Yorkshire prepares for unique global gathering of bishops

In a unique event for a diocese in the Church of England, this month senior bishops and leaders from seven countries with partnership links to the Diocese of Leeds will meet together for the first time. The church leaders will spend 31 March-9 April in the diocese with five days together on retreat at Parcevall Hall, together with services and opportunities to meet with parishes and link supporters.

The church leaders are Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo, Sudan; Bishop Dhiloraj Canagasabey, Colombo, Sri Lanka (pictured with Bishop Nick); Bishop George Okoth, Mara, Tanzania; Bishop John Samuel, Faisalabad, Pakistan; Bishop Mark Bourlakas, Southwestern Virginia; Bishop Åke Bonnier, Skara, Sweden; and Senior Matthias Rein, Erfurt, Germany.

The global gathering begins with a diocesan welcome service at Wakefield Cathedral on Sunday 2 April at 3.30pm.

Dean Jonathan Greener said: “It would be great for as many people from the diocese as possible to come along to show how pleased we are that our visitors have made the effort to come to the UK.”

Link events will take place the following weekend, including a forum with the bishops at Leeds Minster on Sunday 9 April from 3.30pm, followed by Evensong at 5pm.

Bishop Nick, who writes about the visit on page two, said, “It will be a unique international conference. We’ll be celebrating the strength of global Christianity - a hugely positive message that runs counter to the current narrative of anti-globalisation”.

Five bishops go to Durham

Five bishops from the diocese travelled north in March to join the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, in a four-day mission to the diocese of Durham, “Talking Jesus”. A programme of imaginative events included Bishop James Bell at ‘Chase a bishop on a bike’ and the Bishop of Richmond, Paul Slater, taking part in a family cricketing tournament (pictured, courtesy Keith Blundy). Bishop Jonathan Gibbs joined Street Pastors in Gateshead, while Bishop Toby Howarth was in Stockton taking part in an art event, ‘Painting Jesus’. The former Bishop of Bolton, Rt Revd Chris Edmonson, now an Assistant Bishop in Leeds, took part in a ‘Bishop’s Bingo’ event.

Durham is the third Archbishop’s mission, with previous missions at Blackburn (2016) and Sheffield (2015).
When worlds collide

Bishop Nick Baines

By the time you read this we will be welcoming the arrival of seven of our link bishops to the diocese. Last year I invited the Archbishop of Sudan, the bishops of Mara (Tanzania), Colombia (Sri Lanka), Faisalabad (Pakistan), Southwestern Virginia (USA) and Skara (Sweden), and the Senior of the Kirchenkreis Erfurt (Germany) to visit our diocese and hold a retreat/conference.

The bishops will arrive in time to spend a weekend around the diocese, spend a week with our bishops at Parcevall Hall, then spend the following weekend around the diocese before going on Monday 10 April to Canterbury to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury. There will be a celebration service at Wakefield Cathedral on Sunday afternoon 2 April and a final event at Leeds Minster on 9 April in the afternoon.

The point of all this is to bring together bishops with whom we have strong relationships, but who might not know each other. We shall pray, study, talk and debate with each other. We will begin by learning from one another what it is to be a disciple, a church, a bishop in our very diverse cultures and contexts. We shall explore how our partnerships across the world (in our own mini Anglican Communion) might best be developed and optimised in the future.

In one sense this means allowing a number of worlds to collide. And the run up to Holy Week is not a bad time to do this - after all, Holy Week and Easter compel us to allow our own secure worlds to be challenged, exposed and addressed. Put your hopes for eternity in a messiah who then gets himself killed, and you might feel something is not quite right. How are you supposed to make sense of (and live with) the Prince of Peace being subjected to extreme violence?

The worlds collide. Violence is met with forgiveness. Earth is confronted by heaven. Fear is embarrassed by grace. And death is diminished by life. Happy Easter!

+Nick
Bishop of Leeds

Shrove Tuesday
Generosity

More than £1k worth of foodstuffs were donated on the steps of Wakefield Cathedral on Shrove Tuesday as a response to its Giving Campaign for Lent to tackle food poverty across the Wakefield District. Those who brought food, including pupils from local schools, exchanged their gifts for free pancakes and wrote prayers to hang on a prayer tree. Pictured is Revd Tim Stevens, who demonstrated his skills in pancake flipping.

