

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Leeds

@10

Marking 10 years of
the Diocese of Leeds





From Richmond to Barnsley, Huddersfield to Wakefield and Bradford to the Dales, our clergy reach out into the hearts of the diverse communities served by the Church of England in every parish.

Our unique diocese has three cathedrals, three minsters and 440 parishes supported by lay leaders and worshippers working together across the region from inner cities to remote rural villages.

Children and young people are supported by the diocese in 237 schools and our churches hold thousands of services and events each year.

Our five Episcopal Areas of Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds, Ripon and Wakefield each have their own area Bishop and cover nearly all West Yorkshire, the west of North Yorkshire, some of South Yorkshire and parts of County Durham, Cumbria and Lancashire.

Our Area Bishops are the Rt Revd Tony Robinson (Wakefield), the Rt Revd Smitha Prasadam (Huddersfield), the Rt Revd Toby Howarth (Bradford), the Rt Revd Arun Arora (Leeds) and the Rt Revd Anna Eltringham (Ripon).

Loving. Living. Learning.

An introduction from Bishop Nick



This brave new diocese was born on Easter Day 2014 and we are now ten years old. The last ten years have seen some remarkable people do some very courageous things in letting go of past forms, creating new ones and helping grow a new diocese through constant change. I am deeply indebted to all colleagues – clergy and lay – for having the courage to make this happen.

We didn't do this for the sake of it or in order to save money. Rather, we did it because it enables us better to reach our communities across North, West, South Yorkshire and slices of Lancashire and County Durham. For example, the city of Leeds used to be in four dioceses – how do you work with wider society in that way?

So, we now have a large diocese with its benefit of scale ... and five episcopal areas with the intimacy of the local. Our three cathedrals are unique in England and we are the only diocese with a 'college' of deans. We have every sort of urban, suburban and rural context, and our parishes and institutions offer a rich texture and vibrantly coloured complexion. This is a wonderful diocese, with wonderful places and people.

In the last ten years we have faced and overcome many challenges – not least COVID and its consequent ongoing impact. There will be many more in the future as we seek to be faithful to God and the Church, sacrificially serving our communities and reaching out with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Each Anglican Christian and parish church can be confident that the God who calls us is faithful and empowers us by his Holy Spirit to be joyful and confident in our common mission and ministry.

To all in our churches who have been part of growing a uniquely new diocese, I say a huge 'thank you'. To those who doubted, but came on the journey anyway, I say an even bigger 'thank you'. To those who bear the scars of this venture, I thank God for you and your commitment.

We look back with gratitude and learning. We look forward to the next ten years with joy, confidence and anticipation. For Christ has risen; the Spirit has come; and together we are his Body.

The Rt Revd Nick Baines, Bishop of the Diocese of Leeds

Bradford

"We are grateful to serve alongside wonderfully creative lay people and clergy who confidently and joyfully engage in mission, church revitalisation and community transformation across the varied contexts of the Bradford EA, which include other-faith majorities, urban estate and village communities, the Aire Valley towns and the Wharfe Valley."

Bishop Toby Howarth and Archdeacon Andy Jolley



Our Bradford Mission Apprentices are living, loving and learning in our communities

Mission Apprentice Lucinda Cook of St John's Clayton speaks enthusiastically about the joys and challenges of her two year role.

"It gives me the opportunity to learn more about God by studying His word in a community, and to grow in confidence through being involved in all of church life," Lucinda said.

"For me, this started through Messy Church, running activities and leading the Bible teaching and connecting with local people, including our Church of England school where I did assemblies for most of 2023."



Lucinda highlighted one moment at Messy Church, when four new parents and a child answered "yes" when asked if they wanted to learn more about Jesus.

"It's such a blessing to see God moving in this area. I've also been part of a team who started a joint youth group with a local church to give the young people their own space and more time to explore faith. It has been running for over two years now," Lucinda said.

She has just completed our diocese's Occasional Preachers course and is excited about the future.

"I'm now looking forward to starting the Introduction to Theology course and seeing what God has in store for me next."

