The diocese is leading a campaign with Rural Action Yorkshire this winter to help keep people in rural areas safe and warm, reducing the high number of deaths in the countryside from cold weather and fuel poverty.

The latest figures for winter deaths show that across North Yorkshire, there are over 26,000 homes living in fuel poverty, 10% of the population. There are an average of 431 excess winter deaths every year and over 3,000 emergency admissions to hospital as a result of cold conditions and fuel poverty.

Now, clergy and churches are being urged to join with other partners in the ‘Warm and Well’ campaign by setting up winter weather schemes and raising awareness at church services of the dangers.

The initiative has been led by Bishop James Bell who, in publicity for the campaign, says “The figures for excess winter deaths and hospital admissions are tragic... I would ask that you consider how you and your church and community can be involved.” Churches are encouraged to look out for vulnerable members of their local communities, make more home visits and set up winter weather schemes. The ‘Warm and Well’ campaign is offering a hardship fund, as well as training on fuel poverty and applying for Warm Homes Discounts.

Rural Officer, Andy Ryland, said on BBC Radio York that churches are invited to follow in the footsteps of Good King Wenceslas. “In the carol, the King looks out and sees a peasant gathering winter fuel. With his page, he takes food, wine and fuel to look after him and in our situation this is a message for the churches as well.”

For more, visit: www.westyorkshiredales.anglican.org/warm-well
**Drawn by hope**

Bishop Nick Baines

Every January feels like having fallen off a conscientiously-climbed ladder and having to start the whole thing again. This isn’t helped by the fact that the weather is dodgy, the bank balance is shot and the waistline has expanded.

But, one of the things about Christianity is that there is no ladder and we don’t have to just keep on repeating history. We are not condemned to being stuck on the same old hamster wheel, running faster and faster just to stand still. Nor are we doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past for which hindsight can be a blessed gift.

At Christmas we celebrated that God does something radically new - but we need the eyes to spot where he is at work, where the new invitation is to be heard. In Jesus, God comes among us as one of us. In his birth he is met by unlikely outsiders. In his ministry he demonstrates to people who think God has passed them by that God invites them to the party, too. In his death he absorbs all that the world throws at him, and doesn’t throw it back. In his resurrection he quietly exposes a new world in which death, violence, sin and failure do not have the final word.

So, we can begin the new year with renewed hope. But, that hope needs to be met also with renewed commitment. There is little point in welcoming an open door if we don’t then walk through it. Yes, 2016 will hold both promise and threat, hope and despair. The year will bring new life, but also death. As a diocese we will continue to shape our mission and ministry for the future. As with each new year, we have no idea what will happen in the wider world (and beyond our control) during the months to come. Which is why we walk into the future with hope in the God who draws us.

As we now move from Nativity towards Easter, we remind ourselves that Christians are to be drawn by hope and not driven by fear.

Happy New Year.

+Nick
Bishop of Leeds

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**Halifax Street Angels celebrate 10th anniversary**

HUDDERSFIELD Bishop Tony Robinson and Paul Blakey MBE, founder of the Halifax Street Angels, joined volunteers last month to celebrate its tenth anniversary.

Representatives from the Calderdale Police were also there to thank the Street Angels for their dedication in making Halifax a safer place and for inspiring the launch of over 130 similar projects across the country, in what MP Holly Lynch describes as “one of Halifax’s greatest exports to the UK and beyond”.

Since 2005, the Street Angels have provided Halifax with around 13,000 volunteer hours and helped around 3,000 people. In those ten years, the Street Angels have helped to reduce crime in Halifax town centre by 57% and have earned the town a Purple Flag Award, for reaching ‘standards of excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy’.
Chaplains discuss faith on the battlefield at Catterick event

**RIPON** Chaplains play a vital role in the army, and Bishop Nick Baines has been hearing about their work at Catterick Garrison near Richmond during an event to encourage more clergy to consider the role.

Catterick is the British Army’s largest training establishment. Army chaplains are both ordained and qualified Army officers who minister to soldiers and their families in times of war and peace.

They offer moral guidance through formal teaching, personal example and counsel.

Chaplain, the Revd Phil Burrows, said, “It’s a great privilege to be with soldiers at some of the darkest times in their lives. When I was in parish ministry, there weren’t many opportunities for really deep conversations about faith. But soldiers are surprisingly open and they ask heartfelt questions.”

People’s Pilgrimage for climate action

**LEEDS** In the lead up to the United Nations Paris Climate Change Conference, more than fifty pilgrims from across the diocese took part in a pilgrimage for climate action in Leeds. They walked from the four corners of the city to a service at Leeds Minster, where they prayed for the ‘COP21’ talks. Jemima Parker, Diocesan Environment Officer, said, “Bishop Paul gave a compelling call to take personal action to cut our carbon consumption for the love of our global brothers and sisters.” Many of the pilgrims then joined the city’s People’s Climate March.

Archbishop visits Hemsworth

**WAKEFIELD** Church almshouses for ‘worthy churchmen and women’ in the village of Hemsworth have been given a boost with the opening of a new community facility by the Archbishop of York. Dr John Sentamu visited the Archbishop Holgate’s Hospital to preach at the Founder’s Day service before blessing and officially opening the new Ebor Hall. Master of Archbishop Holgate’s Hospital, Fr David Wheatley, said: “We needed a communal building on-site as a meeting place for residents who had nowhere to meet as a group and for the local community to use.”

Room at the ‘Inn Churches’

**BRADFORD** Churches in Bradford are once again opening their doors to the homeless this winter with the innovative ‘Inn Churches’ initiative.

All Saints Little Horton began the project last month, welcoming homeless ‘guests’ for one week before the baton was passed to another 20 churches who will each provide accommodation for a week throughout the winter months until March.
Paris vigils across the diocese

Cathedrals and churches across the diocese held scores of prayer and candlelit vigils last month in response to the Paris terrorist atrocities. The day after the attacks, the Church of England issued a prayer to be read out in services while the bishops from our diocese released a message offering their support and condolences to those in Paris.

At Ripon Cathedral, a candle in the Chapel of Justice and Peace burned for the people of Paris. At Huddersfield Parish Church, Huddersfield Interfaith Council, Kirklees Faith Forum and Churches Together came together to hold a Vigil for Peace. The Dean of Bradford led prayers outside Bradford City Hall with around 200 people.

Wakefield Cathedral held a prayer vigil and in Harrogate, churches held a Candlelit Vigil for Peace in the centre of town (pictured). One of many church services was that held in Leeds Minster by the new Rector-Designate, Canon Sam Corley.

The Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, the Lord Mayor of Leeds, inter-faith representatives and civic dignitaries took part.

Bishop Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield said, “The attacks perpetrated on the people of Paris on Friday evening fill us all with revulsion….Our thoughts and prayers go to the victims of these senseless acts of violence and their families. Together we must present a united front to the terrorist threat.”

New Synod members take their places

The nineteen newly elected lay and clergy members of General Synod from West Yorkshire & the Dales took their places and made their mark at its first meeting of the next five year term, which was opened by the Queen and held in London last month.

During the two day meeting at Church House Westminster, Synod discussed climate change and gave its overwhelming backing to supporting the resettlement of vulnerable Syrian refugees. (Pictured are Gary Waddington, Ruth Hind and Paul Cartwright).

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. © Diocese of Leeds, 2016