

Network

 **THE DIOCESE
OF SHEFFIELD**
Renewed | Released | Rejuvenated

The magazine of the Diocese of Sheffield
Issue 19 Winter 2022



Follow the
Star: The Great
Invitation

Christmas
hamper appeal

Youth project

www.sheffield.anglican.org



breathe deep

youth event

28 January 2023

10:00 - 16:00

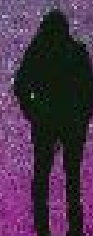
Doors open 09:30

Sheffield Cathedral

Church Street, Sheffield S1 1HA

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Welcome from Bishop Sophie



'Here is your God!'

I stopped at a coffee shop a few weeks ago and the staff were surrounded by boxes. 'You look busy,' I said. 'Yes', the barista said, 'We are just getting rid of Halloween, tomorrow it's Christmas!'

Advent is a precious season, and some feel frustrated by its conflation with Christmas. Clergy and lay leaders are often working ahead, planning events and festivities for

others. We too can be in danger of missing the present moment. Isaiah chapter 40, a familiar Advent reading, calls us to attention: 'You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" (vg).

This edition of Network magazine is an opportunity to pay attention to some of the wonderful ways that God is among us in the Diocese of Sheffield. Perhaps even as you stop for a coffee (Christmas flavoured or otherwise) you can join me in considering who we can invite to church and other events through 'The Great Invitation' as we 'Follow the Star' together. You can give thanks for our remarkable Centenary Project as you read of their work this past year. Ask God to bless Focal Ministers and to raise up others to be Lights for Christ in the world. So many great stories of our life together.

May God bless and encourage you as you read, this Advent,

The Rt Revd Sophie Jelley
Bishop of Doncaster

Contents

- 5 [Rotherham Minster Christmas campaign](#)
- 6 [Follow the Star: The Great Invitation](#)
- 7 [Contactless giving in Hoyland](#)
- 8 [A faith story in Focal Ministry](#)
- 10 [The building of a New Congregation in Anston](#)
- 12 [Green shoots in the Diocese: Eco Church grows!](#)
- 14 [Pitsmoor Youth and Community Project](#)
- 15 [Book recommendation](#)
- 16 [Celebrating buildings in the Marshlands Benefice](#)
- 18 [Café church in Kirk Sandall and Edenthorpe](#)
- 20 [A Year in Centenary Project](#)
- 22 [Book of Common Prayer services in Loversall](#)
- 24 [Reimagining Paul Exhibition](#)
- 27 [Celebrating confirmations in Cantley](#)

The Rotherham Minster Christmas Campaign helping those in need



The team at Rotherham Minster is doing its bit to help families who are struggling to have a special Christmas this year.

An appeal has been launched to sponsor a Christmas hamper for £70, with each package given to members of Rotherham's Social Supermarket.

70 were sent out last year, with local businesses helping to source and package the food.

Social Supermarket Manager Christine Batchford says the scheme was well received in 2021, but they need people's help to push it on this year:

"We find that at Christmas time a lot of our families are struggling even more than normal. Often it's a time when people get into debt, so we thought it'd be a good time to give people a really nice Christmas hamper which includes goodies and treats.

"It's quite a feat to go get the food, package it up and then send it out, but we really appreciated how big a difference it made to people's Christmases in 2021. We've got some funding from the council, but that alone won't go far enough. We want to ask individuals, businesses and groups if they'd be willing to sponsor a hamper. It costs about £70 to get all we need in the hamper.

"This year people will be really worried about the cost of living. People are really feeling the pinch, so the more we can do to help people the better.

"Sometimes when you haven't got much you feel like you're being a bad parent because of the pressure of getting gifts that we see advertised

on TV and social media, but it doesn't have to be like that. Sometimes smaller presents that are well thought through and homemade can be just as good – if not better."

A Christmas Day meal is also being planned at St Paul's Masbrough and is aimed at inviting those who are alone at Christmas.

Volunteers and members of the Social Supermarket will be helping out, and a local taxi firm has offered to give lifts to people attending.

Christine says it's important to recognise that not everyone will have friends and family near to them over the festive period:

"We want it to feel like one big family eating together rather than something that feels like charity. We're looking for people who might be able to help with giving lifts, and if people have got contacts for people to help provide the meat and veg that would be really helpful. We don't have any money for it yet, but we just decided to do it and make it happen. We're trusting in God and the goodness of people to make it happen.

"We're celebrating the birth of Jesus, and what better way to do that than support those who are struggling. It's not just about us helping people - it's recognising that when you get together you find that the folks you invite bring all sorts of gifts and insights to us all."

You can donate in a labelled envelope to the Minster donation box or by going to their Stewardship account: stewardship.org.uk/partners/20375359

Contact for more information on 07419 200405

Follow the Star: The Great Invitation

Lights for Christ enabler Hannah Sandoval talks about the missional opportunity available to us all this Christmas

The Church of England's campaign this Christmas is called 'Follow the Star: The Great Invitation', with plans to welcome people back to services and events that haven't been possible recently.

At the heart of this invitation is an opportunity for Christians to be Lights for Christ to others, and to share the good news of Jesus in our daily lives.

The Diocese of Sheffield's Lights for Christ enabler, Hannah Sandoval, explains how we can help to build others up over the next few weeks:

"It's a time of year that really lends itself to thinking about our calling to be Lights for Christ, and this is a calling that we all have regardless of age, background or tradition. Jesus said 'you are the light of the word', not that 'you might be'.