Grubs Up – A Place to Share, Eat and Pray reaches out to Keighley Parish in tough times

Grubs Up is a weekly service with a meal that began in response to numbers of Keighley people who are battered by the storms of life. It starts with a prayer and healing time offered to its pay-as-you-can café customers and began four years ago following street prayer with people in need during the Covid lockdowns.

When we were allowed to have a service, eight people joined us and now nearly 50 people attend,” said Team Vicar, Revd Natasha Thomas.

“People come who want to share prayer, who want to dance to the worship songs or ask questions about the bible teaching. The service is simple – gather; bible reading and talk, worship song and prayer followed by a shared meal.”

16 people have now been baptised some through full submersion, four have been confirmed.

“God has blessed us and blessed this community. God’s love overflows in this place, showing that fellowship and belonging to church is for all people,” said Revd Natasha.



People brought to Jesus by a new “spiritual family” for inner city Bradford folk



Church@5 was planted three years ago by a team from St John’s Bowling, with a vision to be a spiritual family to people who would never just walk into church on a Sunday morning.

Revd Chris and Margaret Barnes worked together with youth and family workers from Bradford-based charity E:merge and invited local families to join them in a community space for a Monday evening meal and a chance to talk about Jesus. “It proved so popular we soon had to find a bigger venue!” Revd Chris said.

Some 40 people now form Church@5, with ages ranging from six to 90. For many of those who come, it is their first experience of worship.

“Church@5 is a diverse and growing family in which people with difficult lives have been welcomed, received practical and emotional support, and found Jesus!” said Margaret.

And, in the words of one of this growing “family” of worshippers: “I felt alone, then one day I was invited to Church@5. I’ve now got a family and we can all walk together as God wants us to.”

Huddersfield

"We are greatly encouraged by the diversity of mission and ministry that thrives across the Huddersfield EA; in urban estates, rural villages, town centres and local neighbourhoods, across a vibrant mix of communities and ethnicities. Some say we are post-industrial, but in mission and ministry, we are definitely not post-industrial!"

Bishop Smitha Prasadam and Archdeacon Bill Braviner



New funding means full steam ahead for exciting ministry in Mixenden



Holy Nativity, Mixenden is powering into the diocese's next decade, supported by the diocese and now backed by fresh funding from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

"Our church people have built great relationships with our wider community and over the next three years," said Jo Beacroft-Mitchell, Holy Nativity's new Fundraising, Development, and Community Engagement Manager.

"Our ambitious vision is to develop Holy Nativity Church into a flagship eco-friendly church and vibrant community centre. Partnerships have grown over the past 10 years and it is time to really show what a parish church can do for everyone."

Expressing pride in the parish's achievements, Revd Robb Sutherland praised the people of the economically-challenged area.

"Our goal is to inspire others in estates ministry and show what riches can be found in areas like ours. Places like ours may often be seen as burdens, but Mixenden and Illingworth show that grass roots people and strong lay leadership can transform lives," Revd Robb said.

"With a comprehensive plan and the community behind us, we aim to ensure the future of the church for generations to come."

Promises of faith by young and old form part of visible Christianity in Huddersfield



God is bringing growth and ever-increasing diversity to St Peter's Huddersfield.

"We are in a town centre full of faith and we serve our parish and Huddersfield as God's family in the heart of an urban community," said vicar Revd Canon Rachel Firth.

"Our vision is to be visibly and inclusively Christian, in action and worship. We invite people into our church and also go out into our town.

"Our Initiation Service is a joyful example of all we want to be. Young and old baptism promises are renewed, first communions shared, and teens and adults confirmed as we journey together.

St Peter's confidence shows in its civic role, hosting services and events which are distinctively Christian, yet sensitively reflect and embrace the diversity of the Kirklees District.

Relationship building with other faith communities has enabled the re-launch of an Interfaith and Belief Forum for South Kirklees – with Bishop Smitha as its first patron.

"We step out confident in our own Christian identity and ready to answer Jesus's question - who is your neighbour?" said Revd Rachel.

Young Christians are blossoming in Bradley

At St Thomas, Bradley they thank God for the growth of their Sunday congregation, children's and youth groups, and for stronger ties with local folk, says Revd Ian Jamieson.

"We're now averaging around 100 regular worshippers, with a fifth aged under 18.

