

Diocesan News

June 2024

30 years of women priests celebrated at Bradford Cathedral



The 30th anniversary of women priests has been celebrated at a recent service at Bradford Cathedral.

The service on Saturday, May 4, also included the commissioning of five new Women's Ministry Advisers for the diocese, one in each episcopal area.

On Sunday, May 8, 1994, 12 women were first ordained priest in Bradford Cathedral by the Rt Revd David Smith, then Bishop of Bradford.

The service looked to celebrate the diversity of ministry that the ordination of women has enabled, celebrating not just the last thirty years but also the coming thirty years.

It aimed to honour the costly discipleship journey of those who made the way by walking it, those who are treading those paths today, and those

who will tread new and unimagined paths of ministry in the future.

The President at the service was the Revd Canon Dr Sue Penfold, who was ordained priest in Bradford Cathedral on Sunday, May 8, 1994.

The service included hearing from female priests and their experiences of ministry over the last 30 years, interviewed by the Rt Revd Smitha Prasadam, Bishop of Huddersfield.

The Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon, commissioned five new Women's Ministry Advisers for our diocese, who work with their Area Bishop, and as a team of advisers, to advocate for, support and develop the ministry of women.



Careful planning, decorated biscuits and community effort raises £25k



A well-planned fundraising weekend for the Parish of Bardsey with East Keswick has raised a whopping £25,000 to boost church funds.

Structural damage to church grounds and rising heating costs had significantly hit their bank balance, so worshippers realised at the end of last year that they would need to do some fundraising in 2024, said incumbent Revd Angela Hannafin.

The community-based events of the weekend included an afternoon of tea and cakes organised by the local WI (including hand-decorated biscuits by local artist Klara) and a 'Family Forage', where families could pick out dragon-featured symbols (to tie in with St George's Day) as they walked from one church to another.

Changes in a testing world

Bishop Nick

June is going to be a busy month. Not only are we in the throes of a general election campaign, but it is also Ordination month. (And I daren't mention the Euros ...)

At Pentecost, I will ordain deacons at Ripon Cathedral and the area bishops will ordain priests in their episcopal areas. What unites these two things - an election and the ordinations - is that both will involve change.

It is vital in a participatory democracy that citizens get out and vote. I hope that everyone will take this responsibility seriously this month. Citizenship brings responsibility as well as privilege, and moaning about governments cannot be legitimate if we fail to influence government direction and policy by voting.

Those being ordained have already accepted the fact that change can be personally costly ... and that being an ordained person lays one open to all sorts of public judgment. So, I encourage you to pray for our new deacons and priests as they feel their way into a new way of living and ministering in and through the Church of England in our vast range of contexts.

They exercise their ministry at a time of enormous challenge. Yet, challenge is not something that in our diocese is either novel or unwelcome.

This year we celebrate our tenth anniversary, recalling the birth pangs from 2014 onwards, but also looking forward to a future



in which we continue to take responsibility for shaping the church for both the present and the future.

If the country needs refreshed vision and direction - whoever gets into government - then so does the Church as we live in a testing world at a testing time in history.

I am personally deeply grateful to all those who bravely did what no other diocese(s) has dared to do, and let some things die in order to shape something new. A number of faithful and committed people at every level of diocesan life bear the scars of our loving, living and learning. We learned together from both challenge and encouragement. I pray that this will continue into our next ten years as we grow confident Christians who grow our local parish churches and seek to transform our local communities with the motivating grace and love of God in Jesus Christ.

Presence and participation are central aspects of our Church of England Christianity. And the principles that inspire such commitment might also be evident in our exercise of civic duty on 4 July.

Rural ministry and relationships across our diocese praised at special service

More than 400 people celebrated all things bright and rural at Ripon Cathedral in a special service as part of our diocese's 10th anniversary year.

The "Rivers of Life" service focussed on the significance of a decade of rural life and Christian ministry, with guests representing key areas including farming, tourism and conservation.

The event was part of the 10th anniversary year since the creation of one of the largest dioceses in the Church of England, the Diocese of Leeds.

In his sermon, Dean John praised the resilience of so many, calling on people to have confidence in the God who pours out his spirit to sustain life and draw people together in unity.

The service was attended by the Deputy Lord Lieutenants of both North and West Yorkshire, Mr Simon Theakston and Mr C Richard Jackson MBE, representing His Majesty the King.



Major funding for fresh engagement with people of every ethnic background



In its 10th anniversary year, the Diocese of Leeds has received forward-looking funding to boost its work with the region's richly diverse communities during the next decade and beyond.