"For festive events we have Christingle services, we put lights up and we look at passages from the bible such as John 1:4 - 'In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind'. It's an opportunity for us to think about joining Jesus in that mission to be lights in the world."

A key part of the campaign is directing people towards ChurchNearYou.com, so that anyone thinking about attending church this Christmas can find out more about the services that are happening in their local community.

Hannah says the message of hope and light is especially important during this period of hardship for many:

"Often at church we think about how we can reflect that light for others. We hope that this time of year is joyful for everyone, but we know the reality is that it's a very difficult time with the cost of living crisis. We want to encourage people to share hope and light, whether it's in a practical way like giving or volunteering, or in the way that we approach and relate to others as representatives of God's kingdom.

"We believe that every person who is baptised has received the light of Christ, and we want to help them fulfil their baptismal calling. We want people to experience life in abundance as Jesus says, and we believe we do that by following Jesus closely; by receiving His light, walking in His light and reflecting His light to others. Christmas could be the only time of the year when some people come to church, so it's an important opportunity to remind them of Jesus' invitation to experience fullness of life in him, and to join him in being the light of the world."

Resources available from the Church of England for churches include printed and digital materials; social media graphics and templates; music; 'Christmas in a Box' and various seasonal liturgies.

With this in mind, Hannah says it's vital that churches don't slip into the mindset of assuming the way Christmas services have always been done is the best method this year:

"This is a chance for us to be missional and intentional in how we invite the public to join us this Christmas. Let's bear in mind those people who have never been to church before, and aren't familiar with how services may be run. I encourage those planning advent and Christmas services to really think about accessibility and how they can make sure newcomers feel comfortable and welcome."

If you'd like to think more about being a light for Christ, find out more here: lightsforchrist.uk/wyff

You can get in touch with Hannah at hannah.sandoval@sheffield.anglican.org

Resources to invite your community back to church this Christmas are available here: churchofengland.org/resources/advent-and-christmas-resources

Contactless giving rollout a success in Hoyland

St Peter's Church has set up a contactless payment device, and is already seeing the benefits of the new scheme



It is hoped that giving towards the church community in Hoyland will be made easier thanks to the installation of a contactless payment device.

The Generous Giving Team at the Diocese of Sheffield

worked with Mission Partnership Development Worker Ian Burgess to help put together the scheme via a grant application.

The device at St Peter's Church allows people to donate amounts of £3, £5, £10 and £20, with an additional option for donors to select their own amount if they wish. Father Richard Parker SSC is the Vicar of St Peter's and St Andrew's in Hoyland:

"We'd heard and seen other churches having contactless devices, and thought it was a really good idea. I've used them when visiting other churches, and thought it'd be useful here. A lot of people no longer carry cash all the time, and we thought having a contactless setup could provide another possible income stream.

"I spoke with Libby Culmer from the Generous Giving Team, who came out to see us. At the time I only knew of smaller devices, but Libby told us about a more recent update; a larger device with an iPad-style screen. This made it easier for people to navigate, so we jumped at the chance to have one!

"Our Mission Partnership Development Worker Ian Burgess applied for a grant for the device, and we were very pleased that was successful."

The impact so far has been positive, with people already using the device and finding

it straightforward to navigate. Father Richard says a large event at the church proved to be a successful test for the equipment:

"It's early days, but so far it's been really good for us. We had a baptism during a Sunday Mass, with between 70 and 80 people; quite a few people afterwards were queuing up to use the device, and were finding it quite easy and convenient to use.

"It's really encouraging, and some people are quite happy to pay that way. We probably missed out from some donations in the past from people who didn't carry cash, or only carried larger notes. It enables people to choose whichever amount is best, and also to gift aid if they wish.

"We were advised by Paul Sheridan from the Diocese that smaller donation amounts* should be eligible under the gift aid small donation scheme, which is even better."

Other churches across the Diocese of Sheffield have been putting in place similar technology, and it's hoped more congregations will consider similar schemes.

Father Richard says he's hopeful this scheme can challenge any misconceptions or concerns people may have around the technology:

"My message to other churches is that they should definitely consider setting up contactless giving. Have a look at whether there are some other grants available to help. It's worth investing in, and even if a church has to put the money in for the project I think it pays for itself. I think there's everything to gain from having a device like this, and it's not a problem to set up."

For more information on how to set up contactless giving in your church, contact: generosity@sheffield.anglican.org

*Donations have to be under 30 to be claimed and they have to fit within the other Gift aid ratio: gov.uk/claim-gift-aid/small-donations-scheme

“Faith has become my ultimate passion”

Focal Minister James Kirk shares his faith journey from a time of struggle and pain to a fruitful relationship with Jesus

“God is not far from any of us” – Acts 17:27

Those words from the bible can be a source of comfort to anyone going through hardship or wrestling with their faith.

The spirit of this message has been borne out through Focal Minister James Kirk, whose journey to faith is a powerful reminder of God’s grace.

This journey began following the death of a loved one, as James explains:

“I’d had a rocky start in life with the death of my mum when I was 18. She was a massive role model in my life and this hit me, my dad and my sister really hard. It sent me down a spiral of drugs, alcohol and wasting money.”

Things began to change for James when he met the love of his life at the age of 25. He hadn’t come from a church background, but explored faith when he first got together with his now wife:

“We worked at the same place got on really well. She was beautiful inside and out, and lo and behold she was a Christian. Whether or not that was the first step of my journey and whether or not Jesus mapped it out...it’s how it was meant to be.

