

Bishop Jonathan calls for national rural strategy to save schools



National decision makers must adopt a co-ordinated approach to protecting rural communities and listen to the needs of rural schools, says Bishop Jonathan Gibbs, the Bishop of Huddersfield, in an article for the Yorkshire Post.

“We need to be shouting loud and proud about our rural communities, and making sure that people in London are hearing that in the midst of all the noise,” he says. The newspaper says urgent meetings are to be held due to warnings over the clash of financial pressures versus the preservation of countryside communities. Since last year, nine small schools have been threatened with closure in North Yorkshire and the Church of England has called for a rural education strategy to address challenges nationwide.

Bishop Jonathan, Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Education, said there must be a co-ordinated Yorkshire vision to protect rural communities, with pressure on Westminster to draw up a blueprint for the future. “We need our politicians, both locally and nationally, to be pressing central Government for a more co-ordinated approach,” said Bishop Jonathan. “These schools are central pillars of rural communities...our rural communities need joined-up thinking in order to be able to thrive, not just survive.”

Last month, the diocese hosted the Rural and Small School’s Conference 2018. Held at Allerton Castle, near Knaresborough, it brought heads and governors together from rural schools across the region. It was followed by a symposium at Lambeth Palace on protecting the future of education in rural communities.



‘Guinea Pigs’ trial clergy management training

A pioneering training project developed in the Ripon Episcopal Area to develop management and leadership skills has seen its first cohort of clergy complete a 14 month course. The group of twelve clergy ‘guinea pigs’, as they were called, formed a new Clergy Leadership Network (CLN) with the aim of fostering mutual support and development.



The CLN programme was developed and led by Bishop Bev Mason while she was Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven. Topics included finance, working with volunteers, change management and leadership skills.

After positive feedback, it is now hoped that lessons from the CLN can be rolled out in future training.

A year to remember?

Bishop Nick Baines

Happy New Year!

If 2019 is half as lively as 2018, we are in for an 'interesting' time.

Of course, the big event this year will be the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 29 March. At the time of writing we still don't know if or how this will happen, but we do know that whatever and however it happens it is not going to be a comfortable ride. So, what are we to offer as Christians and Anglicans at such a time as this?

Well, some people will be celebrating and others will be miserable. The fact is that our country - and probably, therefore, our diocese - is split fairly down the middle on the matter of EU membership. This means that whatever happens on 29 March the divisions will not simply go away.

Christians are called to be realists - not to pretend all is well when it isn't. Christians are also called to be engaged in the mucky reality of the world and strive for truth and justice. However, these are not always crystal clear. So, the Christian calling to a ministry of reconciliation remains vital whatever the circumstances



in which we find ourselves. And this must mean that we pay particular attention before and after Brexit Day to those who suffer the consequences of any fall-out to the political and economic circumstances that pertain at that point. Our vocation to care for poor, homeless, dispossessed and marginalised people in our parishes will not go away.

So, my wish for a happy new year is accompanied by a plea for this year to see us fulfilling our Christian vocation to be disciples of Jesus, servants of one another, lovers of God's world, and liverers of God's grace.

At Christmas, we were surprised again at God coming among us as one of us - the ultimate in commitment. At Epiphany we meet the Magi who look for a king, find a baby, then, politically threatened, "go back a different way". I pray that 2019 will see us walking a renewed path in the light of our encounter with Jesus.

+Nick
Bishop of Leeds

Wakefield celebrates with pork pie

WAKEFIELD A special pork pie has been created as part of celebrations to mark Wakefield's 130th anniversary of city status.

Commissioned by Wakefield Business Improvement District (BID) and created by champion pork pie-makers, Hofmann's of Wakefield, the new pork pie is based on the family's award-winning secret recipe with the added twist of a rhubarb topping.



Wakefield was given city status – thanks to Wakefield Cathedral – in 1888 and eight years later, the family's first butchers started on Westgate. Pictured are the Dean of Wakefield, Very Revd Simon Cowling, Wakefield Bid manager Elizabeth Murphy, and champion pie makers, Nigel Hofmann and his daughter Emily.

Dean Simon said, "Wakefield Cathedral is proud to be playing its part in Wakefield BID's drive to put Wakefield on the map. After all, it's because we were given cathedral status 130 years ago that Wakefield became a city. We look forward to joining the celebrations."

