

‘Raring to go’ – 18 new deacons begin their ministry...

Eighteen men and women have begun ministry as deacons in parish churches across the diocese following two ordination



services held on Saturday 30 June in Ripon Cathedral led by Bishop Nick Baines. They include a former member of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, a police communications officer, a fishmonger, a construction engineer from Zimbabwe and a university lecturer from the United States.

“They are wonderful, gifted, passionate people, full of energy but like the rest of us they are incomplete,”

said preacher, Bishop Chris Edmondson, an Honorary Assistant Bishop, who had led the three day preparation ‘retreat’ for the eighteen new curates. “However incomplete they may be,” he added, “they are raring to go, ready, willing, realistic about the challenges but excited to get stuck in to the various ministries to which God has called them.”

Within the Church of England there are three stages of ordained ministry: deacons, priests and bishops. Following training at theological college, newly ordained deacons are appointed as curates. After one year, deacons are normally ordained as priests.



... as 19 new priests ordained

Priests are ambassadors of Christ, both servants and followers of God, said Bishop Tony Robinson at Wakefield Cathedral, one of the five priesting services held across the diocese on Saturday 23 June. There, Bishop Nick ordained five priests.

Meanwhile, Bishop of London, the Rt Revd Sarah



Mullally, gave the sermon at Leeds Minster where six priests were ordained by the Bishop of Kirkstall, Paul Slater. Bishop Jonathan Gibbs ordained three new priests at Huddersfield Parish Church and Bishop Toby Howarth ordained one at Bradford Cathedral. At Ripon Cathedral, Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley ordained four priests during what she called “a wonderful, joyous afternoon.”

A Shred of Evidence?

Bishop Jonathan Gibbs

I have just returned from one of the most rural and isolated churches in this area. It is called “Shred Church” (that’s another story) and is tucked away in the hills above Slaithwaite, with few houses nearby.

What is interesting is that what goes on there is almost entirely lay-led and absolutely focused on attracting children and their families. There is a Sunday School that meets every week at 11.15am, during which parents and carers stay for coffee and a natter. Once a month there is a family service, which the vicar attends and in which the children share something they have prepared in the Sunday School – and their mums and dads (and more) come along and take part.

So how many people do you think were there today? Twenty maybe, or thirty at a push? Well in fact there were almost seventy-five people at the service, including more than twenty children. There was nothing wacky about the service – it was just straightforward all-age worship – but the place was humming.

What seems crucial to me is



that this church has focused its energies on providing something that attracts children and that helps them and their parents feel welcome and part of a community. There are also good links with the local school, and the church building hosts a playgroup during the week. Children are clearly central to everything they do.

One woman told me that her family had started coming five years ago, with no church background whatsoever, and now they would have no hesitation in describing themselves as Christian – and they clearly all enjoy being part of the church.

The “shred of evidence” here, it seems to me, is that putting children first, making good links with local schools, and providing a place where families feel welcome can be a winning formula.

So why don’t more of us try it and see where the evidence leads?

**+Jonathan
Bishop of Huddersfield**

Thornhill alive with the sound of music

HUDDERSFIELD A church project to bring music to the community, begun by the parish of Thornhill near Dewsbury, has resulted in the recording of a new CD and the commissioning of a song for the village. Thanks to an HLF grant, the Thornhill Community Choir was formed, and meets weekly at the parish church. Tuition is provided by Musica Kirklees and Performing Arts etc Ltd who also worked with children from local schools.



Four songs were written at each school, while the music team, working with the Thornhill Community Choir came up with the finale on the CD, the song for the village of Thornhill. “All these songs were recorded in church on 21st and 22nd of June at two concerts,” says church member, Brian Pearson.

“About 200 children took part in half day rehearsals followed by a concert each day attended by 200 parents, and the Community choir were involved too. The result is the recording and the CD is launched this week.”

Wading into the waters in Swaledale for river baptisms

RIPON Christians ranging in age from nine to seventy-five have been baptised in the chilly waters of the River Swale in the Yorkshire Dales, following in the footsteps of the first Christians in the area nearly fourteen hundred years ago who were baptised by the 7th century Bishop of York, Paulinus.

