

Diocesan News

April 2025

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Bishop Nick announces his retirement with thanks to all in our diocese



The Rt Revd Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds announced his retirement, and will end his ground-breaking role at the end of November this year.

Bishop Nick writes: "I write to inform you that I have submitted my resignation to the King and he has accepted it. I will retire as Bishop of Leeds on 30 November 2025 after nearly twelve years in post.

"It has been an immense privilege to have been asked to serve in this role, and it has been an honour to work alongside clergy and lay leaders who demonstrate joy, vision, courage and resilience.

"I will for ever be grateful for support, prayers and encouragements - even when people strongly disagreed with me or my colleagues. I cannot

put into words my respect and gratitude for all the colleagues with whom I have worked closely in building this diocese: diocesan staff, bishops, archdeacons, deans, and many, many more.

"However, the time is right for me to go and for the diocese to seek a new diocesan bishop who can bring new vision and build a stronger future. I will continue to work as hard as ever until mid-September before delegating to Bishop Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford, while I begin to extract myself and do the necessary archiving and preparing for the vacancy and retirement.

"I will delegate my authority to the Bishop of Bradford, on Friday 12 September. I will officiate for the last time at Bradford Cathedral on Sunday 19 October and at Wakefield Cathedral on Sunday 26 October. My farewell service will take place on Sunday 23 November at Ripon Cathedral.

"You will remain in my heart and my prayers into the future. Please pray for me and Linda."

The Ven Malcolm Chamberlain to be Bishop of Wakefield



The Venerable Malcolm Chamberlain, Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham, will be the new Bishop of Wakefield in the Diocese of Leeds.

Introducing himself to the Wakefield Episcopal Area, where he will serve as a Suffragan Bishop, and to the diocese as a whole, Malcolm said: "I'm delighted to be called to serve the people and parishes of Wakefield, Barnsley and the surrounding towns and villages as their Area Bishop, and greatly look forward to joining you in June.

"Having studied at York University and lived for the last eleven years in Sheffield, Yorkshire is a region very close to my heart and I am most thankful to God for calling me to this role in the Diocese of Leeds. I feel especially blessed to have the joy of ministry in both South and West Yorkshire as the Bishop of Wakefield!"

Lessons learnt and new ways ahead at our Synod



Safeguarding, Barnabas and lessons learnt from legal actions were on the agenda for the 30th Diocesan Synod which met online recently.

In a presentation which tied in with recent discussions at General Synod, the diocese's Head of Safeguarding Juliette McLellan told of the substantial work done in the last six months to heighten the functionality of her team and also to increase engagement with parishes in this most important area.

She explained the diocesan safeguarding structures and how there are plans for a new quarterly newsletter to be sent to Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) which will contain the latest offers of support and training opportunities.

Juliette said how there was already support for those working with the Parish Dashboards and that another new step would be PSO forums both in person and online.

General Synod member Joyce Hill then presented her report on the latest national church gathering, which she described as "a convoluted and complicated synod in parts" and noted that her report gave the precise wording of the amended Model 3 option regarding safeguarding reform and that representatives from Leeds had been "very, very active."

The new chair of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, Andrew Hall spoke of its work helping parishes with church building matters and said: "I want people to have confidence in a committee which is rooted in experience and commonsense and where everything is done with transparency."

Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence news and progress was delivered by the Revd Canon Jude Smith, our Director of Mission and Revitalisation and she shared data which showed the trajectory of engagement by parishes with its different offers.

Jude also highlighted the new Compass tool to help churches assess where they are now, where they want to be, and how to get there.

Diocesan Secretary Jonathan Wood led Synod through a detailed explanation of the legal matters surrounding the case of the disgraced former solicitor Linda Box, who defrauded monies from both the former Diocese of Wakefield and its then bishop while she served as their registrar.

Jonathan told how monies had been recouped following extensive legal arguments in the High Court and Court of Appeal and stressed that the learning from this experience meant that financial procedures in the Diocese of Leeds were very robust and secure, with actions to strengthen financial oversight, enhance independent auditing procedures and have strong invoicing and payment controls in place all having been achieved.

Christ Church Upper Armley celebrate 150 years of ministry

One of our Leeds area churches have recently celebrated their 150th anniversary.

Christ Church Upper Armley marked the occasion on the weekend of Saturday, March 1 and Sunday, March 2.

On Saturday, March 1, the church held a fair, displaying work from local primary schools and the secondary school inspired by the church, along with clothing exchanges, the production of a mural, and a bouncy castle and free cake and drinks.

On Sunday, March 2, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds, preached at a multicultural, all-age service, followed by a lunchtime banquet.

Over the weekend the church saw some 500 people at all the festivities.

The Revd Phil Arnold, Vicar at the church, said: "Christ Church has been serving the community of Upper Armley in ways that have evolved to adapt to the local community.

"It's an exciting time to be here!"



