

DEVELOPMENT DAY 24 • BEING BUILT TOGETHER

network

ISSUE 26 / AUTUMN 2024

**SUMMER
REWIND!**

**WEAR YOUR
FAITH FORTNIGHT**

**MICROFUNDING -
STARTING NEW THINGS**



FROM THE EDITORS



BEN FEARN

Communications Officer



KELLIANNE MONTGOMERY

Digital Learning Designer

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Network as we look ahead to a busy last few months of 2024 in the Diocese of Sheffield.

September is when schools start back after the Summer holidays and that 'back to school' feeling feels present at Church House as staff and clergy return from holidays. I've always disliked the phrase 'recharging your batteries', as time off can often involve activities and exploring which leave you more tired when you return to work! But with lots of events over the coming weeks in the Diocese it's a great opportunity to focus again on serving Jesus in a variety of contexts.

We look forward to welcoming our keynote speaker Christian Selvaratnum to Development Day on [Saturday 5th October](#) and you can hear more from him in an exclusive reflection in this edition of Network. The theme is 'Jesus calls his followers... helping people to move forward in discipleship and mission'. You can book your tickets for the day at St Thomas Crookes in Sheffield here: sheffdio.org/DevDay24. There's also the 'Being Built Together, Being Fruitful Together' event jointly hosted with the Racial Justice Unit on Saturday 19th October at Sheffield Cathedral – an important day of networking and building up UK Minority Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage leaders of all ages.

As ever, we love to hear stories and testimonies from across a multitude of traditions and backgrounds across the Diocese of Sheffield. If you have a story you'd like to tell or share, please do get in touch with us:

communications@sheffield.anglican.org

This magazine is for everyone and we hope you enjoy it!

*Ben Fearn and Kellianne Montgomery
Communications and Learning team*

Credit to Chris Ellis for the cover photo.

WELCOME

This edition of Network shares inspirational stories of God's continuing faithfulness in the lives of individuals and communities, as we look to the future. Revd Canon Ian Smith looks back over his service in Sheffield Diocese. We are so grateful for all he has given in significant leadership roles. Our new deacons and priests are also a source of thankfulness as we pray for those who have responded to God's call to ordination in recent years, do read their stories on page 14. Please join in praying for those considering God's call in the future this Vocations Sunday 29th September, as we have committed to a day of prayer and fasting for more people to explore ordination with our vocations team.

Details of Development Day on October 5th are on page six, with a focus on the theme 'Jesus calls his followers...Helping people to move forward in discipleship and mission'. We are delighted that Christian Selvaratnam will help us think about being apprentices to Jesus. Do consider attending with others from your church so you can see how your learning and insights can be applied together.

Summer has been a creative time for churches reaching out, from 'Holiday at Home' in Bessacarr to church champing at Whitgift. God calls us to play our part in his kingdom work in rich and diverse ways. Part of our vision is to become a more diverse diocese, so we are thrilled that the Racial Justice Unit is partnering with us through a gathering at Sheffield Cathedral on Saturday 19th Oct, for more details of this event see page 10.

With 'Wear your Faith Fortnight' and the Church of England national advent campaign 'Calm and Bright' there is much inspiration for us all over the coming months as we continue to shine as #LightsforChrist in the world and reflect His light, today.

+ Sophie

With every blessing,

+Sophie



AUTUMN

2024

06

Development
Day 2024

08

“Faith Makes
You Complete”

10

Being
Built Together

12

Wear Your
Faith Fortnight

14

Looking Back,
Looking Forward

17

Neurodiverse
Services

18

Summer
Rewind!

22

Microfunding -
Starting New
Things

23

Building Relationships
in Thurcroft

25

Reflections on
22 Years

27

Our Diocese
Champing Champions

29

Holiday
at Home

31

Follow the
Star

DEVELOPMENT DAY 2024: IS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY ARTISTRY?

By Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam, Dean of Church Planting



Revd Dr Christian Selvaratnam

I've always wanted to be an artist. Unlike my brother, I lack an aptitude for playing the piano or guitar. My uncle was an accomplished painter and my wife excels at watercolours, but my attempts look like they were produced by a child. I can sing, but only if I'm standing next to someone who knows the tune (once, I was caught in a choir holding my music upside down). I love the theatre, but I've never been asked to act. And while I might proudly consider myself an accomplished dad-dancer, my children assure me that my moves—like my dress sense—are 'embarrassingly bad'!

The one artistic pursuit that has worked for me is photography. Whether behind a camera lens or just a smartphone, I've found a way to explore creativity—a rewarding pursuit that blends skill with imaginative expression, learning and a willingness to try something new. Through my own journey—in

photography, but also in ministry—I've come to believe that not only am I creative, but that we all have significant creativity within us, and that releasing this artistry is important for spiritual growth and necessary for Christian ministry.

It is essential to understand that creativity is a universal gift. While we often associate it with activities like art, music or dance, it extends far beyond these traditional domains. Creativity can reveal itself in everyday actions—asking open-ended questions, exploring alternative approaches, and imagining new possibilities. It's not limited to producing tangible works of art or performing on a stage; it's an intrinsic part of human existence, relevant to every aspect of life. As beings made in the image of God, we all inherently carry the potential for creativity, reflecting and expressing divine intention through our own imaginative endeavours. In this way, creativity becomes a profound expression of God's character, allowing us to mirror the divine creative essence as image-bearers.

Creativity is a powerful tool for empowerment, particularly within the modern church. It often begins with recognising the potential in emerging leaders and providing them with the encouragement and freedom to develop solutions in their own unique ways. True creativity thrives on the willingness to embrace uncertainty, venture into uncharted territories and take risks—an essential response to the complexities of modern ministry.

Often, it's within the constraints of scarcity or adversity that the most

innovative thinking is sparked, leading to creative solutions for pressing problems. Adopting a creative approach requires flexibility, as it naturally involves experimentation and the ability to adapt. This approach also means being open to the possibility of mistakes and being ready to adjust strategies as new insights emerge and situations evolve.

Do these thoughts resonate with the changes we're witnessing in Christian ministry today? Should church leaders adopt a more creative, artisan approach to enhance the effectiveness of ministry in addressing the unique challenges of this decade? What might it look like to cultivate greater creativity in ministry?

