

Diocesan News

January 2025

New Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven announced



The diocese is delighted to announce that Revd Canon Dr James Theodosius, currently Rector of Holy Trinity, Skipton, will be the new Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven.

Revd James will work with the Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon.

He knows the Ripon Episcopal Area very well as during the last ten years he was Vicar of Upper Wharfedale and Littondale, then served at Holy Trinity, Skipton, where he is also Area Dean.

A strong advocate for rural ministry, he is also keen to ensure that the urban and rural are thoughtfully integrated in ways which echo the good news of the gospel.

Speaking of his appointment, Revd James said: "I am delighted to be continuing my ministry in the Ripon Episcopal Area as the Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven.

"I will do all I can to serve the parishes and chaplaincies, both clergy and laity to ensure that we are real and true with each other and embolden one another with the good news of the kingdom.

"This is such a unique and special area, abounding in proud history and culture and with so many gifted and committed people.

"My job will be to encourage, facilitate and ensure that to the best of my ability, the structures and governance of the church enables, empowers and serves local ministry."

Welcoming Revd James to his new role, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds said: "After a thorough process and a very strong field, I am very pleased that James has agreed to be the next Archdeacon of Richmond & Craven.

He brings unique experience of parochial ministry and has been an excellent Area Dean. I very much look forward to him joining my staff team in the spring."

Christmas Tree Festival gives young people chance to raise funds for church



The Parish of Easby, Skeeby, Brompton on Swale and Bolton-on-Swale enjoyed their Christmas Tree Festival, with craft, live music and more.

The Festival was held at St Paul's church and Hub, and opened with a performance from the Brompton on Swale Primary School choir.

As well as the Christmas trees provided by community groups and businesses, attendees enjoyed stalls with Christmas crafts, trees and games, run by the church's young people group, We Are 1.

The Revd Simon Dowson, Vicar of the parish, said: "Lots of folk from the church, the local C of E School and the community came along during the day and enjoyed the trees that various groups, organisations and businesses had contributed, and the young people raised nearly £150 from their craft stall."

Bradford: heaven on earth

Bishop Toby

Happy New Year and welcome to Bradford 2025: UK City of Culture - we've arrived!

First it was the months of pulling together our bid, then that riotously joyful moment in City Park I remember so well when we heard that Bradford had been selected.

Bradford 2025 kicks off on January 10 with "Rise" a spectacular opening event with Steven Frayne, (formerly known as Dynamo) and continues through the year and across the District.

"Earth and Sky", for example, invites us to walk with Opera North's immersive music on Haworth's Pennistone Hill; "Draw" invites us to pick up our pencils with David Hockney, and "Sing, Dance, Leap" invites school children to do just that in a major programme with the Royal Ballet and other national partners.

We will be in the national spotlight, where we and others can examine the narratives that have shaped us with honesty, humour and love.

It's not just about the arts and "high culture". It is about economics and investment,



about development and jobs. National and international businesses will want to come to Bradford if they hear stories of confidence, youth, creativity and entrepreneurial energy.

The story of God's people in the Bible is told as story of grace. We learn that our real value lies not in our achievements or the suffering that we have endured, but simply in the fact that we are loved by God and called to follow in the way of love shown to us in Jesus Christ.

Such knowledge then gives us the deep confidence to create new stories and new futures for ourselves, our families and our communities. I hear these stories often as I travel around the Bradford District as bishop.

So, here's an invitation to everyone across our diocese, whether you're reading this in Bradford or further afield. Come and take part in our UK City of Culture and join in with this year's opportunity to re-frame Bradford's narrative. What about "Bradford: heaven on earth"?

Licensed Lay Minister helps children experience Christmas

Holy Trinity Barnoldswick have been helping local children experience Christmas.

The church recently ran an Experience Christmas event for some 120 Year 3 children from the three schools in the town.

The event was coordinated by Louise Firth, a Licensed Lay Minister at the church.

After being welcomed to the church, the children moved around five different stations to learn about different parts of the Christmas story.

The Ven Bill Braviner, Archdeacon of Halifax and Warden of Readers in the Diocese of Leeds, said: "Our Licensed Lay Ministers, who are part of their local congregations and locate their ministry as members of them, offer an enormously valuable gift to their communities all year round, and not least at this time of year.

"They are able to engage with the stories, the joys and the opportunities of the season, as part of the parish family they serve, and this brings a bevy of blessings!"



Recent visit shows diocesan support for church in Sudan



People in our link diocese of Sudan have been supported by a recent visit from the Revd Canon Anne Russell, Team Rector of the Seacroft Parish and Co-Chair of our Sudan Link Group.