“I started going to church and enjoyed it, and followed it up with bible studies and an Alpha course. My faith just grew and grew, and it impacted my life ten-fold.”

James and his wife got married on Christmas Eve in 2012, and since then

have been blessed with a son.



James was eventually drawn towards Focal Ministry after attending his wife’s church at St Leonard’s in Wortley:

“My faith just grew and grew”

“It’s a small church that welcomed me with open arms. It’s a beautiful community, and I wanted to help them out in whatever way I could. Using my skills as a graphic designer I helped to put together a smart website to

help promote the work that takes place there.

“It was a nice way for me to give something back to the church, and it brought the opportunity for me to use my abilities as a Focal Minister.”

These experiences helped inspire James to put down in writing his testimonies amongst others into something called ‘Global Truth’, a project aim towards non-believers who are searching to gain a better understanding of how others have found Jesus.

In trying to draw others to faith, James has also published his first book: ‘Angles and Angels’; a production designed to visually share the contents of the Bible and how it affects and relates to our thoughts and emotions in everyday life.

Find more information about Global Truth: <https://www.global-truth.com/index.html>

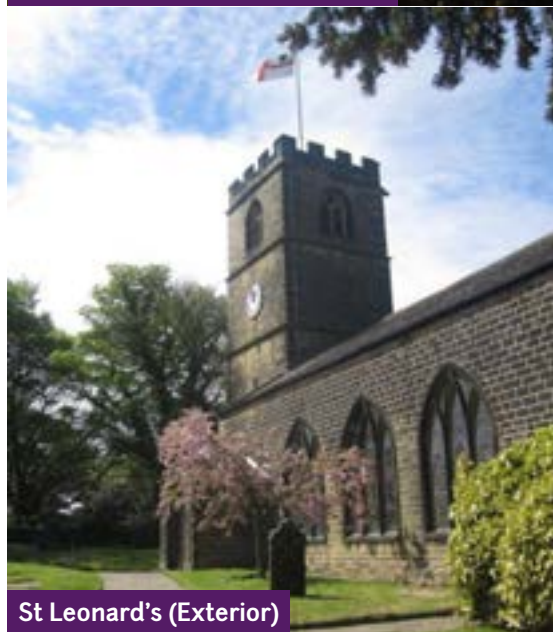
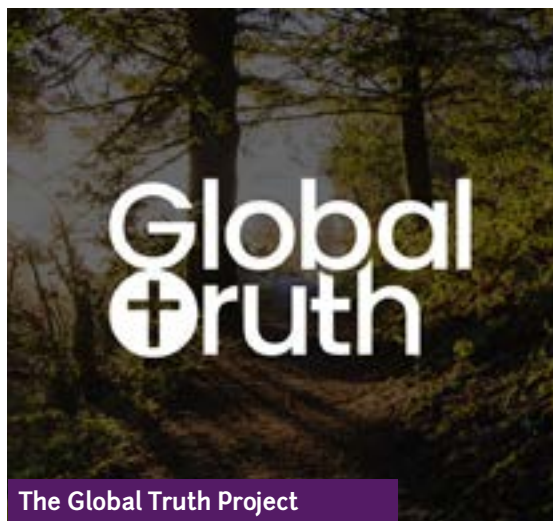
Read James’ testimony in full: [global-truth.com/story1-a-new-path-through-love.html](https://www.global-truth.com/story1-a-new-path-through-love.html)

Check out his book Angles & Angels: [global-truth.com/angles-and-angels.html](https://www.global-truth.com/angles-and-angels.html)

Following discussions at the Diocese with Sally Myers (Director of Focal Ministry) and Elliot Hyliger (Digital Mission Development Advisor) James is also working on some evangelistic projects that will be shared in 2023.

He has this advice for anyone taking the first tentative steps on their faith journey:

“You don’t need to read the bible from cover to cover. I think people get intimidated by it all, as I was initially. You can have a relationship with Jesus from your bedside; everything will naturally grow as your faith and wisdom develops. Just open up to Him and explore what path you want to take.”



The building of a New Congregation in Anston

The community at St James in Anston have brought people together through a natter group, and there are plans for it to grow further

An Anston group is working towards becoming the Diocese of Sheffield's 16th New Congregation thanks to the dedicated work of its volunteers, and its visionary plans for the future.

Based at the St James Church Hall, the natter group has developed from a café that was mainly a place for getting food rather than fellowship.

As people retired and left Reverend Barbara Cushing, the Assistant Priest at St James, felt called to take over and change the setup to a more personable outlook:

“We wanted to focus the café on relationships and on people, and after conversations with John Marsh (Mission Development Adviser) we worked on ways of making the setup more approachable for people.

“Prayer was an important part of our mission: asking God to send people, and just letting it grow. I always felt this was like planting seeds in the garden; you don't expect instant results but



An informal men's group has started up here

need to watch the growth carefully.

“It's quite an old hall which we also rent out to other users. The grounds had become neglected so my husband started to tackle that along with a couple of others, and that developed into a sort of informal men's group. They planted a herb garden and flowers just to generally make it a nicer space, and from that the men's group developed a strong connection with each other. We didn't plan this particular group, but God's hand has definitely been in it.”

Barbara also started 'Bible Natter' a couple of years ago by looking at Psalms. The group has grown and has continued by exploring the person and ministry of Jesus together. An Advent Bible Natter is planned with a series of sessions including Easter and Advent courses.

A Christmas celebration is planned this month, which will include carols at the café with a couple of people from St James' Church providing the music.

