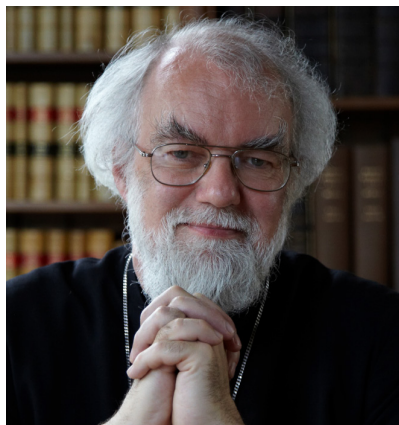


## Rowan Williams is first speaker at our Follow Me 2023 events

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Revd Rowan Williams will begin Follow Me 2023, a series of inspiring talks and events organised by the Rt Revd Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield.

Wakefield Cathedral will welcome the noted theologian and writer for his talk entitled Agents of the new creation: bringing the world to life, on Thursday, February 9.

The session begins with evensong at 6.30pm, followed by a simple supper and then teaching from 7.45pm.



The third session is a talk from Canon Mark Oakley, Dean of St John's College, Cambridge and Canon Theologian at Wakefield Cathedral on Thursday, April 20.

Please email Caroline Asquith, PA to Area Bishop Tony at [caroline.asquith@leeds.anglican.org](mailto:caroline.asquith@leeds.anglican.org) for more details and to book your place.

Bishop Tony said: "I am thrilled that Bishop Rowan Williams will be our first speaker in the round of Follow Me sessions for 2023. Please do come and be inspired by Bishop Rowan. The Lent Quiet Day at Mirfield always proves popular, so book early!"

The next event is at the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield during Saturday, March 11. Join Bishop John Pritchard for 'Sleeping on the Job', this Quiet Day gives the opportunity to pause and reflect in our often busy schedules.

## New minister among deaf people for the Diocese of Leeds

Revd Dr Tracey Raistrick is to be the next Minister Among Deaf People for our diocese.



Tracey will take on the role from the recently retired Revd Mark Smith.

The Bishop of Leeds, in a recently recorded video, welcomed Tracey into her new role: "Tracey, I'm delighted that you're coming into this post," Bishop Nick said.

"You have a long track record in it and I'm sure the deaf communities within our diocese will be delighted with the news as well. Welcome to your new role."

# Find joy in wholehearted commitment

## Bishop Toby Howarth

Firstly, may I wish you all the very best for 2023 and I hope that Advent and Christmas provided time for meaningful reflection and also joyful celebrations for you, your families and friends.

As we venture into a new and challenging year, I've been drawn back to John Wesley's Covenant Prayer. It's a gift from the Methodist tradition that many Anglicans also use in this season as an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to God. It goes like this:

"I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, exalted for you, or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing: I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven."

This is a brave and difficult prayer. It reminds us that, as those



who have responded to Jesus' call to follow him, we don't get to call the shots. Although at times, as the preface to Wesley's prayer makes clear, what Christ calls us to is, "suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests." At other times, however, it is "contrary to both." It demands the kind of trust that Jesus himself had in the one he called his heavenly father.

Since Wesley penned those words in the 18th Century, countless Christians have experienced in the prayer what they might not have expected: joy.

There is a joy that blossoms out of such wholehearted commitment that we can miss if we follow Jesus on our own terms. That joy is a gift both to us, and for us to share in the challenging months ahead.

**+Toby  
Bishop of Bradford**

# Rhythm of Life Lent Course ready for churches in 2023

What it means to be a disciple in today's world is the focus of our newly published Rhythm of Life 2023 Lent course.

Lenten themes, combined with some key issues, including Poverty, Racism and the Environment will be explored by those participating. It will also provide an opportunity to engage with the Rhythm of Life areas for deepening commitment.

The Revd Andrew Norman, Director of Ministry and Mission for the diocese, said, "Our Lent Course is a great opportunity for taking a fresh look at our rhythms of life.

"But it's not just about us. Our eyes will be drawn to some of the most challenging issues facing society today, as we journey with Jesus – and one another – through Lent."