Imagine a jazz performance where the musician delivers a brand-new song, one never played before, yet the music effortlessly fits the setting, the audience and the moment. This is creativity at its finest. Now, think about the performer's journey. Despite never having been taught that specific song, they've acquired the complex skills necessary to deliver it. They've mastered the basics of their instrument, practiced scales, and learned to read music. Over time, they honed their craft by interpreting and performing others' compositions, receiving feedback, and refining their interpretations. Eventually, a crucial shift occurs: they move from imitation to innovation, from copying to creating and composing. One day, they play a new song, consistent with the principles of

good music, yet uniquely attuned to a specific moment in time and space.

How can church leaders connect improvisation with tradition and context, effectively bridging the gap between heritage and innovation? Could the metaphor of jazz improvisation enhance our understanding of creativity in church work, particularly in how we engage with legacy practices in evolving contexts? Bruce Ellis Benson, drawing on this analogy, observes that 'in jazz, knowing the past is what makes the future possible'. He explains that 'to learn to be a Christian improviser, one must know the entire context: Scripture and the ways in which Scripture has been interpreted in the past'. He adds: 'when I play a tune, I am never simply improvising on that tune alone. I am improvising on the tradition formed by the improvisations upon that tune'.

Creativity in Christian ministry is not merely an optional enhancement but a vital expression of faith that connects us to our divine purpose. By embracing the art of improvisation—rooted in tradition yet open to innovation—church leaders can navigate the evolving landscape of ministry with both authenticity and relevance. Just as a jazz musician harmonises past influences with new expressions, we too can faithfully build on our spiritual heritage while creatively addressing the unique challenges of our time.

*Christian Selvaratnam is speaking at the Diocesan Development Day 2024. He has written about ministry and creativity here: [The Craft of Church Planting: Exploring the Lost Wisdom of Apprenticeship](#) (SCM Press 2022) and here: ['Is Church Planting a Craft? Training Lessons from Medieval Guilds'](#) in Will Foulger (ed.), *New Churches: A Theology* (SCM Press 2024).*

DEVELOPMENT DAY TAKES PLACE ON SATURDAY 5TH OCTOBER FROM 9AM-3.45PM – BOOK YOUR TICKETS HERE: [SHEFFDIO.ORG/DEVDAY24](https://sheffdio.org/devday24)

“FAITH MAKES YOU COMPLETE” A CENTENARY PROJECT TESTIMONY

St John’s Goole Centenary Project Worker Emma Johnson shares how faith has transformed her life.



Centenary Project worker Emma Johnson

I DIDN’T GROW UP AS A CHRISTIAN

I grew up with my grandparents. My Nana taught me the Lord’s Prayer and we’d have to watch Songs of Praise on a Sunday, but Christianity wasn’t something that I followed. It was kind of something I felt I had to do.

At secondary school there was quite a bit of stigma attached to being a Christian, so for me it wasn’t something that followed. Cynically, I would pray when I

needed something.

THE ALPHA COURSE WAS A TURNING POINT

I had a friend who did the Alpha course and she would openly put things on Facebook about church, the course and how good it was. It felt like that was niggling in the back of my mind. I worked in a primary school to teach RE of all subjects, so Christianity was one of those religions I had to teach.

I decided to explore more and went in with an open mind, thinking I’ll just gain a bit more knowledge of the Christian faith to help with teaching. I messaged Hannah Patton (Vicar at St John’s Goole) about Alpha and started the course in February 2021 during lockdown.

I WAS AT A REALLY LOW POINT

I was intrigued and fascinated by the course, and I wanted to know more. I was really struggling with my mental health at this time, so this felt like a turning point.

The course was like a little guide along the way, just opening my mind and asking questions and kind of starting the healing journey. The most powerful point was the Holy Spirit Day on the Alpha course, which we had to do over Zoom because of Covid.

I was in my bedroom on a screen with

six other people, including Hannah the Vicar. She kept saying, “if you want to, people can open their arms and I’ll just say a prayer.” I didn’t want to do this but I noticed Hannah repeatedly offering the invitation and everyone else on the screen was lifting up their hands. Eventually I lifted my hands and she prayed to let in the Holy Spirit.

I CAN’T EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED

It was such an emotional experience. I was crying on a screen in front of six people that I kind of knew, but we just met once a week. I just couldn’t speak; it was really overwhelming.

From that moment everything just seemed to be different. I looked at things in a different way. The most powerful point was inviting in the Holy Spirit.

I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD BE PART OF A CHURCH

If somebody said to me five years ago that I would be a Christian going to church and working for a church, I would have rudely laughed at them! But that Alpha course changed things and I started attending church regularly. The previous Children and Families Worker wanted people on the team, so I offered to help out.

I was struggling at work and at school. I had a lot going on and wondered what I could do about this. I prayed and asked where God wanted me to go. The Centenary Project Worker post came up at St John’s, but I knew it would be a big decision having worked in school for 18 years.

I HAD A VISION

I carried on praying and I remember

having a vision during a Sunday service of a silhouette bridge over water with a lily floating by underneath. I asked Hannah about it and she asked me to try and interpret it myself and see what you think God’s saying to you.

I saw it as a bridge to something new, something that would bring peace. I decided to apply for the job and I got it.

FAITH MAKES ME COMPLETE

If I didn’t have faith, I think would have something missing from my life. I now ask, “why don’t people just come to church? Why don’t people find Jesus?” To me, faith is an ongoing journey and I feel I’m on a really personal healing journey at the moment. Faith can bring comfort, security, belief. I think faith just makes you complete.

BEING BUILT TOGETHER

The Racial Justice Unit at Sheffield Cathedral

*In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling
place of God in the Spirit.
Ephesians 2:22*

The first Being Built Together conference was in October 2023 at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick. It was the first event organised by the Church of England's Racial Justice Unit, which was established as a response to the Church of England Report on Racial Justice – [From Lament to Action](#), which coincided with Black History Month. The day brought people together from many parts of the country to encourage, support and affirm their work, whilst learning more about the Racial Justice Unit and the ongoing efforts of the Archbishop's Racial Justice Commission. It was a great opportunity to meet people from backgrounds like UK minority ethnic (UKME), Global Majority Heritage (GMH) and all those excited by the opportunity to network with others passionate about racial justice within the Church.

