

# Diocesan News

## September 2024

## Church Buildings Grants scheme round 3 is open



The Diocese of Leeds is pleased to announce that the third round of our Church Buildings Grants scheme is now open.

Additional new funding is now available to help churches reach net zero carbon, increasing the capacity of the scheme to support churches in a variety of ways.

In order to support mission across the diocese, we launched our Church Buildings Grants scheme in 2021, which currently is providing £80,000 of grants per year for a minimum of five years.

The scheme now also allocates funds from two additional sources, the Church of England's Buildings for Mission fund, and their Net Zero Carbon Quick Wins fund.

Our Net Zero Carbon Quick Wins grants will be given to

churches to support new energy, heating and lighting projects, including new insulation, solar panels, smart meters and more.

Fran Taylor, Diocesan Net Zero Carbon Fundraising Officer, said: "I am delighted that I am able to support churches in their own environmental projects, and the new Net Zero Carbon Quick Wins grants are a fantastic opportunity to kick start a huge variety of projects".

The Ven Dr Andy Jolley, Archdeacon of Bradford, sits on the panel that considers grant applications, and said: "I'm really delighted that we can offer this kind of concrete support to parishes across the diocese, helping churches get their buildings fit for the future.

"The new Net Zero Carbon Quick Wins grants are a great addition to our existing scheme, allowing us to support an even greater range of projects than before."

The deadline for applications is Thursday, October 31.

## Chinese church leaders meet and eat with Bishop Nick



Leaders from Chinese churches across the diocese met with the Rt Revd Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds, to share about their mission in our region.

Bishop Nick invited the leaders from five churches in Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield to a lunch to speak and eat together, to learn about the ministry of Chinese churches in our area and to discuss how the Diocese of Leeds can work together with Chinese churches.

The Revd Dave Ho Young represented St Barnabas' Alwoodley, which has a significant number of people from Hong Kong attending worship, and said: "The meeting between Bishop Nick and Chinese church leaders recognised the important role that Chinese churches have in the UK today."

# A pilgrimage to discover life in Christ

## Bishop Smitha

In the very week marking the 80th anniversary when a young 25 year old Swiss man risked everything for an adventure of holiness and founded the Taize community on a hillside in Burgundy, pilgrims from the Diocese of Leeds alongside other friends travelled together to glimpse the mystery of the undivided church in simplicity, joy and trust.

21 hours on coach and ferry and a damp, cold arrival did not make for the most promising of beginnings for the pilgrimage, but, in the words of one person: "It turned from hell to fabulous, overnight."

Life in Taize is simple. Pilgrims fall into the rhythm of life of the Taize community with prayer 3 times a day, simple meals, a Bible introduction, the opportunity to reflect and discover with others what life in Christ can mean and to discern God's presence amid the challenges of everyday life.

We rejoiced in the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell joining us for the weekend and presided at a glorious Eucharist in the village church and, in preaching at the



Sunday Eucharist reminded everyone that "however difficult, challenging or costly, Jesus has the words of eternal life".

Among the joys of the week was connecting the Taize Prior, Matthew with his former neighbours in Pudsey and presenting him with a football shirt of his beloved Bradford City Football Club!

In the words of a pilgrim: "Worship, a bit challenging at first, at the start sitting in silence for 10 minutes seems ridiculous, but you find it easier and it has more meaning as you go along. It is amazing how many different ways there are to sing Alleluia. You don't have to be an amazing singer to join in, fortunately, everyone together sounds great. I have had a really pressured year studying for my A levels, waiting for results. Life is so different and so simple at Taize, you reset. It's worship, work and the people you are with. It is completely relaxing.

"I want to come again next year and would recommend it to others who haven't made the pilgrimage yet."

## Grand days out thanks to charity support for a Leeds church community

Dozens of children and adults have enjoyed special summer days out, thanks to hard work by one of our Leeds churches and funding by a generous local charity.

St Agnes church serves the people of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill – the most deprived council ward in Leeds – and members organised trips to Forbidden Corner, the popular family attraction near Middleham and to Bridlington for the seaside and fish and chips.

Organiser Gill Wigham told how thanks to the Leeds-based Wades Charity, everyone had great experiences without hurting their pockets.

Gill said: "At Forbidden Corner we had a picnic and we were blessed with dry weather."

"The cost of everything was provided thanks to Wade's Charity and that included coach travel, lunch, drinks, entry to the attraction and even the ice creams."