"We don't claim credit for this, rather we recognise God as the only one who provides growth," Revd Ian said.

He said St Thomas' worshippers are answering the call to "plant and water":

"We've been praying. We've been preaching God's Word at baptisms and funerals, at school and community events, and on Sundays, preaching the message of Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins for all who come to Him with repentant hearts.

"We've strengthened our bond with our local church school through collective worship and after school groups.

"Finally, we've increased community engagement by supporting local food provision, starting a toddler group, and hosting events where we feed people physically and spiritually. Upwards of 150 unchurched people have attended, with more than half of those being children. Praise God with us!"



"The Leeds EA embraces almost all of the UK's third largest city. It's an ambitious city with considerable wealth, but there are highly deprived areas, with a third of its children affected by poverty. Leeds enjoys a rich ethnic diversity of people whose origins are in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, as well as a significant Jewish population. Our faithful mission is to support all our communities, whatever their needs."
Bishop Arun Arora and Archdeacon Paul Ayers



New arrivals from Hong Kong get a warm Yorkshire welcome in Leeds



People from Hong Kong are being welcomed and supported at St Barnabas' Alwoodley.

Political instability and the introduction of the 2020 National Security Law by the Chinese Government led to the British Government allowing Hong Kongers with British National Overseas passports to live and work here.

Since January 2021, more than 140,000 people have arrived in the largest planned migration to the UK since the Windrush arrivals.

In response, St Barnabas reaches out to those new to Leeds and some have joined the church, worshipping regularly on Sundays, with a number being baptised.

Revd Dave Ho Young, Vicar at St Barnabas and the only clergy person in our diocese with both British and Chinese heritage, said: "It's been such a great joy to see growing numbers of people from Hong Kong coming to worship here at St Barnabas.

"One way we welcome people is through Café Connect, which is a weekly English class devised by the charity Faith Action. It is wonderful how participants who came to the first course are now helping us lead other courses."

The church has also includes elements of Cantonese in some of its worship services.

"Welcoming the stranger and hospitality is at the heart of our faith in Jesus and that is what we at St Barnabas seek to live out," said Revd Dave.

Rainbow Junktion: waste not, and give hospitality at the table

Rainbow Junktion, the community café and foodshare run by All Hallows, Hyde Park is on a mission to build community, fight food waste, and tackle food poverty.

“Jesus was a genius! Hospitality is such a brilliant way to break down barriers,” said Revd Heston Groenwald, who guides its volunteers.

“We all need to eat and all love different foods, so we can share cuisines and cultures around the table. This is at the heart of what we do: sharing bread and wine on Sundays, and sharing lunches and groceries through the week.”

Revd Heston said how this also serves as activism in an environmental crisis: “We collect unsold food from supermarkets and restaurants and make nutritious, delicious meals. We run on a ‘pay-what-you-can’ basis. Money is not a barrier to food.”

“Since the pandemic, we have served as a foodshare, providing groceries for neighbours who are struggling financially, offering as much choice as possible. Our services are non-judgemental and open to everyone.

“It’s a joy and privilege to share hospitality with the amazing people of Leeds. Praise God!” said Revd Heston.



New midweek service sparks growth thanks to success of “Bramley’s Families”



St Peter's Church Bramley entered a new era of church life when it was joined by a plant of 15 people from St George's Leeds and a new Rector in 2022.

“In January 2023 we launched our vision to reveal God’s love in Bramley, and have already seen growth with some 65 adults and 15 children and young people now worshipping on Sundays,” said Revd Julia Wilkins, Rector of St Peter’s.

“Under 18s are a priority and we are encouraged by the commitment of our young people, and the growth of our Praise Patrol group for under sixes. We have also teamed up with Christ Church Upper Armley and St John's, Wortley and Farnley to form West Leeds United: a joint youth initiative.”

St Peter's new midweek service, ‘Bramley's Families,’ has engaged many unchurched folk and created a new worshipping community of some 30 adults and children. The church now has strong connections with Bramley St Peter's Primary School, and held an Easter Story Trail, which engaged all pupils and staff.

“We will continue to build on what has been achieved in recent years and are very much looking forward,” Revd Julia said.

