New Archbishop of York is
Bishop Stephen Cottrell

The Queen has named the Right Reverend Stephen Geoffrey Cottrell, MA, the Lord Bishop of Chelmsford as the new Archbishop of York.

As Primate of England and Metropolitan of the Province of York, he will share in the leadership of the Church of England in partnership with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, at a time of change and challenge for both the Church and the country. Bishop Stephen said: “I am humbled and excited at the prospect of becoming the 98th Archbishop of York.

“I will receive the baton from Archbishop Sentamu. These aren’t just big shoes to fill, but a big heart and a big vision. However, I am not daunted. Working alongside the Archbishop of Canterbury, I hope to help the church be more joyful and more effective in sharing the gospel and bringing hope and unity to our nation.

“Although I was born and grew up in Essex, I lived and served in Huddersfield for nine years. I know and love the north of England. Two of our children were born there.

“I now look forward to returning and being a voice for the North, sharing the liberating good news of the gospel and helping to address the discrepancies of wealth and opportunity that too often favour the South.”

Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines welcomed the announcement: “I am delighted that Stephen Cottrell is to come back north to be the next Archbishop of York. Grateful for the ministry of Sentamu, I look forward to welcoming and supporting Stephen’s ministry here.”

New Diocesan Secretary announced

The new Diocesan Secretary who will take the reins from Debbie Child is a senior civil servant. Jonathan Wood joined the Civil Service in 2005 after reading law at Durham University.

Bishop Nick said: “I am pleased to announce that Jonathan will join us from his role as National Services Director for Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service on 16 March 2020.”

Jonathan said: “I am looking forward to the opportunity to work alongside Bishop Nick and the team in Leeds to see God’s kingdom grow across the Diocese.”

He is married to Claire, they have two children and are both committed to their parish.
Huddersfield’s new vicar Revd Rachel relishes tasks ahead

Huddersfield has a new vicar with the announcement that Revd Rachel Firth, currently at Lindley parish, is to take on the high profile role. Born and raised in West Yorkshire, she grew up in Mirfield and was educated in Wakefield.

“I’m delighted to be appointed as the next vicar of St Peter’s,” Revd Rachel said. “After a couple of years working abroad in my late teens I came back to Huddersfield to do my first degree. I don’t know if you’d call that a sign of things to come, but I loved my time as a student here and have always loved the town,” said Revd Rachel, who is married to Simon and has three children.

Bishop of Huddersfield, the Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs, welcomed the appointment: “Rachel has her roots in the Huddersfield area and has done a fantastic job as vicar of Lindley over the last eight years.”

Pay attention!

Bishop Nick Baines

The bishops of this diocese meet every month, beginning with a Eucharist, followed by breakfast and Bible study/theology prior to getting on with the business. I always go out of there having been stimulated, challenged or encouraged. Except when it is my turn to lead it.

The last time I did it we looked at a phrase in Luke 8 that I must have read - and missed - a thousand times. While explaining and commenting on a parable, Jesus tells his friends that light exposes everything, including the things we would prefer to keep hidden. Then he says - and this is the bit I never spotted: “Pay attention to how you listen.” Why?

Jesus has just told his friends that you have to be seriously interested to work away at a parable. Not everything in life is - or ought to be - immediately obvious or even accessible. So, he told stories in order to make the hearers (who could be bothered) take the space to think. And this, he says, means that we have to pay attention to how we listen.

Now, this doesn’t just apply to parables, the words of Jesus or the Scriptures as a whole. It applies to the rest of life, too. As I write this (in early January) the world is on tenterhooks about an Iranian response to the assassination by the Americans of General Soleimani in Baghdad. As with other world events (or even local gossip), we get bombarded with opinions, reports, speculations, ruminations and interpretations that render us unable to be sure who to believe or what to believe.

So, we need to pay attention in two directions: (a) how to discern what is really going on in the world or people’s lives locally, and (b) how to look through the eyes and hear through the ears of Jesus as we learn to think and judge and respond. It isn’t easy. But, in a world of competing fake news, it is our responsibility.

Lent begins at the end of this month. This is a gift - offering time and space to reflect on how we listen, not only to what we listen.

