

Thanks for your generosity and commitment, says Bishop Nick

Parishes have shown creativity, love and generosity throughout a time of unprecedented changes and challenges, says Bishop Nick Baines in a special message to the diocese.

church in uncharted territory were immense. Yet clergy, our lay leaders, our parishes, our church officers have adapted remarkably and shown enormous creativity with local



In a new video now on our YouTube channel, Bishop Nick warmly thanks everyone from our clergy, lay leaders, church officers and beyond for maintaining giving and their commitment to our communities across the diocese:

“No one gave us a script for the year 2020, and that situation carries on into 2021.

“The unprecedented changes that were thrust upon us, the challenges of having to be the

sensitivity to those in need.

“Thank you for your generosity, thank you for your maintained giving and thank you for the grace which reflects the generous grace of the God whom we serve.

“We look to the future with continued challenges but we look with commitment, with faith, with hope and in love. Love for one another which is rooted in our love of God.”

Young adults invited to consider ordained ministry

The national Step Forward event, held annually for 18 - 30 year olds in the Anglican Church, is taking place on Saturday, March 13 over Zoom.

It is a great opportunity for those exploring the possibility of ordination, no matter how faint that might feel at the moment.



This year it will include inspiring guest speakers, such as the Archbishop of York, the National Young Vocation Officer and various others representing different kinds of ordained ministry.

Visit www.stepforwardanglican.org.uk to book your place before Wednesday, March 3.

Take care of yourself – so you can care better for others

Bishop Jonathan Gibbs

This morning around 120 members of the clergy from across our Diocese attended an introductory seminar on responding to trauma – via Zoom of course. Not a particularly cheery subject for a Friday morning, you might have thought. But in fact it was an excellent session, not least to judge by the large number of very positive comments turning up in the Chat box as the meeting drew to a close.

Trauma of course can take many forms. It can be about the aftermath of a major event such as an earthquake or a terrorist attack. It can be a result of what happens to individuals at any stage of their lives, including abuse of whatever kind. And in the context of today, it can be about what we are going through as a society (and world) as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

One conclusion that struck me particularly was the reminder to us that trauma not only can have a huge impact on our lives, but it can take a lot longer



for us to recover and be harder for us to rebuild than ever we might have thought. Talking with my fellow clergy and others over the last few weeks has made me realise how important this is right now. Far more than last year, people are feeling exhausted, drained and lacking energy, as well as frazzled and uncertain about what to do next. It is really hard. That is the reality we are all facing and we need to be honest about that.

The message coming out of this, for all of us and especially for those who are caring for others in whatever setting, is that we need to take care of ourselves, both for our own sakes and in order to be able to care the better for others. Jesus said: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.... And you will find rest for your souls."

So please, take care of yourself – so you can also care better for others.

**+Jonathan
Bishop of Huddersfield**

Rhythm of Life Lent course launches

How we live the gospel in our daily lives will be explored this Lent, with our upcoming Rhythm of Life course. The course will provide an opportunity to learn more about how we can provide structure to our lives in seven key areas: praying, reflecting, encouraging, sharing, resting, celebrating and creating.



The course will be a stepping-stone for further engagement with the Rhythm of Life, with six sessions, with online materials, for use with Zoom.

The diocese-wide course will begin on Wednesday, February 24, and run for six weeks.

The Rt Revd Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield, said: "The Rhythm of Life is simply a structure for looking at the demands of the gospel and making them more purposeful in our everyday lives."

More details can be found at www.leeds.anglican.org/rhythm-of-life.

Bishop Helen-Ann goes the extra mile in aid of farming charities

Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley joined hundreds of farmers in a month-long sponsored run throughout January that has raised £44,745 for rural charities across the UK and overseas.

The Run 1000 campaign saw farmers and other people in agriculture each donate £20 and record the distance they ran or walked during January.

Runners were asked to join a social media group representing their home nation to see which country's team could be first to run 1,000 miles and Bishop Helen-Ann was vice-captain of the Scottish team.

"Amazingly 64785 miles (that's 2.5 times round the world!) collectively was run by the teams, and more than £44,000 has been raised thus far," she said.

"It's impressive given the original intent for the total was for each team to get to 1000 miles.

"For my effort, I managed 68 miles during January!

"It has been an absolutely incredible celebration and affirmation of the importance of attending to urgent needs in the agricultural sector."



Money raised is going to the Farming Community Network (England), the RSABI (Scotland), the DPJ Foundation (Wales), Embrace Farm (Ireland) and the Do More Agriculture Foundation (Canada).

New climate toolkit for churches

Ways the church can respond to the climate crisis was the topic at the Leeds launch of a new climate toolkit this month.

The Climate Emergency Toolkit, from Tearfund, is a new resource to help churches confront issues the world faces, and has been put together in collaboration with a coalition of Christian organisations, activists and church leaders, including our own Diocesan Environment Officer, Jemima Parker.

The toolkit looks to put churches on a path to action, with resources to help churches prepare for making changes, declare an intent to face climate change, and make an impact.

Jemima Parker said: "Here is a tool that can help us work out our church family's response to the climate emergency, to take a three-step approach: Prepare, Declare, Impact.

"Now churches can come along side other organisations in the community, living out our faith with a carbon reduction plan and having an impact in the local area."

Please email jemima.parker@leeds.anglican.org for more details.

A word of hope

**Revd Andrew Cromarty,
Hipswell and Colburn
near Catterick**

A few days ago my wife Jo and I were out on a biting cold afternoon. Jo noticed, beside the road, a handful of early 'Easter Roses' and a small patch of snowdrops, raising their heads in a sunny corner. Not only were these tiny flowers beautiful – each uniquely displaying God's creative handiwork – but they also reminded us of nature's amazing ability to overcome hardship. In their own, understated way, they seemed to offer a subtle reminder of God's enduring purposes which counter faith-eroding fear.

Maybe it is this sort of time which forces us to face the deeper questions of life, questions like, 'What is it really all about?' or 'What is my value, if I cannot work productively?'. Indeed, how do we keep hope alive, when facing so much frustration, pain or loss?

I once heard someone describe the concept of hope as 'faith on tiptoe – straining to see ahead for what God has planned for our lives'. The phrase 'faith on tiptoe' speaks



to me in a way that some of the more academically correct descriptions fail to do!

As a local church, one of the things we've been discovering afresh is the importance of kindness. St Paul invites his hard-pressed Christian friends in Colossae to 'clothe [themselves] with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience'. They are to put up with each other, even to go as far as forgiving each other's faults, because, as disciples of Jesus, love is to be their greatest motivation. Love, when given full expression, wonderfully harmonizes all the other attributes.

Maybe, like those tiny snowdrops pushing their way into the open, we need a fresh dose of 'faith on tiptoe', a daily anointing of hope. Why? To remind us that, as disciples of Jesus – walking 'by faith and not by sight' – our loving Heavenly Father will never once abandon us; and will ultimately – yet in his own good time – welcome us Home.

Funeral homes blessed with Epiphany chalk

The tradition of blessing homes with Epiphany chalk has been shared with local funeral homes by Wakefield Area's Fr David Teasdel.



The chalk is used to bless homes in Epiphanytide (the period between 6 January and Candlemas) and many churches would distribute chalk to their parishioners for use in their own homes.

"The chalk is a reminder that everyone who comes through the door is welcomed in the same way that the three wise men were welcomed at the birth of Christ," said Fr David, parish priest for St Mary Magdalene, Altofts and St Luke the Evangelist, Sharlston.