

## THE CHRISTMAS BEAN

# ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS GREETINGS!



 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Leeds

DECEMBER 2023

### Christmas: what's it all about?

A couple of years ago we had a Palestinian Muslim friend with us for Christmas lunch. While he had a basic grasp of what Christians believe about Jesus, he really struggled to understand why we had a highly decorated 8 foot fir tree in the corner of our lounge. And to be honest, I really struggled to explain it to his satisfaction. Each time I thought I had offered something plausible, it just took the “why?” question a stage further.

At this time of year, with countless carol services, crib services, Christingles, not to mention school assemblies, we tell again the story of Jesus' birth – a story so familiar to many of us, but increasingly less so to lots of people. I hope we can make the most of the opportunity to explain the “why?” of the story too – the “reason for the season”.

At a carol service this past weekend, John 1 was read just before I was due to speak. I was all set to draw from John's explanation of the “why?” of the incarnation, but then I was taken by surprise. Unexpectedly, the reader used the Passion Translation which rendered “the Word” as “the Living Expression”. Without getting into the best way to understand the Greek word “Logos”, what the unfamiliar translation did was to bring new depth of insight for me into the meaning of Christmas, and what God was doing. It also meant the talk was a minute longer as I added a little to what I had prepared to say!

This Christmas, may God open for each of us fresh and deeper understanding of the reason for Jesus' birth, and may He help us to explain that well and winsomely whenever we have the chance.

## BISHOP COLIN BUCHANAN

Along with many others in the Diocese we mourn the death of Bishop Colin who died on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

Bp Colin was a great supporter of our parishes who were in vacancy and would volunteer to come to a parish each year to help them and encourage them during Lent and Easter.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory

A memorial service will be held for Bp Colin at Bradford Cathedral on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm.

## SONGS FOR UKRAINE

Over 350 people came to Bradford Cathedral on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December for ‘Songs for Ukraine Chorus’, a Christmas



Concert collaboration with the Royal Opera House.

The assembled audience included people from across the city, as well as invited guests from the world of the arts, culture and the city, including Members of Parliament, Bradford City of Culture 2025, and members of the Bradford City FC Community Foundation.

‘Songs for Ukraine’ is a creative exchange between the Royal Opera House and displaced Ukrainians produced by ROH Learning & Participation. The project has created a space for 150 Ukrainians to make music and connect with one another, and with the Royal Opera House. Beginning in September 2022, the project has continued to grow and evolve, with the group performing for the first time at the Royal Opera House in March 2023.

The concert featured the Songs for Ukraine Choir alongside, from Bradford, the Fiyalka and Dibrova choirs, as well as lay clerks from Bradford Cathedral and the Grace Notes, the Cathedral's young community choir.

The programme included ancient pre-Christian carols to the well-loved “Carol of the Bells”. As is customary in Ukrainian song culture, this included “Kolyadka” which signifies the birth of Christ and “Shchedrivka” which brings wishes for well-being, a rich harvest, and family happiness

**For more information on other Advent and Christmas services coming to Bradford Cathedral this year, as well as new videos, music recordings and much more, please visit [bradfordcathedral.org.uk/advent-christmas](https://www.bradfordcathedral.org.uk/advent-christmas) or find out more on social media. You can find out more about the Royal Opera House at <https://www.roh.org.uk/>.**

## THE DIOCESE AT 10

At Easter 2024 the Diocese of Leeds will be 10 years old. There have been joys and challenges over the last 10 years after the three former dioceses of Bradford, Ripon & Leeds and Wakefield were brought together to be a single entity.

To mark this milestone there will be various events happening all over the Diocese, including a visit from the Archbishop of York from 19-21<sup>st</sup> April. Details of all the events will be found on the Diocesan Website and in the E-news.

In the BEA we are planning a Thanksgiving Service at Bradford Cathedral preceded by a pilgrimage walk. The date is not yet confirmed but is likely to be a Saturday in either June or July next year. The idea would be for people to walk from their parishes during the day and would end up at Bradford Cathedral for @ 4pm to gather for light refreshments and then a service at @ 4:30pm led by Bp Toby.

We realise that not everyone can or would want to walk, and that some parishes are a long way from the Cathedral but the hope is that we can get people to walk part of the way (and could even do it in relays walking just a short distance) as a visible sign that the church and Christians are everywhere!

