

Solidarity shown with Ukraine at Vigil for Peace

Solidarity with our Ukrainian sisters and brothers was on full display at a recent Vigil for Peace in Ukraine held in Bradford.



The Vigil, hosted by Bradford Cathedral, was attended by some 400 people, and was organised after the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine to bring together people from across the city of all faiths and none.

The Vigil opened with messages and laments from leaders of the local Ukrainian community.

Four young people from different groups in the city - Nikoleta, Kodi, Rabea and Umaimah – then shared a powerful message of solidarity with the people of Ukraine,

born from experiences of persecution experienced by their communities.

Messages of support were also heard from Ed Anderson, Lord-Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, including a note from the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge; and Councillor Bev Mullaney, Deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford.

A poem written by someone on the frontline in Ukraine was also shared, in both English and Ukrainian.

Ukrainian songs were performed by the Fiyalka Ukrainian Ladies Choir and the Dibrova Male Voice Choir, who also led a moving rendition of the Ukrainian national anthem sung by many in the Cathedral.



Harrogate church leaders back plans for first mosque

Church leaders in the Harrogate district are supporting plans for a mosque in the town with a new joint statement.

Twenty-two leaders have signed the letter backing the scheme, saying the “time is right” for a place of worship for Muslims.



Signatories include several priests from Anglican churches in the area, and the Bishop of Ripon, the Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley.

Harrogate Islamic Association has submitted plans to Harrogate Borough Council to convert the former Home Guard Club into a place of worship.

‘No man is an island..’

Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley

I have a vivid memory a few years ago of entering Canterbury Cathedral very early one morning in Lent. I was staying in the Cathedral Study Centre, a couple of minutes' walk away. It is the custom at Canterbury to completely remove the chairs in the main body of the Cathedral during weekdays in Lent. The impact is immediate: so much space; it reminded me of a quote from a prayer-poem I came across once: 'O God, thy sea is so great and my boat is so small.'

I was asked recently what I had learnt during the pandemic, particularly during the months of lockdowns. I replied with words to the effect that it had made me realise how small things were, stuck day by day in my office on Zoom, and yet at the same time how vast the world was and how connected we were (ironically because of Zoom). Jesus reminds his disciples in the Gospels how 'even the hairs of your head are all counted.' This Lent, we cannot ignore the desperate plight of the people of Ukraine, not least because this is an invasion with immense ramifications for our own security, and that of mainland



Europe. The scenes of families (even with their pets) fleeing, or taking shelter in underground stations are distressing beyond compare. It is easy to feel helpless. In his book, 'No man is an island' based on John Donne's poem that begins with that phrase, Thomas Merton says:

"We cannot find God unless we know we need God. We forget this need when we take a self-sufficient pleasure in our own good works. The poor and helpless are the first to find God, Who came to seek and to save that which was lost."

May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and may we have the courage to pray for peace and justice this Lent.

**+Helen-Ann
Bishop of Ripon**

Growing young people as Christians

A new youth group at St Chad's Church Far Headingley is celebrating half a year of existence with an exciting programme of activities this Spring.

Formed back in September 2021, the youth group began life with an Alpha Course designed to help young people explore faith together and ask



those questions about life, faith, God, the universe, that they always wanted to ask.

Since then the group has gone from strength to strength, with some of the young people deciding to be baptised and confirmed in their faith (pictured above).

"Making space for them to question and explore their faith alongside others the same age, and coupling this with a fun social programme can turn the tide," said the Revd Hannah Lievesley, Vicar at St Chad's.

New Archdeacon for Halifax joins our diocese at Wakefield Cathedral

The Ven Bill Braviner, former Incumbent of St Peter Stockton-on-Tees and St John Elton, has been installed as the new Archdeacon for Halifax.

At a service presided over by Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, Archdeacon Bill made his Declaration of Assent and swore oaths of allegiance before a congregation of family, friends and clergy at



as Lay Canon.

Speaking afterwards, Bill said, "I'm so looking forward to working with everybody across the whole diocese as Warden of Readers,

as part of the Bishop's staff and of course within the archdeaconry, with the parishes and the leadership there.

"It's wonderful to come to such diversity ... and to a place that has such tradition in music and in the arts.



Wakefield Cathedral.

Alongside the Collation and Installation of the Revd Bill Braviner as Archdeacon of Halifax, the Revd Charlene Smith was licenced as Honorary Priest Vicar and Mrs Marilyn Banister was installed

"Thank you so much for the welcome I have received and for the prayers that have been said for me as I begin this ministry and I can't wait to meet people, to get stuck in and to join this wonderful Diocese of Leeds."

New curate in BBC documentary

A new member of our clergy featured in a BBC current affairs series that looks at the changing face of England's national identity.

Revd Leah Thompson, curate at Holy Trinity parish church, Idle featured in a regional episode of the new show *We Are England*.

Viewers followed her first weeks as she meets and gets to know people in Revd Jim Taylor's parish and begins what she has called "the best job in the world".



"I hope people get the message that church is fun, a place of creativity and somewhere that's really alive," Revd Leah said.

"I've seen the film and think it's a really positive portrayal of a young female clergyperson pursuing their vocation."

Revd Leah is from Worthing, West Sussex and studied geography at the University of Leeds.

Software and laughter - worship online

Revd Caroline Brown, curate at St John's Church Yeadon

On being asked to share my experiences at a lay worship leaders course entitled 'Audio Visual & Leading Worship', my initial reaction was laughter. Starting a curacy in the summer of 2020 meant that my primary learning curve was getting up to speed with using an editing software, and other technological components, in order to livestream services from the 'curatage'. I laughed to myself because I am aware that I am no expert in this field and I realise that I am certainly not the only one who has had to learn new skills in the pandemic.

It was a pleasure to share my 'technological testimony' in February and, although there are numerous advantages to livestreaming, I was keen to highlight the importance of being realistic with what can be achieved in the contexts we are in. Reflecting on my own experiences enabled me to share about the 'costs' of time (in terms of learning and preparation), money (in terms of the extra equipment that is needed) and formation



(in terms of being prepared for God to be at work in our formation as worship leaders); it has been interesting for me to identify how the latter has brought to my attention a particular sense of vulnerability as I lead worship live over the internet. I also mentioned how I'm still waiting for my request of a hair and make-up artist to be granted, but I do know I'll be waiting for this for a very long time!

Leading worship is always a privilege and a great responsibility. When using audio visual technology, whatever this looks like, there will come a point when we have to accept that we are not in control of those moments when things going wrong; I have, more than once, experienced the sermon video freezing and Facebook switching itself off during services. I was keen to stress a couple of phrases to those attending this course, which may speak to you today: 'Don't panic' and 'Keep calm and allow God to work through you'.

Chinese New Year party for new Hong Kong friends

New arrivals from Hong Kong joined with more than 100 locals from St Barnabas' Alwoodley, Leeds to celebrate the Chinese New Year.



Welcoming the Year of the Tiger, the church was decorated with fai chun (traditional red decorations) and everybody brought Chinese food to share.

Revd Dave Young (Ho Ming Lun), the vicar of St Barnabas' whose father is Hong Kong Chinese, said: "It was amazing to celebrate the Lunar New Year together with so many new arrivals from Hong Kong and it has been wonderful to see how the congregation at St Barnabas' has reached out to welcome new arrivals with such enthusiasm."