Barbara says it's important to tailor what the group does to making things as comfortable as possible for people not familiar with how church works:

“The vision was to sit in our corner with our bibles, and natter about what the bible tells us. We've had a mixture of church and non-church people, and I was thrilled to bits those people came to listen. Some people have joined us who



The hall is also let out for other groups to use

have waited at the bus stop outside, and when their bus has been delayed or cancelled they've come to us.

“The aspiration will be that once a month we do a worship natter and have a small, simple service. It's utilising things that people can identify with but not feel threatened about. It's striking how many people tell me they're not religious, and I tell them I'm not really! I know what they mean; they mean that part of talking about God that's full of special language that excludes them, and it's trying to be aware of that and to avoid it.

“We're really excited about the next step, and are thankful for everything that God has provided in this community.”

Barbara has signalled her determination to meet all 6 criteria for the natter group to become the Diocese's 16th New Congregation, with a worship element including sacraments to be worked on and included in the near future.

The criteria involves worship (UP), fellowship (IN), outreach (OUT), reaching new people, raising new leaders and offering the sacraments.

If you want to find out more about starting new things generally, or a New Congregation in particular, contact john.marsh@sheffield.anglican.org

Green shoots in the Diocese: Eco Church grows!

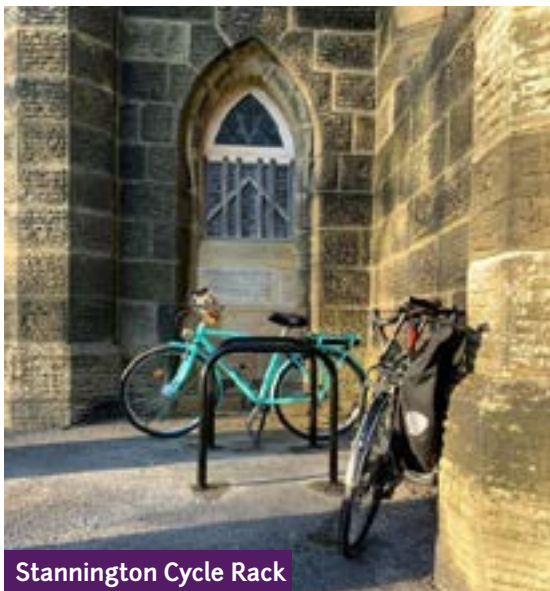
Diocesan Environment Officer Dr Cathy Rhodes updates us on the progress being made with Eco Churches across the Diocese.

One of my favourite jobs as Diocesan Environment Officer (DEO) is checking the A Rocha Eco Church map. It's especially exciting to see the church markers change colour when the commitment of a church community is rewarded by a Bronze or Silver award. I just checked the Eco Church map for this article...and found another Bronze Eco Church!

So congratulations to Holy Trinity Church, Ulley on being the latest church with a Bronze Award. They have gained enough points to be at least Bronze level in the online survey on every Eco Church section: Land, Buildings, Worship & Teaching, Community & Global engagement and Lifestyle. You can see some of what they and other Eco Churches have done in these fantastic photos:



Askern Bog Garden



Stannington Cycle Rack

When I started the role of DEO in March 2020 and looked at the map, there were 16 Eco Church markers with 4 awards. The map of our Diocese had a lot of space on it! But less than three years later, there's a wonderful view of 51 markers crowded together including 19 awards. Despite the pandemic and all the pressures churches are under, the number of Eco Churches has tripled and we have nearly five times as many awards. I'm so pleased this is through the whole Diocese and all Deaneries. As part of our mission to sustain and renew God's beautiful earth, our church communities are committing to care for Creation one step at a time, and now a

quarter of our churches are Eco Churches. This will help us to apply for our Bronze Eco Diocese award! For this we need Church House in Rotherham to be Bronze and we are making progress there too.



Finningley Spring Meadows

There are many other churches with great stories and photos to share, so please join our Eco Church Facebook group (search for groups on the Diocesan page and ask to join!). The updated Diocesan web page will have a list of Eco Churches and awards. We'd love churches to join that list: have a look at the A Rocha website: ecochurch.arocha.org.uk There are helpful resources, and you can register for free, though you can give a donation if you like.

I suggest printing the survey questions off and handing out to the right person. For example your churchwarden for the Buildings section and those who lead worship for Worship & Teaching. Questions

include praying regularly for Creation or encouraging wildlife on your land (even a bug house helps!). Are you trying to reduce your carbon footprint e.g with LED light bulbs or cycle racks? The answers can be put online and then you'll find out how close you are to your first award. Many churches are already Bronze on some areas and a few simple changes can get you your Bronze award.

Email me or Sally Hunter if you need help or advice. And above all please pray and give thanks for our church communities working as Lights for Christ to care for God's gift of our beautiful earth and all that is in it.

Dr Cathy Rhodes, DEO

environment@sheffield.anglican.org

Sally Hunter, Environmental Project Support

environment.admin@sheffield.anglican.org



Dr Cathy Rhodes

Pitsmoor Youth & Community Project

A youth project fund from the Diocese of Sheffield has helped to make a positive impact on the lives of young people.

A project making a difference in Pitsmoor has been made possible through the Hollowford Trust, which is managed by members of the Anglican Church locally. The fund aims to assist young people aged between 10 and 25 years who are resident in, or near the Diocese of Sheffield, to develop their physical, mental and spiritual capabilities.