## More than a quarter of parishes engage with Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence



More than 25 percent of our parishes have engaged with Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence since we were granted national funding just over a year ago.

Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence exists to offer support to every church to move forward in their mission in a way that is prayerful, intentional and with God's grace possible.

It offers one to one help (mentoring and coaching), places to learn from each other (learning communities is the term we use) and courses that aim to encourage confidence in line with our diocesan vision.

Personal Growth and Leadership is one such course. PG and L is homegrown, starting in Bradford but now available to many churches. Last year 16 churches and 65 individuals were able to take the course which works with teams of clergy and lay people from churches to grow in confidence.

Confident Leadership for Missional Church is now in its second year, with 19 individuals in the first cohort and 21 in the second.

The CPAS-designed course is a 10

month leadership development journey for clergy seeking to be equipped for new leadership challenges they will face.

In the Diocese of Leeds we also use mentoring in a variety of ways in order to support groups and individuals, to encourage those facing challenging circumstances.

35 mentors have been trained in the last year, offering encouragement, support, perspective, challenge, accountability and prayer to provide the mentee with a safe environment for exploring important issues.

Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence has helped many new learning communities get started in the last year, creating another way we can hear and grow from the wisdom in parishes.

Since last year we have begun several new Barnabas learning communities and trained their facilitators.

These communities cover topics including interim ministry, Messy Church, church grafting and planting, Growing Faith, Net Zero Buildings and more.

## National report notes progress on racial justice in our diocese



A report on progress on racial justice in all 42 CofE dioceses has noted that in Leeds, this important work is "a whole diocese matter".

Progress on Racial Justice across the Church of England Dioceses from the Committee for Minority Ethnic Concerns (CMEAC), gives an account of how all 42 dioceses have responded to From Lament to Action (FLTA) recommendations along with examples of good practice and case studies.

The review covers the work of the dioceses in promoting diversity and inclusion from support for UKME/GMH vocations, to racial justice charters, and work in partnership with local racial justice groups.

The new report's comments regarding the Diocese of Leeds included: "Racial justice is a 'whole diocese' matter. Since its formation in 2014, the Diocese has taken a number of steps to promote racial justice." ■

## Fresh starts

Simone Bennett  
Diocesan Director of  
Education



As summer draws towards a close, so our new school year begins. This is a time of fresh starts, the simple pleasure of a new exercise or notebook, new pupils and staff and the anticipation of what lies ahead.

Every new school year is a time of opportunity. A time for new goals, new roles and personal and professional growth.

Lamentations 3 reminds us, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Trusting in God, each other and ourselves can bring us the wisdom, courage and joy we so often need day to day.

In school, we do not journey alone. We are part of the wider diocese and the family of church schools. Over the Summer I visited an ancient church. On the wall was the outline of a cross, long since removed and yet the outline remained. Similarly, each Headteacher and leader serves as a gatekeeper for a time. They, along with every staff member, governor, pupil and family leave their mark.

Each one contributes something unique, enriching the lives of our schools and communities for everyone.

So, whether returning or starting out with us for the first time, welcome back. Wherever you are on your faith and education journey, on behalf of myself, the education team and the Diocesan Board of Education, thank you for all you are and will bring this academic year. Thank you for all you will sacrifice and all you will share as you create the next chapter of your school.

One thing is certain, there will be moments of joy and triumph, disappointment and struggle. We are here for you. We offer you our on-going support, encouragement and love as you navigate your role with purpose, kindness and integrity.

As you shine and share the light of Christ in every classroom and with every member of your school community, may this year be a manageable one - one where you can fully flourish.

Our new Director of  
Vocations aims to  
harvest new clergy and  
lay leaders



Our new Diocesan Director of Vocations is Revd Canon Sean Robertshaw from the Holme Valley.

Revd Sean was born and raised in Huddersfield where he was a youth worker, becoming ordained in 1993.

He served as curate in Morley before becoming team vicar in the Upper Holme Valley Team in 1996.

Since 2001 Revd Sean has lead the team as Rector and since 1998 he has also served in the Army Reserve (formerly the Territorial Army) holding a number of positions as chaplain and being closely linked with the Army Foundation College in Harrogate.

He is looking forward to growing into the new position of Diocesan Director of Vocations later this year and to meeting people from the parishes across all the episcopal areas as he wants to see new vocations both lay and ordained springing up in the harvest fields.