A grant of £734k has been awarded by the Church of England's Racial Justice Triennium Fund to further develop our engagement with people of every ethnic background and in every social context.

This funding will support churches and schools in urban, rural and post-industrial areas in their positive responses to the challenge to achieve racial justice for all, as laid out in From Lament to Action, the ground-breaking report by the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Task Force which identified Participation, Education, Training and Mentoring, Young People, Structures and Governance as priority areas.

There are three paths to progress this important project locally and to benefit neighbouring dioceses in the Northern Province and the Church of England as a whole: advancing Ministry, which includes initiatives for nurturing Global Majority Heritage vocations to lay and ordained ministry; advancing learning, which involves establishing and delivering courses for churches;

and advancing engagement, which means helping our churches and schools engage more effectively with their localities and build on the experience of diocesan partner organisations.

These three work streams will benefit from a variety of wider partnerships (eg interfaith, ecumenical and educational). They will be supported by a diocesan racial justice reference group.

The Rt Revd Smitha Prasadam, Bishop of Huddersfield and diocesan lead bishop for racial justice (pictured above) said: "This timely gift enables us to build on the good work and good will so evident in our churches, schools and communities.

"As we celebrate the transforming power of God on the anvil of our lives, Pentecost reminds us how barriers of language, class and status are broken down to make way for mutual understanding, healing and peace. We seize the day and hasten God's kingdom."



Youth church praised for its precious work by the Archbishop of York



Sorted, the Bradford youth church, was visited by Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell for a live event which saw thousands of young people nationwide say the Lord's Prayer together.

The Prayer, hosted by presenters from The Way UK, aimed to do a live link-up across the country to encourage youth groups as part of the worldwide initiative Thy Kingdom Come.

Sorted, a long-standing Bishop's Mission Order for young people, was selected to be one of the key venues in the North for The Prayer.

Describing Sorted as a 'Fabulous youth church', the Archbishop said: "What I've seen here is not just young people learning about their faith but young people leading in the church."

Sorted operates across the north of Bradford, offering wellbeing to young people at senior school; facilitating after school clubs and hosting two large social gatherings every Friday night.

The wonder of vocations

Revd Canon Derek
Walmsley
Diocesan Director of
Ordinations and Vocations

I was asked to write a short piece about "The Wonder of Vocations". What would you write? Let me ask some questions then. How do we find our vocation? How do we discover what God wants us to do with our lives?

My answer begins here: We don't need another hero, as Tina Turner sang. I don't want to lose you, so please read on.

The Bible is full of exciting stories about people chosen by God. But there is a huge risk that we read these stories in the same way we read popular fiction. We look for heroes and then we unconsciously imagine ourselves in their shoes and think the moral of the story is that if we just do what they did, then all will be fine. However, there are some serious problems with this.

Firstly, each of them is unique and different. We are not the same person in the same context at the same time in history. We are different. There's no such thing as the typical male or female.

But could we learn some principles from what happened?



Unfortunately, that doesn't work very well either, because often the point of the story is that they messed up. They did the wrong thing! Don't try this at home...

Hebrews 11 (read this please) tells us that the better ones, who did some great things by faith, also had terrible things happen to them. They were tortured, chained, imprisoned, stoned, sawn in half, persecuted, tormented. Not good news, is it? That's the way of the world.

So we are called instead to love. What's love got to do with it? (I hear you say). According to the Bible, we love because He first loved us. We love God and our neighbour in response to His love for us.

You see, the stories in the Bible are each just a part of a much bigger story. The story is God's big plan from creation to revelation. You could say there is only one big wonderful point.

The Wonder is that there is only one Big Hero and his name is Jesus. The Bible is not about us but about Him. He's simply the best, better than all the rest.

A pilgrimage paved with prayer to all churches in Huddersfield Deanery

An inspiring pilgrimage has taken place across our Huddersfield Deanery with prayerful walkers visiting all 17 churches and covering more than 30 miles.

With the theme of Thy Kingdom Come, and spread over four mornings, they also called in at a hospital chapel and Huddersfield University Faith Centre.

Numbers varied along the route, but some 15 people took part and were joined by Bishop Smitha Prasadam joined at Golcar, and Archdeacon Bill Braviner walked with them from Christ Church Woodhouse, via St Hilda's Cowcliffe, to St Cuthbert's Birkby.

Revd Simon Crook, vicar of Golcar and Longwood was one of the pilgrims and here is his personal reflection on the experience: "It felt very special to deliberately walk to a church, dedicating that journey to God. It was good to link all our deanery churches together in this way."