Last year, the group started the new Annual Award, where they gave away £2,500 to one exciting, larger-scale youth project, trip or event. They awarded this amount in March 2022 to the Lindley Educational Trust, who have been working with young people from Pitsmoor.

Since then, the Lindley Trust have delivered some challenging outdoor activities, from canoeing and caving to rock scrambling and climbing.

The programme has also helped to teach leadership skills along with first aid training, with six young people from Pitsmoor engaged with a project on using outdoor education to grow ethnically diverse young leaders.

The team at the Lindley Educational Trust said:

“We are really pleased with the activities delivered as a result of the funding. It gave our young people some really challenging experiences that we are absolutely sure they will remember for many years to come.

“We cannot emphasise enough how important these activities are for young people’s personal development, particularly in terms of building resilience, increasing self-confidence and giving them access to opportunities they would otherwise miss out on.”

Mike North, Children’s and Young People’s Adviser, said:

“It has been great to see how the Annual Award has been used this year, and as trustees, we look forward to receiving applications for next year’s award! We’re inviting youth workers and youth organisations to put forward their big ideas for 2023 to see young people’s lives in South Yorkshire changed for the better.”

The deadline for applications for the Annual Award is 31st December, 2022. Applications for smaller grants for young people are considered four times per year. Details of the funding criteria and deadlines for applications are on the website above.

More details on the Hollowford Trust can be found here: sheffield.anglican.org/hollowford-trust



The project puts on many outdoor activities

Book recommendation

Lights for Christ enabler Hannah Sandoval reviews 'Seven Sacred Spaces' by George Lings (The Bible Reading Fellowship: 2020)



Hannah Sandoval

Recently I've really enjoyed reading George Lings' *Seven Sacred Spaces* – an approach to discipleship and community life as a church that draws on monastic tradition and theology of space. Lings suggests that seven spaces commonly found in monastic communities can act as a tool to help us think about our individual and communal spiritual lives. They are:

- Cell (being alone with God)
- Chapel (corporate public worship)
- Chapter (making decisions)
- Cloister (planned and surprising meetings)
- Garden (the place of work)
- Refectory (food and hospitality)
- Scriptorium (study and passing on knowledge)

Lings writes about how these elements of the Christian life might be worked out by the individual and in community. In my role as Lights for Christ / discipleship enabler, I have mainly been reflecting on how individuals can apply these ideas to their everyday lives. In our Diocese we often talk about the importance of whole-life discipleship – of allowing one's relationship with

and worship of God to 'spill over' from Sundays into the rest of the week. We are called to be lights for Christ whenever and wherever we are – in all seven of the sacred spaces.

Lings' book provides a helpful framework for thinking about this sort of thing. If you have already begun to live by a Personal Rule of Life, using the *Seven Sacred Spaces* as an additional framework could help you to think more deeply about the balance of patterns and practices in your life. For me, it has been a useful tool for evaluating the ways in which my everyday life reflects my faith. I realised that I had carefully considered the way my work relates to God and the calling he has given me (garden), but that I hadn't learned anything new for a while and would value taking part in a study course (scriptorium). I now also feel that I want to offer more hospitality as an expression of my faith (refectory), and so I've been thinking how I might go about that too.

For others, it may be that you are serving faithfully in church (chapel) but are left with little opportunity for time spent alone with God (cell). Maybe you are an important Christian presence to those you meet in your everyday life (cloister) and want to think more about how you can be a Christian influence in places where you have authority to make decisions (chapter), such as at work, church or within your community.

Using the *Seven Sacred Spaces* as a framework for discipleship can help us to see which parts of the Christian life are bearing fruit for us, and which might need a bit more work. To help people to do this, the Diocese is planning to run several retreat days based on the seven spaces in 2023. These will be open to all and advertised on the Lights for Christ website (lightsforchrist.uk). If you're looking to re-evaluate your current rhythm and spiritual practices, or want to go deeper in your discipleship, I highly recommend *Seven Sacred Spaces* to you.

Marshland Benefice: “We want to make our buildings community assets”

The Marshland Benefice, comprising the churches of Adlingfleet, Eastoft, Swinefleet and Whitgift, is looking at new ways of widening their partnership with the local community.

Exciting progress is being made on transforming church buildings in the Diocese and celebrating their rich heritage.

The Marshland Benefice has been assisted recently by the Church Buildings Team, with consultations, and various workshops taking place to give advice on how to make the most of them.



The Benefice includes the churches of Adlingfleet, Eastoft, Swinefleet, and Whitgift. Swinefleet and Whitgift in particular have made promising developments, and it's hoped there's more to come moving forward.

Swinefleet is the youngest of the four buildings,

and is the only one not to be listed. It didn't have a congregation until June of this year, but since then services for young families have been taking place once a month.



The building is over a thousand years old

Justine Smith is the Priest in Charge of the Marshland Benefice:

“Swinefleet didn't have a PCC – just a treasurer and myself looking after the building for the six years that I've been here.

“The treasurer has had to retire due to health problems, so we had to look at new alternatives. Viv Cooling (Church Buildings Officer Team Leader) has been really helpful, and she helped me to advertise for people to run the church building.

“A small group of people from the village came forward and are forming into a friends' group. Viv has also run a maintenance workshop with Zoe Kemp (Resourcing Churches Buildings Officer), and has put together a programme tailored to Swinefleet's needs.

“They've helped to train the volunteers to look after the building, which has been fantastic.

“The friends’ group has already run a couple of cleaning sessions and is just about to get its constitution up and running, which means it can take over the day to day running of the church. Viv and the team have been instrumental in helping a church without a congregation and a PCC come back to life.”

