying on certain days? For the curious minded, over the next few weeks, here are the flags that will be flying and why:

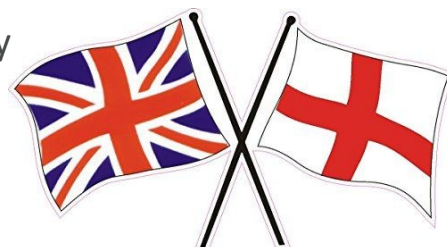
Sunday 1 February

St George's Cross - Feast of the Presentation



Sunday 1 March

Union Flag - Saint David's Day



ORGAN RECITALS

Organ Recitals on the fabulous Ruffatti are returning for 2026! It is with great pleasure that the Sunday afternoon promenade concerts begin again on 22 of February with the Abbey's Director of Music, James MacDowall-Scott presenting an all Baroque programme featuring works by JS Bach, Vivaldi, Albinoni, Buxtehude and Frescobaldi.

The Ruffatti is certainly one of the finest liturgical and concert instruments in the country and we are very blessed to have it. During Advent, James played a piece every day that attracted a wide global audience on the Abbey's YouTube channel. James is looking to produce some online organ recitals over the next few months, so one can enjoy the glorious Ruffatti from the comfort of one's own home! Stay tuned for more information.



Future recital dates and performers are:

February 22 - James MacDowall-Scott (Organ)

March 8 - Sean Maxwell (Vienna and Portugal)

March 15 - James MacDowall-Scott- (Piano)

April 12 - James MacDowall-Scott (Organ)

June 7 - Piers Maxim (Great Malvern Priory)

July 12 - Marion Wilmann (Soprano) & James MacDowall-Scott (Organ and Piano)

August 9 - Paul Carr (International Concert Organist)

All recitals begin at 1400 and are free, with a retiring collection.

IONA WORSHIP

So, what is Iona Worship? For more than two decades there have been regular Iona Worship services in Pershore Abbey. But what is 'Iona Worship' at 1700 on the fourth Sunday of the month?

Inspired by worship on visits to the Scottish island of Iona with its Abbey and welcoming Iona Community, people from Pershore Abbey started up their own monthly service using Iona worship materials. Themes for the Iona services range from the personal, such as forgiveness, to social and environmental concerns. The Iona Community produces many insightful books as well as innovative worship materials. These resources are accessible to all and can be found at www.iona.org.uk/our-resources.

The services are informal and lay led, allowing time for reflection, discussion and sharing. Iona worship challenges the 'ownership' of Christian traditions and symbols by political or specific groups. We sit in a circle for services; everyone is welcome and all are valued. The special Iona worship space is valued by diverse people, some of whom travel a distance to attend or join via zoom. In the words of the songwriter Marty Haugen:

*Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed, as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.*

The next Iona Worship services will be on Sunday 25 January and Sunday 22 February.



PERSHORE BENEFICE SUNDAY SERVICES JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2026

Details of our planned **Sunday** worship services within the Pershore Benefice are given below, though please do check our social media pages and website in case of changes. We look forward to welcoming you in person, and don't forget that the 1030 Sunday Service from Pershore Abbey is livestreamed and available to view on our YouTube

Channel: **Pershore Abbey Community**

PERSHORE ABBEY

SUNDAY 25 JANUARY

Conversion of Paul

0800 Eucharist

1030 Morning Praise *with Livestream*

1700 Iona Worship

SUNDAY 1 FEBRUARY

Candlemas

0800 BCP Eucharist

1030 Sung Eucharist *with Livestream*

1700 Evensong

SUNDAY 8 FEBRUARY

2 Before Lent

0800 Eucharist

0930 Café Church (*St Andrew's*)

1030 Sung Eucharist *with Livestream*

1700 Wholeness and Healing

SUNDAY 15 FEBRUARY

Next Before Lent

0800 BCP Eucharist

1030 Confirmation Service *with Livestream*

SUNDAY 22 FEBRUARY

Lent 1

0800 Eucharist (*BCP*)

1030 Morning Praise *with Livestream*

1700 Iona Worship

SUNDAY 1 MARCH

Lent 2

0800 BCP Eucharist

1030 Sung Eucharist *with Livestream*

ST MARY'S, WICK

SUNDAY 25 JANUARY

1030 Parish Communion

SUNDAY 8 FEBRUARY

1030 Morning Praise

SUNDAY 22 FEBRUARY

1030 Parish Communion

ST NICHOLAS', PINVIN

SUNDAY 1 FEBRUARY

1030 Holy Communion

SUNDAY 15 FEBRUARY

St Nicholas' will be joining the Abbey for their 1030 Confirmation Service

SUNDAY 1 MARCH

1030 Holy Communion

ST JAMES', BIRLINGHAM

SUNDAY 22 FEBRUARY

1500 Bulb Sunday Service

**PLEASE SEE PAGES 2 & 3 FOR INFORMATION ABOUT
LENT IN THE PERSHORE BENEFICE**

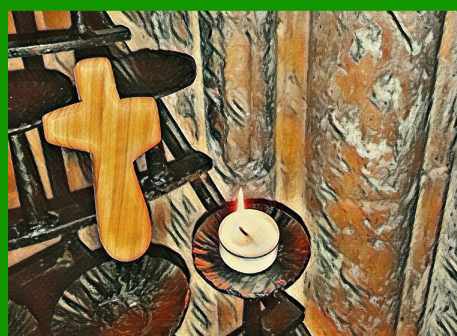
MONTHLY SERVICES



CAFÉ CHURCH

SUNDAY 8 FEBRUARY & SUNDAY 8 MARCH
0930 ST ANDREW'S CENTRE

Come and join in with our family friendly and informal café-style worship as we meet for worship, music and refreshments.



WHOLENESS & HEALING

SUNDAY 8 FEBRUARY & SUNDAY 8 MARCH
1700 AT PERSHORE ABBEY

We also offer the opportunity to receive the ministry of healing prayers with two of the Wholeness & Healing team in the St John Chapel after communion has been received at every 3rd Sunday 1030 Eucharist



IONA WORSHIP

SUNDAY 25 JANUARY & SUNDAY 22 FEBRUARY
1700 PERSHORE ABBEY

We hope you will join us either in person or via Zoom. Contact for iona@pershoreabbey.org.uk the Zoom link.

PERSHORE ABBEY FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

SATURDAY 07 FEBRUARY 1500
SINFONIA OF BIRMINGHAM CONCERT

SATURDAY 07 MARCH 1900
PERSHORE ROTARY JAZZ CONCERT

SATURDAY 14 MARCH 1430
WORCESTER PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA SPRING CONCERT



www.pershoreabbey.co.uk

