A specially-tailored course on church planting is to be run for the first time outside London in Leeds early in 2020.

The Plant Course is a seven-sessions programme designed to equip church planters and their teams in the three to nine months leading up to their plant and will be run at St George’s, Leeds in February.

The course covers the practical aspects of church planting, such as strategy, finance, funding, communications and self-leadership.

The Revd Lizzy Woolf, Rector at St George’s, said:

“This is the first time the Plant Course has been run in the North of England, and our heart is that it will be a blessing to churches across our diocese and beyond.

“As a Resource Church for the Diocese of Leeds, we are committed to sending out teams to help churches grow and communities be transformed.

“Every context is different, and as we reimagine ministry together, we believe specific church planting training is invaluable.

“We are therefore very excited to be partnering with St Hild Theological College to offer the Plant Course in Leeds from February 2020.

“The Plant Course is designed to equip church planters and their teams (both clergy and lay) and uses material developed by the Diocese of London, where it has been used to train more than 150 teams so far.”

For more details please visit www.stgeorgesleeds.org.uk

Digitally preserving the Past

An exciting new digital project aiming to map and photograph churchyards across the country is being rolled out in Huddersfield and Halifax.

The Burial Ground Management System is a joint venture between the Church Buildings Council and Atlantic Geomatics, providing an online tool designed to act as a management tool for churchyard maintenance and burials.

Two open days, at Emmanuel Church Shelley and All Hallows Kirkburton, were held to provide information about the online system, which is hoped will enable churches to reach out to those in their communities who are interested in areas such as family history and biodiversity.
The Epiphany

Bishop Tony Robinson

We all enjoy a good dose of escapism. We tell our children fairy-tales about giant beanstalks and glass slippers. We lose ourselves reading trashy novels, spend hours following the adventures of our favourite characters in the soaps, go to the cinema and play computer games. Mostly, it’s good, clean fun. It’s a way of switching off and forgetting about the harshness and stress of reality. The story of the Epiphany of Our Lord can be seen in the same light. We have the exotic — the Wise Men from the East; the mystical — the star which guides them; the ‘baddie’ — King Herod; the ‘feel-good factor’ — the mother and baby in the stable. We can see it as another good yarn. However, it is much more than a legend or a religious fairy-tale. Matthew is very clear in setting the incident in a specific time and place: in Bethlehem, in Herod’s reign. This is something rooted in reality, not just a nice story. The star was no magic light, infallibly showing the way — the Magi had to ask the way, they had to consult others as to where they could expect the new king to be born. Scripture gives us a very telling, realistic ending to the story: “they returned to their own country”. To their homes, their everyday lives. And this is very significant. Just as the Magi spotted the star, we are called to read the signs of our times, to be alert to God speaking to us in our lives. We are called to have the courage to act on our convictions, leave our old familiar securities and embark on the journey of discovering God. We are challenged to recognise the presence of God in the particular circumstances of our lives. The Magi saw beyond the baby in the stable and recognised the very presence of God, the Word made flesh. And so they adored. We too are called to recognise the presence of the Lord in this world — not the next, but here and now, in the people and events of our lives. And once we do, we are asked, like the Magi, not to keep this to ourselves but to ‘return home’, to let others know that our world in 2020 is still charged with the glory and the presence of God, if only we would open our eyes to see it.

+Tony
Bishop of Wakefield

Three generations confirmed in one go in Battyeford

HUDDERSFIELD Three generations have recently been confirmed at a church in the Huddersfield area.

William James, his mum Ruth, and her mum Muriel were all confirmed by the Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Huddersfield, at the Church of Christ the King, Battyeford.

This was the latest step in 10 year-old William’s Christian Journey which had begun when the Revd Maggie McLean baptised him in July 2009, shortly after her arrival as the new Vicar of Battyeford.

Ruth and Muriel had been brought up as Baptists but became closely involved with Christ the King Battyeford over the years, helping with children’s activities and then filling other roles in the church.