Whitgift is also making positive strides. The Grade 1 listed building is over a thousand years old, and comes with a unique number 13 on its clock.



‘Champing’ is being considered here

Its PCC is made up of a mixture of existing long-term members and new people. Justine says they want to continue making the building fit for the 21st century:

“We’re going to look at applying for grants and expanding our community use of the building.

“Whitgift has appointed a local community

consultant to help with increasing the use of the building, and she’s been working with Viv to help bring in more volunteers. Viv and Zoe have set up a maintenance workshop for Whitgift, helping us to understand any issues around the building.

“We want to make this building even more of a community asset. Local people are absolutely passionate about our churchyards and church buildings, and it’s really helpful to have the Diocesan buildings officers advising us. We want to channel that passion to enable us to rise to the challenge of looking after our historic building and enabling future generations to benefit from all it has to offer.”

Moving forward it’s hoped that Swinefleet’s congregation will continue to grow, with more major festivals taking place there throughout the year along with life events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

At Whitgift Justine says they are also looking at possible plans for ‘champing’, where people can pay to camp overnight in a church and experience more of the building.

Champing would be another useful revenue stream, but it is the discussion of ideas like this that has helped to spark conversations about new uses for the churches.

Justine has this message for other people in the community:

“These buildings are beautiful and a huge community asset with a wealth of heritage. If you have any interest at all in them, please come and talk to us!

“We are part of the community, and we want to widen our partnership further. I’d also like to say a huge thank you to the Church Buildings Team, who have been tremendous with all their energy and insight”.

Church Together: Café church in Kirk Sandall and Edenthorpe

Vicar Tom Brown talks about the exciting new fellowship that's developed in Doncaster

A new type of church for families in Kirk Sandall and Edenthorpe has been developed, with the aim of bringing together more people in a comfortable setting.

'Church Together' (at the Church of the Good Shepherd) takes place every Tuesday in term-time and is split into two sessions; 2.45pm-3.15pm drop-in drinks for parents and carers and café church at 3.15pm-4pm for children aged 5-11 and their families. The sessions include games and crafts, interactive Bible teaching and music.



The sessions take place every Tuesday

Vicar of Kirk Sandall, Edenthorpe and Barnby Dun – Revd Tom Brown – says the team have deliberately chosen to make the events informal and relaxed:

"We were trying to think of creative ways to connect more with our local communities, but particularly with some of the younger generations. The real privilege with one of our churches is that we have a primary school built into the side of it.



"We wanted to build on that and recognise that Sundays can be tricky for people in terms of schedules, whilst also wanting to hold on to Sunday as the main gathering for the Lord's people. We looked at stepping stones towards that transition, deliberately using the language of 'Church Together' rather than something quirky but meaningful."

The interactive element has been particularly popular, with opportunities for people to chat, ask questions and be creative.

Tom and the team are keen to stress that the setup doesn't feel 'churchy', and is for everyone in the whole community.

"After marketing it through leaflets and talks at school, people started to give it a go. We

deliberately didn't want to make it all singing and dancing, as we wanted to make it feel as normal as possible to our community.

"We're about friends, faith and fun, and because of that the reception has been really positive. We said at the beginning that it would have been worth it if one person came and heard about Jesus. Wonderfully, we've had between twenty-six and forty-six attending each week, and most of those don't attend church regularly."

Refreshments are free each week and there's no obligation to pay, "we just want to serve people", Tom adds.

So will there be a Christmas flavour to proceedings as we make our way closer to the school holidays? Tom explains:

"We're working our way through Mark's gospel with small bits each week, as Mark takes you straight to Jesus and the good news.

"However, we'll jump over to Matthew's gospel for a little bit over Christmas, and want to tie it into some of the things that the school are doing over the festive period.

"We'll have a Christmas party on the 13th December, which is the last Church Together session before the school holidays start.

"The important thing for us as a team is that we want to draw people in to be a part of things. It's about building those relationships."

More details on Church Together can be found here: beakondoncaster.co.uk/cogs/cogs-whats-on/



A Year in CP

Centenary Project Manager Sarah Beardsmore shares her highlights from 2022



Sarah Beardsmore

It has been another exciting and encouraging year in the Centenary Project as we've continued to see our workers reaching into communities across the Diocese and helping to engage, nurture and disciple children, young people and families.

It's also been a year of change. Back in April, we said goodbye to Helen Cockayne, who had managed the Centenary Project from the very beginning in 2015. Helen had been passionate about helping church communities who wouldn't otherwise have been able to appoint a youth, children's or families' worker. She championed our workers and their ministries and enabled the project to grow. The Centenary Project was blessed to have Helen at the helm.

It's been a privilege over the last nine months to visit lots of our Centenary Project Workers; to see their ministries and the very real impact they are having. Below are just a few of my highlights from the last year:

The Centenary Project Evaluation

In February, the Church Army published their evaluation report into the work of the Centenary Project. The report was overwhelmingly positive, concluding that the project is reaching deprived communities and making a difference to those communities. One child that contributed to the report said "I love it! Learning about Jesus is so much fun. People at school and in my class don't care about Jesus, but I do and I love it" (age 6), and a parent said "Thank you for being there and being the light in my dark times of worry". You can find out more about the evaluation findings here: sheffield.anglican.org/news/centenary-project-evaluation

Networking

Networking is a really important part of the Centenary Project. In March all of our workers and supporters from their parishes came together for our Action Learning Network. This is a chance to share our experiences of ministry with one another and to pray and worship together. Throughout the year, our workers meet for monthly gatherings with training, faith input and sharing.