Christian and Muslim women hold sleep-out for charity

BRADFORD A group of seven Christian and Muslim women in Riddlesden near Keighley have held an overnight sleep-out in the car park of St. Mary's Riddlesden, raising money for the charity War Child which tries to support and rescue children in conflict areas around the world.



"It was close to Remembrance Day, when we remember and pray for all victims of conflict, many of whom are

children, and also the first day of Interfaith Week, a week to show that people of different faiths can come together in friendship and concern for others."

Despite the bitter cold, and getting very little sleep, organiser, the Revd Jenny Ramsden, Assistant Curate of Morton and Riddlesden, said it was an important statement.

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Mirfield Monk to celebrate 75 years by running 10k

HUDDERSFIELD There are many ways to celebrate an upcoming 75th birthday but Fr John, a monk from the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield, has chosen a more unusual celebration. On January 26 he will celebrate his 75th birthday by running 10k for charity.



the life that God has given to me, for the Gospel, for family and friends, for the Community and College of the Resurrection ... Especially I want to say thanks that I am still running and so I am going to run 10k on the 26th January 2019."

Fr John writes, "I thought that this would be a good opportunity to give thanks for

Proceeds from the Sponsored Run will go to Tariro, a charity helping orphaned teenagers in Zimbabwe Sponsor Fr John at mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/frjohngribben10krun

Village churches tackle loneliness

RIPON A new project has been launched to tackle loneliness for people of all ages in Dales villages. The Markington Wellbeing Service has been set up by the Benefice of Bishop Thornton, Burnt Yates, Markington, Ripley and South Stainley, working with the Ripon and Rural Wellbeing Service. Volunteers have been recruited to visit those who are lonely, while more drivers are still needed. Penny Manock, one of the organisers, said: "We'd like to identify those who would benefit from this service. We can offer lifts to the doctors or the shops, or even to visit a relative or friend. This could make the world of difference to someone who might not see anyone else for days."

Appeal for mother

LEEDS Two years after an abandoned baby was left at the door of the St Peter's Bramley vicarage, the Revd Paul Crabb, the rector, has made a further appeal for the mother to come forward. The child, which was wrapped in a towel and a plastic carrier bag, was pronounced dead on arrival at hospital.

Paul says that despite the passage of time, the church would still like to hear from the baby's mother. "Be assured that we're always ready and waiting to help you in any way we can."

Diocese spearheads interfaith training for clergy

The way Christians relate to those of different faiths and cultures is the subject of a newly developed training course being pioneered by the Diocese of Leeds which all new clergy in the diocese will be required to complete.

The 'Presence and Engagement' course gives clergy experience of church ministry in parishes where at least 10% of the community are of other faiths, now estimated at close to 100 parishes in our diocese. Recent visits have included All Hallows' Church, Hyde Park, Leeds, the Leeds Grand Mosque and St Paul's Church, Manningham, and Bradford Central Mosque.

Among those leading the course is the Bishop of Bradford, Bishop Toby Howarth (pictured), Chair of Faithful Neighbours and lead bishop on interfaith matters who meets with participants to discuss some of the issues and questions raised by the course.



Emily Tidball, Presence and Engagement Coordinator says, "We are the only diocese which asks all clergy new to the diocese to complete this training, recognising that Presence and Engagement is relevant and important in all contexts."

Director of Clergy Development, the Revd Andrew Tawn, agrees the training is important for all clergy wherever they minister. "There is no context in our multi-faith society where these issues are not relevant. The course is about seeing engagement with people of other faiths as an opportunity rather than a challenge."

Presence and Engagement is part of a national Church of England programme which was agreed by General Synod in 2017. Currently, there are just four Presence and Engagement hubs – Leeds, London, Manchester and Birmingham and only the Anglican Diocese of Leeds requires all new clergy to take part in training.

Honour for Leeds priest

A young Leeds priest has received national recognition as one of 21 young champions of interfaith engagement chosen by a national panel made up of Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders.

The Revd Heston Groenewald (37), Pioneer Minister at All Hallows, was singled out as one of seven Christians, seven Jews, and seven Muslims to be commended for the '21



for 21' awards, a joint project between the Church Times, Jewish News and British Muslim TV.

Heston was honoured for his work in building strong relations with local Muslim and Hindu leaders. His church café attracts customers of all faiths and in 2016 he opened a Syrian Kitchen to enable Syrian refugees to spend the day at All Hallows, cooking meals and talking about their culture with others. He also recently joined Muslims and Jews to lead a counter-demonstration against a far right gathering in Leeds.