The cathedral had invited local people, schools, churches and local businesses to join in with the campaign. It is continuing to collect further donations for distribution throughout Lent.
Leeds based comic book explores Lent

**LEEDS** A Leeds artist has written and illustrated a Leeds-based comic book for Lent. Si Smith’s comic *How to Disappear Completely* has been commissioned by Leeds Church Institute and reflects on Christ’s 40 days in the wilderness as well as some of the realities of life and faith in modern-day Leeds.

Si said: “People local to Leeds will recognise some of the locations I’ve used, not least the derelict council offices on the way out of the city to the M621. All of the characters in the comic have been observed and drawn around Leeds. I’ve put things in there that people can find, there’s hints to things, and there’s references to songs, so if you’ve got the patience, and the interest you can look at it and go, ‘Oh, yeah!’”. *How to Disappear Completely, a comic for Leeds and for Lent* costs £5 per copy and is available from LCILeeds.org.

Ripon couple’s African dream

**RIPON** Revd John and Cathie Rutter from Ripon are using their retirement to fulfil a long held dream of returning to Africa to work with the Church Mission Society. The couple first met in Nigeria in the 1970s while working with Voluntary Service Overseas. They returned to Ripon 36 years ago and since then have both been active members of the congregation at Holy Trinity Ripon. They hoped to work at a Bible college in South Sudan, but fierce fighting has meant they will now be heading to Uganda to work at a refugee camp until conditions allow them in. John said: “It feels right going now. We see this as an adventure and it is an opportunity to re-energise.”

Peddling to keep warm

**BRADFORD** Vicar of St Stephen’s, West Bowling, Bradford, the Revd Jimmy Hinton, and Sarah Hinton, Project Manager of the Shine Community Project, are to take on the challenge of a marathon tandem ride to raise the £60,000 needed to provide their large Victorian church and community centre with underfloor heating. The ‘Warm the Heart’ appeal aims to raise the money in just ninety days through a host of sponsored events and activities including, concerts, comedy and quiz nights and donations.

The Shine community project, based at St Stephen’s Church, runs exercise classes, jobs search clubs, arts and crafts classes, refugee welcome groups and much more for more than 250 people each week. More information can be found at www.warmtheheart.co.uk

Minster role

**HUDDERSFIELD** A packed programme of events for all the family is planned at Halifax Minster thanks to the appointment of a new member of the team. Former Calderdale head teacher Karen Lomas has been appointed as the Minster’s Education Officer. Karen was head at Savile Park Primary School for 12 years, and prior to that, deputy head at Luddenden Dene CE Junior and Infant School. Last summer she retired from teaching to spend time volunteering in Nepal where she taught English, helped in an orphanage and shared her expertise in teacher training.
Farewells and tributes to Bishop James

Special services have been taking place for several months throughout the Yorkshire Dales to bid farewell to Bishop James Bell who retires at the end of April. At a special communion service in St Margaret’s Church, Hawes, tributes were paid to the “approachable, kind, always smiling” bishop who had “a great sense of humour” and who would be sadly missed when he formally retired at the end of April.

Bishop James’s official farewell and thanksgiving service will be held at Ripon Cathedral on Sunday April 30th at 3.30pm. James has been Bishop of Ripon since the creation of the new Diocese of Leeds in 2014.

Pictured: the Highside Longsword Group show their appreciation.

Green energy saves £100k

A unique green energy scheme pioneered in the Leeds Diocese is now attracting attention from the church nationally, having saved participating churches in the diocese more than £100,000 to date.

The diocese has been working in partnership with Green Energy Consulting to offer good value, 100% renewably generated electricity and natural gas to churches. So far, 109 churches have switched either their gas or electricity, or both, with an average annual saving of £775. In addition, the company has reclaimed more than £35,000 in overpaid VAT.

Jemima Parker, Environment Officer (pictured), said “It’s so important that we start the journey to decarbonising our churches as we all move to a low carbon economy to combat climatic change.”

For more details email jemima.parker@leeds.anglican.org.

Wave of Prayer campaign

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York will be inviting churches and worshippers across the diocese to pray for the evangelisation of the nation during the week before Pentecost Sunday.

Thy Kingdom Come has expanded since last year to include churches of all denominations. Bishop Toby has urged everyone to take an early look at the “global wave of prayer” campaign. “There will be diocesan-wide celebrations. We ask the churches and deaneries to be looking at how they can join this wave of prayer.” With events across the diocese, including Bishop Nick speaking at Wakefield Cathedral at Pentecost, the campaign officially starts on Ascension Day, 25 May, and runs for nine days until Pentecost, 4 June.

More details can be found at www.thykingdomcome.global