

## Diocese of Leeds gains its first Eco Church Gold Award

Faith and dedication at St Mary's, Embsay with Eastby, have earned it the first Gold Eco Church award in our diocese.

A Rocha UK Eco Church assessors visited St Mary's earlier this month to judge their bid for the rare Gold Award and Parish Environment Officer, Diana Linford, responded to the good news "We have a small, but very active Eco Group at St Mary's and have the strong support of our vicar and congregation. We do feel that caring for Creation is embedded in the life of our church community and we are delighted to have received the Gold Eco Church Award."

St Mary's Revd Canon Marion Russell commented: "It's a great honour and we are grateful for the Eco Church Award structure and encouragement that



comes for A Rocha UK to guide us to think and act more deeply with awareness of caring for God's creation. We are committed to continuing our journey through learning more and sharing in our community and with other churches and groups."

St Mary's is one of only 33 churches in England and Wales to have won a Gold Award.

Diocesan Environment Officer Jemima Parker added her congratulations: "This is a tremendous result and shows just what can be achieved – well done St Mary's!"

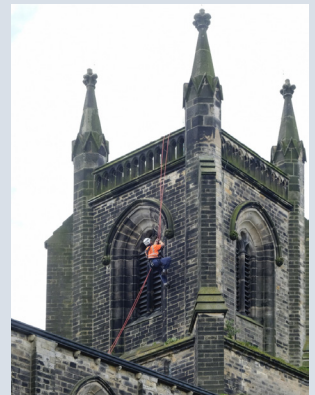
## Church roof repairs set Spidey senses tingling

Passers-by in Skipton could be forgiven for thinking Spiderman was in town recently as nimble figure clambered over the roof of Christ Church and abseiled down the church tower.

In fact they were members of a team of specialist roofers contracted to carry out repairs to the Grade II\* listed Victorian building in Cross Street.

Instead of using expensive scaffolding, the team from Vertex Specialist Roofing, based in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, use ropes and harnesses, and the sort of skills more usually associated with rock climbing, to repair difficult to access roofs.

They are carrying out necessary repairs to the slates, downpipes and guttering on the church.



# Thank you for the music

## Bishop Toby

Welcome to June, and we've got a busy month ahead of us! Our current deacons will be ordained priest at the end of this month in the Episcopal Areas, and Bishop Nick will ordain this year's new deacons at Bradford Cathedral on Saturday, July 1.

We're also in the middle of a season of encouraging volunteering. Six million people across the UK participated in "The Big Help Out" over the Coronation weekend, celebrating and encouraging volunteering in our communities. Churches and other faith communities led the way in helping to re-build a volunteer base that had been severely dented by the COVID pandemic. The /Together coalition, of which I'm vice chair, helped to organise that, we've got Volunteering Week on June 1-7, and we're following those up with the third annual national "Thank You Day" on Sunday, July 2.

Gratitude sits at the heart of our Christian faith. Many of us were brought up with the beautiful BCP General Thanksgiving that begins, "Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men..." Thank You Day is an opportunity together, as a nation, to bring our communities together to say thank you.



This year, there is a particular way in which our parishes and chaplaincies can be involved. In partnership with the charity, Music For Dementia, we are encouraging our communities to show our appreciation for Britain's un-sung army of carers: family members, neighbours, friends and care-workers, with a particular focus on those who look after people with dementia. Tony "Is This The Way To Amarillo" Christie is re-recording "Thank You For Being A Friend" by Andrew Gold, and we'd love to see churches partner with others in their neighbourhoods in taking a pop-up choir to visit a local care-home.

We're in the middle of a cost of living crisis, with wars and so much else that can pull our eyes and our hearts down. But the Apostle Paul's most joyful letter (to the Philippians) was written from prison, and I've been inspired by our friends in the Episcopal Church of Sudan, where life is unspeakably difficult at the moment. They have not stopped giving thanks to God and neither should we.

+Toby

## Refugee support charity marks 20 years of supporting asylum seekers

Meeting Point, the charity based at Christ Church, Upper Armley, is celebrating 20 years of helping refugees and asylum seekers in the Leeds area.

Meeting Point provides practical and emotional support to the many people who arrive in Leeds from around the world seeking sanctuary.

Numbers attending the project have increased significantly over the years, as conflicts around the world continue to force families and individuals to flee to places of safety.

The community came together to celebrate, with live music from Bandiera Rossa and a DJ, circus skills, bouncy castle and craft, along with lots of food from around the world.

Emma Crossley, who leads the Meeting Point team said: "What a wonderful and well-deserved celebration event!



# The Cathedrals Cycle Route Relay returns with local Yorkshire route

This summer local cyclists will be invited to make a pedal pilgrimage from either Ripon Cathedral to Bradford Cathedral, or Bradford Cathedral to Wakefield Cathedral, as part of this year's national 'Cathedrals Cycle Route'.



