New Strategy for our Maturing Diocese approved by Synod

Maturing in Christ, a five-year strategy for the Diocese of Leeds, has been overwhelmingly approved by our Synod. The strategy, which in Bishop Nick Baines’ words, “puts the parishes, schools and churches at the centre” was presented in revised form to delegates in Harrogate last month, and supported without any opposition and only one abstention.

It contains the five clear goals which will guide diocesan progress until 2024:
1. Thriving as a distinctive diocese whose culture is shaped by a shared vision and values.
2. Reimagining ministry to promote clergy and laity working confidently in fruitful relationships.
4. Building leadership pathways to continuously develop lay and ordained leaders.
5. Growing young people as Christians.

The strategy, first presented to Synod five months ago, has been extensively restructured and re-written. It now exists in three parts which were acknowledged as more digestible and inclusive by many Synod members.

Its second section, Diocesan Strategy Objectives and Initiatives, was commended by Synod and a new Diocesan Strategy Toolkit, “Helping our churches to flourish”, was officially welcomed as a work to be further tested and developed. There was also a positive response to a new Diocesan Environment Policy, which was approved with one vote against and one abstention.

The Presidential Address was given by Bishop of Kirkstall, the Rt Revd Paul Slater in the absence of Bishop Nick, who was on sabbatical.

‘Green Journey’ refreshed for future needs

“Green Journey”, a package of energy services provided for churches in the Diocese of Leeds, has renewed its partnership with energy procurement specialist Green Energy Consulting.

At the end of a successful four year partnership, the bundle of services was retendered in February in a process run by the Diocesan Energy Services Scrutiny Group. Eleven companies bid to offer green energy services for parishes in the Leeds Diocese and Green Energy Consulting have been confirmed as the winning provider with their Green Journey scheme.
Maturing in Christ

Bishop Paul Slater

The Diocesan Synod on 16 March saw the Diocesan Strategy passed almost unanimously. You may remember that there was a debate last year in November and Synod asked for more work to be done.

The goals have not changed: Thriving as a distinctive Diocese in five Episcopal Areas, Reimagining Ministry with new ways of lay and clergy partnering together, Developing Lay Discipleship both within and beyond our church walls and Growing Young Christians. Synod approved these goals as providing vision for a flourishing church, not just for its own sake, but for a church to make an impact on the diverse communities and contexts in which we are engaged across the Diocese of Leeds.

Synod commended the objectives, which are a set of possibilities - not exhaustive - for action at parish, Deanery, Episcopal Area and Diocesan level and which we expect to change over the next five years. And, finally, Synod welcomed the toolkit as offering ways for parishes to find their way into the Strategy and see what it can mean locally. All this can be found on the Diocesan website. Much of the initial rollout will take place through the five Episcopal Areas.

The Strategy has been themed “Maturing in Christ”. That means partnership and collaboration at all kinds of levels - parish, Deanery, Episcopal Area and Diocesan - and between lay and ordained. It also implies self-giving and a certain willingness to take risks and try things, so that we are truly a church which is outward facing and serving and engaging in God’s world. Now it is up to us.....

+Paul Slater
Bishop of Kirkstall

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New Pioneer Evangelist at Bradford Centre of Mission

**BRADFORD** Vicky Bell has been appointed as Pioneer Evangelist in the Bradford Centre of Mission to work alongside co-founder Tracy Milne.

Vicky (pictured below) will begin the new role in her home town on Tuesday, April 23. She began working with Sorted as their Youth Enabler in May 2018. Her previous roles have included family support work, working with those at risk of offending and supporting individuals struggling with substance misuse issues.

Looking ahead to her new role Vicky says, “I am very excited to continue working with Sorted and to share the Gospel with the young people who live on the estates where I grew up.”

The Bradford Centre of Mission is home to the Sorted Project – a church for young people, run by young people. It was established as a fresh expression of church in 2005 by Andy and Tracy Milne.
Private paradises will be open to all this summer when thousands of visitors will flock to the picturesque village of Cawthorne, South Yorkshire for its Open Gardens Weekend.

