

## Refugee crisis - first meeting of new Synod calls on churches to act

### Share to rise and leaders debate blood donations

Church leaders at the first meeting of the new Diocesan Synod, held last month in Harrogate, have called on congregations to do more to support refugees. Synod members unanimously backed a motion proposed by the Bishop of Bradford, Toby Howarth, asking parishes across the diocese to respond to the refugee crisis by considering how they might support refugees locally and engage in debate and collaboration with local authorities and charities. In his Presidential Address, Bishop Nick Baines said, "The plight of refugees is desperate.

The abuse by some should not blind us to the appalling choices faced by millions of people in this world. How we respond to their plight matters enormously."

### Parish Share to rise by 1.75% as Synod agrees 2016 Budget

Parish share will rise across the diocese by 1.75% in 2016 as Synod backed a deficit budget which would allow for £1.18 million to be drawn from reserves as the three year transition from three historic dioceses to one new one continues. Chair of

the Diocesan Board of Finance, Bishop Tom Butler, said that the budget would enable the diocese to maintain its mission and ministry with no reduction in the current 332 full time (equivalent) paid clergy posts. Stipends have gone up by 1.75% and Bishop Tom emphasised that Parish Share (67% of income), pays for parish clergy.



### Synod calls for national church backing for blood donations campaign

The new Synod sent its first motion up to General Synod for national debate, after backing a call for churches to encourage their members to become blood donors. **Kay Brown (pictured above)**, from Allerton Deanery Synod, proposed the motion, carried with a large majority, calling on every church in the diocese to encourage members to consider becoming blood donors.

## Results of General Synod elections

Nineteen candidates have taken their places as lay and clergy representatives of the diocese on the Church of England's General Synod for the next five years. Thirty-nine candidates stood for the nine lay and ten clergy places, the highest representation of any diocese in the country except London.

### Elected as the ten 'Proctors in Convocation' (clergy):

Paul Ayers, Paul Cartwright, Jonathan Clark, Robert Cooper, Anne Dawtry, Kathryn Fitzsimons, Ruth Hind, Joyce Jones, Margaret McLean, and Gary Waddington.

### Elected to the House of Laity:

David Ashton, Alison Mary Fisher, Malcolm Keith Halliday, Joyce Margaret Hill, Stephen William Hogg, Camilla Mary Rose Holmes, Zahida Bibi Mallard, Richard John Mantle and Paul Neville.

They join Bishop Nick (Diocesan Bishops) - and Bishop Jonathan Gibbs and Bishop Glyn Webster, elected as suffragan bishops.

# Why is the Church of England getting involved with ...?

## Bishop Jonathan Gibbs

Time and time again people ask me the question, “Why is the Church of England getting involved with...?” At which point you can add the words refugees, debt, tax credits, or any number of other things. Surely the primary business of the Church is religion, helping people to develop a relationship with God and to become part of the life of the Church. So why get involved in all these other issues?

Well, we need to remember that the central theme of Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels was that of the “kingdom of God”. Now it is tempting to assume that this “kingdom” refers primarily to what we think of as heaven, meaning by that what happens to us after we die, but in reality Jesus’ teaching is about so much more than that.

The kingdom of God is about people entering into a relationship with God – with God as the centre and focus of their lives – but it is also about the way in which the life of this world is transformed from the inside out to become a little more like life as God



intends it to be. That is also what the “kingdom of God” is about, and that is the meaning of stories like the parable of the yeast, which works its way through the whole loaf, leavening it and making it into something good to eat.

The Church rightly is concerned with both of these things: helping people to discover and to grow in a relationship with God that changes their lives and seeking to transform the life of the world for the better and for the good of all. That commitment is a reflection of the generosity of God, which was revealed to us in the gift of his Son Jesus born in a stable at Bethlehem, and in the vulnerability of a Saviour hanging on a Cross. God gets involved with us and our world – and he calls us to do the same.

**+Jonathan  
Bishop of Huddersfield**

# International artists bring music and a message of peace to Ripon

**RIPON** Young people in the Ripon area have been learning about peace and understanding, while taking part in a series of music, drama and dance workshops run by an international team of artists and musicians. The *Gen Verde* group, representing thirteen different countries and five continents, has been touring throughout Europe and in Ripon last month they



held workshops at Holy Trinity church for young people and gave a concert at Ripon Cathedral.

