Wakefield Cathedral has hosted a special service to launch the Church of England’s first Persian language translation of Holy Communion to further engage with the growing numbers of Iranians in our congregations. Some 500 Iranians from across the country packed into the cathedral, one of three in the Diocese of Leeds, and were welcomed by Dean Simon Cowling and Subdean Tony Macpherson.

Authorised by the House of Bishops, the publication of the Farsi language service affirms the presence of Iranians in churches as a gift, and demonstrates commitment to welcoming them into the life of the Church of England. The new liturgy is designed to be used alongside English language liturgy, with both languages printed side by side, enabling people to follow and participate in services.

At a special celebration service in Wakefield Cathedral, the Bishop of Bradford Toby Howarth and the Bishops of Loughborough and Durham used the wording for the first time. Members of congregations from churches across England, including British, Iranian and other nationality Christians, attended the event which included the singing of hymn verses in English and Farsi alternately and prayers in both languages.

The Bishop of Loughborough, the Rt Revd Guli Francis-Dehqani, who came to the UK from Iran with her family when she was just 14-years-old, presided at the celebration and conveyed messages from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Bishop Toby spoke of the Iranians coming to our churches as something God is doing across our churches and across the world: “We are not just the Church of England, we are the church of God and we want people to be able to worship in their own language alongside each other.”
Honorary Canons take their places at Wakefield Cathedral

The following people were installed as honorary canons by the Bishop of Kirkstall, the Rt Revd Paul Slater on Sunday February 24:

Jane Evans is a retired communications director who serves on the Leeds Diocesan Board, and is an elected member of Diocesan Synod.

Irving Warnett has served on the Board of Trustees of Opera North, is a Trustee of the Leeds Diocesan Board, and Chair of the Finance, Asset and Investment Committee.

Sandra Benham is currently Vicar of Baildon and Area Dean of Aire and Worth Deanery. Before ordination Sandra was a Church Army Officer.

Rachel Firth is Vicar of Lindley, Huddersfield Advisor for Women’s Ministry, and Bishop’s Advisor for Community Engagement (Kirklees).

Vaughan Pollard is Vicar at St John’s Clayton and the Area Dean of Outer Bradford and has served as Chaplain of Huddersfield Town FC.

Fresh hope for all at Easter

Bishop Toby Howarth

At a time when tragic street violence as well as fears over Brexit have dominated much of the news agenda, it is important to find signs of hope for our apparently fragmenting society.

At Wakefield Cathedral, I was privileged to witness that wonderful public space packed with worshippers from Iran, the UK and other backgrounds. We were celebrating the translation of the Holy Communion service into Farsi. Many who came had made costly decisions to follow Christ, sometimes losing businesses and family, and enduring horrendous journeys to escape persecution. Those I met were delighted, committed and intensely serious about their faith in Jesus.

Bishop Guli from Loughbrough, for example, who presided at the Eucharist, has told how her own brother Bahram was murdered just a month before her family fled to safety in England in 1980. For many, it has been Christians and churches who have offered care and love along their journeys to freedom.

When immigrants to the USA gain the right to stay, no one questions their swift and grateful loyalty to the Stars and Stripes. And similarly, I believe we can take real hope from the Persian and other families who are committing to worship in our churches; they too are committed to bringing their skills and energy, playing a full part in our communities.

These people are real gifts to our churches and parishes, and remind us how at Easter, God brings new life and reconciliation from the most surprising situations.

+ Toby
Bishop of Bradford
Bradford Cathedral welcomes “Ambassadors for the Diocese”

BRADFORD Honorary Canons are faith ambassadors for the Diocese and its three cathedrals, said Dean of Bradford, Jerry Lepine: “I am delighted to welcome four new Canons - Revd Kathia Shoesmith, Revd Phil Stone, Revd Mike Cansdale and Revd Michael Wood,” said Dean Jerry, after they were installed last month.

They are pictured above, with Bishop of Kirkstall Paul Slater who officiated at the service.