Fundraising from the event will go towards repairs to All Saints’ Church, the Exodus Project children’s charity in Barnsley and village organisations. This hardy biennial attraction is being held for the twelfth time on June 22 and June 23 when 19 immaculate gardens each with its own individual interest and character, will be open from 11am to 5pm each day.

Many are suitable for wheelchairs and dogs are welcome.

Dean John said, “I’m delighted to have been asked, it’s a huge privilege and honour.”

“We at the Cathedral work very closely with the lieutenancy and are always very keen to support in any way we can.”

Dean John made a Deputy Lieutenant for North Yorkshire

Dean of Ripon Cathedral, the Very Revd John Dobson, is one of five new deputies, including BBC Look North’s Harry Gration, appointed by the Lord Lieutenant for North Yorkshire, Johanna Ropner, with the Queen’s agreement.

They will assist the Lord Lieutenant in her duty as the Queen’s official representative across the county.

The new appointees means North Yorkshire will be served by a total of 43 Deputy Lieutenants, drawn from various locations, backgrounds and disciplines, but all having demonstrated overriding commitment to their communities.

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80 years of service to music

After over 80 years as a chorister, Peter Davis, a member of St Mary’s Church in Garforth, has finally decided to hang up his robes.

Peter, pictured with the Revd Jane Brown, vicar of St Mary’s in Garforth, and Gillian Hainsworth, Director of Music at St Mary’s, was presented with the Royal School of Church Music’s loyal service medal in recognition of the many years of faithful service he has provided as a church chorister.

Since the age of seven Peter has been involved in church music, most prominently as a tenor, and for the last thirty-five years has been a member of the choir at St Mary’s Church in Garforth. Gillian Hainsworth said, “We want to say a huge thank you to Peter for his outstanding commitment, dedication and singing.”

Private paradises open to all

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Dresden preach

As Brexit storms thunder on, Bishop of Huddersfield Jonathan Gibbs has preached in Dresden’s Frauenkirche, rebuilt after being destroyed by Allied bombing in the Second World War. Bishop Jonathan gave the sermon in German at a special service last month and drew on his international life experiences to call for Christian clarity in precarious political times. In the sermon he warned how fake news, distortions and lies on the Internet pose a dark threat to concepts of truth in society and said that Christians everywhere must strive to shed light on those dark places.
Diocese of Leeds news

Diocesan education conference brings 200 delegates to Leeds

Education experts from across our diocese and beyond have gathered for the Annual Senior Leaders’ Conference held in the heart of Leeds.

Some 200 delegates took their seats at the Queen’s Hotel to be welcomed by Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education and Richard Noake, Diocesan Director of Education.

Students from the Bishop Young Church of England Academy, Leeds began the day of listening and learning by leading the opening act of worship.

Mary Hawes, the church’s National Children and Youth Adviser then gave a presentation entitled “Don’t mention the spiritual”.

Professor of Urban Education at the University of London, Kathryn Riley spoke on how schools must be supported as places of belonging and the afternoon session began with children from Trinity All Saints, Bingley CoE Primary School, who led worship. Staff from the diocese’s Children and Young People’s Team were amongst many stalls offering a huge range of resources.

Bishop of Ripon Dr Helen-Ann Hartley presented on “What’s your mountain, what’s your river and who are your people? Education and the formation of identity.” She also livened up the post-lunch slot by producing a purple ukulele and serenading the audience with a Maori hymn.

Bishop Helen-Ann was followed by Shonette Bason-Wood, who focussed on the importance of nurturing happiness amongst our young people.

Prog Rock comes to our Cathedrals

Rock legend Ian Anderson is bringing his Christmas Jethro Tull Concert to a brace of our cathedrals this December. The band will play at Wakefield on Friday, December 6 and then head north to play Ripon Cathedral the following evening.

Ian said: “Whether your Christmas is a secular affair of gift-giving and family gatherings, or a more worshipful recognition of one of the two biggest days in the Christian calendar, join us for some uplifting Christmas spirit, music, readings and maybe even a prayer or two.”

Ian, a self-professed Deist/Pantheist, has a heart for the Christian traditions and aims to support places of Christian worship by performing in some of the country’s cathedrals and churches to help them raise much needed funds.