"In the Yorkshire Dales and beyond, priests and people serve our parishes in towns and rural villages alongside chaplains in farming auction marts, schools, army garrisons, prisons and hospitals. They respond to local needs and grow faith in people of all ages. We give thanks to God for the mission and ministry of the church in this beautiful area and are continually inspired by seeing faith in action."

Bishop Anna Eltringham and Archdeacon Jonathan Gough



Our diocesan desire to combat climate change is well illustrated at St Mary's, Embsay with Eastby

One of our first Gold Eco Churches, St Mary's earned that award in May 2023 based on people's Christian commitment to protecting our God-given planet, said Diana Linford, its Parish Environment Officer.

"Creation and the environment are strongly embedded in our Worship, including in our prayers and sermons. Services throughout the season of Creationtide have an Eco theme. We have a strong Eco Group and an active Parish Environment Officer and our church newsletter always includes an "Eco Tip." We also offer a recycling point for various items," Diana said.

The future matters, and St Mary's goal is to be Net Carbon Zero by 2025 and so will make the change from gas to electric heating. It has already ensured its roof and windows are sound. The simple things of worship life are also eco-friendly, such as using only recycled toilet paper and non-harmful cleaning products.

The churchyard is managed sensitively with bird and bat boxes, a bug hotel and hedgehog shelter. Swathes of wildflowers are left uncut.

St Mary's also looks beyond its boundaries and is a Fairtrade Church with its toilets, taps and bins twinned with global partners, and more locally, it is a Food Bank collection point.



How St Peter's feeds the hidden hungry in the upmarket spa town of Harrogate



"Where can you find free food when you have no money?" That's the opening question from Revd Alan Garrow of St Peter's Harrogate.

"Where can you find a place of belonging when nobody else wants to know? Where can you find a worshipping community that makes space for you, whoever you are?" Revd Alan and his team are determined to provide the answers.

St Peter's stands in the heart of wealthy Harrogate and its wide glass doors are open daily, with volunteers ready to greet and help those in need. Its food ministry café offers breakfasts, ten hot meals a week and a mini supermarket – all provided free if asked.

Volunteers and clergy will ask your name, but no other questions, and then remember you the next time.

"This is a place that, surrounded by banks, cafes and shops, seeks to offer something different and transformative – a small sign of what it looks like when the Lord's Prayer gets answered," said Revd Alan.

Splendidly rural, St Mary's Church, Arkengarthdale, is up on the road to Britain's highest pub

Built in 1820 near the Tan Hill Inn, St Mary's is a box shaped building with no other rooms. Water came from an outside tap and the toilet was a shed in the churchyard.

And so it stayed, until the congregation, led by worshipper Tony Oldershaw, decided the building could be reordered, to offer community space that could grow the church.

After much planning and many cups of tea, funds were raised and the work was completed in 2023. This was a lay-led process, through the PCC, with encouragement from the clergy.

There is now a disabled toilet, a kitchenette, and a large multi-purpose space at the back of the nave, which has allowed it to become The Arkengarthdale Hub – a church and community group which now offers zumba, pop up choirs, rural arts workshops, concerts and coffee mornings; the list goes on...

"Our hope and prayer is that now we can have conversations with those who come in, invite them to open their hearts to faith, and join a community that follows Jesus," said Revd Canon Caroline Hewlett, vicar of Swaledale with Arkengarthdale.



Wakefield

“The Wakefield parishes and church schools in Wakefield District and much of the Borough of Barnsley serve many parishes with significant deprivation. We encourage them to become ever more outward looking and beacons of mission engaged with their local communities serving everyone especially the poor, homeless and those in need.”

Bishop Tony Robinson and Archdeacon Cat Thatcher



Sanctuary and support for those seeking safety from global conflict and strife

St Michael's Church is a beacon of hope in Wakefield District's City of Sanctuary movement that supports asylum seekers from across the world.

It offers welcome, inclusion, hospitality and friendship to refugees and people in the asylum process. City of Sanctuary encourages people from all communities to welcome people of all faiths and of no faith. People seek asylum when they are fleeing war, persecution and the devastating effects of climate change.

