

The Pillertons Parish News ...
The Magazine for All
February to March 2026

Church services at St Mary's (www.stourdene.com)

Please check the church notice board for changes to service times, and the website for information about services in other benefice churches.

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| <i>February</i> | |
| Wednesday, 18th Feb | 6:00 pm Benefice Service for Ash Wednesday |
| Sunday, 1st Feb | 10.30 am Morning Worship |
| Sunday, 8th Feb | 8.30 am BCP Communion, Pillerton Priors Hall |
| Sunday, 15th Feb | 11.00 Family/All Age |
| Wednesday, 18th Feb | 6:00 pm Benefice Service for Ash Wednesday |
| Sunday, 22nd Feb | 9:30 am Common Worship Communion |
| <i>March</i> | |
| Sunday, 1st March | 10:30 am Morning Worship |
| Sunday, 8th March | 8:30 am BCP Communion, Pillerton Priors Hall |
| Tuesday, 10th March | 6:00 pm Prayer Walk/Talk |
| Sunday, 15th March | 11:00 am Family /All Age Mothering Sunday |
| Sunday, 22nd March | 9:30 am Common Worship Communion |
| Sunday, 29th March | 10:30 am Benefice service for Palm Sunday at Halford |
| Thursday, 2nd April | 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday, Alderminster |
| Friday, 3rd April | Benefice Good Friday Service, Pillerton Hersey |
| Sunday, 5th April | 11.00 am Easter Sunday, Butlers Marston |

The Rector writes... Goodness, it's now February - the year is galloping forward! At the beginning of each year, I tend to think it's illogical to regard a single date as a new start, but we do, most of us, think of New Year in that way. What will 2026 bring? Some of us may think we know and may already have booked things like holidays. But in fact, of course, we don't know if we shall be doing any of the things we imagine we will. Life is uncertain.

For many last year was 'good' or 'good in parts', for others it was disheartening or even tragic. Many people are hurting or fearful because of their experiences over the past year. For them it was a difficult year with challenging personal circumstances, financial issues, difficult relationships, illnesses and bereavements. And yet, when we look back, amidst all of the anxieties and difficulties, there were some 'signs of hope' which could be discerned, giving strength to persevere and carry on. Some of these signs of hope were people around us or things that people did for us. You may have been one of those people bringing light into someone else's darkness.

As 2026 unwinds I'd like to share a poem - you may know it.

*I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
'Give me a light that I might tread safely into the
unknown!'*

*And he replied: 'Go out into the darkness
And put your hand into the hand of God!
This shall be to you better than light
And safer than a known way'.
So I went forth, and finding the hand of God
Trode gladly into the night.*

As you walk through the unknown of this year, you may be excited or maybe you're scared of the darkness that you feel or see ahead. As day follows night, light always follows darkness and signs of hope like chinks of light will be there. You may just need help to see it. May you find someone to hold your hand and be your light through good times and hard, be it God, your partner, family or friends.

Rev'd Nicki

Churchwardens' notes - As it was too late to include in the last newsletter, we collected £173 at Remembrance for the Royal British Legion.

Services over Christmas were very well attended with over 70 people at both the Carol service and the Christingle/Crib service, with the latter raising over £325 for the Children's Society, and over 50 from the Pillertons and Butlers Marston on Christmas Day.

January saw the start of our new service schedule which we hope makes it easier to find a time you can attend. For those of you who have followed the tradition of putting up lights and decorations at the start of Advent and leaving them up past Twelfth Night, 2nd February marks Candlemass when they should all be taken down and put away until next Advent. Candlemas also celebrates the Presentation of Christ at the Temple which we mark on Sunday, 1st February.

As we are still in the colder months, both February and March 8:30 Holy Communion Service, as well as 'First Thursday Cuppa Club' meetings, will be in Priors Village Hall.

Prayer walks continue every Tuesday but will be in the vicarage for February before resuming around the Benefice - the next one in Pillerton Hersey will be on 10th March at 6pm, meeting at the Church. Please note this plan may change, depending on the weather. A full rota of services is posted on the church's notice board.

The Lego Café will next meet on 21st February and then again in March in Ettington Church. Apart from the Lego (which isn't just for children!), it is a great time to have a chat over tea, coffee and cake!

Bible Book Club continues to meet on the first Tuesday of each month - 3rd February and 3rd March - in Ettington Church at 1:30.

Churchyard maintenance will take place on Saturday afternoons throughout March from 2pm. All helpers for light duties will be very welcome!

