

20th October 2025

Dear friends,

I'm writing to you as Bishop Nick has delegated his diocesan responsibilities to me ahead of his retirement, and I'm writing about Parish Share.

Churches and Christians have always looked after each other. This was central to the understanding and the growth of the early church, as we read in Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles.

In this diocese we've got a challenge. I learned recently that just seven years ago nearly all the costs of ministry across our diocese were covered by Parish Share. Now Share covers less than three quarters of those costs. This isn't something we can wait for a new bishop to help us sort out. Wouldn't it be a great present for our new bishop if we have addressed this issue during the vacancy-in-see?

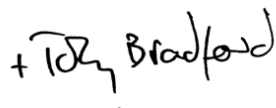
So, I'm asking you to do two things.

Firstly, will you commit to pray with me about Parish Share, especially for the next 12 months? To pray about Share intentionally, regularly, privately, with friends, in PCCs and in church. To pray joyfully and confidently that our rich and generous God will turn this situation around.

Secondly, will you talk more about this issue? I don't like talking about money, but I'm learning to be more like Jesus, who was very comfortable talking about money, speaking joyfully and confidently, knowing that his Heavenly Father provided, and he didn't need to be worried. And we don't need to be worried.

If we are open with God and one another, and talk about our church and diocesan finances, I'm confident that new ideas will emerge. I'm looking forward to God answering our prayers and enabling us to be more accountable to one another in the use of our money.

I want to finish by saying how grateful I am to everyone, every church, parish and benefice, who gives. I know it's costly and increasingly tough, but I'm so appreciative of your generosity, for what it offers for ministry, and also what it offers as a sign of God's kingdom. Thank you.



The Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth
Acting Bishop of Leeds