

BISHOP PETE • DEVELOPMENT DAY • WYFF

network

ISSUE 22 / AUTUMN 2023

**FOCAL
MINISTRY**

PILGRIMAGES

**CELEBRATING OUR
BRONZE ECO DIOCESE AWARD**

FROM THE EDITORS



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Welcome to the Autumn edition of Network magazine as we look ahead to what is shaping up to be a busy but exciting time in the Diocese of Sheffield.

Although the longer nights are drawing in, this is a time of year for renewal. We have recently had a Celebration of Lay Ministry and Vocations Fair, looking at ways of calling and service. We've also got the upcoming Diocesan Development Day, which will be a great opportunity to look at the rejuvenated strand of the Diocesan strategy.

We're keen to remind people that we have plenty of learning resources on offer to help parishes with any questions they may have. We have an article in this edition looking at Mission Area Support advice in the build up to Christmas, plus our new website features a useful guide on the different stages of Mission Action Planning to help with both outreach and practical tools.

It's also been fun to work on the Diocese of Sheffield's new podcast – Words of Grace. You can read more about it in this edition of Network, but please do pass on to us anyone you think might be interested in coming on as a guest. We're looking to have as broad a range of backgrounds and traditions represented as possible.

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

*Ben Fearn and Kellianne Montgomery
Communications and Learning team*

Credit to Giles Morrison for the cover photo.

Credit to Arise Sheffield for Wear Your Faith Fortnight photos.

WELCOME

One of the highlights of the coming term will, I trust, be our Diocesan Development Day on Saturday 7 October, 9am to 4pm, at St Thomas', Crookes. Do please join us if you possibly can, on-site or online. You can already register for the day, [here](#).

Our keynote speaker will be Dr Paula Gooder, Canon Chancellor at St Paul's Cathedral in London. Dr Gooder will be known to many of you. She is one of the foremost biblical scholars in the world, and a prolific author. She will speak at the start of the day, to set the tone and theme for the workshops and seminars which will follow, by reminding us of the full dignity of our baptismal vocation, 'to shine as lights for Christ in the world to the glory of God the Father'.



In the Church of England, we speak of the 'three orders of ministry': deacons, priests and bishops. But we might arguably speak of four, because baptism is in effect a primary ordination. To be baptised is to be called to an active part in the ministry of the Church in the world, which is the ministry of Christ himself. A Christian can have no part in Christ, without a share in the mission of Christ. Baptism delivers both: in baptism we are incorporated into Christ; and in baptism we are commissioned in Christ's service.

The focus of our Diocesan Development Day is on the rejuvenation of the Church – but there will be no rejuvenation if we are unable to recapture this sense of the full dignity of baptism. I am confident Dr Gooder will help us greatly to do so!

What follows in this edition of Network is, in effect, a set of illustrations of what it means 'to shine as a Light for Christ in the world to the glory of God the Father': from working for climate justice and the care of the environment to 'Wear Your Faith' Fortnight; from Beakon Doncaster to faith stories. I hope you will be encouraged afresh to consider afresh before the Lord your own primary vocation, received at baptism. I wonder how the Lord is calling you to express that vocation now?

Finally, and on a personal note, you may like to be aware that, with the encouragement of our own Bishop's Council and of the Archbishop of York, I shall be taking a three-month period of sabbatical leave from Boxing Day this year to the eve of Palm Sunday 2024 (26.12.23 to 23.03.24). By the time the sabbatical begins, I shall be 6½ years into my tenure as Bishop of Sheffield, and by the time it ends I will (the Lord granting me health and strength) have 6½ years to retirement. Cathy and I plan to spend the heart of the sabbatical in Melbourne, Australia, where I hope to write a short commentary on the Book of Ruth in the light of the present migrant crisis. You will know how renewing I will find it to bury my head in Bible study for an extended time! In addition, there will be an opportunity for me to go on retreat, and for Cathy and me to take some holiday. During this time, I shall disengage as far as I possibly can from my responsibilities as the Bishop of Sheffield and will be delegating the oversight of the Diocese, with glad confidence, to Bishop Sophie. I'm sure she would be grateful for your prayers, as I will too of course.

With every blessing as ever

+Pete

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DEVELOPMENT DAY: CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



Mike North

What an amazing opportunity to spend the day together at our Diocesan Development Day to think, pray and plan for starting new things... particularly for children and young people!

We have been blessed by some young people from Sheffield joining us to help host the day and run one of the workshops. We also have some Centenary Project Workers and other lay people bringing us encouragement to love, embrace and walk with our children and young people in the Diocese of Sheffield.

I'm so privileged to be a part of a diocese which places a high priority on children and young people! I hope you feel the same. Our focus on this important ministry reminds us of children's place in God's heart. Jesus welcomed children and challenged his disciples to listen them (Matt 11: 25). I wonder how often God reveals the secrets of His heart to children and we never get to hear it, because we fail to listen to them?