Summer Activities

As well as finding time for some rest, lots of our workers ran summer activities. I visited Rachel, our worker in Hatfield, to join a session of her 'Follow the Leader' summer club. The church was filled with children and their carers crafting, playing games and sharing in worship. I also popped along to Heeley to visit worker Josey's Messy Breakfasts, providing children and families with a healthy breakfast and activities in church.

Wild Away Day

In October, the Centenary Project hosted an activity day at Kingswood. 62 children and their leaders joined us for a day of activities including a zip line and Jacob's ladder. In the afternoon parents and carers joined us for family worship celebration. Our Hubs Co-ordinator Hannah said "the Wild Away Day is a chance to see that we are a much bigger church family; a space for friendships

to strengthen and new friendships to form as we hear about God's love for us all." The sun shone all day and it was joy to see the children having fun and growing in faith.

Training

Recently all of our Centenary Project Workers took part in a training session on supporting children and young people with additional needs. The session was led by the Additional Needs Ministry Director at Urban Saints and was a brilliant session challenging each of our CPWs to make their ministries accessible and welcoming for all children. Training is a valuable part of the Centenary Project.

Our Centenary Project Workers are doing some amazing things in their parishes and communities and we're really grateful to everyone that supports them in their ministries. I can't wait to see what the next year has in store for the Centenary Project.



Book of Common Prayer services in Loversall

Midweek worship based on 400 year old liturgy is taking off in Loversall

A midweek service based around prayer, singing, worship and reflection is building up momentum in Loversall.

Based around the Book of Common Prayer, which was first published in 1662, the gathering takes place every Wednesday at St Katherine's Church.

The Revd Canon Ian Smith, Oversight Minister for Warmsworth, Wadworth, Loversall and Balby, had looked at services across the Mission Area and found there was a struggle to do anything with St Katherine's on a Sunday:

"We decided to do something midweek and make it unique, so we went with the Book of Common Prayer. We'd oscillate between doing evening prayer and an evening service at 6pm to see if it'd attract people.

"To our delight 8 people turned up straight away, and then we started finding people were driving in from Bessacar and Hexthorpe. People were coming along specifically to come midweek to a place that met some of their spiritual needs."

The time was altered to 2pm as winter approached to account for darker nights, but numbers haven't been affected by the change.

What was a quiet church is now comprised of up to 20 people attending. Ian says some of the attendees have known each other for a long time, but are meeting in a new context in church for the first time:

"The warmth of welcome has been tremendous. We will review how it's all gone in the future, but I really want to capture what it is that's drawing people in at the moment.

"My gut feeling is that this midweek service has helped to be a bridge from Sunday to Sunday."

The services have provoked plenty of discussions, with responses overwhelmingly positive to the structure of the sessions. Ian has shared with the Diocese one of the written reflections submitted by a lady who goes every week:

"It's midweek and it's my little retreat. My batteries are recharged and I'm then ready for everything else towards the weekend. This place is tranquil; this place is peaceful. It's amazing and the atmosphere goes home with you."

"If you had that review as a café or restaurant you'd be thrilled!" Ian adds. "But that's what we're getting for a midweek 400-year-old liturgy in that place."

Singing has been introduced as the sessions have developed, with organ music forming part of the worship.

Sermons are also included which, as Ian explains, helps to stimulate discussion once the services draw to a close:

"We set up about half an hour before the service, and we wait around for half an hour afterwards just for a chat; we've had some quite emotional moments in that space.

"One person told us they were dragged there unwillingly by their partner, but once it started they were overwhelmed by the language. They felt it took their relationship with God very seriously, and the words hit them with a real freshness. They found themselves caught up in a form of worship that was totally new."

Ian is passionate about recommending midweek services to other churches in the Diocese, and suggests adding time afterwards for refreshments and conversations.

He advises thinking about music and the

message you might give:

“Just because it’s midweek it doesn’t have to be midrange. It can still be the very best quality. I really want to commend thinking about midweek services.”

Another member of the Loversall congregation submitted their thoughts about focusing on the Book of Common Prayer, and believes it’s brought new life to their way of worship:

“This is my oasis. I’m very busy despite my age. Here I can get into God’s word. I’ve got a moment of peace; I’m joining in with the believers of centuries past in a beautiful old building with wonderful old words, and the sermon gives me something to think about. I really don’t want it to finish. Here I meet up again with Christian friends. Here I am really refreshed. Why on earth did I ever keep waiting for Sunday?”



St Katherine’s Church (Exterior)



St Katherine’s Church (Bird’s-eye view)

Follow The Star THE GREAT INVITATION

Following a series of difficult Christmases, churches across the Church of England are hoping that 2022 offers a chance to welcome people back to services and events that haven’t been possible recently.

Discover resources to invite your community back to church this Christmas. The services and events will be specific to your community, but here you will find signposts to the national branding, reflections and more that will help you to invite people into your church – both online and onsite.

[churchofengland.org](https://www.churchofengland.org)

Reimagining Paul Exhibition

Dr Grace Emmett, Sir Henry Stephenson Visiting Researcher from the Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies, tells us more about the artwork capturing attention at Rotherham Minster

What is 'Reimagining Paul'?

'Reimagining Paul' is an exhibition of two newly commissioned artworks created to spark conversation about the apostle Paul and the interpretation of his letters in contemporary society. The exhibition features a painting entitled 'St. Paul of the Thorns' by Elizabeth Tooth and a neon text piece by Bettina Furnée entitled 'Like this. I am more'. Both pieces draw inspiration from different passages in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and explore themes including the body, disability, and masculinity.

