

Creationtide Conference to help churches care for and use their green spaces



How we can care for and use our churchyards and green spaces effectively is the topic of an upcoming one day conference hosted by the Diocese of Leeds and Ecclesiastical.

The conference will be on Wednesday, October 4, the feast day of St Francis of Assisi and the end of the Season of Creation.

This event, hosted at St Stephen's West Bowling in the Bradford area, coincides with the launch of a new churchyard toolkit.

The toolkit is designed for anyone who has responsi-

bility for or uses their local churchyard and wishes to explore its potential as a haven of biodiversity; an educational/heritage resource and family friendly space; and as a space for quiet reflection and prayer.

Throughout the day there will be a programme of relevant speakers including Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, the Diocese of Leeds's own Children, Young People and Families team, and case studies to help you make the most of your churchyard, increase biodiversity and create a space for all to enjoy.

God's blessings shared at Wensleydale Show

Volunteers from across Wensley Deanery came together over the August Bank Holiday weekend to bring The Church about the Dale to the Wensleydale Agricultural Show in Leyburn, in the Benefice of Leyburn and Bellerby.

Members of congregations came together the night before to pray for all those organising and attending the show, and on the day, served nearly 1,500 cups of Fairtrade teas and coffees, juice and biscuits.

There was a prayer tree, and a 'find the lost sheep' trail for children and families to do, with Divine chocolate prizes for each participant and a chocolate sheep for the winner.



Giving generously

Bishop Arun

Later this month we will be embarking on Generosity Week as Stewardship teams across the Church of England remind us of the generosity of God and of our own call to be generous with the gifts He gives to us.

Giving is an intensely personal business. Like many vicars, I made it a point of principle when I served in parish ministry never to know who gave what financially to church.

Fundamentally, giving is part of discipleship and an individual's relationship with God. If people are going to short-change what they offer to God, they will be answerable to someone much more important than the vicar. The account in the book of Acts about Ananias and Sapphira withholding money is a cautionary tale.

I can't remember exactly when I discovered the official Church of England policy on financial giving but I do remember that I had been worshipping in the Church for a number of years and was more than a little surprised to discover what it said. Perhaps that was because we didn't really talk about money much in the parish where I worshipped.

The official policy of the Church of England on individual giving is that church members are encouraged to commit only 5 per cent of their net income to the Church and a further 5 per cent to other



charities. My Christian upbringing in the Baptist tradition provided a different approach rooted in the biblical concept of tithing; that you gave 10 per cent of your income to the Church. If you wanted to give more, either to the Church or to other charities, that was fine but 10 per cent to the Church was the baseline. I naturally thought this would apply in the Church of England too.

The Bible does talk about money a great deal and it is something that Jesus consistently addresses in his parables and teachings, as with the widow giving all that she has to live on to the temple treasury; the parable of Dives and Lazarus; the sadness of the rich young ruler; or the warning to give to the poor discreetly so your left hand does not know what your right hand is doing.

The Bible also talks about the wonderful generosity and abundance of God who gives to us our every breath. We are reminded of this each week in the words of the thanksgiving prayer 'all things come from you and from your own do we give you.'

As we give thanks for the generosity of God so we too recognise our call to give first to the Lord and for what we do with our resources to be an integral part of our discipleship individually and collectively.

Check up on your giving this coming Generosity Week

PCCs from churches across the Diocese are encouraged to carry out a Generous Church Check Up to mark Generosity Week, which runs from Sunday September 24 to Sunday, October 1.

The Generous Church Check Up is a simple task that will help PCC members to talk about and explore how to encourage giving and generosity in churches and the wider community.

The check up list helps churches work through a series of short questions and relaxed group activities enabling a review of giving practice, acknowledging the positive steps already taken to encourage giving in church and growing a generous culture, but will also help to identify new opportunities to grow further.

Senior Stewardship officer, Janet Edmond, said: "If your PCC hasn't carried out a review of giving this year why not start this Generosity Week and make it an annual event during every National Generosity Week?"

"You should come away from your session with a vision of how God is calling you to be generous as a church and the steps you need to take to get there."



Bishop Smitha welcomed to diocese in service at Halifax Minster



The new Bishop of Huddersfield, the Rt Revd Smitha Prasadam, was welcomed to the diocese and the Huddersfield area at a service at Halifax Minster.

On Saturday, September 2, the Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, led a service of inauguration of Bishop Smitha's ministry at the Minster.

