



Diocesan News

December 2022

Top national award for one of our headteachers

A headteacher at one of our primary schools has been named Headteacher of the Year in the prestigious Pearson National Teaching Awards.

Helen Stott of Allerton CE Primary been a Headteacher at Allerton CE Primary, Leeds since 2006 and which was re-launched in 2007.

Helen was nominated by a teaching assistant in school and she, her staff, governors, pupils and a range of external partners went in front of a panel of judges to be assessed for the Gold Award, which Helen received at a special presentation event.

“Allerton CE Primary School, or ACE for short, is truly ace!”

“We opened in 2007 with 200 children and now have got 700 children with 49 languages. It is really diverse and very dynamic,” Helen said.

“Arts have always been embedded at the very heart of everything we do, which is based on providing opportunity for all regardless of their starting point or socio-economic background.”

Richard Noake, Director of Education for the Diocese of Leeds said: “This is wonderful news and recognises all Helen’s hard work and great achievements.

“Helen works closely with the diocese and her local parish and we know her to be an

outstanding church schools leader. A richly deserved accolade.”



Activities across diocese to celebrate Interfaith Week

Interfaith Week 2022 was marked across the whole diocese with a full slate of events and activities.



Amongst the activities, Roses for Peace were handed out in Huddersfield, which are white roses with words for peace from the Holy Bible & Holy Qu’ran attached.

Bradford Cathedral hosted the ‘Child of Empire’ exhibition, which is an animated VR docu-drama about the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan.

At Halifax Minster the Revd Canon Hilary Barber, Vicar at the Minster, hosted a meeting for clergy and imams with the Rt Revd Toby Howarth.

The Meaning is in the Waiting

Bishop Nick Baines

Is it just my imagination or did Christmas begin this year at the beginning of November? That's when I saw my first tinsel and Christmas tree. The artificial snow in shop windows followed in quick succession. Maybe next year it'll start in June.

Call me old-fashioned, but I like the old idea of waiting. Advent creates the space and time in which we have an opportunity to live with and reflect upon where we have come from, where we are, and where we are heading ... towards Christmas and the breaking into the world of God's incarnate love.

Advent invites us to slow down, to live with the story of God and his people as they wait and long for the return of God to their troubled world. And the joke, of course, is that when the object of their yearning and praying comes among them, they miss it.

Advent whispers to us that God comes among us in surprising ways. A world that thinks might is right - and power is all that matters - will be unsettled by God coming among us as one of us - as a vulnerable baby born to refugee parents in a small town.

The Welsh poet RS Thomas caught the idea beautifully when he wrote that "the meaning



is in the waiting". We know this, don't we? Sometimes the journey is more exciting than the destination. But, slowing down and living with the story provides a richness that defies the urge for instant gratification that characterises much of our social and consumerist dynamics.

If we fill the waiting time with contemplation, questioning and searching, then arriving at the mystery of Christmas itself will bring a new and deeper experience of hope and faith.

Why? Well, because the end of the Advent story then turns out to be simply the beginning of a new one. One in which we follow the baby who grows into the man who turns people's world upside down. Advent beckons us to look for God among us - and surprises us as we see that God has surprised earth with heaven after all.

**+Nick
Bishop of Leeds**

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.

Warm welcome for people struggling with cost of living

In response to the cost of living crisis, churches across our diocese have begun to open their doors to the public as Warm Spaces.

One of those churches, doing their best to support people struggling with their rising bills this winter, is St Paul's Ireland Wood who have set up a weekly space on a Monday teatime called Warm Welcome.

People from the local community are invited to come along for a free hot meal, refreshments, access to Wi-Fi and some friendly company.

Mark Harlow, vicar of St Paul's Ireland Wood, said, "Warm Welcome is something we've worked on with local organisations and councillors as the cost of living crisis becomes all the more harsh.



"We wanted to provide a space where people could come and have that sense of dignity. Where people can chat and have community and have fun.

"We wanted to create a space where visitors don't need to switch the heating on, they don't need to cook a dinner and can save money in that way.

"We've provided this space for the community and as we do that we're building relationship, building a sense of community and through that sharing a little bit of the love of Jesus."

Bishop Stephen Race consecrated as Bishop of Beverley

The Rt Reverend Stephen Race has been consecrated as the new Bishop of Beverley.

Bishop Stephen said: "It is my hope that all those who look to the Bishop of Beverley for pastoral and sacramental support may continue to be a vibrant presence within the Church in order that all people may have the opportunity



to hear and respond to the transformational love of Jesus Christ.

"I consider myself to be fortunate enough to have had positive and nurturing experiences of a wide variety of traditions within the Church, all of which bring their own charisma and insights to our fellowship.

"I recognise the challenges that come with being the Bishop of Beverley, but will seek to be a Bishop for the whole church and rejoice in the gift of the Five Guiding Principles."



The Word in our Hands

Revd Leah Thompson

I recently read a devotional by Oswald Chambers in which he wrote: 'Beware of posing as a profound person: God became a baby.' I was struck by the simplicity, and yet ironically, the profoundness of that statement: 'God became a baby.' In Idle (North East Bradford), we certainly go BIG at Christmas! It is so easy to get caught up with the glitz and glam that Christmas festivities can bring, the flashy gifts, and the pressure to meet expectations. However, at Christmas we remember the God of the universe introducing himself to us in the cries of a baby. A baby, born amid animal muck. A baby, laid in a feeding trough. A baby, born into danger and hostility.

The baby Jesus, the epitome of weakness and dependency, models to us the notion of strength found in weakness. Therefore, isn't it strange how quickly our default is to pose as a profound person? One who has it all together, is impressive, and is important? I was certainly caught in this trap, the pressures of which led me to have a breakdown in my early 20s. In the recovery of this, the phrase, 'he remembers



that we are dust' was stuck in my head. So, I googled it, thinking it was a song lyric. It turns out that this is a verse in Psalm 103:14: 'He knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.' As someone who had put a lot of pressure on myself, this came with a sense of sweet relief for me. God was there when we were formed; he doesn't forget that we came from dust. Therefore, he doesn't have unreasonable or unattainable expectations of us!

This Christmas, maybe you can join me in reflecting on the humility and vulnerability of Jesus at his birth, which as followers of Jesus, we are called to imitate. In a season which for many of us comes with high expectations and mounting pressures, perhaps remembering that you came from dust and that these pressures are not from God himself, will come with relief. His power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Do we live as if this is true?

Revd Leah
Curate at Holy Trinity Idle

New canons for the diocese welcomed at Wakefield Cathedral

Bishop Nick was at Wakefield Cathedral last Sunday as four new members of the Diocese of Leeds College of Canons were installed at an evensong.



They included Bishop Arun Arora, Bishop of Kirkstall, who was installed alongside the Revd Anne Russell, Team Rector of Seacroft in Leeds.

The College will also benefit from the skills and experience of two senior lay people: Liz Morton, Team Leader for the diocese's Children, Young People and Families Team, and Alison Dean, a member of the Cathedral Chapter and a Trustee of the Bishop's Development Fund.

Commenting on the appointments Dean Simon said, "Please pray for them as they enter this new phase of ministry."