+Nick
Bishop of Leeds
First glimpse inside Bradford night club to become new church

A first look inside the former night club set to become Bradford’s new city centre church shows there’s lots of work to do. Since the Revolution nightclub closed its doors more than three years ago, it has suffered much damage and abuse due to vandalism. A clean-up operation is well underway, but drugs paraphernalia and litter still needs to be safely cleared away, as shown in the picture, courtesy of the Bradford Telegraph and Argus.

Reverend Linda Maslen, minister at Fountains Church, said: “Every needle that has been dropped in here, every drug capsule that’s been left behind, every empty alcohol bottle - those represent people’s lives that are in ruins.”

“It’s hoped the church will be open - in some way - for worship by June next year.”

Battle of Wakefield marked by march from Cathedral

A battle that changed the course of the country’s history has been commemorated by a march from Wakefield Cathedral led by the Bishop of Wakefield.

The Battle of Wakefield Memorial March, on December 29, marked the historic 1460 event that claimed hundreds of lives and was a decisive moment in the Wars of the Roses.

There were medieval tents to provide shelter and re-enactors to give accounts of the battle.

Bishop of Wakefield, Tony Robinson (pictured) said, “The march commemorated a significant moment in the city’s history, and was extremely well attended.”

Safeguarding Law Society talk

“Safeguarding: From Ball and Banks to Beech via Bell” is the title of an upcoming Ecclesiastical Law Society lecture to be held at Church House in Leeds at the end of January. The first in the ELS Northern Province Lecture series 2020 will be hosted by Wrigleys Solicitors LLP.

The Rt Worshipful Peter Collier QC, Chancellor of the Diocese of York, will deliver the lecture, which he describes as: “A review of the development of safeguarding policy and practice in the Church of England against the background of what was happening in the wider world during my life in practice at the bar and on the bench in the areas of crime and child care (1970 to 2018).”

Cathedral event

Ripon Cathedral will be welcoming hundreds of folk in early February to celebrate Jesus as the Light of the World during their spectacular, annual Candlemas service.

It is an ancient Ripon tradition and one of the earliest festivals of the church, which commemorates the presentation of Christ at the Temple in Jerusalem.

Over 7,000 candles in total will burn during the celebration at Ripon Cathedral to create a visual and spiritual spectacle not to be missed.
Beware of hubris and heed genuine advice, urges Bishop Nick

Amidst extreme international actions, Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines used his first House of Lords speech of 2020 to call for caring voices to be heard.

Speaking on Tuesday as tensions increased in the Middle East, Bishop Nick said:

“I hope that the Government, with some humility and deeper cultural thinking, might just listen to those who wish to see global justice and peace worked out in this complex world by people who are not driven by claims to power, but by the imperatives of mutual human flourishing.”

He also cautioned against misplaced belief in the strength of simplistic geo-political alliances:

“The UK’s response to the assassination of General Soleimani in Baghdad last week, as we have just discussed, further exposes both the interconnectedness of foreign policies and the particular impact of trade dependency on the United States of Donald Trump — something that will not be lost on Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe or her family.

“Daily reading of the Bible, which is in my job description, reinforces a sense of the transience of power in history. The Old Testament shows that quick and obvious defence alliances often led to terrible longer-term enslavements.

“Empires came and went, their hubris dribbling away into deserts of exiled misery, and powers and rulers never learned, even when they seduced their people into what turned out to be false securities.”

Local projects received awards from Professor Mona Siddiqui on behalf of the Isachaar Fund. These included Touch-stone, a Methodist initiative which works alongside people of many different faiths and gives opportunities to share communality and differences, particularly with women. BIASAN, the Bradford Immigration and Asylum Seekers Support and Advice Network, were also recognised.

Gratitude and faith shared amongst Christian and Muslim friends

Stories of friendship between Christians and Muslims filled Bradford Cathedral recently, as part of a Near Neighbours event chaired by Bishop of Bradford, Toby Howarth.

Women from grassroots groups were interviewed by Kaneez Khan of Wellsprings Together, sharing stories of how gratitude plays a part in their work.

Scan the QR code below to read Bishop Nick’s speech in full.