For those wanting to take their engagement with the Rhythm of Life even further, there will also be Episcopal Area retreats taking place during Lent. More information about these retreats will be released in due course.

# Cricket and carols at Yorkshire County Cricket Club's new Christmas celebration

Christmas and cricket came together at Headingley, Leeds when the Yorkshire County Cricket

Club hosted its first ever Christmas Celebration with carols ringing out in the Howard Stand Concourse.

Club Chaplain, Bishop Chris Edmondson, who is one of our diocesan Honorary Assistant Bishops, helped organise the event and said: "It was fantastic to celebrate the birth of Christ in this iconic venue with YCCC members, players and staff, people from the wider community and local churches.

"We sang carols, led by award winning singer/songwriter Rob Halligan and his band, and enjoyed some wonderful



refreshments generously supplied by My Lahore and Regal Foods.

"We enjoyed a great message from the Bishop of Kirkstall, the Right Revd Arun Arora, and listened to Bible readings brought by George Hill, Young Player of the Year in 2022, and Jess Platts, Director of People and Culture at the Club.

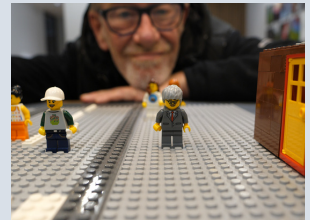
"The weather may have been cold, but the hospitality offered by the club, and being together in this way was heart-warming at what's a tough and anxious time for many people."



# New Year's Message urges us to look to the Good Shepherd

The Revd Canon Robin Gamble, Bishop's Advisor for Church Growth in our diocese, has recorded a New Year's Message to be shared by churches.

Referencing Psalm 23, Robin urges viewers in 2023 to look to God as the Good Shepherd.



"I have a favourite image from the Bible, which helps me with my travelling through life. It's about us not being alone, but having a good shepherd."

"Maybe the key to a good 2023 is not people wishing us good luck, but you and I looking to the Good Shepherd and walking with him every day, every week, every month."

The video can be accessed via our YouTube channel. Find it by searching for @LeedsCofE.

## The Lord is our help forever

**Revd Mike Coe**

What's in your personal 'review of 2022'? There will be highlights - memorable holidays, time with family and friends, weddings, new arrivals. But there will be lowlights as well - bereavements, health issues, broken relationships, financial worries, global concerns.

In the same way, entering 2023 is like walking into a darkened room full of 'stuff'. Some is good, some is bad, but we don't know the what, where, when or how of its impact on us. And that can fill us with fear & trepidation. In Psalm 124, David refers to a recent experience of tough times which he likens to facing a terrifying monster or being in the midst of a raging flood or being helplessly trapped in a hunter's snare.

Does he just quake with terror? No, he turns to God for help! Because he knows however terrifying the situation is, God was in the midst of it with Him and had the definitive way forward for him, and David encourages us all to do the same!

This time last year I was back at work after time off for



stress. It was an incredibly difficult time and I wish it had never happened. But as I look back I'm thankful for it because God taught me vital things about my life and my ministry that I couldn't have learnt any other way. As a direct result I believe I'm a better Christian, family member and vicar. Many times I prayed for God to change everything and to be back to 'normal' in an instant. But if that had happened, and God could have done it, I would have missed important lessons that He needed me to learn. Having faced the fear of being overwhelmed I can more truly say 'if the Lord had not been on my side I would have been swept away.'

So as we enter 2023 with whatever lies ahead of us, let's encourage each other with the words of Psalm 124:8 - "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

**Revd Mike Coe**  
**Vicar of All Saints, Ilkley**

## Volunteers wanted by Wakefield Street Angels for 2023

Wakefield Street Angels are looking for new volunteers to help keep people in Wakefield safe in the evenings.

The Street Angels are looking for people 21 years old or older, who can be free for



a few hours on Friday or Saturday nights, and are caring, confident and enjoy helping others.

One of the organisers said: "It's a wonderful opportunity to either gain experience for a compassionate career, or to use your worldly experience to benefit others."

For more details on how to apply please email: [office@totalprotectionsecurity.co.uk](mailto:office@totalprotectionsecurity.co.uk).