

Giving for Life initiative reignited at November 5th Synod

A new initiative to encourage generous giving throughout the diocese has been launched at the November 5th meeting of Diocesan Synod in Harrogate.

Giving for Life: Continuing the Journey is a pack of discussion materials to help parishes review

their stewardship and giving patterns. It is being sent out to every PCC in the coming few weeks.

The new material was presented by the Stewardship, Funding and Development Team (pictured) and redevelops and expands the original *Giving for Life* report produced by the Archbishops' Council in 2009. Seven years on, a survey of more than 1100 parishes has shown that adopting the advice has had a significant impact on levels of giving and attitudes to generosity. Since 2009, church giving have risen by 19.4% at a time when much charitable giving has suffered.

Stewardship Advisor, Jo Beacroft-Mitchell, told Synod, "What we are hoping will happen with these packs is that



every PCC will set aside time in the next 12 months to discuss this material and review where they are as a parish against what we have identified as being the best practice across the country."

Pictured above, the Stewardship, Funding and Development Team, (l to r) Susan Rundle, Michael Southworth, Paul Winstanley, Jo Beacroft-Mitchell, Uell Kennedy, and Cath Fox.

Team members will be available to visit parishes. You can contact them via sfdadmin@leeds.anglican.org or by calling 0113 353 0221.

Joy to the World

Scores of churches across the diocese have been adding details of their Christmas services to 'A Christmas Near You', a new website inviting people across the country to attend local parish services at Christmas. Churches have until December 1st to register their Christmas services.

From December 1st, www.AChristmasNearYou.org will be live for anyone to be able to find their nearest Christmas



service. They'll even be able to find which Christmas services are serving mince pies or mulled wine! Four videos will accompany the campaign with Gogglebox vicar Kate Bottley, comedian Paul Kerensa, Matt Woodcock and Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons Rose Hudson Wilkin - each talking about a moment of Christmas Joy in their lives.

Cry of a tiny babe

Bishop Nick Baines

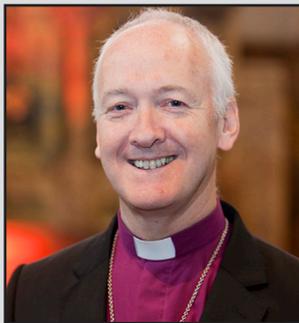
Since I was ordained I have managed every Christmas to quote from a Bruce Cockburn song. "Like a stone on the surface of a still river, driving the ripples on forever, redemption rips through the surface of time in the cry of a tiny babe."

It sums up Christmas, doesn't it? And it opens up to our imagination the infinite wonder of God coming among us as one of us.

Advent is the season that should hold us back from too quick a celebration. As we re-tell the expectation of God's coming during those four slow weeks, we clearly find it difficult to resist the pressure of the carols and cultural 'christmasness' that seeks instant gratification and bids us short-cut the build up. But, if we allow our imagination the space to explore the mystery of the Incarnation, we will reach Christmas at the right time and with a new depth of celebration.

Christmas begins with a baby. But, the baby grew up. So, Christmas points us to three encouragements:

Loving the world is what compels God to expose himself to all the realities of



mortal life as we experience it. He empties himself out of love.

Living among us removes any excuse we might have to think of God as disinterested in the real world. Matter matters to God. So, we cannot escape the call to live in the world as God did in Jesus of Nazareth.

Learning how to do this is a lifetime challenge. The baby of Bethlehem is easier to handle than the man who calls religious authorities "a brood of vipers" or overturns the tables in the temple. And we Christians need to re-tell the Christmas story with humility, recognising that we will never exhaust the depths of God's love or our need for redemption.

Christmas begins with a baby. But, it doesn't end with the baby.

May our celebrations this year be filled with wonder.

+Nick
Bishop of Leeds

Second Saturday Gathering

HUDDERSFIELD The Saturday Gathering, which has seen over 100 new Christians come to faith since it opened five years ago in Halifax, has planted a second Saturday Gathering in a different part of the town. Newly baptised members of the church shared their stories to a packed congregation at the new location, St Hilda's Church in Gibraltar Road, Halifax.



One of the founders of the Saturday Gathering, the Revd Linda Maslen, said: "Sharing our faith is a really important part of what we do. We tell our stories and we pray. It's who we are."

The Saturday Gathering, a fresh expression of church, grew out of the Food Bank and Drop In Centre run by Christians Together in Calderdale from Ebenezer Methodist Church in the centre of town and has become one of the fastest growing churches in Yorkshire.

Communities Minister starts national tour in Bradford

BRADFORD Communities Minister, Lord Bourne, chose Bradford Cathedral, last month, as the starting point for a 'grand tour' of every Anglican cathedral in England during the coming year.

