

Diocesan News

June 2025

 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
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Diocesan Internship Scheme applications open to all for 2025/26



Applications are open for our Diocesan Internship Scheme for 2025/26, and we want to encourage a whole range of people to apply.

The Leeds Diocesan Internship Scheme is an opportunity to explore more of what it means to be a lifelong disciple of Christ and to serve His church.

It is a year where people from all kinds of backgrounds are equipped for the kingdom of God in life, work, and leadership.

The scheme runs from September to July and involves practical placements in churches, weekly training, and being part of a Christian community of interns.

The Revd Simon Walters, Diocesan Intern Lead, said: "I'd really like to encourage you to know that God is calling a whole diverse range of different people to be interns.

"Classically we think of interns as maybe university graduates in their early 20s who have just finished and have some free time. But in fact, there's a whole bunch of other people whom God is calling."

"We have people who've encountered the presence of God and whose response is to say, 'I want to know more about him.' We have people at particular transition points in their lives trying to work out what it is for them to use their gifts in serving the church."

"I'm so passionate about internships because I was an intern myself 12 years ago. A church took a chance on me, and it was an investment, I think, in the church of the future."

"Are there people in my church community who might not look like your typical intern, but whom this could be a good thing?"

The arrival of a new Pope is a joyful moment for Christians, says Bishop Nick



The Rt Revd Nick Baines has described the election of the new Pope as a joyful occasion for all Christians.

"The election of Pope Leo XIV is a cause for great joy among all Christians," said Bishop Nick.

"His commitment to the good news of Jesus Christ, the sharing of that good news to the world in service, and the consequent love of justice and peace fit him well for his vocation.

"We Anglicans will pray for him and the Roman Catholic Church he leads as we serve together in Christ's name."

The Church bursting into life

Bishop Toby

Sunday, June 8, from midday until 2.30pm, in Bradford's Bowling Park will witness a "Pentecost Party" featuring some of the diversity of the Area's churches and Christians. It will take place in "The Beacon", a touring venue which is part of the 2025 UK City of Culture Programme.

In an echo of the first Pentecost, at which people were heard praising God in languages from around the world, the Party in Bowling Park will bring together singing, testimonies, stories and prayer from, among other places, Nepal, Ghana, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iran.

There is an awful lot of babble around these days, not least coming out of our smartphones. Much of that babble is divisive and ugly, insulting and seeking to set people against one another. We've seen how this babble can infect community relations, sour our political discourse and how it even encourages violence on our streets.



The church that burst into life that first Pentecost, at which three thousand people were added to the number of disciples in a single day, instead brought people together. Women and men, slaves and free people, poor and rich, Jews and non-Jews, educated Greek-speakers and 'barbarians.' They all met to praise God, to share food together and with the wealthy supporting those who were struggling. A love for Jesus was almost everything that they had in common.

This is our story and our inheritance. Especially when sometimes even the church itself can feel infected by divisive babble on social media, it's good to be reminded of the Person and the story that brings us together, whether in Bowling Park or any of the multitude of churches that are celebrating Pentecost this year across our wonderful and varied diocese.

Ofsted inspectors praise one of our primary schools for its community role

One of our Bradford primary schools in Bradford has been praised by Ofsted inspectors for being "at the very heart of its local community".

St Paul's CE Primary School, Wibsey, was visited in March and a newly-released report said the school has "taken effective action to maintain the standards" which were identified during its last check, when it was rated 'good' overall.

Headteacher Sean Helliwell-Kenny said: "I am extremely proud and very fortunate to be the headteacher of such an amazing school where the children, staff and parents work together to provide the very best education and experiences that all children deserve.

"We're pleased that the Ofsted inspectors were able to see that the children and adults of St Paul's live out the school values every day and so naturally.

"We are equally as proud of our close links to St Paul's church and the outreach work we take part in within the local community."



New hostel for walkers and cyclists opens in a former church



St Michael's Lodge in Hudswell, near Richmond is opening its doors as a new hostel for walkers and cyclists on Saturday.

