Wise words for Epiphany at the launch of Bradford Cathedral’s Centenary

Bradford Cathedral launched its centenary celebrations with special Epiphany events to mark the 100th anniversary of the Parish Church of St Peter, Bradford becoming the Cathedral Church of St Peter, Bradford.

There was a powerful talk to a large audience from Bishop Nick, entitled: “Going back a different way: being Christian in a populist world” which addressed pressing modern issues.

“Bradford Cathedral is 100 years old in 2019, but the building has been here for many centuries before that,” he said. “It is living evidence of Christian worship, service and faithfulness through times of peace and conflict, change and challenge, struggle and joy. It was designated a cathedral within just one year of the end of the so-called ‘War to end all wars’.”

Bishop Nick then addressed international issues facing Christians in 2019, including Brexit, and the full talk can be read on his blog, Musings of a Restless Bishop.

Dean of Bradford, the Very Revd Jerry Lepine (pictured below) said: “This was a joyous and thought-provoking beginning to Bradford Cathedral’s Centenary Year.

“I was deeply touched by the people who travelled a distance to be with us. It showed not only their generosity of spirit but also the affection that people have for this cathedral.

“This is a very special year for the cathedral and we do hope that you can join us at some of the many events which will take place throughout the year.”

Record numbers take part in ‘awe-inspiring’ Boxing Day Pilgrimage

A record number of pilgrims, around 2000, took part in this year’s Boxing Day Pilgrimage from Ripon Cathedral to Fountains Abbey.

The four-mile pilgrimage follows in the footsteps of Cistercian monks who set out from Ripon the day after Christmas, 1132 AD, to found a new monastery on the banks of the River Skell.

It was the first walk to be led by the Area Bishop of Ripon, the Rt Revd. Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, together with the Dean of Ripon, the Very Revd John Dobson.
People of all ages keep fit at Curling Cafe

**LEEDS** At the start of a new year folk of all ages have been keeping active in an unusual way at Christ Church Lofthouse. The Indoor Curling Cafe launched last October and has quickly gained a regular following of enthusiastic 'curlers' who enjoy fortnightly matches.

The sport of indoor curling, made famous on the ice by the Winter Olympics, provides an opportunity “for everyone, young and not-so-young, able-bodied and not-so-able-bodied to take part and compete against each other on an even footing,” said the Revd Mandy Rhodes, team vicar of Rothwell, Lofthouse, Methley and Oulton.

“I came across this innovative way to encourage fellowship and keep people active at the same time when visiting a church in Calderdale. From that moment on, the seed was sown and it has proved to be a great success with our youngest player being 6 years old; the oldest, so far, over 90! People are so hooked that they’re now talking about challenging other churches to compete against them.”

From Mexico to Settle

**Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley**

A little over 20 years ago, I went on a trip to the US-Mexico border.

I was working in a church in the USA at the time, and we took a group of young people on an organised visit to help us better understand border issues. ‘There is’ (to quote the phrase) ‘nothing new under the sun’ there then.

As part of the trip, we spent a night staying on the Mexican side of the border in the town of Nogales. I was on my own, and was looked after by a family who played a card game with me as we tried with often hilarious results to communicate in English and Spanish. I slept under the stars in a room that was awaiting a roof. Dogs barked and the stars twinkled in the warm night air. The hospitality was incredible; you’ll never eat a finer taco than a home-made one in Mexico, that’s for sure!

February brings with it my first anniversary as Bishop of Ripon; what a full year it has been! A question I often get asked is ‘have you settled in?’ My reply is that I am still settling, and in a way I hope I don’t settle completely. The cry of the Gospel is not about comfort. A Biblical passage that has accompanied my journey comes from the first verses of John’s Gospel: the description of the birth of Jesus as God ‘tabernacling’ in our midst. That to me sums up perfectly the joy and challenge of being a disciple.

We are a people on the move. Tabernacles (or tents) aren’t meant to be permanent fixtures.

God calls us and invites us to work together to grow the Kingdom of God in such a way that its borders are always extending. When so much of the discourse of the current time is about walls and breaking long-held connections, there is an obligation and opportunity for people of faith to proclaim a different narrative: one that speaks of hope and optimism about our future, and a willingness to work together in a spirit of trust.

That’s what I am holding this year in my work and prayer.