The event offered time for prayers, for fellowship, time to listen to each other, as well as discussions of various issues about UKME and GMH participation within the Church. There were reports from various networks, youth work, representation at different levels, ministry progression, and clergy well-being. The conference helped to reduce the sense of isolation that can often happen to UKME and GMH individuals within the Church. It gave us a diverse, beautiful, complex picture of the Church of England.

The director of the Racial Justice Unit, Revd Guy Hewitt, reminded us about racial justice:

"Our commitment as a Church to racial justice isn't simply to reflect

*demographic trends, or to be socially responsive in the pursuit of equality, diversity and inclusion, both of which are commendable goals. But rather, we **choose to stand against the evil and pernicious sin of racism.** The racial justice mandate flows not from identity politics, but from our identity in Christ, reflecting the Image of God by being united in him."*

Archbishop Cottrell delivered a video message to the participants, expressing his gratitude to the conference delegates for "your tireless work, your perseverance, sometimes under very challenging circumstances. Your dedication and commitment make a profound missional impact wherever you are, and help us to be the Church that God is calling us to be. I assure you that we will work together in this journey towards racial justice."

Since then, the Racial Justice Unit has been partnering with 'Lead Dioceses' across the regions to offer one-day events as a follow up to last year's national Being Built Together meeting. The purpose of the events is to pray for and with each other, to get to know each other, to support, encourage and affirm each other, share ideas, raise confidence and expectation among UKME/GMH leaders and supporters, mentors, allies, of all ages. All are welcome.

The next Being Built Together conference will be on Saturday 19th October at Sheffield Cathedral. Attendance is free! You can register here: <https://sheffdio.org/BBTRegister>

It has been said: 'If you want to go fast,

go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'

Let's all continue to build a more inclusive, dynamic and diverse church. I am thankful that we are together on this

journey. Looking forward to seeing you all on Saturday 19th October. God bless.

**Revd Anesia Nascimento de Jesus Cook,
Racial Justice Officer**

Being Built Together Being Fruitful Together

Racial Justice Unit in Partnership with the Sheffield Diocese

A regional day of networking, fellowship and the sharing of ideas + building up UK Minority Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage leaders of all ages, ordained + lay, along with allies + supporters

Speakers:

Rev Sarah Siddique Gill, St. James Church,
Assistant Archdeacon for Blackburn

Ven Karen Belinda Lund, Archdeacon of Manchester

Rev Guy Hewitt, Director of the Racial Justice Unit

SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL
19TH OCTOBER 2024 : 10^{AM}-4^{PM}



WEAR YOUR FAITH FORTNIGHT

Viki Seithel from Arise Sheffield gives us more insight into this year's campaign (20th October-3rd November).

I'm sure even the most 'holy' of us have, at one time, exhibited road rage. I recently heard a story from a local Church Leader who shared their journey with this. They found themselves driving up one of the many hills in Sheffield with the right of way, to find themselves having to give way to an oncoming vehicle speeding down the hill. Their desire for the correct road etiquette led to a frustration growing inside of them that can only be described as road rage. As the speeding driver whipped around their car and continued with their day, this Church Leader shared their thoughts as they looked in the mirror shortly after. They were wearing their vicar's collar, an outward expression of not only their occupation, but their faith in Jesus.

From this moment, they were challenged. They considered what the driver must

expressions of faith, whether through our clothing, accessories or symbols of faith, influence our individual experience of God. Wear Your Faith Fortnight (WYFF), a part of Arise:Hallow, empowers Christians to visibly and authentically express their faith for two weeks over Halloween, transforming what might seem like a dark season, into a time of light and connection.

Last year, thousands of badges and stickers were used as a display of faith by Christians around the Diocese throughout the season of Halloween. By choosing to wear a symbol that displayed their faith, Christians expressed that they felt emboldened to share the reason for their hope with the people around them. This year, with new designs for badges, stickers and clothing items, we invite you to consider how you



have thought, and in that moment, what their perception of Christianity would be from this one, short experience. Perhaps you've had a similar experience. The majority of us don't wear vicar's collars in our everyday lives, but we do represent Jesus in the places and spaces we find ourselves in. Sometimes our external

intentionally step out in faith, bringing light in a darker season.

WYFF is more than just wearing badges or symbols; it's about choosing to wear our identity, our faith, for the world to see. Consider the ripple effect we can create when thousands of us, united in

purpose, boldly display these symbols of faith. For the past two years, Christians have told us they have felt more confident and full of faith because of taking part in WYFF. As a result of this, conversations have been sparked with friends, colleagues and neighbours that have opened doors, changed hearts and transformed lives with the power of Jesus. WYFF is about breaking down those invisible barriers that often keep us from truly connecting with others on a deeper level.

You are invited to not only participate, but to embrace the opportunity to be a light for Christ in your community.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

WYFF, a part of Arise:Hallow, begins on Sunday 20th October and runs until Sunday 3rd November 2024. Ahead of then you'll be able to pick up a free pin badge from local churches; wear it as a symbol of your faith. If badges aren't for you, decorate a window, choose jewellery, hopeful clothing, or stickers for your water bottle or car. The joy of WYFF is

you can choose to wear and share your faith in a way most natural to you.

- Talk to your church leader and encourage them to order badges for everyone in your congregation. The more badges distributed, the more opportunities created for meaningful conversations.
- Spread the word—share the message with friends, family, and on social media. The more people who get involved, the bigger the ripple effect of hope across South Yorkshire.
- Remember, it's not just about wearing a symbol. Be ready to share the story of your faith and the reason for your hope when someone asks. WYFF turns small gestures into big, life-changing conversations.

Everyone has a role to play in WYFF—whether you're younger or older, Yorkshire-born and bred or just arrived for uni, or new to faith or a lifelong believer. Together, let's shine our light this Halloween.



LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD: STORIES FROM OUR NEW PRIESTS

Our deacons from the 2023 ordinations reflect one year on, as they begin life as priests in 2024.

Each Petertide is a joyous time as we ordain new deacons and priests to serve in the Diocese of Sheffield. It's also a time of reflection as our ordinands discern their callings and reflect on where God may be calling them to next.