While William was considering confirmation, his mother and grandmother thought, “why not us as well?”
Boost to Bradford’s greenery with Cathedral and community

A day devoted to boosting the greenery of Bradford saw 750 trees planted at a nature reserve by volunteers from the Cathedral and community.

National Tree Week 2019 saw the trees planted at the Denso Marston Nature Reserve to also provide some much-needed flood support.

People from Bradford Cathedral, Extinction Rebellion and Baildon CE Primary School, plus volunteers from the Bracken Hall Countryside Centre and Museum, grabbed gloves and spades and helped plant the trees. Even passers-by and dog walkers jumped in to help out.

Mike de Villiers of the Cathedral EcoGroup said: “Trees are the natural cover of this country, and we really need to reinstate them and overturn the damage that we, as humans, have done over the centuries.”

People of faith from across diocese meet and learn together

Members of the three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, have recently gathered at a church in our diocese for a chance to explore the faiths together.

The event was standing room only with many visitors rarely seen in church to learn more about the beliefs and traditions of particularly Islam and Judaism.

The gathering took place in St Paul’s Church in the village of Aldbrough St John, and was hosted by the Revd Camilla Campling-Denton, Priest in Charge at Forcett and Aldbrough and Melsonby, who opened the meeting with a welcoming prayer.

St George’s Crypt

St George’s Crypt has been serving the homeless community of Leeds since 1930, and are looking to their 90th anniversary in 2020. Their mission began when the Vicar of St George’s Church at the time, the Revd Don Robins, cleared out the church’s crypt to serve as a homeless shelter providing food and support to those hit hardest by the Great Depression.

The Crypt now aims to provide a calming environment where clients can open up about their issues so they can move forward from them, in any of the several types of accommodation run by the charity.

To find out more please visit www.stgeorgescrypt.org.uk

New Canon Theologian

The Revd Canon Mark Oakley has accepted an invitation from the Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, to become Canon Theologian at Wakefield Cathedral. In this honorary role, which he will hold alongside his role as Dean of St John’s College, Cambridge, Canon Oakley will support the Bishop and the Cathedral Chapter in their theological reflections and encourage integrity in their discernment and decision-making. Canon Oakley will also be invited to preach in the Cathedral from time to time.
The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) cares for 240 church schools and academies serving 64,000 children and has responsibility for the over-arching vision for their education.

All of these schools, and our Multi-Academy Trusts, are supported by the officers of the DBE, its Director Richard Noake and the Education Team at Church House.

“The Diocesan Strategy with its clear reference to work with children, young people and schools, alongside the national report, Growing Faith, provides focus to the work of the DBE,” Richard said.

“Much of the Education Team’s work concentrates on training and supporting schools to better articulate their distinctive Christian vision, helped by specialist RE advice.”

“Rural sustainability is of great concern when it comes to education,” said the Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Huddersfield and chair of the Leeds DBE: “We need our politicians, both locally and nationally, to be pressing central Government for a more coordinated approach,” he said.

“These schools are a central pillar of rural communities - this issue cannot be seen in isolation, but as part of a much bigger discussion about their future. Our rural communities need joined-up thinking in order to be able to thrive, not just survive.”

At a national rural schools conference run by the DBE, some 60 schools joined a new support network. The DBE continues its calls for strategic approaches to managing schools in the rural areas.

To find out more please contact the Education Team on info.ed@leeds.anglican.org.

“Truth of homelessness told at Wakefield”

Myths have been broken and truths told about the extent of homelessness in Wakefield at a recent event at one of our cathedrals.

Guest speaker Kevin Dobson, Project Manager of the city’s Community Awareness Programme, which provides support for the homeless and those who can’t make ends meet, told the audience at Wakefield Cathedral some hard facts, including that tragically 17 of their clients had died in 2019 due to their homelessness.

He said in any one year the project saw 400 new people, cooked and served 21,000 hot meals, and gave out 3,500 items of clothing and 3,500 items of toiletries.

Kevin said, “A big part of our job at CAP Care is setting the record straight about homelessness.”