As well as being shown the city centre and recent repairs and ongoing work at the cathedral by the Dean, **the Very Revd Jerry Lepine (pictured right)**, he visited community projects in the city, held talks with Near Neighbours, met community



and religious leaders and visited Bradford City Football Club. The minister says he hopes his visits will highlight cathedrals as places which provide social support, community and interfaith engagement. He was shown the renovations made possible by the government's World War I Cathedral Repairs Fund including the Victorian State Gate which once again provides an entrance to the cathedral precinct from the city.

New Archdeacon of Leeds

LEEDS The Revd Canon Paul Ayers has been appointed as the new Archdeacon of Leeds. He will succeed the Venerable Paul Hooper who retired at the end of October.

Paul is currently Vicar of St Lawrence and St Paul's Church in Pudsey, where he has been since 1997. He was born and brought up in Bradford and after training in Oxford and Bristol, he served in parishes in the former Diocese of Bradford.



The Rt Revd Paul Slater, Bishop of Richmond (who looks after the Episcopal Area of Leeds), says, "I am really pleased that Paul Ayers has been appointed as the next Archdeacon of Leeds. Paul has an incisive mind and a passion to see God's church grow and flourish. I am looking forward to working with him."

It is expected that Paul will take up his new post in February.

Church stars in CofE video

WAKEFIELD A Wakefield church stars in a new film to promote the Church of England's Parish Buying project. Churchwarden Brian Morris persuaded his vicar, the Revd Stephanie Buchanan, to join the scheme – and the church, St John's, in the city centre, has never looked back. Brian said of the video, "We were one of three churches used. The others were a large parish church in Hampshire and Birmingham Cathedral – so all our circumstances were very different." The CofE buying service allows parishes to save time and money on key areas including energy, furniture, boilers and office supplies. You can see the film and find out more at www.parishbuying.org.uk

Future church?

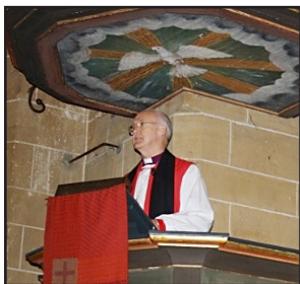
RIPON International Christian pastor, activist and author, Brian McLaren, was in discussion with Bishop Nick last month at a conference in Harrogate to discuss his latest work, 'The Great Spiritual Migration.' The event, at St Mark's Church, attracted an audience from across the north of England, keen to hear Brian McLaren's influential views which includes a call for the church to move forward from a religion based on a static belief system to "a way of life and love which is organised for the good of society as a whole". The conference was organised by the Progressive Christianity Network.

Reformation and Brexit

500 years since Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of Wittenburg church, an act which led to the Protestant Reformation, Bishop Nick has joined international church leaders including the Pope at events in Germany to mark the anniversary.

The Bishop of Leeds preached at Erfurt Monastery where Luther was an Augustinian monk. He spoke of the importance of the Reformation for Britain as well as Europe. "England isn't very interested in the Reformation that began 500 years ago in Wittenberg. Perhaps this ...explains why so many Britons wanted to leave the European Community - they have no idea where they come from or where they came from..."

He added, "After being surprised by the grace of God and freed from fear, Martin Luther opened the Bible for future generations."



New Evangelical Network

A network for Christians of the evangelical tradition in the diocese has been launched. The Leeds Diocesan Evangelical Network has been officially recognized by the CofE Evangelical Council, with objectives to unite in fellowship evangelical Anglicans in the Diocese.

Secretary of the Leeds DEN, Revd David Houlton, said "The Leeds Network links evangelicals across the five Episcopal Areas and provides support and information - especially for the many evangelicals ministering in non-evangelical settings - with a bi-monthly précis of



news and events of particular interest to evangelicals."

Evangelical clergy and laity may become members of LDEN, and others who wish to support the Network can join as friends.

For more information email: LeedsDEN@gmail.com

Bishop of Ripon to retire

It has been announced that the Bishop of Ripon, the Rt Revd James Bell, is to retire on 30 April 2017 with a farewell service in Ripon Cathedral. James Bell has been Bishop of Ripon since the creation of the new Diocese.



He was ordained in 1975 in the Diocese of Oxford and later served in the Diocese of London before joining the former Diocese of Ripon as Director of Ministry and Training, then Director of Mission. He became Bishop of Knaresborough in 2004.

"It has been really exciting to be part of the shaping up of our great new diocese, and a deep joy to have a particular care for the Ripon Area," said Bishop James. "I give thanks for God's grace at work amongst us and look forward to serving through the next few months. There'll be plenty of time for reflections and goodbyes in the spring."