

Dramatic church trail guides schoolchildren through the Easter story

Children and staff at Bramley St Peter's Primary School have been immersed in the story of Easter, thanks to a dramatic Story Trail at their church.

The interior of the St Peter's was transformed into a striking backdrop that transported them back to the very first Easter.

Pupils were led through the streets of Jerusalem and were brought into the Upper Room with the disciples and watched as Jesus breaks bread and pours wine.



They heard the drama unfold in the Garden of Gethsemane, stood at the foot of the Cross, visited the empty tomb and shared in the joy of the first Easter Day.

The new rector of Bramley, Revd Julia Wilkins said the physical nature of the experience had been a great way for the children to learn and engage: "It's been exciting to welcome our local primary school, so they all got the opportunity to see the story unfold before their eyes," Revd Julia said.



People of all faiths gather for community Iftar in Pendle

Some 300 people of different faiths came together for the first-ever community Iftar to be held in Barnoldswick.



The Iftar was organised by Noor Uddin of Barnoldswick takeaway, Usmaniyah.

Meals were served up to people of all faiths in a giant marquee in the Town Square in what was described as a 'tremendous' and 'fantastic' community event.

Revd Sheena McMain, vicar of the United Benefice of Barnoldswick with Bracewell, introduced the speakers, including the Mayor of Pendle, Councillor Yasser Iqbal.

Limping Towards the Sunrise

Bishop Nick Baines

The key to Easter is to journey to and live through it as if we didn't know the outcome. This way, we walk with those caught up in those terrifying and bewildering events of two thousand years ago. And, in doing so, we find a mirror of our own experience as human beings, bound by time and place, trying to make sense of the world while learning that we are not in control of it ... and cannot know what will happen next.

This journey is summed up in the title of Richard Holloway's book *Limping Towards the Sunrise*, taken from the account in Genesis 32 when Jacob wrestles with God at Peniel and leaves wounded, but also blessed.

This is no twee story, aimed at keeping us religiously happy in the midst of a challenging world. Rather, it makes absolutely clear that God is not there to keep us in an easy life of pious acceptance, but to wrestle with us and, sometimes, to leave us marked by the meeting. We are meant to wrestle with Scripture, wrestle with our faith, wrestle with God ... even when we get wounded by it.



This is the reality, the encouragement and the challenge of Easter itself. It runs through the biblical narrative and is most vivid as the friends of Jesus find themselves challenging their theology, their ways of seeing God and the world and the meaning of it all. For the Holy Week and Easter experience is one of confusion, misunderstanding, pain, regret, disappointment and fear. Only having endured that – as they see their hopes bleed into the dust of the rubbish dump that was Golgotha/Calvary – does the sheer shocking sunrise of Easter Day make any sense.

We do not need to be reminded that life is often a bit rubbish and hard to navigate. But, as Jesus looks the reality of evil and darkness in the eye from the cross – deserted by his friends at his point of distress – he confronts the horror. But, the sun rises, the Son rises, and the bewildering challenge of a new hope opens eyes and hearts and minds to a new reality. Resurrection, not death, has the last word. Which is why I can say: Happy Easter (when we get there)!

**+Nick
Bishop of Leeds**

Step Forward helps explore God's call on young adults' lives

A national event encouraging young adults to explore God's call on their lives has taken place in part thanks to the hard work of our diocesan Vocations Team.

The Step Forward event was held at Bishopthorpe and featured the Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, as a key speaker.

Members of the Diocese of Leeds Vocations Team were involved in the planning, organisation and running of the event, and it was attended by young adults from the diocese.

The Revd Canon Derek Walmsley, Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocations, said: "It was a lively and enjoyable day, and many thanks go to the Archbishop and his staff for their hospitality.

"The Vocations Team are keen to encourage everyone to think about God's call on their lives, to serve Him as faithful disciples and in some cases in authorised ministries, lay and ordained."