Since gaining this status during Refugee Week 2010, St Michael's and others have encouraged people to share good neighbourliness and acts of kindness. People from all communities have looked beyond differences and seen the humanity of ordinary people.



Amin, who has recently been accepted as a refugee, volunteered at St Michael's and says that without that moral support, he would have struggled to cope. Now, as he works towards requalifying as a solicitor, he is determined to continue to help others.

Similarly, Isha, who has no access to public funds, said: “Without City of Sanctuary and St Michael's I would have lost all hope of a safer future. They support me with clothes, food and money. Each day I thank God, they have found me a place to stay whilst I get my legal case together. Without their help and kindness I would be a homeless stranger.”

Transforming communities by Christian-led social action with young people

Every Good Work (EGW) is a new venture aimed at young people in Wakefield, and funded through the diocese's Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence project. Young people are under represented in churches, but have a strong sense of justice and urgency in changing the world, said EGW Lead Revd Canon David Gerrard.

"Often in Christian life we are guilty of separating our spiritual lives from the call to contribute to the common good. 2 Corinthians 9:8 tells us that through God's grace, we can be fruitful in 'every good work'. EGW engages young people in social action work, and through this teaches the Christian faith," explained Revd David.

Although only at the very beginning of its work, the three youth workers employed by EGW are already building relationships and encountering hundreds of youngsters in local schools.

"This has been possible through our relationship with the CROSS Project, an ecumenical Christian charity, and 22 young people attended our first after school drop-in. The work has just begun, yet the impact is already being felt," said Revd David.



Prison chaplaincy challenges and rewards at New Hall Prison and Young Offenders institution



HMP Prison New Hall is a closed-category prison for female adults and young offenders near Wakefield and has a multi-faith chaplaincy managed by Revd Lesley Greenwood-Haigh.

"A typical day involves seeing every new prisoner and visiting all those on the segregation and healthcare units, plus welfare checks on others who are at risk of self-harm and suicide, and people who are due to be released," Revd Lesley said.

"We support those whom many in society turn their backs on. Many of our women have been victims of crimes, far worse than those that led them to New Hall.

"The greatest thing we offer is hope. We serve in incarnational ministry, and we rejoice when people find faith in Jesus."

Already in 2024, 20 women who entered prison with no faith have been confirmed, thanks to the chaplains and their ministry of sharing God's love for them in all their failings and frailties.

"Our prayer is that churches will take up the challenge of welcoming ex-offenders and be the family and support they deserve to continue in their journey with Christ," said Revd Lesley.

Your Cathedrals

Our three cathedrals make the Diocese of Leeds unique in the Church of England. They are ours in shared spiritual ownership, but each is excitingly individual in its history, location and architecture. The contrasting, yet complementary nature of contexts allows their ministry to be owned across the whole diocese and they project our Christian voices into the public square.



Wakefield

Wakefield Cathedral stands at the heart of West Yorkshire's oldest city on a site where God has been worshipped for over a thousand years and its spire - the tallest in the whole of Yorkshire - is a regional landmark. Joyful, Generous and Inclusive, its vision and ministry are told in its four goals.

The cathedral wants to grow and develop welcoming and increasingly diverse congregations, united in purpose, committed to our rich and distinctive pattern of liturgy and music, and equipped to reach out in intentional missional activity to tell the story of Jesus Christ.

It aims to be a vital asset to the city and district of Wakefield as a place where challenging issues facing the nation, region and city can be debated; to be a convenor for organisations across all sectors; and to be a key partner in work with the vulnerable and those in greatest need.

The cathedral looks to be the focal point of a revitalised city centre whose buildings are available as an asset for the wider community, contributing to growing confidence in the city; to ensure that God will be in evidence to all people using the cathedral, whatever their reason for doing so.

As one of the three cathedrals of the Diocese of Leeds, it is a place of resource which parishes across the whole diocese are able to draw on as they seek to fulfil their task of developing confident Christians who are growing their churches and transforming their communities.



Dean Simon Cowling

Ripon



Ripon Cathedral's stunning Anglo-Saxon crypt of St. Wilfrid's basilica, built in 672AD, is the oldest built fabric of any English cathedral. It is still a place of prayer to this very day.

