Two congregations contest Church Times Green Awards

A church and a cathedral in the diocese are pitted against each other in the national Church Times Green Church Awards which will be announced and presented at Lambeth Palace this October. Both Bradford Cathedral and St John’s Church, Sharow, near Ripon (pictured) have been shortlisted in the national ‘Bio-diversity’ category, one of the five award categories which make up the prestigious environmental awards. The aim of the awards is to celebrate the work of individuals and congregations to offset the damage being done to the earth, and to set good examples for other churches.

Bradford Cathedral has introduced several innovations and last year received its third eco-congregation award. This nomination recognises the contribution the cathedral has made to a city-wide tree planting project.

St John’s Church, Sharow, has become only the fourth church in the diocese to gain an Eco Church Award. Earlier in the year it took part in the ‘Cherishing Our Churchyard’ Week, which saw local schools and charities assisting with biodiversity surveys, moth captures and churchyard trails.

The churchyard provides an oasis for wildlife and the increasingly rare MG5 grassland, described as a ‘time capsule’ for Britain’s meadows.

The diocese is also well represented amongst the finalists for the ‘Green Champion’ award. Suzanne Dalton from St Chad’s, Far Headingley was a long standing member of the Diocesan Environment Group and another contender, Dr. Judith Allison from Settle is a current member of the group. The awards ceremony takes place at Lambeth Palace on 16 October.

Disability Officer

Fiona Hill has been appointed as the diocese’s first Disability Officer, working two days a week based at Church House, Leeds, and visiting parishes to help them become more disability friendly.

Before coming to Leeds, Fiona spent a year working with the Anglican church in the Hague and, prior to that, as a support worker, mentor and study skills tutor at two universities working with students with disabilities.

Part of Fiona’s job will be to help churches become more inclusive, something which since the Equalities Act of 2010 has been a legal requirement. Churches are obliged to make “reasonable adjustments” for people with a wide range of disabilities.

To contact Fiona, email fiona.hill@leeds.anglican.org.
Greenbelt hears about Batley & Spen

Bishop Nick Baines

Each October I invite clergy to a Study Day in one of our cathedrals. This year we’ll be looking at the Reformation and its significance today, with the help of Professor Charlotte Methuen from Glasgow University (and Canon Theologian of Ripon Cathedral), and Silke Römhild who helped produce the bestselling magazine that brings Martin Luther & co to life for a new generation.

In England, the last day of October sees children dressing up as spooks and annoying the neighbours with demands for sweets, but in Germany it is known as Luthertag - Martin Luther Day - when the miserable monk is alleged to have nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Schloßkirche in Wittenberg, thus initiating the Reformation. So, while we miss the point of All Souls and focus on ghosties and slightly wicked naughtiness, the Germans commemorate a man who changed the world for ever. This year it will be 500 years to the day since it all kicked off.

So much has been written about Luther and the Reformation that it is easy to over-simplify the story or forget the point of it all. Luther, a monk in Erfurt and later a professor in Wittenberg, was obsessed with how to keep God happy. Overwhelmingly conscious of his own sinfulness, he wrestled with how to please God and become holy. It was his discovery of God’s grace that transformed him and, subsequently, both the church and the world. He found that God’s love and mercy powerfully dealt with the guilt of sin and anxiety about death.

But, for Luther this wasn’t simply a selfish concern about his eternal destiny; rather, it informed his theological view of how society should be ordered. Faith in the forgiving God sets us free to live differently. If we have received grace, then we must exercise grace; if we have been loved, then we must love; if we are forgiven, then we must forgive.

And that’s it.

+Nick
Bishop of Leeds
The youth group at St Mary’s Whitkirk added some unusual beach activities to their two-day trip to Bridington – a baptism in the sea and a Eucharist on the sand. Zach Higgins, a member of the youth group, appropriately called FISH, was baptised in the chilly North Sea as leader, Jacob Peat, explained. “We wanted to ensure that everyone could take part in the Eucharist, so, as he was the only member not baptised, Zach agreed to being baptised in the invigorating North Sea. The water temperature made it ‘interesting’ for him I think, and his parents and the other children enjoyed watching it and being part of the service.”

Work has started on the new Starbeck home of Wellspring Therapy & Training, the Harrogate-based counselling and training centre, of which Bishop Nick is patron. The mental health charity has raised more than £171,000, enabling it to move into new premises to cope with the growing demand for its services. The charity is re-locating to nearby St Andrew’s Vicarage early next year, after an extensive refurbishment. Bishop Nick says: “For many people with mental health issues, timely access to good quality talking therapy is essential. And at a time when access to that provision is at a premium, charities like Wellspring provide a crucial service.

“I was glad to offer my support by becoming Wellspring’s patron and I am delighted to see that the next phase of the relocation project is underway.”

Bradford Cathedral is the oldest building in Bradford and the only medieval building in the city centre. The bell tower was finished in 1508 and the first bells were hung in 1666. Inscribed on the bells are messages from families who lost loved ones in WWI.

Bradford Cathedral has received nearly £80,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for an exciting project to share the heritage of its First World War memorial bells.

Work starts this autumn to repair and restore the peal of ten First World War memorial bells and improve accessibility to the bell tower so that the bells can be heard ringing across the city again.

In addition, an exhibition will be developed, volunteer bell ringers and guides will be trained, and booklets will be produced on the heritage of the bells and the stories behind the names on the bells.

Ringing out in celebration - £80k for cathedral bells

Bracing beach baptism

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Work starts on charity’s new home

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WAKEFIELD Young people from the Wakefield area, including the parishes of Hemsworth and Pontefract, spent a rainy but fun-filled week at the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage. One camper, Sophia Laycock, wrote, “Our theme at Walsingham this year was ‘Who do you think you are?’ . Within this theme we explored our identities and how modern-day society may have influenced how we perceive ourselves with a particular focus on social media.”

Key note speaker Bishop Philip North explained how he found his identity through his faith.

Pilgrimage
A group of young people from the link Diocese of Southwestern Virginia are safely home after an action-packed programme of visits across our diocese including a trip on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, visits to some of our most famous beauty spots and worship at a variety of churches.

On the 16 day trip, the students from churches across south-western Virginia also visited Whitby, Rievaulx Abbey and York as well as spending four days in London.

While here in the diocese, the youngsters and their leaders were hosted by church families in the Bradford and Keighley area, and enjoyed the hospitality of local churches. They met with Bishop Toby Howarth, the Bishop of Bradford, as well as the Chief Inspector of Bradford Police, and the Deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford. They experienced a variety of worship styles including Taize and Celtic spirituality. They stayed for one night at the diocesan retreat house, Parcevall Hall in Appletreewick, while in the inner city they got their hands dirty helping to clean St Christopher’s Church in Holme Wood, Bradford. In Leeds on a multi-cultural day, they visited the Makkah Masjid Mosque.

Whether it was visiting Bolton Abbey, ten pin bowling, a trip on the Worth Valley railway, or curry in Bradford, the group say they have had a wonderful visit and have thanked all the churches and hosts who welcomed them.

Dory – “It was good to meet new people and make long-lasting friendships.”

Lydia – “My favourite parts of the trip were seeing Westminster Abbey... and the visit to Holmewood in Bradford and meeting the young people there. And the curry!”

Elizabeth – “I loved the itinerary because it included things I would never have known to do in the UK. I especially liked visiting all the abbeys.”

Isabel – “I wanted to come on this exchange because Charlotte came to Virginia last year on the exchange and I wanted to return the visit!”