In July 2023 Bishop Pete ordained 10 deacons at 10.30am, with the Bishop of Ebbsfleet (the Rt Revd Rob Munro) ordaining a presbyter and the Bishop of Beverley (the Rt Revd Stephen Race) ordaining a deacon.

These deacons were all ordained as priests in June of this year. We've been catching up with some of them to hear how their journeys have been going so far.

REVD PETER GAUNT, SERVING AS CURATE IN THE BENEFICE OF GREYSTONES, ST GABRIEL



Revd Peter Gaunt

It still feels strange to think I was ordained deacon over a year ago and as of July have now been ordained

priest. It's amazing how time flies when you love what you do.

As I reflect back on the last year it has been full of ups and downs, full of learning new things and has required a greater trust in God than I have ever experienced before. Two highlights from this year have been starting a young family's community at St Gabriel's, which continues to grow and is lots of fun. I have also really appreciated walking alongside those in the parish, whether that be with members of the congregation as they have grieved or been unwell or with those who don't yet know Jesus, through life events and relationship building in the local community.

Moving forward into the next phases of my curacy, I feel excited to continue to learn all that God wants to show me and teach me. I know I'm in the place where God has called me to be and that brings me a deep sense of peace and trust in Him; even when challenges come my way - and they will - I know He is with me.

REVD BEN GRIST, SERVING AS CURATE AT ST JOHN'S GOOLE

Serving the Goole community has opened my eyes to the depth of faith and generosity among our parishioners with such a warm welcome and openness to chat.

I've been humbled by the opportunity to share in people's joys and sorrows, particularly through leading numerous funerals and baptisms and exploring the big questions of faith with those on the



Revd Ben Grist

Alpha Course.

With such a strong importance of the church's tradition in the parish, it has been a rich opportunity to share Christ's love and reach so many people's hearts. Leading the Goole Remembrance Day service and partnering with the Mission to Seafarers to support seafarers in our port have been especially meaningful experiences.

Looking forward to this coming year, I'm filled with growing excitement and purpose following the incredible celebration of my ordination. As I continue my ministry, I eagerly anticipate the opportunities and blessings this next chapter will bring.

REVD TONY HEPPEL, SERVING AS CURATE IN THE BENEFICE OF THE RESURRECTION, DONCASTER



Revd Tony Heppel

Serving, listening and helping others are basic principles that we continue to learn during our deacon year. I have found this invaluable; I have tried to use this as my basis and grounding in my faith. To serve God and share in his mission. It is what we are formed by; others have reminded me, including Bishops, that we are always deacons even when we are priested. In everything I have done over this last year, I have tried to keep this principle and I hope to do so now I am priested. There have been many challenges over the last year but remembering God has got me this far, because he has called me, has helped me to overcome and learn what he wants of me. The last year has been a learning curve and a realisation that God has got this covered.

REVD DR LOUISE MCINNES, SERVING IN THE BENEFICES OF DINNINGTON, ST LEONARD AND THURCROFT, ST SIMON & ST JUDE



Revd Dr Louise McInnes

I have had a wonderful first year as a curate serving the churches in Thurcroft and Dinnington. Both congregations

have been so supportive of my curacy and are a delight to serve. I have been blessed by a wonderful Training Incumbent who has been a great source of knowledge and wisdom – and thankfully has endless patience! Being priested this year was a great joy, and I thank God for calling me to serve him in this role. Presiding at the Eucharist has been more wonderful than I could ever have imagined, and I am humbled to be able to now do this for my congregations. I am loving every minute of my curacy and look forward to the new challenges and joys that God might bring my way in this second year.

REVD BRITT WEBB, SERVING AS CURATE IN ST LEONARD COMMUNITY CHURCH – BMO IN THE BENEFICE OF HEELEY WITH ARBOURTHORNE AND NORFOLK PARK



Revd Britt Webb

It was a privilege to be priested this year. It felt particularly special and moving in light of the celebration of 30 years of women being ordained as priests in the Church of England. The time on retreat was a great opportunity to thank God for the adventure we have been on together (from Australia to the UK!). It was great

to be reminded of God positioning me here in the UK so that I could step further into his call to serve the church in this way.

This last year serving as a deacon at St Leonards Arbourthorne and Norfolk Park has been brilliant. I've loved getting to know people in our community, hearing their stories and getting to see the natural and beautiful ways that they follow Jesus in their everyday lives. As a priest, I hope to step deeper into God's call to serve his church, and to help others discover Jesus and his call for their lives.

FR CHRIS WROOT, SERVING AS ASSISTANT CURATE IN THE BENEFICE OF WARMSWORTH



Fr Chris Wroot

As I reflect on the past year as a deacon, I feel extremely blessed to have been placed in the mission area of Warmsworth, Balby, Wadworth, and Loversall. This time has been one of immense learning and growth, revealing to me how much there is to learn in curacy. I have been given the opportunity to grow, develop, and make mistakes, learning from each experience. Meeting families before a funeral and conducting the funeral of a loved one has been the greatest privilege I have been given.

Since my ordination as a priest,

celebrating at the altar has been an immense privilege for me. As I begin the second year of my curacy, I am filled with confidence and excitement for what lies ahead. I am certain that, with the

continued support of our church family, I will continue to learn, grow and serve in ways that honour God and our communities.

NEURODIVERSE SERVICES AT RESURRECTION DONCASTER

A church service for neurodivergent people has been created in Doncaster, with a welcome event held recently for members of the community and their families.

Launched towards the end of August, it's hoped the services can continue on a monthly basis on the last Wednesday of each month, taking place at 4.30pm at St Aidan's Church Wheatley Hills.

Their services included prayer stations, quiet spaces, noise reducing headphones, drinks and cakes. The initial meeting in August was for people to come and get to know the team to help develop the service to make it inclusive.

Reverend Tony Heppel, Curate at Resurrection Doncaster, was keen to bring his experience of working with people with severe autism:

"One of the places I used to help out at was a swimming club, set up by families of people who had got children with autism. When I was there, I noticed how relaxed everybody was. They said the reason that they're all relaxed is because they're all like-minded people; they know if something goes wrong everybody would understand and wouldn't be shocked because they've had a similar experience.

"That gave me the idea for setting up a

service for neurodivergent people and their families and support workers, so they're in a comfortable atmosphere.