How did this exhibition come about?

Last year, I completed a PhD that looked at the apostle Paul's letters and masculinity. During that process, it struck me that there are a variety of different ways that Paul presents himself and that it would be interesting to invite artists to respond to passages in Paul's letters that might be fewer familiar candidates for artistic inspiration. There was a public call for proposals earlier this year, after which two artists - Elizabeth Tooth and Bettina Furnée - were commissioned to produce pieces for the exhibition, and it has been on show at Rotherham Minster since mid-October.

What is the exhibition about?

The exhibition is titled 'reimagining Paul', and so on one level the exhibition is about Paul specifically and inviting viewers to encounter Pauline texts that either they may not be familiar with, or to encounter those texts from a different perspective as a result of the pieces

on display. But more broadly the exhibition is an exercise in exploring different ways to read the bible in contemporary society, with an interest in themes of identity. So for example, one of the pieces responds to Paul's revelation of his 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Cor 12), reading that passage as an example of disability (as many commentators do).



This opens up the potential for a broad discussion: how is disability presented in that text? What do we make of reading that text from a 21st century perspective? And so on: the aim of the exhibition is not to tell people how they should or shouldn't think about Paul or his

letters, but to use the two pieces of art to open up conversations on different themes and invite viewers to contribute their own perspectives.

What do you hope people will take away from the exhibition?

I'm mindful that there will be a range of people who view this exhibition, from those who have never heard of Paul to those who know the story of his life and letters inside out. But I hope the exhibition will be interesting to people across that spectrum and spark curiosity about Paul as a person, about some of the passages in his letters, and more generally how the bible can be engaged with in different ways in contemporary society.

Could we see similar projects like this going forwards?

I hope so! There are plenty more opportunities for other biblical figures and themes to be 'reimagined' and I would be delighted to learn of other similar projects.

Elizabeth Tooth produced the painting, and says: "It's always been a dream of mine to feature my artwork in churches and cathedrals. I'm in awe of this building here at Rotherham Minster, and can't wait to see Sheffield Cathedral as well. This is a dream come true."

Bettina Furnée put together the neon sign:

"For this exhibition we were invited to respond to selected passages of Paul's letters. Choosing neon as my material for darkened church spaces, I collaged a line of text that can be read in subtly different ways as the neon flashes: 'like this I am more' and 'I am more like this'.

"I aimed to make a statement about identity, and the freedom to determine who we are, and

our struggles to be seen for what we can be. I thought the lemon and lilac colours would compliment the meaning of the words."

The display will move to Sheffield Cathedral from the 6th January until early February. You can find more information on the project here: sheffield.ac.uk/scibs/reimagining-paul



Artist Elizabeth Tooth

Elizabeth's husband, Owen, was the model for the painting



Celebrating confirmations in Cantley

There are hopes that confirmations at St Wilfrid's Church and Branton Saint Wilfrid's V.A. Primary School will become more regular thanks to stronger links between the two

The moment when someone is confirmed into the Christian faith is always a hugely important event for the individual, their family and their friends. It's all the more special when young people step forward and proclaim their faith to others, and it's in that spirit that St Wilfrid's Church in Cantley is planning on doing more to help.

Based in the Doncaster Deanery, St Wilfrid's had confirmations for pupils at its associated school (Branton, Saint Wilfrid's V.A. Primary School) every other year pre-pandemic. The Vicar there, Father Andrew Howard, is keen to strengthen links between the church and school further, and says enthusiasm is growing:

"I've been here for 9 years and want to foster and further links in the area. Before the pandemic we did try having the confirmations in church as well as in the school. It was nice, but only a certain number of kids could come as it isn't a huge building. It reverted back to being a whole school thing where the children could see their friends being confirmed.

"We opened it up to Years 4, 5 and 6, and the services took place in November. We had one a few weeks ago with 8 candidates, which was a joy as it was witnessed by the whole school. Afterwards, we had lunch in school with the parents, children and the Bishop of Beverley (Bishop Glyn Webster), which was a further celebration.

"The kids contributed towards the service by doing the intercessions, readings and singing. It was a glorious day!"

Letters asking parents and carers if they have children willing to be confirmed go out in July, with replies normally coming in before the school breaks up for the Summer holidays.

Father Andrew says some caregivers also ring him up to have conversations about the process, as well as asking about particular themes for the events.

This building up of a school congregation has helped to convince Father Andrew that holding an annual confirmation service is the way forward:

"I've decided to have a confirmation service next year to compensate in some way for not being able to have one during the pandemic.

"When we have it in 2023 the kids will remember witnessing the event from this year, and will hopefully want to get involved themselves. Hopefully we can build up momentum to having these confirmations every year."

St Wilfrid's also has a worship council in place, where children in school can plan worship sessions and themes. The children who have been confirmed are encouraged to attend the monthly 'Church in School' sessions, which are led by Centenary Project worker Kirsty Rigg.

The school has several nativities lined up in the runup to Christmas, with a Christingle service planned at the church on Christmas Eve from 5.30pm. Father Andrew thinks the confirmations are a vital way of proclaiming faith, and are positive steps forward for future generations:

"Confirmations are essential because we are a church school, so they further the Christian understanding and ethos of the school. It underpins what's already there. We like to have things in school every week, but this is something annually that underpins what we do regularly."

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