More details in the New Year.

## CITY OF CULTURE EVENT

As part of our collaborative engagement in City of Culture across the Bradford Episcopal Area we have a vision for a large theatre tour that would journey to diverse locations across our district. We are in creative conversations with a professional theatre company about the possibility of devising a show that would place the stories of faith of our different communities into the wider story of God in Yorkshire. The company would spend time in a specific area during the first part of a week to listen to the people of that place. They would use these stories to create material that would be included in their final performance at the end of the week.

More details to following the New year

*Revd Canon Ned Lunn*



## BRADFORD MISSION APPRENTICES: THE JOURNEY SO FAR.



For the last three months I've had the joy of meeting each week with Leah Leighton to lead a programme of new ministry experiences for an amazing group of people exploring what following God and exploring options for ministry in the Church of England might mean for them.

The Mission Apprenticeship programme is a chance for someone to work in and with a church part time, come together as part of an amazing learning community, and grow in their own faith as we all work together to think what God asks of each of us, and how we serve the local church within that. 17 Mission apprentices from a really diverse range of backgrounds and life experiences have placements in churches across the area (St. John's Bowling, Keighley Parish, St. John's Great Horton, Holy Trinity Idle, St. Margaret's Frizinghall, Fountains, St. John's Clayton and All Saints/St. Oswald's Little Horton). Already, the breadth of what everyone's doing is growing, and each week as we share what's going on there's always something exciting to hear about. Once every couple of months also meet with the interns from the Leeds area scheme to learn and grow together in an even bigger group (hence there's a lot more than 20 in the picture above and it's Bishop Arun rather than Bishop Toby!). This adds even more interesting stories!

Please pray for the programme, the learning everyone is doing, and that the amazing work everyone is learning through will bear fruit, and fruit that will last

*Revd Derek Jones*

## PERSONAL GROWTH & LEADERSHIP

Between September and March, several of our churches are gathering monthly on a Saturday morning at Fountains Church in Bradford along with two churches from Huddersfield to take part in the Personal Growth and Leadership Programme. They are also joined through a livelink by churches in Wakefield. The programme comes under the Barnabas: Growing Confidence umbrella. Teams of clergy and lay people are coming together to grow in confidence and leadership skills - including many not yet leading activities but with the potential or calling to lead. The teams also meet between sessions to plan how to put their learning into action. *“The sessions have been really engaging and challenging, personally and for our church. We have formed a really close group and continued the conversations throughout the month to apply what we are learning to our personal growth, as well as seeing our church growing in number and depth.”* (PGL participant). The next programme starts in September 2024 – to find out more speak to Andy Jolley or Sharon Bavington



## KILDWICK CAFÉ

At 9am on Wednesday 19th July, a fabulous commercial café, (Coffee and Crumbs), opened in the Parish Rooms of St Andrew's Kildwick. As you can see from the photo the rooms now look and feel like a cosy, contemporary café.

The parish rooms had previously been used once or twice a week and were becoming increasingly difficult to maintain due to the limited use. Rev'd Mike Green, (the vicar), says, “We thought about selling the Parish Rooms, but that would leave us with no toilet facilities near the church.”

Mike also recalls that, “one elderly resident of Farnhill told me that the café has opened up a whole new life for her. She has limited mobility and doesn't like pubs. The café will enable her to get out of the house and meet new people.”

## AN ADVENT ADVENTURE: JESUS IS COMING AND WE ARE EXPECTANT

All Saints' Ilkley has teamed up with St James' Silsden to share the good news of Jesus, with 600 new households in a close knit community. Those who call St James' their place of worship and love Jesus are keen to share the gospel and invite the village to experience God's love. So why involve another church to help?

The wardens and retiring clergy, David and Susan Griffiths, knew that capacity to meet, greet and embrace newcomers as an interregnum approached would be tricky. And so the Ilkley partnership began.

Firstly, **prayer**, via a Whatsapp group, of locals, Scots and Australians. Prayer walking around the town with Silsden and Ilkley residents followed and continues.

**The questions.** *Where* is God leading? where are people searching for help with life's issues? Who better to **ask for practical advice** than Robin Gamble? What a great encourager! **Churches together leafleted** all the new and some older houses in Silsden in September. Robin's advice? ... go again before Christmas.