"The services are open to everybody. We want this to be a learning process as well. Someone once said to me, 'if you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism, because they're all as individual and different as you and I'".

Liturgy will be used in the services in a more informal manner, with communion possibly taking place in future services. The team have consulted with organisations such as the Doncaster Autism Service, with Wednesdays selected as the day of choice to complement other services.

Tony adds that he hopes people will come to the services open-minded and will learn more about the needs of the community:

"We all think in different ways. Our churches can all play a part by welcoming neurodivergent people, getting to know them and finding out how wonderful they are.

"We really hope these services will grow and we'll see where it takes us."

SUMMER REWIND!

Take a quick look back at some of the highlights of events from across the Diocese of Sheffield this Summer

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF WOMEN PRIESTS (8TH JUNE)



The celebration event was well attended

The service, taking place at Sheffield Cathedral on Saturday 8th June, took a look back at celebrating the stories of women in ministry over the last 30 years, as well as looking to the future.

Hymns and prayers of thanksgiving, penitence and intercession took place alongside musical contributions from the choir. Interspersed throughout the service were videos of different clergy sharing their testimonies

30 Years of Women Priests - sheffdio.org/30Years

HOPE WEEKEND 2024 (21ST-23RD JUNE)

Hope Weekend 2024 was full of fun and fellowship, with lots of young people taking part across the Diocese of Sheffield.

The weekend, hosted by the Centenary Project, Diocese of Sheffield and youth workers, was opened up across South Yorkshire and the East Riding following the successful return of Hope Doncaster in 2023.

This year the tagline “YOUNG FAITH IN ACTION” was emphasised to help young people take ownership of their faith (however big or small it is) and taking steps to show it outwardly.



Photos from Hope Weekend

Hope Weekend - sheffdio.org/HopeWeekend24

CELEBRATING PAKISTANI CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES (27TH JUNE)

People came together in Doncaster to celebrate the Pakistani Christian community and to shine a light on the perspectives of people living as a minority.

Following a lunch gathering, the Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox, Bishop of Sheffield, opened the event and led opening prayers before handing over to the Archdeacon of Doncaster, the Venerable Javid Iqbal. The opening worship featured a Punjabi Psalm before speeches were made by members of the Pakistani Christian community.



The Pakistani Christian Community gathering in Doncaster

Celebrating Pakistani Christian Communities - sheffdio.org/cpcc

PETERTIDE ORDINATIONS (29TH-30TH JUNE)

Ordinations at Sheffield Cathedral



On Saturday 29 June the Bishop of Sheffield, the Rt Revd Dr Pete Wilcox, ordained 10 priests at Sheffield Cathedral. In addition, the Bishop of Beverley ordained one priest in the parish church of St Leonard Scawsby on the same day.

On Sunday 30 June the Bishop of Doncaster, the Rt Revd Sophie Jelley, ordained deacons at Sheffield Cathedral.

Petertide Ordinations - sheffdio.org/Petertide24

SEE OF BEVERLEY NORTHERN PROVINCIAL FESTIVAL (27TH JULY)

On Saturday 27th July, the See of Beverley Northern Provincial Festival took place at York Minster with the theme 'We believe in the Holy Spirit.'

The day began with a Solemn Mass, during which Centenary Project Worker Mel Pay (Children, Youth and Families Worker based at St Leonard's and St Jude's in Scawsby, Doncaster), along with a fantastic team from the church, provided the children's work. Children took part from all over the Northern Province of the Church of England.

Northern Provincial Festival - sheffdio.org/NorthernFestival

The Northern Provincial Festival



MICRO FUNDING: STARTING NEW THINGS IN THE DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD

Mission Development Adviser John Marsh takes a look at the impact of micro-grant funding on mission in our diocese.

Micro funding is an idea that's been around a while in the wider church. If you can give a small amount of money (up to about £2,000) for a specific missional purpose, then you can usually kickstart something that would otherwise not get going.

We've had three separate micro funding projects in the diocese:

The Online Grant. The Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) provided a £500 equipment grant and some training to help 76 churches to stream services and bring mission and ministry online during lockdown.

The Mission Action Grant. Also provided by the DFBF, which was used to help 11 churches start missional activities both online and offline. This also provided £500 and support from RMM. It focused on developing mission pathways that the church or Mission Area had identified.

The Small Sparks Grant. We're now giving away grants of between £500 and £2,000, again based on an identified mission pathway. This money has been provided by the national church through SMMIB. We have approx. £25,000 in grants each year for the next 5 years.

There are several advantages of micro funding. Firstly, it can take away the financial risk from the church itself, because sometimes £500 - £2,000 is a lot of money. Secondly, as the money is given based on a specific idea for mission, it helps keep focus. Thirdly, since only small amounts of money are involved for each grant there is no need to means test and the grant can be processed quickly.

There have been a wide variety of projects that churches have engaged with as a result of the Small Sparks grant so far. This micro funding has allowed these churches to begin things they wouldn't have been able to begin, or would otherwise be cautious about beginning. They've also enabled churches to think through their missional strategy with a particular group or demographic.

In a new and related funding stream we also have the Mission Enabler Grant (MEG). This is a new departure for us in micro funding. The MEG will enable a layperson to work one day a week, either in the parish or across the mission area, to enable mission. The premise is that the worker will still be using the idea of mission pathways. The MEG is flexible and would allow someone who might not be working at the moment, or someone working part time to give time to mission. The funding is at national average wage for one day a week. It's initially for a year but we'll consider funding it for longer if the work is able to be multiplied.

The whole grant-making process for either Small Sparks or MEG is about having an idea. You don't need to have a fully worked out plan before you apply because the process involves talking it through with myself so we can develop it. The actual grant form is only just over one side of A4. It's really easy to fill in and we will assist you with the process.

There's an absolutely no reason not to apply for one if you've got an idea for mission! You set your own criteria for success. The vast majority of funded

projects have reported success in terms of reaching new people, starting new things, making disciples and reaching out to the community.

For more information and an informal chat, get in touch with me:
john.marsh@sheffield.anglican.org

For more information on Small Sparks, click here:

<https://sheffdio.org/smallsparksgrant>

For more information on Mission Enabler Grants, email me.



Bible study and food at Denaby Main - supported by Small Sparks

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN THURCROFT

Julie Bringloe shares the positive outcomes of the link between Thurcroft Parish Church and The Willows Community Special School.