Over the last 18 months, villagers and local tradespeople have worked hard to restore and repurpose their former parish church as a hostel for walkers and cyclists and the Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon stopped off on pilgrimage walk to see work in progress.

Hudswell Community Charity acquired the redundant church from the Church Commissioners in 2023.

Since then they have raised almost £900,000 in grant aid to pay for the conversion work.

The result has seen all the historic features of the building retained, while providing modern accommodation with six ensuite rooms, a resident's lounge and dining area in the former chancel and kitchen in the former vestry.

Annie Sumner, one of the Charity Trustees, explained that "We were very keen that when guests entered the building from the porch, they would be able to see right through to large East Window and up to the wooden ceiling, so the open design and the use of a lot of glass has enabled us to achieve this."

Martin Booth, another trustee added "We wanted to preserve our parish church and keep it accessible and in the ownership of the local community.

"To achieve this, we needed to give it a new use that would generate an income so that we could maintain the building and we also wanted it to be an asset to the village that would support our other community owned businesses - the George and Dragon pub and the Little Shop. We are sure that St Michael's Lodge will fulfil this dream."



Leeds vicar to swim the Channel for charity - in his local pool



Revd Phil Arnold, vicar of Christ Church Upper Armley, will swim the 21 miles of the English Channel, in his local pool in aid of vital church building improvements.

He will swim 5 hours every day for five days consecutively and said: "I approached the Armey Leisure Centre manager, Dean McKenna nine months ago and he agreed to make it happen.

The centre has a brilliant pool, I really enjoy swimming there and it's a hub for healthy living in the Armley community and beyond."

Revd Phil asked for a bit of coaching and was linked with swimming teacher Lucy Miller, and her dad Alan Miller, a top coach who worked with swimmers at the City of Leeds Swimming club at the International Pool and the John Charles Aquatic Centre.

"Suffice to say, I haven't lived up to those lofty heights, but it's been a rewarding journey," said Revd Phil.

The swim is to raise money from the Armley Good Neighbours Project, that seeks to future-proof Christ Church by making improvements to the building with a target of £300,000.

Stepping back

Shirley Stow
Mothers' Union Member

Over the years, I have taken part in many retreats and each has given me something spiritually different to bring away with me. One of the nicest things is meeting up with new people who quickly become friends as we share the days together. Also, cementing closer relationships with those we have previously met perhaps in different situations. The Retreat I joined this year was held at The Briery Retreat and Conference Centre in Ilkley and it was a time for reflection on a variety of topics.

Each day our morning and evening prayers/compline were led by our Mothers' Union chaplain, Rev. Michelle Petch. On our first afternoon together, our Diocesan President, Julia Tum, outlined her priorities for the triennium which stimulated and encouraged us all. Our session topics were:- Building on solid Foundations; Celebrating our Resources; Sharing prayers and ways of praying; Stepping out in Faith and a time for Personal Reflection.



These topics stimulated small group discussions and we brought back the comments made, to our larger group.

All the above Subjects opened our minds to each other's comments and gave us food for thought when on our own in our rooms each evening. Perhaps these subjects could be brought to our local MU meetings occasionally.

An extra bonus from Retreats is sharing food together and The Briery did us proud. In the relaxed atmosphere of their spacious dining room, light-hearted banter could be heard and each meal time we were encouraged to sit with different people which enabled easy conversations with previous strangers!

As we came into the chapel for our final service together on the seat was the name of a person we were encouraged to think about in our prayers when we left. I feel privileged when I include someone who was a stranger when our Retreat began, but is in my prayers each day!

Dales river baptisms for 16 worshippers from Bradford



Baptisms in the River Wharfe at Burnsall Park took place for 16 worshippers from St John's, Bowling during the recent sunny weather.

The riverbank was full of families from far and wide enjoying the sunshine, playing games and firing up barbecues with many watching as the baptisms took place.

Vicar of St John's Bowling Revd Tim Thomas commented: 'It's always very special to welcome new believers into the church through baptism, but especially on a sunny day like today in such a beautiful place!'

"Do you do this often?" asked a woman who had watched from the riverbank. "Just once a year, but we'd love to do more," replied Revd Tim.