So, how will you respond to the invitation to start something new with children and young people in your church and community? Whether you attend Development Day or not, there are many

opportunities you can grasp. May I suggest that your first step is chatting to others about what you think God is encouraging you to do... and ask the children and young people what they think God is saying, too!

When you've reflected on the mission-opportunities in your community, it's good to start with just one new thing. Build with what you have, pray for more resources (people and things), keep

**'AT THAT TIME JESUS SAID,
"I PRAISE YOU, FATHER,
LORD OF HEAVEN AND
EARTH, BECAUSE YOU
HAVE HIDDEN THESE
THINGS FROM THE WISE
AND LEARNED, AND
REVEALED THEM TO LITTLE
CHILDREN. YES, FATHER,
FOR THIS IS WHAT YOU
WERE PLEASED TO DO."'**

[MATTHEW 11: 25-26]

listening to what God is saying in other people and walk bravely forward!

Some ways forward you could consider:

- Starting a toddler's group (weekly session for parents, carers and their little ones).
- Invite young people to lead things (like services, music, social media, community events, social action, decision-making meetings...).
- Ask your local school (primary or secondary) how you can serve them? (Assemblies, classroom assistants, lunchtime supervisors, giving nice gift-bags to teachers in the middle of each school year, helping with events, praying for teachers and pupils etc).
- Starting a youth drop in for young people to talk and be listened to.
- Explore funding options to employ a children's or youth worker.
- Starting a family-friendly outdoor church, like [Muddy Church](#) or [Forest Church](#).
- Hosting a Christmas fair aimed at families (invite community people to run stalls or activities; invite the local brass band to play; invite young people to plan it?
- Run a Summer Holiday Club for children from the local primary school in your church building.
- Start a [Church in School](#) congregation.
- Come to our Network Gatherings for those involved in children's and youth ministry – it's great to connect with

others, pray, get resources and ideas from others (next one on 16 October at St Peter's Church Hall, Warmsworth from 7:30pm – 9pm).

- Come to the [Joined Up Conference](#) - If you would like some extra ideas and to find out more about how to get your idea off the ground, could I invite you to join us at the Joined Up Conference in Sheffield on Saturday 2 March? You'll get to choose from a wide variety of workshops on all kinds of children, youth and schools ministry, and meet with others to discuss practical ways forward.

Remember, whatever you do, make sure that all those working with children and young people are recruited safely (in line with diocesan policy) and have completed their [basic and foundations safeguarding training](#).

Please get in touch with Mike North (Children's and Young People's Adviser) to help you develop your ideas in this area of ministry.
mike.north@sheffield.anglican.org

Stay in touch with children's and young people's events, resources, ideas and news by joining:

www.facebook.com/groups/youthworknetwork

www.facebook.com/groups/sheffieldchildrensworkers

LOOKING FOR HOPE: FIVE DAYS OF COMMUNITY ACTION IN DONCASTER

Bringing people together and sharing the good news of Jesus will be top priorities in Doncaster this Autumn as a series of community events get underway.

The Church of the Good Shepherd (Kirk Sandall & Edenthorpe) and The Church of St Peter and St Paul (Barnby Dun) are putting on a variety of gatherings from the 2-8 October to help connect with others and share the hope of Christ.

We're hosting a whole load of events and we'd love you to be our guest.
Drop in for the warmest of welcomes!

Tues 3rd	Wed 4th	Fri 6th	Sat 7th	Sun 8th
Church Together <i>An informal service for 3-11s and their families</i> [The Church of the Good Shepherd @ 3:15pm]	Community Group <i>A chance to meet & make new friends</i> [The Church of the Good Shepherd @ 2pm]	Take-a-Break Community Cafe <i>Friends, food and a testimony of faith</i> [Barnby Dun Church Hall @ 12pm]	Family Fun Day <i>An afternoon of fun for all the family</i> [The Church of the Good Shepherd from 2-5pm]	Guest Services <i>Two special services with a message of hope</i> [Barnby Dun @ 9:15am Edenthorpe @ 11am]
A Night of Colour <i>An artist shares their passion & their story</i> [Barnby Dun Church @ 7:30pm]		The Big Pub Quiz <i>Test your skills in a quiz with a twist</i> [The Beverly Inn @ 7:30pm]		Songs in the Churchyard <i>Songs of Praise where you can choose!</i> [Barnby Dun Churchyard @ 3pm]
	Hosted by The Church of the Good Shepherd (Kirk Sandall & Edenthorpe) and The Church of St Peter & St Paul (Barnby Dun) WhatsApp: 07733 461 301 // Landline: 01302 882 861 Online: www.beakondoncaster.co.uk/hope			Assembly Bangers <i>Childhood favs, with glow sticks & more!</i> [The Church of the Good Shepherd @ 6pm]

Vicar Tom Brown explains the reasoning behind setting up this plan:

'The heartbeat of what we do is looking up and reaching out. I thought about the discipleship angle of helping people to share their faith, and one of the great ways

we can do that is by trying to find new ways to connect with our communities, sharing and speaking of our faith.