New Bishop of Wakefield enjoys first day in diocese



Our new Bishop of Wakefield enjoyed a grand tour of the varied area where he will serve everyone, following the Downing Street announcement of his appointment.

The Ven Malcolm Chamberlain, currently Archdeacon of Sheffield and Rotherham was introduced to clergy, civic and faith leaders at Wakefield Cathedral, where he spoke of his excitement at joining the diocese and taking on the role of bishop for the Wakefield Episcopal Area.

First stop after the cathedral was Royston St John CE Primary School, where he was greeted by new headteacher Rachel Steele and Year 5 pupils Reggie and Eden, who presented him with a bouquet.

Enthusiasm for learning in a Christian environment was evident in all the classrooms which Malcolm visited and where he chatted with children of all ages.

"We are here to make a difference to children's lives every day," said Headteacher Rachel.



It was then on to meet Revd Phil Maries in a tough corner of Barnsley. St George's church sits on the edge of challenged estate, physically cut off from the town centre by the busy ring road.

Malcolm has great understanding of work in estates churches having served in Toxteth and Wavertree in Liverpool and thanked Revd Phil and his volunteers for all they do.

"The Brassed Off church" is how Fr Robert Hart introduces St Helen's, Hemsworth, where worship is firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England.



St Helen's interior was used in the famous film about social hardship, friendship and brass bands which was set in nearby Grimethorpe (Grimley in the film).

Looking to the future, St Helen's is striving for church growth and runs different courses based on Alpha and also the Roman Catholic Sycamore course.

Malcolm said how he was committed to the flourishing of all forms of Church of England worship traditions.

Lead bishops for racial justice have been appointed by the Church of England



The Bishop of Kirkstall, Arun Arora of our diocese, and the Bishop of Croydon, Rosemarie Mallett, have been appointed by the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London as joint lead bishops for the Church of England on racial justice.

Their role will involve acting as advocates on racial justice throughout the Church of England, including promoting implementation of the recommendations of From Lament to Action, the landmark report from the Church of England's Anti-Racism Taskforce.

Bishop Arun and Bishop Rosemarie will also serve as joint deputy chairs of the newly created Racial Justice Board, a committee of the Archbishops' Council that will oversee its work on racial justice.

Their appointment comes after the General Synod voted to back the findings of the final report of the Archbishops' Commission on Racial Justice ensuring crucial resources remain available for racial justice including a Racial Justice Board, Panel, and Lead Bishop.

The work of the Mothers' Union

Julia Tum
Diocesan Mothers' Union
President

Since January, the Mothers' Union has been focusing on aspects of life which have 'mothering' as their central tenet. In early January we held our "Wave of Prayer" and prayed for those Members in our link dioceses in Nigeria, Rwanda, Solomon Islands and Lesotho. Lesotho has one of the world's highest rates of HIV-Aids infection and this has resulted in a large number of child-headed households because both parents have died. These desperate children are the new mothers in our world.

On Saturday, March 15 we held a Commissioning Service at Wakefield Cathedral. +Nick led the Service and +Smitha, Bishop of Huddersfield, gave an emboldening sermon encouraging all MU Members to sing out to everyone about MU and raise its profile.

On Tuesday, March 25, MU across the globe celebrated the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary; more commonly known as Lady Day. Churches across Leeds Diocese held services to give thanks for Mary's courage to say "YES". The services encouraged us all to step out



with open and fearless hearts.

At Halifax Minster's Festival of Women on Saturday, March 29, MU had a stall alongside Women's Aid and Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership. MU raises awareness of domestic abuse and collects items for the Refuges. Initiatives in Leeds Diocese include volunteering in New Hall Prison, feeding the homeless in Leeds, donations to Baby Banks, knitting mittens for young children arriving at school with hands too cold to hold a pencil and much more. Mothers' Day celebrates all mothers.

How can we continue Jesus' work on earth, as His hands and feet?

We can pray for MU Members across the world, we can let the joy of Jesus fill our hearts, we can continue to support and progress the many MU initiatives undertaken across this diocese, and in the same way that Mary said "YES" to Angel Gabriel we can say "YES" to where God is leading.

Join us, join in...we are changing lives.

St Mark's Harrogate become third church in diocese to get Eco Church Gold Award



St Mark's Harrogate have become the third church in the Diocese of Leeds to achieve their A Rocha Eco Church Gold Award.

The church has a dedicated environmental team with 14 members including clergy and leaders from across the church, which has meant the ethos of 'care for creation' has gradually been embraced by the entire congregation.

Eco Church commended St Mark's for its commitment to sustainability, including the provision of cycle racks for 32 bikes and encouragement of car-free travel, its efforts to share the net-zero journey with the local community via social media, the Clothes Bank supporting local refugees, its thoughtfully designed land use, and the installation of solar panels with well-thought-out future heating plans.

The Revd Mike Resch, Vicar of St Mark's, said: "Caring for creation and working towards its flourishing is central to the work of Christ on the cross."