Church of England launches new green investing index

The Church of England is taking the lead on companies committing to the Paris Climate Agreement, with an investment of £600 million at the launch of a new global stock index.

The FTSE Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) Index aims to allow investment funds to see which companies are committed to the targets set by the Paris Climate Agreement, to allow for more ethical investing. The Index is the first to build in data from the London School of Economics hosted TPI, which tracks whether companies align to the Paris Climate Agreement’s goal of keeping warming below 2 degrees Celsius.

The Index will reward those companies with public targets aligned to the Paris Agreement whilst significantly underweighting or excluding those that do not.

For Christians and people of conscience, this is even more so when you see the impacts on the world’s poorest and least equipped to adapt to extreme weather, as well as the impacts on the beauty of God’s creation.

Jemima Parker, Diocese of Leeds Environment Officer said: “I’m delighted the Church is proactively promoting investing in sustainable companies. This is a significant step towards a low carbon future.”

The Rt Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury (pictured) said: “We all have both a moral and financial responsibility to address the climate emergency.

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Diocesan News
March 2020

www.leeds.anglican.org

+Helen-Ann takes on Education role

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Grave damage after car crashes through church wall

A suspected drink driver has badly damaged graves at St Stephen’s, Lindley after smashing through a wall in a late-night crash.

The driver, a man in his 30s, was injured after losing control of his Vauxhall Zafira.

Vicar of Lindley, Revd Canon Rachel Firth said:

“We’d like to reassure the community in Lindley that while there is damage to some stones, there has been no disturbance of graves themselves.

“It’s also important to remember that the dead rest in the hands of God and aren’t touched by this, however difficult it is for us to see.

“It’s a relief to the church community that there was no loss of life and whatever the circumstances we have offered prayers this morning for all involved.”

Strengthening links

Bishop Paul Slater

I am writing this on the eve of a trip from the Diocese of Leeds to Sri Lanka. There are two Anglican dioceses there - Colombo and Kurunegala - but the church still prefers to call itself, officially, the Church of Ceylon. We go as visitors and guests of the two Bishops, Dhilo and Keerthi. By the time you read this, we will have returned and hopefully, some of you will have been following us on the video diary on the Diocese of Leeds website (www.leeds.anglican.org/sri-lanka-trip-blog).

The Diocese of Colombo is running with four themes as it develops its mission: Alpha Courses; a parenting programme called “The World needs a Father”, which as the title suggests focus on the responsibility of fathers in the family; nursery and pre-school education; and Christians in sport.

We are in the process of learning afresh about the Diocese of Kurunegala and its mission under the relatively new leadership of Bishop Keerthi.

In both dioceses we want to learn more about how clergy manage responsibility for more than one church and how lay leadership is encouraged and fostered.

Soon we will be approaching the first anniversary of the Easter Day bombings in churches in different parts of Sri Lanka. As part of our remembrance of that day and in order to give an opportunity for us all to learn more about the church there, we are holding an open Sri Lanka Day on Saturday, April 25 at St Mary’s, Burley in Wharfedale - details to follow.

We thank God for the church in Sri Lanka. Will you join in praying with us this Lent for a church which knows the cost of discipleship and at the same time is a source of inspiration and Christian hope?

+Paul
Bishop of Kirkstall
Christians will meet to discuss how best to welcome residents of new housing developments at a conference this June. The New Housing Hub is a network for Christians of all traditions who have a vision for engaging with new housing communities, with the aim of inspiring, resourcing and connecting people. The Hub holds its first conference on Saturday, June 20 at Moortown Baptist Church in Leeds, from 9.30am to 4.30pm. The day will also look at how churches can help shape local area plans, and the God-given opportunities for welcome, outreach and building communities. For more information, and to book a place at the conference, please visit the diocesan website.

A churchgoer is recovering from serious injuries after being struck by a hit-and-run driver. Richard Selby was on his way to worship at St Andrew’s, Starbeck, when he was hit by a grey Mini Cooper. The driver fled the scene, leaving injured Mr Selby, who suffered a broken leg and arm. North Yorkshire Police have appealed for information on the collision. Revd Phil Carman, Vicar of St Andrew’s visited Richard in hospital and said: “Richard has been part of the church family at St Andrew’s, Starbeck for many years. He is a volunteer for the St John Ambulance group that has connections with the church and the church family have been praying for him.”

A bumper year of community engagement is being celebrated at Wakefield Cathedral. “It was wonderful to welcome more than 5,000 people to the Cathedral in 2019 for outreach and educational workshops and events,” said Gillian Bunn, Wakefield Cathedral’s Community Outreach Officer. The community outreach programme, which completed its first full year in 2019, is funded by a partnership of the Allchurches Trust, Hymns Ancient and Modern, St George Martin Trust and the Diocese of Leeds Family and Social Welfare Council.
Bishop Jonathan takes on national Safeguarding role

The Bishop of Huddersfield, Jonathan Gibbs, has been named as the Church of England’s new lead safeguarding bishop, taking over from Bishop Peter Hancock, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who leaves the role at the end of February.

Bishop Jonathan, a member of the House of Bishops, will be supported by the Bishop of Southampton, Debbie Sellin, as deputy lead safeguarding bishop.

Bishop Jonathan and Bishop Debbie will work closely with the national director of safeguarding Melissa Caslake, who took up the role six months ago, along with the National Safeguarding Team.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “We welcome Bishop Jonathan and Bishop Debbie and commend their willingness to take up this role which is a vital part of the work of the Church. I am aware of the immense time commitment involved and pray for them as this new chapter begins.”

Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines, said: “Bishop Jonathan has taken on a vitally important role for the church and he does so with my support, encouragement and prayers.”

Speaking of his new role, Bishop Jonathan said: “I am profoundly conscious of the work that lies ahead, both in response to the findings of IICSA and beyond.

“In particular, I am committed to working closely with the survivor community, to whom we owe a huge debt of thanks for their courage, integrity and willingness to hold us to account.

“Safeguarding is about enabling the Church of England to go on becoming a safer, healthier place for all, and it is a sacred responsibility in which every single one of us must share.”

“Giving machine” boosts parish collections

Contactless card readers are boosting generous giving, according to PCC treasurers across the diocese.

Last year some 15 parishes acquired card readers, tablets and stands from a Visa-sponsored Parish Buying offer, and now treasurers from some of those parishes have been offering testimonials about how well they have done.

“We call it ‘The Giving Machine!’” said Brian Pilkington, from All Saints Pontefract.

“We once everyone heard how simple it was, people were keen to use it. For an extra £10 per month payable to the operators, we can collect gift aid on donations. I would recommend anyone to buy one as it has resulted in a definite increase in donations.”