For some years, a small group of us have met at Church on a Thursday morning to take on any job that needs doing and a couple of years ago we agreed to spend some time in the Church garden working on a particular area. We had some very productive mornings and often engaged in chats with members of the community as they passed by. After one such morning, I received a telephone call from a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant at The Willows school who, along with

another member of staff, leads on all aspects of community learning.

The Willows is a community special school situated in our village. The school caters for pupils aged 7-19 years with a range of moderate learning difficulties, with some additional needs such as speech and language difficulties, children on the autistic spectrum and children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The member of staff explained that the students based in the 16 to 19 year age group were struggling to find work experience placements and wondered whether they could join us gardening on a Thursday morning. That was the start of what has developed into a wonderful partnership with the school and some truly inspiring experiences for us all.

Thursday mornings have grown and developed. We start and end with a group chat discussing what we are going to do on that particular morning and always include a question relating to what the students have been doing at home and in school. Together we engage in a variety of practical jobs, depending on individual skills. As well as gardening they help with cleaning, brasses, flower arranging, drawing and painting seasonal art work and whatever is asked of them.

The group members all have favourite jobs and responsibilities that have grown with the group; they have their own notice board in the Church room that they keep up to date, they are responsible for keeping the children's corner clean and tidy and for making refreshments at coffee time. Some of the young people don't have pets at home,

so a highlight is dog walking. Each week there are up to three dogs in Church and each one of them has become an untrained therapy dog!

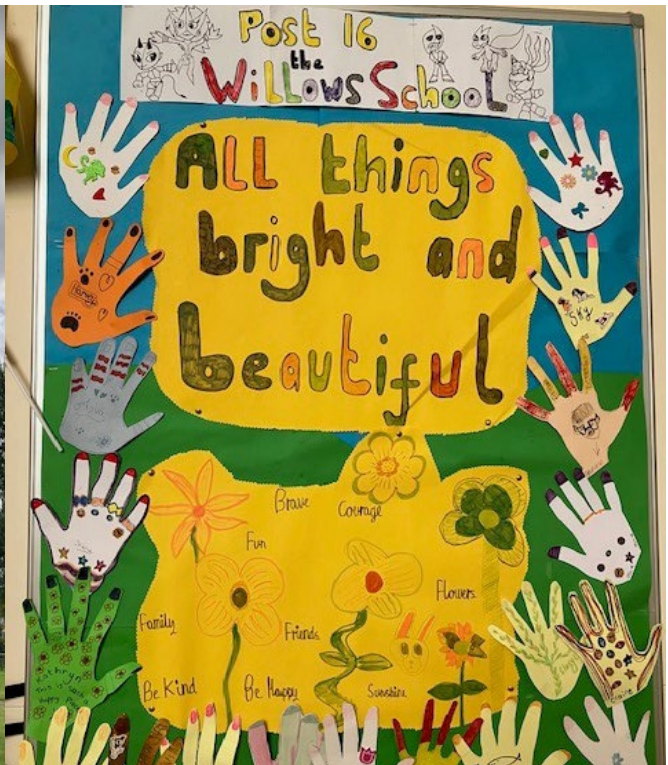
These mornings are mutually beneficial; Church is open for any member of the community and they often pop in for coffee and a chat, the young people meet and greet and offer a warm welcome to any visitors. They benefit from these experiences, developing their confidence and social skills, as do the Church team and visitors who absolutely love sharing our Church with the students.

From Thursday mornings we have shared other experiences; the students attend our coffee mornings where they greet people, take orders and serve drinks, and we attend their luncheon clubs, Christmas and summer productions, summer and Christmas fairs and leavers party.

We have lots of laughs and a few tears, but the progress we see in individuals is a joy and we praise God for this fantastic aspect of our Church life and look forward to a new group in September!



St Simon and St Jude Church



REFLECTIONS ON 22 YEARS IN THE DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD

The Revd Canon Ian Smith



Revd Canon Ian Smith

My first impression of the Diocese was far from positive. I'd been asked to move to Goole from Lancashire and visited it on a cold winter's day. Yet I came to love the town and was so sorry to leave it two years later. Perhaps there is lesson here; take time to immerse yourself beyond the surface of a place; experience its uniqueness; encounter its people, laugh and cry with them; find places off the main road to walk and cycle and grow to love it all.

After super but incredibly busy years in Goole with Canon Gordon Taylor, he and I

both moved on; he to Tickhill and I to Parson Cross in north Sheffield. My car insurance doubled overnight. My new vicarage windows were smashed in. I was threatened in the street and two young men were killed in the parish a short walk from the church building.

St Paul's, Wordsworth Avenue was a small and I think demoralised congregation. I used Bishop Jack Nicholl's recommendation of 'prayer and parties' to get things restarted. It was a reminder of the old ministerial work of being the person/parson of a place; I was on committees and boards, a school governor and in multi-agency meetings. The deanery too started to buzz with new ideas about 'mission areas' and partnerships. Martyn Snow was at Pitsmoor and our Area Dean and he facilitated/pioneered in Ecclesfield deanery what we now take for granted in the diocese, though it is still getting embedded.

Bishop Jack retired and we sensed we needed a new direction, but who would set it? Steven Croft arrived; rather shy and studious but quickly giving a focus and realism to diocesan synod and Bishop's Council meetings. Our Development Days were well attended and energising; a sense of having separate groups in the diocese began to reduce into an experience of together tackling our financial and deployment issues.

The Archdeacons seemed to be worked off their feet. Church House underwent a

number of reconfigurations after review. Senior staff changes came; new Archdeacons and a suffragan at Doncaster. I had the honour and responsibility of helping discern both Peter and Sophie as bishops for the diocese and want to pay open tribute to the way both Steven and Pete, as diocesan bishops, shared those appointments with lay and ordained colleagues in deeply prayerful and yet relaxed settings.

The appointment process for Philip North was a difficult time and we were always having to react to the changes in circumstances. I fielded TV interviews during this time and experienced some very raw and personal messages defending the process. It ended, as we know, with a major report from Sir Philip Mawer on what had happened and then the consecration of Pete Wilcox.