Ripon Cathedral serves the whole diocese as a vibrant and happy centre of mission. It has been blessed with growth and development and made significant strides forward with particular specialisms, including choral music, rural mission, and pilgrimage.

Many new young people have joined the Cathedral choir, which is enjoying a renaissance. Numbers of worshippers, visitors and pilgrims have grown. Always engaged with farming and country life through events like Plough Sunday, the Ripon Cathedral Rural Forum is an important space for major organisations in North Yorkshire to explore the challenges facing rural people and communities.

The cathedral's mission has five main strands: growing the worshipping community; being a mother church for the diocese and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom to the region; promoting, developing and conserving our spiritual and built heritage; responding to human need in loving partnership; and Carbon Net Zero – safeguarding the integrity of creation.

A commitment to the future has seen major investment in ideas of how to grow worship and attendance, responding to the spiritual and physical needs of people.

Dean John Dobson

Bradford

Bradford Cathedral brings together some 1,400 years of Christian witness on this site. It is a story of faith woven into the foundation and heart of the city born at the 'broad ford'. It is a developing story of change and ambition, of hard work and dedication, and is evidence of a God who is faithful, in whom we can trust. It is a place where lives and communities are seen to be transformed.

Common threads form our values. These are what we stand for, through which we will go to where we feel God is calling us, to create our part of the rich tapestry of Christian living in the city and the diocese for decades to come.

We treasure our interculturality - we are diverse, distinct, a place for people from around the world; rootedness – we are realistic and humble in a tradition of Christian witness and mission; innovativeness – we recognise that, with God, abundance is present even in scarcity; and hospitality – we are open to everyone, and offer a compassionate and welcoming home.

Jesus is at the centre of an intentional way of living, with a commitment to daily prayer and devotion, scripture reading, study and service.

Dean Andy Bowerman



Education



237 unique schools, some 64,000 fabulous young people, hundreds of inspiring staff and more than 2,500 dedicated governors all make up the vibrant world of education within our diocese. Rural, urban, large or small, they all celebrate a Church of England foundation and a Christian commitment to transformational learning, deeply-rooted in the diverse communities they serve.

“Every day brings different challenges, but as a family of church schools we are never alone. It’s good to know I’m part of something bigger,” said one headteacher.

In the last ten years and back to their beginnings in 1811, church schools have continued that commitment to inclusive education, especially in communities who need it the most and the diocese is proud to be part of that history.

The Diocesan Education Team gives professional support and extensive training to leaders, staff and governors and is privileged to share in life-changing teaching and spiritual encounters.

Across nine local authority areas and within 11 multi-academy trusts, all our diocesan advisers have been successful church school headteachers. The whole team shares a common goal – for every school to flourish in its unique context. Each year our schools offer more than 47,000 opportunities to explore beliefs and values through collective worship, more than 850,000 hours of religious education and daily conversations that enable our pupils and adults to flourish. The Education Team is proud to partner with clergy, lay ministers, wardens and congregations who lovingly dedicate many hours every year to work with children, young people and staff, providing activities, services and much more.

What do some of our schools say?

“The team is an amazing source of support. Being new to church school leadership, they have given me confidence in my own ability to be a visionary leader and a wealth of information to understand what makes a church school special.”

“Support is always of the highest quality. The approach is personalised and the Education Team know schools and their leaders well, so that working together has the greatest possible benefit.”

“There is a true understanding of what it is like to be a school leader ‘in the real world’.”



Children, Young People and Families

Child care and development in Christian contexts is at the heart of work by the diocese's Children, Young People and Families Team (CYPF), which strives to support parishes as they develop and extend their mission and ministry.

Nationally, the Church of England is committed to bringing more children, young people and their families to know Jesus and has the goal of doubling the number of active young disciples by 2030. The ten years of our diocese has seen the CYPF team reach out and engage with all parishes across the diocese, including the creation of a dedicated training pathway to support and nurture leaders and much-needed volunteers.



2023 saw the introduction of annual 'TEND' events, supported by diocesan senior staff, which aim to thank, inspire and equip volunteers and leaders for their ministry with children, young people and families and there was positive feedback from attendees, including the following: 'Thank you! It isn't often I get to set aside time to learn and pray and worship with other children and youth workers,'

'Thank you. Bishop Nick's message was so needed. Thank you' and 'Fantastic day. Wish others from my church were here.'