In 2021 and 2022 the relay travelled around all 42 English Cathedrals but for 2023 a series of local routes will be undertaken, including one between Carlisle, Durham and Newcastle, and rides starting at Peterborough and Rochester.

Cyclists will set off from Ripon Cathedral at 10am on Friday, June 9, heading towards Bradford, with a second leg heading from Bradford Cathedral to Wakefield, meeting at 1pm for a 1.30pm departure.

The Ripon to Bradford route is the more challenging leg, coming in at just under 40 miles, heading through Harrogate and Otley.

Going onward to Wakefield, this leg is 20 miles and includes riding along the beautiful Spen Valley Greenway to Dewsbury.

The Cathedrals Cycle Route is a unique partnership between the Association of English Cathedrals and Cycling UK, with the support of Sustrans, the British Pilgrimage Trust and Northumbria University.

Each cathedral has been encouraged to appoint a dedicated cycle champion to improve the cycle-readiness of its building, ensure a warm welcome

for visiting cyclists and increase the number that currently arrive on two wheels.

The Revd Dr Philip Hobday, Sub-Dean at Wakefield Cathedral, says: "We're delighted once again to be part of this year's Cathedrals Cycle Route.

"It's a partnership close to our hearts at Wakefield Cathedral.

"As well as raising awareness of our scenic county and historic buildings, it also shows the commitment to greener living and sustainable travel which our award-winning Eco Group does so much to promote.

"Best wishes to everyone who's participating, and we look forward to welcoming you to Wakefield!"

Maurice Manktelow, Bradford Cathedral's Cycle Champion, says: "However our visitors come to our cathedral this year, we look forward to welcoming them and if they come on two wheels, we're ready with a warm welcome, a place to park their bikes, and somewhere to fill their water bottles."

## Refurbished church clock unveiled after parish and community project

Parishioners are celebrating the restoration of their much-loved church clock dating from the Victorian era following a £7,000 restoration project.

Last year, residents came together to launch the Platinum Jubilee Clock Restoration Project for St Bartholomew's Church in Arkendale, near Knaresborough.

A community event has been held to unveil the clock which features gold leaf gilded dials that match the original, and the clock mechanism has been deep-cleaned.

Warden of St Bartholomew's Church, Robyn Cox, said: "It's a new moment in time at St Bartholomew's where the community came together with support from grant-funding bodies and local businesses to restore the clock dials and mechanism. It was a project we started to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of our beloved late Queen Elizabeth II."



## To fix our eyes on Jesus

**Revd Philippa Slingsby-Lunn**  
Interim Associate Minister in  
West Bradford

“Change” is often heard as a negative word for many parishes. Whether it’s because we inherently look for stability in a fragile world, or because our experience of change is often challenging, when that word is uttered it’s almost like a shiver goes through people.

Yet as Christians we are constantly called to be renewed and transformed by God – to be changed. As the church we are called to proclaim afresh the gospel for each generation, to go into the darkness with Christ’s light – to bring change. We follow a God who often calls people out from where they are, to establish them in a new place – bringing change. It is the substance of life and faith that change constantly happens!

It is however still fairly scary. As someone who has lived in many different places so far in life and been part of various churches along the way with diverse expressions of worship, change is more normalised and yet still



unsettling. If you are a small parish faced with declining numbers, little finance, and big questions about your future, where most people have worshipped their whole lives, change is deeply difficult, despite being necessary for new life.

As I journey with two such parishes in West Bradford, I am aware more than ever of the need to fix our eyes on Jesus. I often return to this verse: “let us run with perseverance, the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” (Hebrews 12:2). I also often think of the early church and how it must have been both exhilarating and unsettling, being sent out to share the gospel with people of different languages, cultures and religions.

If we fix our eyes on Jesus, we will find ourselves more able to weather the change, to catch the wind of the Spirit and be drawn to new springs of life. For where the Spirit is, there will be life!

## Churches count nature in blooming June

Parishes across the diocese are joining in with this year’s Churches Count on Nature, an annual “wildlife census” for the nation’s churchyards.

Running from Saturday, June 3 to Sunday, June 11, from Christ Church Longsdale to Farnley Tyas, near Huddersfield, members of the congregation, the Sunday Schools or green teams will have the joy of plant, bug and animal hunting.

Some parishes are organising special events for the wider community to reconnect with God’s creation.

Bradford Cathedral are holding a Bee Creative! family event on Saturday, June 3, with activities such as building and painting your own bug hotel.

At St John’s Sharrow, near Ripon, a Cherish Your Churchyard afternoon will be offering a children’s nature trail, bug hunt, moth count and churchyard management tour.