Pete, I cannot emphasize enough, has grasped and prepared us – possibly the Church of England – for the challenges of attendance, growth, buildings and finance. He's drawn together a creative team and taken criticism for some very forward ideas (the Associate Archdeacon Transition Enablers for example). He has enabled a significant inward investment, securing grants, while taking time to meet people and teach scripture with seriousness but fluency. Unknown to all but a handful was his own cancer diagnosis and treatment as his ordination as Bishop occurred.

I left Sheffield for Doncaster and added another role to that of being one of the two chairs of diocesan synod - Area Dean. Can I say that the chairing and Area Dean roles are the ones that, after parish ministry, I've enjoyed the most in the diocese and I think I know why. Both draw on 'leadership beyond authority', a term you may want to look up. It is leading when your role has no power other than persuasion and relationship. It is about trust and it takes time. I met and treasure my time with church wardens and Readers, helping them cover a vacancy and not losing hope. I helped take services in every place, using every type of liturgy and hymn book and repeatedly finding lively and diverse Christian communities, hoping to grow, not always well networked but open; with current and new disciples, wanting to, and sometimes making a difference, in society and God's world.

In 2014 we marked the centenary of the Diocese of Sheffield; we started and concluded in the cathedral where I've had the joy of being an honorary Canon. That building now buzzes and the transformed interior has seen growing attendance and feels so welcoming and affirming.

Everything suggests to me that the diocese has many years ahead to do amazing things with our amazing God through his people here.

Assistant Curate Goole St John and Old Goole St Mary (2002-2004)
 Priest in Charge Wordsworth Avenue St Paul (2004-2012)
 Rector of Warmsworth (2012-2024)
 Priest in Charge of Wadworth with Loversall and Balby (2022-2024)
 Oversight Minister (2022-2024)
 Area Dean of West Doncaster (2016-2024)
 Chair of the House of Clergy/Vice President of Diocesan Synod (2019-2024)
 Warden of Parish Evangelists and Diocesan Mission Coordinator
 Diocesan Spiritual Director – Sheffield Anglican Cursillo – 12 years

OUR DIOCESE CHAMPING CHAMPIONS

With Church Buildings Officer Chris Ellis

Champing, what is it? Well put quite simply it is church camping – the concept of overnight stays within a beautiful church setting. The idea has been around since 2015, introduced by the Churches Conservation Trust. Offering a completely unique opportunity to spend time within a stunning historic environment, champing has really gained traction as a concept in the past few years.

Unlike any other form of accommodation, visitors can experience a church in a whole new light. Guests have the entire place to themselves, often equipped with comfy camping beds, cosy blankets and atmospheric lighting. It's also a wonderfully sustainable way to get away. Why stay in a new build hotel, or purchase that expensive new tent, when you can make the most of an existing historic building? On top, the funds raised helps to support and conserve our wonderful churches - what's not to like about that?

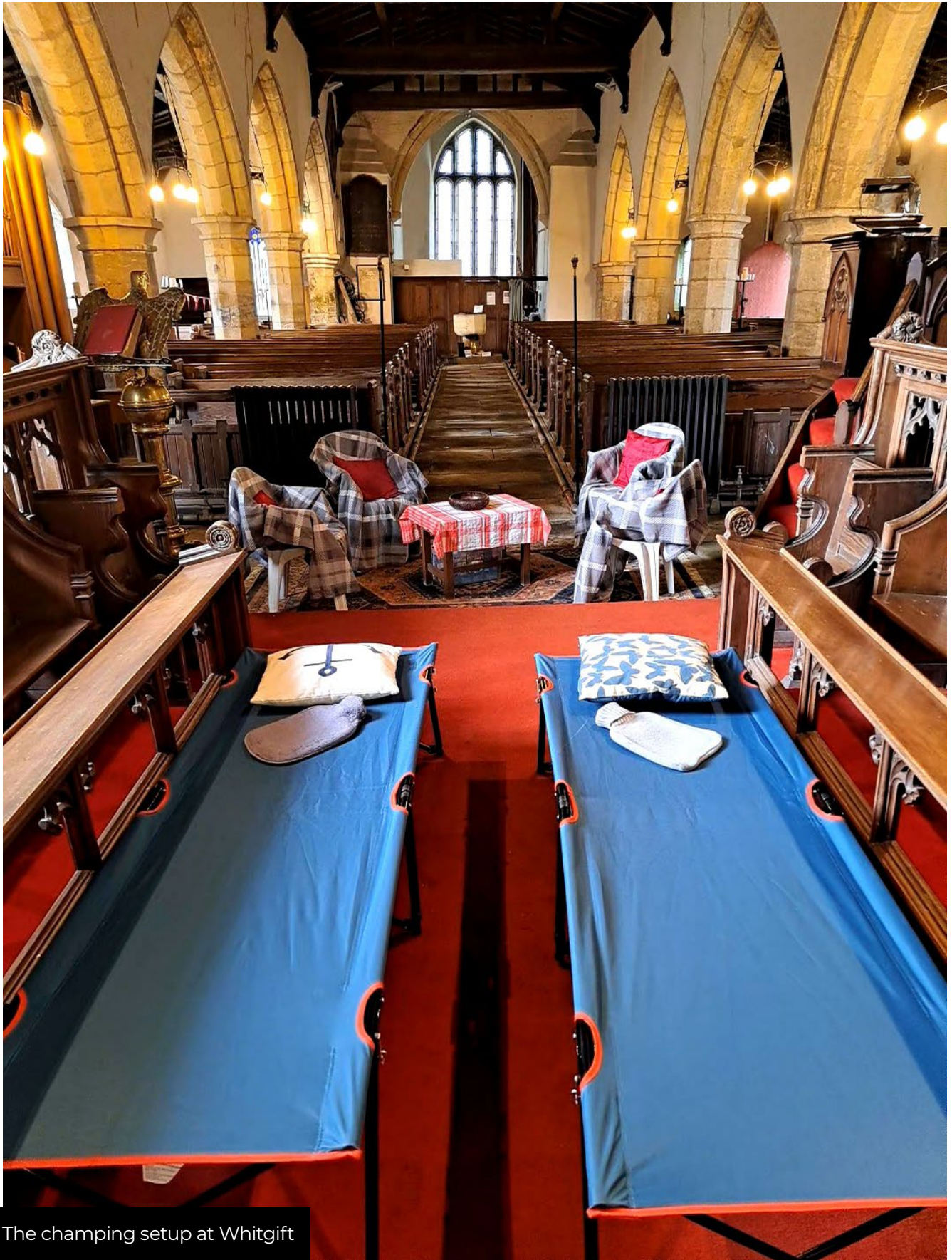
This year our very own Whitgift St Mary Magdalene has joined the Champing party, as our first camping church in the Diocese! According to Whitgift Church Development Group: "It is already used as much more than a place of worship, providing space for community activity and cultural events. The Parochial Church Council wants to build on this and encourage greater use of the building. Our ultimate aim is to restore and improve the premises by repairing the roof and installing up to date kitchen and toilet facilities, so we can develop the building as a local centre for arts, culture and heritage for the marshlands villages, including the wonderful natural environment in which the church sits."