Members of the CYPF team also facilitate Learning Communities to encourage peer support and learning, including communities for Employed Workers, Messy Church and a fledgling group looking at supporting those with Additional Needs.

Parents, grandparents and families who might not go to church, are often welcomed into our buildings as they seek support for their children in challenging times. Many benefit from the simple offer of kindly care in secure settings, as shown by these comments shared in a recent visit to a Toddler Group:



"Little Fishes has helped my child to grow in confidence and I've really seen him develop loads. It is a friendly group here, the parents and carers have built strong bonds and there is a real sense of a community of all ages."

"I came to the group for the first time last week and when someone asked me if I'd like a cup of tea, it brought tears to my eyes because everyone was so kind and my child had a place to play safely."

A message from Diocesan Secretary Jonathan Wood



The Diocese of Leeds has a vision for confident Christians, who are part of growing churches and transforming communities. We want to be faithful to our calling to be good news, share the Gospel and serve with steadfast purpose the communities in which we live.

That vision remains our focus as we enter the next decade. The early church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, prayed for, equipped, mentored, taught and encouraged the local church. Integral in this approach was Barnabas (whose story we find in the book of Acts).

He exemplifies the approach we want to take as a diocese as we seek the Holy's Spirit's help in ensuring every church has the chance of moving forward in mission, ministry and sustainability.

Over the next 10 years our hope is to be a diocese:

- Confident in our mission - supporting churches to become confident in their use of their building, financial and time resources.
- Confident in our future - ensuring the diocese becomes sustainable, building on the success of the last few years where we have reduced central costs to ensure that last year £2m more of our £20m budget was spent on ministry than in 2018.
- Confident in our leadership - giving significant and specific support around leadership for everyone involved in serving in our churches.
- Confident in our witness - encouraging support for all to be confident in living and telling the good news of Jesus in a rapidly changing world, particularly reaching children and young people.

To support this, the diocese through Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence will provide resources and intentional support wherever they are needed. Making use of national church investment, we want to encourage and support growth, both spiritually and numerically, in our parishes. Find out more about Barnabas at leeds.anglican.org/barnabas.

Your help through continued prayer and the giving of time, skills and money will be critical. There is a huge amount of activity taking place in the diocese and there is much for us to be thankful to God for. I am enormously grateful for all who live and serve in our fantastic diocese and cannot wait to see what God will do over the next 10 years.

A Prayer for the Diocese on the 10th Anniversary

God of all grace,
whose boundless and transforming love
gives life and growth to your Church:
enrich us with the fruits of your Spirit,
that with joy and thanksgiving
we may share the good news
of your kingdom on earth
fulfilled in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

Rhythm of Life

'Walk with me and work with me - watch how I do it.
Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.'

Matthew. 11:28-29 (The Message)

Inspired by the work of religious communities and the above verse from Matthew's gospel, Rhythm of Life offers an opportunity for Christians to consider fresh ways of keeping Christ central to our daily lives, through practical commitments, opportunities for mutual support and recommended resources. The initiative has seven focuses: encourage, share, create, pray, rest, celebrate, and reflect.

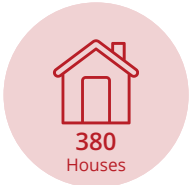
In the days leading us to Pentecost, subscribe to receive a daily devotion by email to help mark the 10th Anniversary of the diocese.

Develop your Rhythm of Life and explore new ways to develop your Rhythm.

To sign up to the daily devotions and to learn more about the Rhythm of Life, visit:
<https://learning.leeds.anglican.org/rol/>
or scan the QR code.



Your Diocese



The inspiring stories in this booklet reflect the wonderful diverse ministry and mission within the Diocese of Leeds. Strong Christian presence, love and care are possible thanks to gifts of time and money from those in our parishes. In turn, what is given financially is shared across the diocese fairly, meaning those who are able to give more, support those in greater need.

Thank you for your generous giving, which helps churches develop sustainable ministry, grow worship and transform communities in the coming decade and beyond.

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