So last week 10 people made **gift bags** with tea, chocolate and invitations, to be distributed around the town. There will be about 700 available bags telling folks about Christmas activities, and also inviting them to a brand new event ' Pizza Praise ' starting on January 28th. An adventure in faith where we shall all learn and grow. Please pray.

*Fiona Schneider*

As well as being a fabulous asset to the community and the church, the café pays rent to the church, which has allowed the PCC to finally finance their roof repairs, as well as helping towards making their Parish Share payment. Mike added, “the coffee and cake are delicious, so if you are ever in the area, do drop in to sample them and support St Andrew's as well!

Coffee and Crumbs is open Wednesday-Sunday 10am-4pm.





## COMINGS AND GOINGS

There has been a lot of movement of clergy in the Episcopal Area in 2023.

This year we have welcomed:

Revd Sally Pickering to St Stephen's in Steeton  
Revds Chris and Foluso Enwerem to St Michael & All Angels Shelf; Chris is also Associate Minister at Fountains Church and Foluso is working as a Pioneer Minister with St Aidan's Battershaw and part of the Leeds Universities Chaplaincy  
Revd Lindsay Pearson who has come to St Michael's Cottingley and is also licenced to Holy Trinity Bingley  
Revd Oli Preston as Rector of Haworth with Stanbury and Cross Roads  
Revd Phil Bishop as vicar of Burley in Wharfedale  
Revd Paul Deo as Priest in Charge of Low Moor and Oakenshaw.

We have also said goodbye to:

Revd Chris Baxfield who stepped back from his role in Wrose and Greengates  
Revd Helen Hodgson who has "retired" from her role at Tong, Laisterdyke and Holmewood  
Revd Liam Beadle from St Chad's Toller Lane who has moved to the Diocese of Ely  
Revd Vaughan Pollard who has retired from St John's Clayton  
Revd John Rainer who has retired from St Peter's Shipley  
Revds David and Susan Griffiths who have retired from their posts at St James', Silsden  
Revd Nick Clews will also be retiring from St Margaret's Thornbury and St James Woodhall in February

We also have some colleagues who have moved from parish ministry to take up new roles in the Diocese:

Revd Helen Collings, former Vicar of Sutton, Cowling & Lothesdale, is now Lay Training Officer  
Revd Steve Proudlove, who will be leaving Menston and his role as Asst DDO to become Director of Ministerial Formation and Development  
Revd Cat Thatcher from Oxenhope who will be taking up the role of Archdeacon of Pontefract in the Wakefield Episcopal Area

We wish everyone well as they take on their new roles

## ABC AT OAKWORTH

Being at home all day with a baby or young child can be tough for new parents and carers. The Children's and Families ministry group at Christ Church Oakworth saw a need in the village and started their **ABC** cafe to connect **Adults** and give **Babies** and **Children** a safe space to play.

Starting at 8:45am, we aim to attract folk straight from the school run. We offer hot drinks and toast because we know that not everyone has time to look after themselves on busy mornings. A warm welcome is important and our volunteer hosts make sure that visitors feel part of the community. We provide toys for the children but do not offer structured activities or a traditional pram service.

The session lasts for around an hour but is followed at 10:30 by our regular weekly coffee morning and mid-week communion if people want to stay longer. Since starting in September 2023 we have met a total of 12 different adults and 14 children, providing a much-needed resource for our village.

*Claire Ketteman*



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES 2024

27<sup>th</sup> Jan: Holocaust Memorial Day  
28<sup>th</sup> Jan: Racial Justice Sunday  
17<sup>th</sup> Feb: Lent Retreat at Bradford Cathedral 10-1 with Bp Toby  
20<sup>th</sup> Feb: Clergy & Reader Study Day for the Bradford EA  
10-2 St Andrew's, Keighley  
16<sup>th</sup> Mar: Diocesan Synod  
31<sup>st</sup> March: Easter Sunday  
20<sup>th</sup> April: Archbishop Stephen visit for Diocese's 10 years  
18<sup>th</sup> June: Admission of Church Wardens, St John's Ben Rhydding, 7 for 7:30pm  
26<sup>th</sup> June – Admission of Church Wardens, Bradford Cathedral, 7 for 7:30pm

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