Vocations Sunday takes place on Sunday, April 30.

New Bishop of Huddersfield spends busy first day in our diocese

The newly announced next Bishop of Huddersfield, the Revd Canon Smitha Prasad, spent a busy first day in the diocese.



The announcement of Revd Smitha as the new bishop took place at the Jo Cox More in Common Centre at the University of Huddersfield, where she was introduced to the region by the Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines.

Revd Smitha then was welcomed to Halifax Minster, spending some time praying



in the historic building. After a walk up to the Halifax Piece Hall, the day ended with a visit to St John's Primary School Dewsbury, where Revd Smitha met the Headteacher, Aidan Blackburn, and helped lead the school's act of worship.

Revd Smitha said: "I really want to engage with the public square: with commerce, with culture, the people, the schools, the institutions here in the area of Huddersfield.

"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."

Faith and confidence enable improvements to one of our churches

Faith and determination have delivered vital improvements at St John the Baptist, Low Bentham in the far western corner of our Ripon Episcopal Area.



The village sits a stone's throw from Lancashire and Cumbria and 14th C St John's became the parish church for the communities of High and Low Bentham some 12 years ago.

St John's has just finished its latest reincarnation and offers a versatile worship space, sparkling new toilets and a cleverly-designed concealable kitchen that vanishes behind sliding doors so the grand west door may be used on ceremonial occasions.

The entrance is now more welcoming and new visitors this year include children from Bentham Community School - able to stay for much longer, thanks to the new amenities.

Actions speak louder than words

Ian Grange

“In the spring-time seed is sown ... Spring is hope”. Words from the pen of a great English lyricist and wit W S Gilbert. In the novel Anna Karenina Leo Tolstoy writes “Spring is the time of plans and projects.” These two very different writers encapsulate for me perennial truths about this time of year. Though written a century and a half ago, each of these sentiments remain true. Plans need to be made and then acted upon. Seeds must be sown, and people need to do this. Spring indeed brings Hope.

Again we rejoice and give thanks for new life, new growth and new hope at Eastertide. And this year for many people a first: The Coronation. From Easter (9 April) until Coronation Day (6 May) Anglicans will be offering daily prayer for King Charles III. On the Bank Holiday after The Coronation, The King is calling for people to volunteer; offering ourselves in the service of others. In this we can reflect the solemn vows to serve made by The King, and ourselves find opportunities to serve.

The story of the call of Samuel is the first lesson at the Chrism Mass at Wakefield Cathedral



on Maundy Thursday. This ends with Samuel accepting God’s call with the words: ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’

As Area Warden of Readers in the Huddersfield Episcopal Area, one aspect of my role is fostering lay vocations. I’m also a diocesan selector and interview those offering for Licensed Lay Minister training. It is a joy to speak with people who have heard the call to ministry in the Church. But, by our baptism we are all called to ministry. For some this is ordination, for others as licensed Readers or other authorised roles. And there are always many other tasks that willing people can fulfil in church and community.

At each church APCM – another regular spring event for Anglicans – there are countless opportunities for service. May we too like Samuel be able to respond: ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’ As we enjoy spring please reflect on what you could do.

Ian Grange
Huddersfield Episcopal Area
Warden of Readers

Interfaith work praised at awards ceremony

Excellent interfaith work in the Bradford Episcopal Area has been celebrated at a recent awards ceremony.

The Mitzvah Day Awards were attended by the Revd Jenny Ramsden, Diocesan Interfaith Adviser, and Kaneez Khan, Faith & Communities Co-ordinator West Yorkshire for Wellsprings Together, as representatives of the Bradford Mitzvah Day project they organised in 2022.

Revd Jenny said: “We were



absolutely delighted to be finalists in the Award for ‘Outstanding Interfaith Partnership’, and to be able to highlight how our diverse faith communities in Bradford and Leeds work so well together to meet the needs of vulnerable people in our communities.”