Revd Anne met with the Most Revd Ezekiel Kondo, Archbishop of Sudan, as well as other bishops from the country, and expressed the firm support of people across the Diocese of Leeds to them.

Revd Anne heard stories of what is has been like in the country since the ongoing civil war broke out in 2023, hearing from those who have fled their homes and lives, and been witness to much violence.

The church in Sudan has been provided pastoral and practical care to those it can, supported by many organisations including the Diocese of Leeds.

Thousands of children and young people have fled the conflict areas, often leaving behind parents, and hundreds of internally displaced people have found food, education and support in the cathedral in Port Sudan.

Visitors from the UK were warmly welcomed by Archbishop Ezekiel, his wife Suria and other church leaders to discuss the prospect of

peace in Sudan and the security of the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

Revd Anne said: "I've been asked to pass on huge thanks, from Archbishop Ezekiel, Bishops Saman and Abdu, other church leaders (both lay and clergy), the Mothers' Union and congregations of the ECS.

"The long-standing relationship of nearly 50 years, alongside Salisbury Diocese, is profoundly important and influential to ECS and its people.

"We received such generosity and openness from those who we met and stayed with while we were there."

The diocese, along with others, has provided financial aid for the church in Sudan, helping to support the people there with food and other church essentials, and this is hoped to continue in 2025.

Revd Anne also had the chance to visit former MU paid workers from Sudan who are currently in Egypt, who are supporting Sudanese refugees with get-togethers including worship and prayers, singing and Sudanese food.



Bradford Royal Infirmary gets a Christmas visit from Bishop Toby



The Rt Revd Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford has paid a Christmas visit to Bradford Royal Infirmary, where he met with Professor Mel Pickup, the trust's chief executive, and toured the hospital, including the neonatal and intensive care units.

The neonatal unit was recently rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. Professor Pickup said: "It was lovely that Bishop Toby took time out of his busy schedule to come and meet our colleagues and show his support for the trust and all it does.

"I know people really appreciated his visit and interest in what they do and enjoyed giving him a window on their world."

Bishop Toby also met members of the hospital's Spiritual and Pastoral and Religious Care (SPaRC) team including Church of England Practitioner Rev, Steve Lees, and Head of SPaRC and Imam, Mohammed Arshad.

His visit ended at the hospital chapel, where he joined staff for a Christmas carol service.

A New Year, a new DAWM

Revd Julie Clarkson of Settle Parish, a Diocesan Adviser in Women's Ministry (DAWM)

What's in a name? Can I really be a priest, a vicar and now a DAWM? The answer of course is yes, and I am not alone. I am one of five DAWMs, otherwise known as a Diocesan Adviser in Women's Ministry.

Our team is headed up by Bishop Anna Eltringham and we were commissioned at Bradford Cathedral in May last year at a service that celebrated the 30th anniversary of women priests. A proud day!

And now, as we barge into 2025, it's about the year ahead – what's coming and what can we all do to spread the Good News.

Our clergy and lay leaders will all have their own plans to meet the needs of their parishes and while women have been in ministry for three decades, there is a dedicated support network to help them make progress.

The National Association of Diocesan Advisers in Women's Ministry NADAWM is made up of advisers from almost every diocese.

Each of our five Episcopal Areas is represented by a DAWM (like me) and Revd Catherine Shelley (DAWM for Huddersfield EA) also serves as secretary on the association's executive committee.



As well as our "day jobs" as ordained women, we understand the needs and challenges that ministry brings and we are committed to help, support and represent women from all backgrounds and contexts.

We are passionate about helping them continue to take out the message of Jesus Christ, which is what brought us all into ministry...regardless of our title. In our diocese, a new Women in Ministry web page for 2025 will host information, resources and contact points as a "one-stop-shop" for those seeking support.

Few other dioceses offer such a resource and it is born of our shared goal of encouraging confident Christians by aiding everyone engaged in that work, according to their needs.

That's surely a New Year's resolution we can all agree on! May I wish everyone the very best for the coming 12 months and in our worship and our ministry. There is so much we can achieve when we all strive, and rejoice together.

Commuters at Menston blessed with free drinks to warm early mornings



One of our Bradford area churches has been helping people on their commutes manage the dark winter mornings.

A team from St John the Divine, Menston, recently served free teas, coffees and hot chocolates to early morning commuters heading to Leeds and Bradford at Menston station.

The team, led by the Revd Jo Glenwright, vicar of the church, wanted to be with the commuters on the cold dark mornings and offer some cheer to them.

Revd Jo said: "We were inspired by a free church doing this at Horsforth station about ten years ago, when I was a commuter.

"We spoke to early morning commuters, often with their headphones in and heads down.

"We thought it was about the teas and coffee, but really it was about being present and being with people."