

# Diocesan News

## February 2025

## Diocesan Church Buildings Grants and Loans Scheme open for 2025



The Diocese of Leeds is pleased to be able to offer some £280,000 to support work on church buildings this year, through our Church Buildings Grants and Loan Scheme.

Last year, the diocese was able to award over £210,000 to 82 parishes, with most parishes receiving between £2,000 and £4,000.

Our Church Buildings Grants and Loans scheme has three grant funds available to apply to, as well a loan scheme.

The three funds are: Diocesan Church Buildings Grants, which support churches with maintaining and improving their church buildings as vital centres of worship, community and mission; Buildings for Mission Minor Repairs and Improvements Grants, which fund small-scale repairs and improvements which may struggle to access to other support; and Net Zero Carbon

Quick Wins Grants, which are aimed at helping churches launch small-scale decarbonisation projects as part of their journey to net zero.

We are running three rounds of funding in 2025, with the application deadline dates being Friday, February 28; Monday, June 30; and Friday, October 31.

Last year, St John's Greengates in the Bradford area took advantage of two of our funds to allow for repairs to their porch, where the roof was leaking badly, causing mould and fungus to grow.

Susan Edmondson, Churchwarden at the church, said: "We applied for funding from the diocese in the summer and obtained over half the cost of our project with grants from the Diocesan Church Buildings Grant Scheme and the Buildings for Mission Minor Repairs and Improvements Fund.

"The process of applying was very straightforward, and advice was available."

## Hundreds flock to Leeds Minster's Lunar New Year fair



A unique fair held at Leeds Minster to celebrate the Lunar New Year was visited by some 700 people, including many from local Chinese and East Asian communities.

This was the second event of its kind and Yvonne Stocks, the Deputy Lieutenant of West Yorks was a special guest.

She joined the Minster's Canon Paul Maybury and other community leaders on stage on Saturday to welcome visitors eager to browse the many stalls laid out in the historic building.

"It was a great event," said Revd Dave Ho Young of St Barnabas, Alwoodley, one of the organisers.

"We had between 650-700 attending and Yvonne Stocks, the Deputy Lieutenant, went down very well with all the Hong Kongers and everyone."

# Place yourself at the centre of love

## Bishop Anna

When I was twelve years old a large envelope thudded through the letter box. It was Valentine's Day, and I was excited and nervous to know who this card was from. There was no clue. Whoever sent it had painstakingly cut letters from newspaper headlines to tell me of their undying love and devotion. A mystery.

A few months later my brother broke the spell and told me the card was from him. It was good to know he loved me, if not quite the love I had imagined it might be.

St Valentine's Day is a day of mixed emotion. I welcome the innovation my two daughters now enjoy called Galentine's Day. It involves pampering, chocolate, games, movies, all girls together. A celebration of friendship and fun. Sounds good to me.

I think there is another love we so easily overlook - self-love. Self-love can sound selfish, self-absorbed or even arrogant, but I was struck by something a yoga teacher wrote about rest:

"What does it mean to truly rest? For years, I thought I knew. I'd take long breaks after burning out to "rest" and I'd put away my work, binge Netflix, plan the next thing, or go on vacation. But after research about rest and trauma, I realised what I called 'rest' was



often just another form of distraction. True rest isn't about escaping or shutting down. It's about creating conditions where your nervous system can fully settle and integrate. This requires understanding that rest is an active process, not a passive one.

"Rest isn't earned, it's a biological necessity. Rest means engaging in activities that require no input. Rest requires feeling safe in our bodies and environment. Rest can happen in two minutes or two hours. Rest is an act of self-love."

Jesus says, 'Love your neighbour as yourselves.' To love our neighbour, first we need to know how to love ourselves. As Christians, we discover how to love ourselves when we learn how to rest in God's love for us. The Christian love of others comes from our experience of God loving us. Which we know best, when we rest in Him.

Whatever you're planning around Valentine's Day, whether with others or on your own, please let your soul catch up with your body as you rest in the loving presence of God. Then, love and peace will flow through you, quite naturally, to those around.

## A wealth of Warm Welcomes, thanks to volunteers at St John's, Bradford

Amazing volunteers who give Warm Welcomes at St John's, Thorpe Edge, Bradford have been praised for supporting their local community.

St John's runs a cafe from Tuesday to Friday 9am till 1.30pm that offers a warm space where anyone can come and get a breakfast or lunch at a minimal cost, plus a free warm drink.

"It's a place where people can come and meet and make new friends. We have also been asked to pray with and for people in the café," said Revd Steve Nuttall.

"We also run day centres for the elderly where they can meet with others, have fun playing games and be entertained as well as having a two course home cooked lunch."

Revd Steve said how St John's also offers "Fare Share Food" on a Thursday where people can access 10 items of food for just £3, and can choose to stay and enjoy lunch.

"These things are only possible due to the amazing volunteers who help week in and week out," Revd Steve said.