'While people might be detaching from institutional religion there's still a longing for relationship - exactly what Jesus offers us,

and what the local church is all about. It's pretty tricky for someone to say they don't want hope, while lots of people would also recognise they don't have it. It seems such an open category that Jesus has so much to say about that really taps into an itch that our society and our culture has at the moment. We want to be positive with this.'

The busy programme of activities at BEAKON Doncaster is inspired by the team's calling to be disciples, with the aim of the events to help attract as broad a range of people as possible.

The week begins with school assemblies on Monday morning, alongside a presence outside the local supermarkets. There's then an informal service for 3-11s and their families at The Church of the Good Shepherd on the Tuesday afternoon, and an evening called 'A Night of Colour' featuring an artist sharing their passion and story at Barnby Dun Church.

Throughout the week there will be community groups and cafes, a pub quiz, a family fun day, guest services and songs in the churchyard – all culminating in the aptly named 'Assembly Bangers' on the Sunday evening to round off the week.

Tom is optimistic that people from a non-Christian background will come along to some of the events:

'In everything we do, we want and expect unbelievers to be there. We're convinced the good news of Jesus is so good that we love to try and find as many creative ways as connecting with people as we can.

'The flow of the week is designed so certain events will connect with particular demographics. For example, my rugby mates are pretty unlikely to come to the Night of Colour evening, but I think a lot of them would come to the pub quiz.

'We're hoping that it's a bit of a smorgasbord of activities where everyone

would be able to find one thing that grabs them, and everyone within the church families would be able to find one thing they could invite their friends to.'

Once the week comes to a close, there's a strong desire from Tom and the team to keep in touch with people and to build relationships further. Around a thousand homes a year are being built locally, with Tom noting that many people won't know there is a church nearby ready to serve them.

To help raise the profile of what's going on at BEAKON Doncaster, during the week a team will be flyering some of the new areas, while also having a 'Big Q' stand outside the supermarkets in the area asking "does Jesus love Kirk Sandall and Edenthorpe?" Passers-by will then be free to throw a ball into a bucket either saying 'yes' or 'no' – without having to say anything.

Tom says the aim of this is to provoke questions among people who might not normally think about faith:

'Whichever way they vote, we hope it causes them to think a little bit. If they vote "yes" they may be wandering around later thinking "why did I say yes to that if I don't believe in Jesus?" Or if they vote "no" they might say "if there is a God, why wouldn't he love this place?" So even that low level interaction could hopefully raise our profile within the community and spark some opportunities.

'One of the key follow-up bits will be a little course called "Hope Explored", where we start to think a little bit about how Jesus offers hope that the world can't offer – how he offers us a deeper hope than anything this world can give. In many ways I'm not so worried about the numbers. We're just going to try and share Christ and His Spirit do the rest!'

WEAR YOUR FAITH FORTNIGHT

CEO of Arise Sheffield Ben Woollard talks about the return of Wear Your Faith Fortnight, which runs this year from 22 October-5 November

WEAR YOUR FAITH FORTNIGHT IS IN ITS SECOND YEAR. WHAT'S IT ABOUT AND HOW HAS IT CAPTURED PEOPLE'S ATTENTION?

Wear Your Faith Fortnight (WYFF) 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 people got involved across Sheffield and something special happened. What we found, time and time again, was that - while the symbols did spark deeper faith conversations - the biggest impact of wearing a symbol of faith was on the wearer. Many of us noticed that we felt bolder simply by putting on a badge.

WYFF is a call to action for every Christian in the Diocese of Sheffield and beyond to step out of the shadows and into the light, especially during a season that can feel enveloped in darkness. We're not just wearing badges; we're wearing our identity for the world to see.

Imagine the impact we can make when thousands of us wear these symbols of faith. It's a visual and emotional ripple effect that can transform our outlook, the conversations that we have, and maybe even entire lives.

This isn't merely about us; it's about the people who will see these symbols and find the courage to ask questions they've been holding inside. It's about breaking down the barriers that keep

us from connecting on a deeper level.

So, I urge you, don't just participate—embrace this as an opportunity to be a light in your community. Let's not just tell people about the love and light of Christ; let's show them. Let's make this Halloween not a season of darkness, but a season of light, hope, and authentic faith. Join us in WYFF and be a part of something transformative.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME GREAT ENTRIES FROM THE BISHOP'S BADGE COMPETITION THAT WILL FEATURE DURING THE FORTNIGHT. CAN YOU TALK A BIT ABOUT THE DESIGNS?