There certainly is a great deal to explore and see whilst in the area. A short distance away sits the RSPB Blacktoft Sands nature reserve, where visitors can see a variety of wildlife including Marsh Harriers, Bitterns and many scarce wading birds. Or why not undertake The Marshland Trail, which guides you through the picturesque villages of Ousefleet, Reedness and Adlingfleet? Pick up your copy of the trail at the church itself.

The church is a fantastic mix of heritage and all the facilities you would need, including parking, kitchenette, toilet and a public house within walking distance. It is also perfectly situated on the banks of the River Ouse, so it's no wonder the church has seen a splendid 11 bookings this season! One happy camper remarked: "we absolutely LOVED it, everything we needed for a fabulous stay – thanks so much!".

Whether you're a church-goer, history enthusiast, nature lover, an appreciator of a peaceful retreat or simply someone who enjoys a memorable adventure, could Champing be your next retreat?

If you would like more information or would like an informal chat on whether Champing could work for your church, email CBO@sheffield.anglican.org to speak to one of our Church Buildings Officers or email champing@thecct.org.uk. You can also find lots of information at www.champing.co.uk.



The champing setup at Whitgift

HOLIDAY AT HOME: WEST BESSACARR

Revd Richard Heard and Jodie Picken from St Francis Church share more on the three-day event which helps to tackle social isolation



Holiday at Home is a three-day holiday experience that we have run for over 60s for the last few years. The idea is to provide a holiday for those that could not get away on a break. This has included people who are normally housebound as well as those for whom a holiday away from home has become too much for them. It is also such a helpful few days for people, who for whatever reason, have become socially isolated. At Holiday at Home people have fun, make friends and have the chance to chat and offload if they need to.

Holiday at Home is always provided free of charge so everyone can join in, but we do give people the opportunity to donate towards costs and each year we are staggered by people's generosity. We always advertise for the wider community and lots of people join us who don't normally worship with us on a Sunday. Some people from our Sunday congregation also join in as guests or helpers.

Jodie Picken got involved with the team that runs holiday at home in 2022 and for the last two she has headed up the

team. She says: "I loved the idea that people were given a holiday experience which was lots of fun. I felt I could make a difference and was more than happy to get involved."

For the last two years Holiday at Home has had a tropical island theme which included a Tiki bar serving mocktails, palm trees, colourful outfits and decorations. The holiday makers get to enjoy a variety of activities including crafts, puzzles, card games and bingo. Each day, we have a short thought for the day which is an interactive talk helping to link the things of life we all experience to faith - and we explore how God can help. It is designed to be open and accessible to those with faith and with no faith. We also provide a two-course lunch and lots of drinks throughout the day.

This year we included a spa area which provided hand and foot massages and beauty products for people to take away.

We also had a beach area with sand and a paddling pool!

A professional singer came on day one to lead us in songs through the years which people joined in with and even started dancing. On Day two we hired a coach to take everybody to Cleethorpes for a fish and chip lunch and time to explore the promenade and shops and arcades. On Day three we had a variety of quizzes in the morning, bingo and other games in the afternoon and we finished our time with a sing-along led by John Stones, our keyboard player.

Every year we find some people who enjoy Holiday at Home start coming to our weekly Monday afternoon activities for older people, which are called J.O.Y (Just Older Youngsters). We also find that gradually people from Holiday at Home and J.O.Y start coming to special services and Sunday services, with some returning to faith and others coming to a new and living faith.



A sing-along session

FOLLOW THE STAR: CALM AND BRIGHT

Take a look at the Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas 2024

December can feel like chaos – lots of social events, services, Christmas presents to buy, never-ending to-do lists and the pressure to create the perfect Christmas. But in the midst of this chaos, our churches can offer an opportunity to find peace during this busy time.

The Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas 2024, Follow the Star: Calm and Bright, draws on the world-famous carol, Silent Night:

**“SILENT NIGHT! HOLY NIGHT!
ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT...”**

One of the reasons that this carol is so universally loved is the way it invites us into the still centre of the Christmas story, to contemplate Mary holding the new-born Jesus, the Light of the World.

The angelic messages we encounter in the biblical story of Jesus' birth typically hold together the need for calm in the present (“Do not be afraid” ... “Fear not”) with the hope of a bright future (“for you have found favour with God” ... “for

behold I bring you tidings of great joy”).

Building on all we learned from last year's invitation to Join the Song and singing Bob Chilcott's new setting of The First Nowell, this campaign will also encourage children's choirs across the country this year with a highly accessible and adaptable new Calm and Bright song inspired by Silent Night.

Throughout Advent, we will focus primarily on how to find Calm during this busy period, with reflections offering people a chance to pause during the busy season and tips on how to prepare for a calm Christmas.

Then through Christmas, we will focus particularly on Bright, with a series of joyful reflections from Christmas Eve to the Eve of Epiphany (5 January) including tips for a bright Christmas.

We will also share reflective content throughout Advent and Christmas for those who find this time of year difficult, with some Blue Christmas resources.

CALM and BRIGHT

“*The Diocese of Sheffield is called to grow a sustainable network of Christ-like, lively and diverse Christian communities in every place which are effective in making disciples and in seeking to transform our society and God’s world.*”



THE DIOCESE OF
SHEFFIELD

T: (01709) 309100 | W: sheffield.anglican.org | E: reception@sheffield.anglican.org

Sheffield Diocesan Board of Finance is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England No. 196087 and registered Charity No. 245861