# Give To Go Green success continues for more of our churches



All churches in the second round of the Give To Go Green have successfully completed their fundraising, raising some £80,000 for projects to help churches reduce their carbon footprint.

The 11 churches all reached, or in some cases exceeded, their fundraising target, raising a total of £81,337 in six weeks of targeted fundraising.

These churches will receive a total of £76,620 in match-funded grants to fund carbon cutting projects, including insulation, solar panels, LED lighting schemes, and draught and weather proofing.

Each church taking part in this round of Give To Go Green reached their fundraising target, taking donations through digital giving mechanisms, through an online giving page or using a contactless device.

Churches held a variety of events, some making the most of the harvest and Advent seasons to reach out to the wider community.

Dr Fiona Ellam, Churchwarden at St Thomas' Greetland that took part in round 2 of Give To Go Green, said: "As a small church we needed to raise a challenging £70,000 to repair the West Window.

"We planned the six weeks around two established fundraising events and decided to do one event per week.

"Members of the congregation agreed to lead on events, and we had a cheese and wine, film night, wreath making, and our annual Dickensian Fayre and Carols and Brass concert.

"Amazingly at the end of the six weeks the total came to £10,646.70.

"This has been matched funded by £10,000 from the Give to Go Green grant to give us £20,646.70.

"We feel blessed and very grateful for the support in raising this sum in just six weeks.

The third round of Give To Go Green is starting soon, with applications open until Sunday, March 16.

Churches can apply for up to £10,000 in match funding to support carbon-cutting projects, and will be supported in fundraising during a six week targeted digital campaign.



## St Mary's and St Cuthbert's Bolton Abbey gets Gold Eco Church Award



One of our Ripon area churches has become the 67th church in England and Wales to be awarded the A Rocha Gold Eco Church award.

The Priory Church of St Mary and St Cuthbert, Bolton Abbey was given the award, reflecting their commitment to walk in step with nature and put creation care at the heart of what they do.

The Priory Church, falling within the Bolton Abbey Estate, has taken advantage of their opportunity to share the eco message with thousands of visitors each year.

Their 'Liquid Worship' service for children is a way they explore creation care, especially with younger members of the congregation.

Fairtrade and locally produced items are available for sale at the church, and the heating system for the Grade I listed building has been upgraded, moving away from fossil fuel to a renewable source of heating.

The Revd Nicholas Mercer, Rector of Bolton Abbey, said: "We are very proud to have been awarded Eco Church III Gold Standard."

## The Year of the Snake begins

The Revd David Ho Young  
Rector of Moor Allerton  
and Shadwell

On Wednesday, January 29, many Chinese and East Asians in this country and abroad celebrated the Lunar New Year. Here in our diocese, there were a number of celebrations. At the beginning of February, nearly 700 people gathered in Leeds Minster to attend a Lunar New Year Market where the richness of Chinese culture was on display. At the event, His Majesty the King was represented by one of his deputy lieutenants who spoke of the value of people from Hong Kong and China who have made their home in the UK. Also, at one of my churches in North Leeds, we celebrated with a wonderful Lunar New Year lunch after the service, organised by many of the Hong Kongers who are now an important part of our congregation.

Each Lunar New Year is represented by an animal in the Chinese Zodiac, and this year is the Year of the Snake. Needless to say, the snake is not the most popular animal in the zodiac, and this is especially true for some Christians for whom the snake conjures up negative connotations through the



biblical story of the snake in the Garden of Eden.

However, in Chinese culture, snakes are often associated with wisdom, flexibility and intuition, and even in the biblical narrative, snakes aren't always bad news. In John 3:14, Jesus speaks of the time when Moses set up a bronze snake on a pole at a time when the Israelites were being plagued by poisonous snakes, and whoever looked upon the bronze snake would be healed by God. Jesus uses this imagery to speak of himself when he would be lifted up on the cross, just like the bronze snake on the pole, and that whoever looks upon him and puts their trust in him would receive healing in the form of forgiveness of sin and new life.

As we mark this Year of the Snake, may each of us receive the blessing of looking upon him who was lifted up on the cross so that we may receive healing and new life. A very happy Lunar New Year to you - 新年快樂 (Sun Lin Faai Lok!)

## Huddersfield folk join together for Epiphany service in Halifax Minster



A special Epiphany service to celebrate the faithful work and commitment of those in our Huddersfield Episcopal Area has taken place at Halifax Minster.

Church banners were displayed as Archdeacon of Halifax, Ven Bill Braviner presided over a well-attended service, despite the snow, where the Rt Revd Smitha Prasadam, Bishop of Huddersfield preached a message of God's presence in life, mission and ministry.

The Revd Canon James Allison, St John's Coley, said: "It was a joy to witness the banners of many different churches from across our area processing down the aisle of Halifax Minster as we began our service.

"We heard stories of God doing a new thing in churches across our area. Bishop Smitha preached on God made manifest, not just through the historic story of Epiphany but through the ministry and mission of our churches."