Lent 2026. Shrove Tuesday falls on 17th February with Ash Wednesday marking the start of Lent with an 'Ashing' service 6:30pm in Butlers

Marston. Lent Lunches will again move round the Benefice on Wednesday lunchtimes, with Pillerton provisionally hosting on 25th March, from 12:00 to 2:30 pm for Christian Aid at Priors Village Hall.

Mothering Sunday is on 15th March with Morning Worship at 11:00 - a great time to celebrate all mothers - with refreshments afterwards.

During Lent, Deanery talks/services take place around the Deanery. Please check the notice boards for details as they become available.

The Good Friday service will take place this year in Pillerton Hersey on 3rd April at 2:00 pm.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we learned of the death of Mike Legg. All our thoughts and prayers are with Judy. *Jeremy and Jennifer*

Jottings from Hersey - More Hersey characters ---

Dorothea Abbott joined the Land Army in 1942. In her book, she describes her time in Pillerton Hersey. She records George Grantham - AKA Spider - who lived in one of the 'hovels' on the Kinton road:

"I enjoyed the bus ride through the autumn countryside and the conductor set me down at Nether Feldon (Pillerton Hersey) Post Office, the nearest approach to a shop the village possessed. As there was no sign of the Manor, I pushed open the door and ventured into the dark interior.

"Can you tell me the way to the Manor?"; I asked, thinking what a good address it sounded.

"First right up the hill. Through the white gate." The fair young woman behind the counter returned to her conversation with an old man in a greasy black suit. I was to find out later he was known as 'Spider'.

"Yon's a jammy Scrib", he remarked as I closed the door behind me, and I wondered uneasily whether he was referring to me or the Land Army hostel.

"Parson at Feldon's very thick with the Lady of the Manor", said Herby Dan. "She reported Spider to the sanitary inspector. She said she's been down to his cottage and it was filthy. Verminous, she called it. Anyroad, before sanitary inspector got there, we went round and cleaned it up. Neat as a new pin it was when sanitary inspector came. He said the old girl had wasted his time!" *Ros Williams*

Pillerton Hersey Parish Council - The date of our next meeting is Tuesday, 20th January at 7:00 pm in the church. Agendas are posted on the village notice board and our website. Since the last newsletter the parish council has:

- Reviewed progress of ongoing planning applications (25/01202/VARY & 25/01663/FUL).
- Considered and prepared responses to new planning applications (25/02998/FUL).
- Monitored road salt levels in the village grit bins.

We have one remaining vacancy to co-opt a councillor, so if you have some spare time to represent your community and be a voice for your fellow residents within local government, please do get in touch with our clerk or any of the councillors.

To keep up to date with information, meeting minutes, and the latest news follow our Facebook page (Pillerton Hersey Parish Council). Our clerk, Laura, can be contacted by emailing clerk@pillertonherseyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Catherine Hewson – Chair

cllr.hewson@pillertonherseyparishcouncil.gov

Pillerton Priors Parish Council - The 218th Pillerton Priors Parish Council meeting took place on Thursday, 15th January. The draft minutes are available to view on the Council's new website www.pillertonpriorsparishcouncil.gov.uk.

The next meeting will be in May with the Annual Parish meeting, followed by the 219th PC meeting. The agenda will be published on the website and on the Priors noticeboards. It will also be included in the PC's email newsletter.

If you live in Priors, and are not already signed up to receive our newsletter, please send an email to clerk@pillertonpriorsparishcouncil.gov.uk with your name and address and you will be included in future editions.

Ian Greenall, Clerk to Pillerton Priors Parish Council

Calling gardeners! You likely have noticed the planter boxes that Pillerton Priors Parish Council installed at the various entrances to the village. There are two on the Banbury Road coming from Ettington, one at the other end of the Banbury Road, and two on Kineton Road coming in from Hersey. The planter boxes sit with the gates and aim to remind drivers that they are entering a village and so should slow down, as well as brightening up the roadside.

The Parish Council are seeking a volunteer (or two!) to look after the planter boxes. We will pay for new plants/bulbs each year if someone will do a little bit of weeding and planting. Watering the plants in the hot simmer is obviously essential. It's not an onerous task and the boxes help brighten up the village.