+Belen-Ann
Bishop of Ripon
**Interfaith weekend brings women together**

**RIPON** Ribblehead recently played host to a group of Muslim and Christian women who came together to explore their faith, build relationships and talk about shared issues of concern, thanks to National Lottery players.

Organised by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) in partnership with the Revd Anne Russell, Team Rector for the Ingleborough Team of churches, the event was a reflective and open encounter which offered the opportunity to foster understanding, counter stereotypes and find solidarity in problems of mutual concern.

Based at Broadrake near Chapel le Dale, the weekend retreat brought together almost 20 women from different backgrounds to meet and share time in the scenic Yorkshire Dales landscape.

**New refurbishment lights up Christ Church Sowerby Bridge**

**HUDDERSFIELD** Christ Church Sowerby Bridge has celebrated the end of a 12 month funding campaign with new lights that shone just in time for Christmas. The Sowerby Bridge Church commissioned a new responsive lighting scheme to replace old wiring and 1970s fluorescent tubes. The light levels have improved substantially so visitors can now see the architectural features, and performers and exhibitors will enjoy an improved venue to host live entertainment and art exhibitions.

The Community Foundation for Calderdale has supported the church with a grant specifically for the LED fittings as it met one of their ten core themes; ‘environment’. They helped the project demonstrate that even with a building dating from 1821, sustainable and vital changes can be made to its carbon footprint.

**Green Community Project**

**BRADFORD** The Very Revd Jerry Lepine, Dean of Bradford, braved the bad weather at the start of December to join members of the city’s faith communities in establishing a new urban forest in Bradford as part of the EcoCathedral project. “This is part of an on-going project to reclaim an area that has suffered from historic pollution,” said Dean Jerry. “It came as part of the EcoCathedral package of ideas that we began to work on together. We had this conversation with the council about ways we could play into the local area from an [environmental] point of view. This suggestion was made and it’s worked like a treat.”

**Reordering Project Underway**

**WAKEFIELD** An exciting reordering project of Normanton’s parish church commenced at the start of January. The development will include new underfloor heating, energy efficient LED lighting, an accessible toilet, a digital PA system, television screens and recarpeting throughout. The font will also be reinstated in a more traditional position near the main entrance, whilst a movable dais will provide flexibility when the building is used outside of regular worship services.
New Rector of Bolton Abbey announced

The next Rector of the Priory Church, Bolton Abbey, will travel round the world to take up the role in Spring 2019.

Rvd Nicholas Mercer is currently the Rector of the Falkland Islands, a parish which includes South Georgia and the British Antarctic Territories, and is based in Christ Church Cathedral, Port Stanley, the southernmost Anglican cathedral in the world. Prior to this position he was Assistant Chaplain at Sherborne School, and previously served his curacy in Gillingham, Dorset.

Nicholas was born in Yorkshire, graduated with a BD from St Andrews, and has subsequently gained LLM and MTh degrees from the universities of Cardiff and Oxford respectively. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1990, and in 1991 joined the Army Legal Services as a Captain. He served the next twenty years in Northern Ireland, Bosnia Herzegovina, Germany, Iraq and Cyprus. His army experience included directing and prosecuting courts-martial, and he was also on the teaching staff of Bielefeld University and the International Institute of Humanitarian Law.

He was the Command Legal Advisor for the HQ 1st (UK) Armoured Division during the Iraq war in 2003. As a result of his stand against the inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners of war in Iraq, he was named as the Liberty Human Rights Lawyer of the Year 2011-2012. He has lectured extensively on the law of armed conflict and human rights. Prior to his ordination, he retired from the army with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Nicholas is married, with three teenage children. His interests include music, fishing, shooting, deer and ferrets.

The institution and induction service will take place on Monday April 1 at 7pm at Bolton Priory. Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley will be officiating.

Invitation to join in German celebrations

The 2019 Kirchentag celebration organised by the Protestant church in Germany takes place in Dortmund this year and many from the diocese will make their way to join in, says Archdeacon of Pontefract, Peter Townley.

“IT’s a great experience and thousands of people of all ages go to this bi-annual celebration not only from Germany, but from across the world.

“There’s lots to see and take part in and an opportunity to hear world class speakers,” said Peter, a seasoned visitor.

In 2017 Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines and Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, the Area Bishop of Huddersfield, spoke at the four day event which was based in Berlin and attended by former US President Barack Obama. A meeting for anyone interested in going to this year’s event will take place at Church House, Leeds on Tuesday, February 12.