Bishops James Bell and Jonathan Gibbs were guests at the event. “Gen Verde does an amazing job bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds, often in areas of real tension and conflict” said Bishop Jonathan. “The commitment of the teams to living out reconciliation is fabulous.”

# Church weightlifter supports bell tower appeal

**HUDDERSFIELD** A 64-year-old Lindley parishioner, who served as a church warden for 17 years, has powerlifted the entire weight of St Stephen's Church Tower to raise over £1,000 for its repair!

Glenn Stewart completed the challenge in 13 weeks by lifting 40,000 kilos each

week, making the cumulative lifted weight over 500,000 kilos – the weight of St Stephen's Bell Tower, or the equivalent of two and a half blue whales. The project, which has been



partly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, will cost the church at least £250,000.

Glenn who holds two unofficial world records, said, "I have been power lifting

since I was 40 and at the tender age of 64 I am now training regularly above the world records for my

age."

He has a rigorous fitness regime which involves a one mile swim each morning and strength/cardio training every lunchtime.

# MU give helping hand on Wakefield's children's ward

**WAKEFIELD** A Mothers' Union project to give a helping hand to parents of children and

teenagers admitted to hospital has been launched at Pinderfields hospital in Wakefield. Members

have worked with staff to design overnight packs for children who have to make an emergency stay there. They aim to



provide 20 bags a month for the pilot project. Eileen Warburton, President elect for the

Wakefield Episcopal Area MU said: "Being admitted to hospital at short

notice is an upsetting time for anyone, but for parents of young children and teenagers, it can feel very stressful."

# Christian presence in new Broadway centre

**BRADFORD** With the opening of the new £260 million Broadway Shopping Centre in November, Bradford Cathedral is providing a Christian presence and working with other churches to offer prayer in the new building. The centre will include a 'contemplation room' and the cathedral has been working with management on its development.

Volunteers from churches are needed to staff around 150 two or three hour sessions each month. Anyone interested should contact [mandy.coutts@bradfordcathedral.org](mailto:mandy.coutts@bradfordcathedral.org)

# Messy Church Wedding

**LEEDS** In what could well be a first, a couple from St Stephen's Kirkstall have had a wedding blessing during Messy Church. As Nick and Rachel Blackburn had been married before, they had a civil ceremony but also wanted a church blessing.

Rachel said, "We wanted a bigger party to celebrate with our wider circle of friends and family, which includes many children, so when Stephen Kaye, our vicar, mentioned a Messy Wedding it seemed the perfect solution."

# ‘Shared diocesan conversations’ on sexuality to take place in the new year

Mission, scripture and human sexuality will be the subject of three special meetings being held in the diocese early next year.

Key national writers and speakers on the subject have been invited to address the ‘Shared Conversations’ which will take

deeply entrenched views, would be best addressed by facilitated conversations ... at national and diocesan level.”

Bishop James Bell, writing to all clergy, said he hoped the Shared Conversations would reflect a wide range of perspectives.



place in Harrogate in late January and February and are open to anyone to attend.

Among the speakers will be Bishop Keith Sinclair, Professor Loveday Alexander, Dr Al McFadyen (Leeds University), Bishop Dr. Toby Howarth and Peter Hart (Durham University).

The meetings follow a House of Bishops working group which recommended that, “The subject of sexuality, with its history of

He said, “The core aim of the Shared Conversation is to find the emotional intelligence to listen to one another. It is not to debate or change minds!”

The three day programme will be held on Saturdays at Harrogate College, Hornbeam Park - January 30th, February 13th and February 27th. For more information and to book contact Judith Richardson by December 20th via [judith.richardson@westyorkshiredales.anglican.org](mailto:judith.richardson@westyorkshiredales.anglican.org)

# ‘From Bethlehem with love’

‘From Bethlehem with love’, a Christmas appeal, has been launched to help bring a troupe of 16 talented young Christian actors and dancers from Bethlehem to Yorkshire next June. *Baqoun*, a group of Palestinian Christians aged 16 to 24, have been invited to



the diocese for a 12 day visit. They will lead workshops and perform at cultural evenings which aim to spread understanding of the challenges facing Christians in Palestine and the Middle East. A special website, [www.baqoun.org](http://www.baqoun.org), gives full details, including how to give to the appeal.

## West Yorkshire & the Dales News

The interim editions are being distributed to churches across the diocese. A new publication for the whole diocese is being planned for the near future.  
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