If anyone is interested in taking on this role, please contact the parish clerk at clerk@pillertonpriorsparishcouncil.gov.uk

Pop-Up Pub at the Village Hall - will be on Friday, 6th March from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

Foodbanks and the help they aim to provide - Across the country, foodbanks are witnessing record demand. In the past year alone, nearly 2.9 million parcels were distributed - more than double what it was a decade ago. Behind each parcel is someone facing the kind of hardship that no one should endure in modern Britain.

But foodbanks are not just about tins and packets. Increasingly, they are hubs of hope, offering welfare and debt advice alongside emergency food. This support can be transformative. A parent struggling with rent arrears may leave not only with groceries but also with a plan to restructure debt. Someone battling the complexities of Universal Credit might finally get the guidance they need to stabilise their income. These interventions change lives, preventing crises from spiralling and restoring dignity where the system has failed.

Our strategy recognises that food parcels alone cannot end hunger. By partnering with advice providers, foodbanks are tackling the root causes of poverty, not just the symptoms. But this work depends entirely on local support: food and financial donations, volunteers and community

solidarity. Please keep us in mind when you are next at your local supermarket or thinking of donating to a charity.

Your local foodbanks – which are part of the national network of Trussell foodbanks – are Fosse (fosse.foodbank.org.uk) and Stratford-upon-Avon (stratforduponavon.foodbank.org.uk). *Davina Logan, Chair of Trustees, Stratford-upon-Avon Foodbank.*
chair@stratforduponavon.foodbank.org.uk

Carers4Carers - We usually meet on the **fourth Friday** of the month (except for December) from **10:30 to 12 noon** at **Kineton Village Hall**. Loved ones are welcome too – they can join our Companionship Group during the meeting.

Friday, 23rd January – we will focus on coping strategies for carers. We'll share ideas, experiences and gentle techniques to help you navigate the ups and downs of the year ahead. Come along for a cuppa, conversation, and a little encouragement. **Friday 27th February** will feature Sian from 'Act on Energy' who will offer energy bill advice and guidance on energy efficiencies.

For further details about our group or help with transport arrangements to/from our meetings, please contact Gillian on 07947 893504, send an email to kcarers4carers@gmail.com, or explore our website www.carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk

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Church opening rota - During the winter, the church opens only on the weekends.

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| 31 Jan – 1 Feb | P&S Kelsey | 7 – 8 Mar | G&C Thomas |
| 7-8 Feb | T&E Fillmore | 14 – 15 Mar | P&S Kelsey |
| 14-15 Feb | A Brooks | 21 - 22 Mar | T&E Fillmore |
| 21-22 Feb | J&F Young | 28 – 29 Mar | A Brooks |
| 28 Feb – 1 Mar | J Lewthwaite | 4 – 5 April | J&F Young |

Church flower arranging rota - Please prepare your flowers in time for each of the Sundays/dates noted alongside your name. Please note that the church is open only at weekends during winter – please ask for a key if you want access during the week. There are no flowers during Lent (18th Feb to 2nd April). If you cannot prepare your flowers for any reason, please contact Fiona (0791 7771157). If anyone would like to join the rota, please let Fiona know – extra hands would be VERY welcome. No particular skill is needed and a plant is very welcome in lieu of flowers. Thank you!

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| <i>18 and 25 Jan</i> | Jennnifer Lewthwaite & Jane Waters | <i>15 Feb</i> | Fiona Young |
| <i>1 and 8 Feb</i> | Gill Ison & Olga Brades | <i>5 April</i> | Easter Sunday – all hands, please! |

Church cleaning rota - The key is available from Fiona Young (The Old Vicarage), Jennifer Lewthwaite (Home Farm) or Elizabeth Fillmore (Church Barn).

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| <i>2 Feb</i> | Mrs Fidler & Mrs Curtlin | <i>9 March</i> | Mrs M Hitchman & Mrs Eveleigh-Jones |
| <i>9 Feb</i> | Mrs Williams & Mrs Brotherton | <i>16 March</i> | Mrs Ison & Ms Brades |
| <i>16 Feb</i> | Mrs Marshall & Mrs Crookes | <i>23 March</i> | Mrs Archer & Mrs Stephenson |
| <i>23 Feb</i> | Mr & Mrs Fillmore | <i>30 March</i> | Mr & Mrs Percival |
| <i>2 March</i> | Mrs Waters & Mrs Dumas | <i>6 April</i> | Mrs Lewthwaite & Mrs Kelsey |

Please submit any news by Saturday, 14th March, 2026, for the next newsletter to cover April and May. (pillertonscoop@gmail.com)