“Each of them brings a lot of experience of ministry and life to the Cathedral and I look forward to working with them and getting to know them better over the coming years,” said Dean Jerry, pictured centre left. “Each cathedral is having new canons installed in 2019 and they will undoubtedly bring new life and vitality. A canon is an ambassador for the Cathedral and makes a contribution to the life of the Cathedral.”

New service for deaf Christians

HUDDERSFIELD Deaf Christians and hearing friends have launched a new service led entirely in British Sign Language, but translated and voiced into English for hearing people.

There was a good turnout at the first event held at Christ Church, Pellon, Halifax, which will now be repeated on the second Sunday evening of every month.

Vicar, Revd John Hellewell said: “The first service was fantastic! There was a great sense of togetherness and fun, and we can’t wait till the next one.

“It’s been a real joy having deaf members as an important part of our congregation.

“It’s great that they are now taking a lead in designing a regular service that meets their needs whilst building links with the hearing members.”

Face up to farming issues

RIPON Bring Parliament to the Dales to learn the tough realities of Northern farming, says Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley, who speaks for the Diocese on rural issues. In the full version of an opinion piece published in the Yorkshire Post, the Bishop of Ripon writes:

“My father once told me a story of going into a field after it had been ploughed and looking at the furrows, and seeing them as if the earth were improvising with itself through the work of the farmer: the rows of tilled soil, and the back and forth pattern which is similar, but not repetitive. Farming works with the seasons and rhythms of the year.”

Social media

LEEDS A Tweet Up of social media users from churches and cathedrals across the diocese took place at Church House to encourage those seeking to make the most of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The event, hosted by the communications team, brought together church-goers who had attended previous courses, to listen to speakers who gave presentations about online interaction and the use of social media. Speakers included Revd David Robertson, vicar of South Ossett and author of What would Jesus post?
New Archdeacon for Richmond and Craven joins our Diocese at Ripon Cathedral

The Ven Jonathan Gough, former Assistant Chaplain General to the Army, has been installed as the new Archdeacon for Richmond and Craven.

At a service presided over by Bishop of Kirkstall, the Rt Revd Paul Slater, Archdeacon Jonathan swore oaths of assent and allegiance before family, friends, clergy and the Diocesan Secretary, Debbie Child.

Speaking afterwards, Jonathan said: “I’m looking forward to meeting and working with people in this wonderful area.

“My wife and I have lived here twice before, and when this opportunity arose I had to answer a calling.”

Pictured above with Bishops Paul, Toby, Helen-Ann and Dean John, he is married to Canon Flora Winfield, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Representative to the Commonwealth and an Army reserve chaplain, who gave the Old Testament Reading on Nineveh, from the book of the prophet Jonah.

In the absence of Bishop Nick Baines, who is on sabbatical, Bishop Paul led the service in which he welcomed Jonathan to his role in our young diocese.

Drawing on the reading from Jonah, he joked:

“This is a big area to cover - I don’t know if you could walk across it in three days or not.

“It’s not got a Nineveh... although it does have Harrogate!”

Bishop Paul said how the “glorious Archdeaconry of Richmond and Craven” was looking forward to Jonathan bringing a new stability and urged everyone to cherish him and Flora as they progress both its identity and that of the Diocese of Leeds.

Jonathan’s interests include the countryside, history, ecumenism, classical and baroque music and fly fishing.

Fact-finding trip to Hanover

A delegation from our diocese has just returned from a bridge-building trip to Hanover, Germany.

Bishop of Ripon, Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, along with the Revd Dr Hayley Matthews, Diocesan Director of Lay Training, and the Revd Derek Jones, curate in Little Horton, Bradford, travelled to Hanover for a four-day exploratory visit, getting to know the context of the Church there and meeting lay and clergy representatives.

Founded on a long-standing friendship between Bishop Nick and Ralf Meister, the Bishop of Hanover and an honorary canon of Ripon Cathedral, this new link represents an exciting opportunity to share ideas and work on projects of mutual interest.