The river baptism service on Sunday 1 July brought together churches in the Richmond area and was led by the Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven, the Venerable Beverley Mason (pictured right, along with the Revd Yvonne Callaghan,



pictured left).

Christian baptisms were first recorded in the 'holy' River Swale nearly fourteen hundred

years ago when the first bishop of York, St Paulinus, baptized thousands of converts in the river around the year 627 AD according to historian, the Venerable Bede.

Ring Out those Bells

BRADFORD The city's cathedral bells are once again ringing out after being rededicated by the Dean of Bradford and the Lord Mayor of Bradford. A rededication evening last month included guided tours given by local schoolchildren, a special choral evensong, and a presentation on the project.

Thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding of £79,100, the peal of First World War memorial



bells have been repaired and restored as part of a wider heritage project which includes the exhibition, guided tours and a special booklet launched at the rededication event.

Bradford Cathedral is the oldest building in the city. The bell

tower (which today has twelve bells) was finished in 1508 and the ten bells which have been restored were first hung in the tower in 1921 as a First World War memorial.

Medieval 'gem' restored

WAKEFIELD Work is almost complete to restore and protect Wakefield's medieval bridge chapel - one of only three in the country - for future generations. Scaffolding has finally come down from around the Chantry Chapel of St Mary's on Wakefield Bridge and work on essential repairs and refurbishment is expected to be completed at the time of going to press.

The chapel is one of just three bridge chapels in the country, only two of which are still in use for worship. It was built by the townspeople of Wakefield between 1342 and 1356, when a new stone bridge across the River Calder was projected.

£500k boost

LEEDS Hard work in the heart of the community has earned St Luke's church, Holbeck, £500,000 from the National Lottery. The grant will go towards a complete renovation and extension of the Malvern Road building including a new kitchen area, extra rooms and opening a community café.

"The grant is absolutely brilliant," said Canon Alistair Kaye. "It's going to create so many more opportunities. We are right in the heart of the estate and we are a community building. We want to make it work for the community and people here."

‘Inspirational’ and ‘amazing’ – warm appreciation for Lay Conference



‘An excellent day with inspirational speakers...’; ‘Thank you for an amazing, God-centred day’; ‘Absolutely amazing day. Feeling blessed and inspired.’; ‘... uplifting and affirming...’

Just some of the many positive comments from the 900 delegates who came to the first ever Diocese of Leeds Lay Conference, Together in Faith, at the Harrogate Convention Centre in June.

The day was packed with talks and workshops with a team of national speakers travelling to Harrogate to lead around 24 different seminars. Leading the main sessions were key-note speakers, Mark Russell, CEO of the Church Army, and the Bishop of Dorking, the Rt Revd Jo Bailey Wells who talked on ‘God’s call’ in the morning and ‘Prayer for all seasons’ in the afternoon. “Go where Jesus would go,” challenged Mark

Russell. “You are the only Bible most people will ever read,” he told delegates. “You are the fifth Gospel.”

A wide range of some 40 stalls filled the vast ‘Market Place’, and a new online learning portal was unveiled by the Director of Lay Training, Hayley Matthews, offering more support and recognition for a wider range of lay ministries both inside and outside the church.

In his conclusion, Bishop Nick told delegates, “Go away and talk to one another, to your friends, your families and your churches about what has grasped your spirit. Take responsibility for your discipleship and for your learning. Join the online learning community. Take responsibility. Don’t wait for the vicar to tell you.”

Join the online learning portal at learning.leeds.anglican.org

Synod’s call to close national wealth gap

Diocesan Synod, meeting in Harrogate, has backed two motions around the Christian imperative to support poor and disadvantaged people, one calling for the reduction of the national wealth gap. Both will now go for debate by General Synod.



The goals of the developing Diocesan Strategy were also unveiled including addressing challenges such as the need to increase vocations by 50 per cent and the call to empower the laity and promote “whole-life” discipleship.

Bishop Jonathan Gibbs and Director of Education Richard Noake gave a presentation on the need for closer engagement between churches and church schools. “The decline of children attending church shows we have a credibility problem,” warned Bishop Jonathan. “We have 64,000 children in our schools and I don’t think we see that many in our churches on a Sunday.”