Bishop Nick spoke about the role a bishop has, as they are called to foster, lead and support God's people in their area, before affirming Bishop Smitha as she begins her ministry in Huddersfield.

Children and young people spoke of their hopes for the region, before Bishop Smitha preached on the story of Mary and Martha, calling on us to be fed both by food but also by the Spirit, in this time of new beginnings.

After leading prayers with the Ven Bill Braviner, Archdeacon of Halifax, Bishop Smitha was presented with oils, a Bible, water and a Communion cup as symbols of her new ministry, before blessing the

congregation as the service ended.

There was then a buffet lunch, and a chance for the new Bishop to mingle and meet many people from her area and across the diocese.

On her first day in the diocese, Bishop Smitha said: "I'm looking forward to working together with parishes, clergy and community throughout Kirklees and Calderdale to encourage people in confident discipleship and relish the thought of embracing cultural, educational, commercial and inter-faith partners so we can support this wonderful place and its people in common cause.

"So, I will be available to you, I will serve you faithfully and diligently.

"I ask for one thing in return, that you will pray for me, and for our ministry, that together God's light may shine on this glorious part of the world."



Special thanks to a tireless supporter of our link with Mara in Tanzania

The tireless efforts of Lay-Canon Arthur Mauya in nurturing our diocesan link with the Anglican Church in the Mara Region of Tanzania for 27 years will be praised at an official "thank you".

Arthur will be at the event at Christ the King, Battyeford at 4pm, Sunday, September 10 when the Rt Revd Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield will offer great gratitude on behalf of all.

"The link's unusual longevity owes much to the tireless efforts of Arthur - one of the hardest-working people I know," said Bishop Tony.

Arthur gave up a well-paid job as a graduate chemist at Mutex (Musoma Textile Company) when he felt called to serve the then recently created Diocese of Mara.

Bishop Tony continued: "On his numerous visits to schools and parishes here, Arthur's warm and friendly manner has been the personification of our relationship with Mara."

"All are welcome to come and say 'Goodbye' to this faithful servant of Christ and good friend to many in this church who have come to know and to value him over the years."



Harvesting anytime

Fiona Schneider
Licensed Lay Minister
Bradford Area

Do you ever find the church calendar unhelpful? Or feel stuck in a church season? Ritual and rhythms help our spiritual journey. Anniversaries give opportunities for remembering. But sometimes, I feel a frustration, almost a play acting whilst we wait to celebrate Christmas or Easter morning. Advent is heavily weighted to expecting Christmas, rather than the second coming of Jesus, that the world is yet to experience. Let's celebrate! Remembering, reflecting but expectantly.

We are in the harvest season. A rewarding gathering of fruits of hedgerows, allotments, and fields.

What of spiritual harvest? Is this as seasonal as plums and marrows? Is it now? Is it even something we expect? Has the seed planting, watering, and nurturing gone well? The Holy Spirit is at work in places, in all seasons, we are not aware of. We might be seasonal as those that plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy.

Part of my lay leader role has been seed sowing amongst worldwide tourists with the Intercontinental Church Society. I don't have a harvest overview, but it's God's worldwide team's mission.



I have been asked to encourage people, new to a town, to seek Jesus. With a longer and more static view, do I expect to see a harvest? Too right I do! This is not just a mission to create cosy feelings of a new place to live, but with expectation that the Holy Spirit will call people to repentance, celebrate his forgiveness, find that faith in Jesus is an anchor in an uncertain world, and become his hope filled followers.

'Isn't there a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest?' I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! they are ripe for harvest.' Spiritual harvest is available at any time. Our life and ministry may have its seasons, but not necessarily God's harvest. Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters their lives, and they enter the kingdom of God.

Not so seasonal as plums, and marrows. No need to wait until Christmas.

The harvest is plentiful but few harvesters. We can change this by asking the Lord of the harvest to send workers into the areas to harvest. A bumper harvest.

Please pray.

Modern slavery subject of upcoming workshop

How we can spot and support those affected by modern slavery is the subject of an upcoming workshop.

Wellsprings Together is working with The Clewer Initiative to run a workshop for all to learn more about modern slavery, about spotting the signs, and about the options that victims have.

Attendees will hear from The Clewer Initiative and from people who work with victims of modern slavery.

This workshop will take place on Monday, September 25, at Fountains Church Bradford, and lunch will be provided.