In preparation for WYFF, Bishop Sophie invited young people from across the Diocese of Sheffield to design a badge for believers to wear for the two weeks around Halloween.

I'm not sure any of us expected what happened next! Over 700 young people aged 2-15 from across Sheffield and the wider Diocese sent in original, beautiful, and inspiring designs. It was so hard to pick just three badges!

There were some popular themes, such as crosses, Noah's Ark, and images of the world, but what really struck us as we shortlisted was how many of the designs focussed on messages about kindness.

After a lot of deliberation Bishop Sophie

selected one design to be the overall winner, and to be made into a badge for believers to wear for WYFF, and she also

selected two runners-up whose designs are being shared as stickers with schools, churches, and families across the Diocese.



The winning design - 'Forgive' - has been made into a badge for Wear Your Faith Fortnight, to be worn by over 1,000 believers across the Diocese of Sheffield. It has also been included on the sticker sheets that have been distributed to schools, churches and families.



'Faith the size of a mustard seed' was a runner-up in the competition, and has been included on the sticker sheets being shared with schools, churches and families across the Diocese. 'His love is warm and safe' was a runner-up in the competition and has been included on the sticker sheets which are being distributed to schools, churches and families across the Diocese.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT WITH THE CAMPAIGN THIS YEAR?

I'm really excited about the continued partnership between Arise and the Diocese of Sheffield. Together we're empowering and encouraging believers throughout South Yorkshire in ways that neither Arise nor the Diocese could do alone.

The flexible nature of WYFF means that believers can wear their faith in ways that work for them. Some people love the free badges, others like to wear a piece of clothing, to add a sticker to their water bottle, or to decorate a window of their house. Believers can respond in any way that works for them, which adds a dynamic layer to WYFF, keeping it fresh and engaging.

While we may not be able to change



The Bishop's Badge competition has been a great example of that. With the support of Bishop Sophie, and the engagement of C of E schools and Centenary Project Workers, the Bishop's Badge Competition helped over 700 children to creatively express what their faith means to them. It's been so inspiring to see the next generation reflect and respond to questions of faith. WYFF has grown from being just a campaign, to being a community effort that spans all ages.

the culture of an entire country, we can certainly make a significant impact in our city. If we, as the church in Sheffield, make a collective decision to be visible and vocal about our faith in Jesus, the ripple effect can be transformative. It's about taking small, meaningful steps that lead to a larger change. And that's what makes this year's campaign so promising and electrifying for me.

Decorating a window, wearing a badge or a

piece of clothing to communicate our faith can go one of two ways: it can be a mere gimmick, or it can be a deeply authentic and intimate act. For me, and hopefully for everyone involved, it's going to be the latter.

This is an opportunity to tell the world not just who we are, but whose we are. It's a declaration of our identity in Christ, and that's what makes it so powerful. So, while the badges and symbols may be small, the statement we're making is monumental. It's about authenticity, community, and the transformative power of The Gospel. That's why I'm so thrilled about the promise of WYFF 2023.

HOW CAN PEOPLE GET INVOLVED?

Getting involved is simple but makes a big impact when we do it together.

WYFF begins on Sunday 22 October. 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.

Talk to your church leader. Encourage them to order badges for your congregation. The more badges we distribute, the more conversations we spark.

Share the message with friends, family, and on social media. The more people involved, the bigger the impact.

Remember, it's not just about the symbol: be ready to share your faith if asked. This campaign turns small symbols into big conversations.

Everyone has a place in this campaign, young or old, new to faith or long-time believer. Let's shine our light this Halloween in Sheffield.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT TAKING PART?

Jump in. Wearing a faith symbol opens doors for meaningful talks. It's not just a badge; it's a statement of who and whose you are. You'll inspire curiosity and questions.

Don't overthink it. The badge or symbol is a conversation starter, not the whole story. Be yourself and let the conversations flow naturally.

Lastly, be open. You never know how a small act can impact someone's life. Your openness could be the green light someone needs to explore faith.

So go ahead, take the step, and be part of something bigger. Let's light up Sheffield together this Halloween.



FLOWERS, FROGS AND FACE-PAINT ECO DIOCESE AWARD!

On Saturday 9 September in the season of Creationtide, Sheffield cathedral hosted a day of celebration of all things Eco Church. Many of our 61 Eco Churches were at the cathedral and received a well-deserved certificate of recognition and thanks from Bishop Pete. It was wonderful to hear the names of Eco Churches from all around our Diocese and celebrate their achievements. We've also won an A Rocha UK Bronze Eco Diocese Award after three years of hard work by these Eco Church communities, the Diocesan team and Environment Working Group.

A Rocha UK is a Christian charity supporting Christians and churches to protect and restore the environment – for God, nature and all people. Our Eco Diocese work includes ethical investments, our climate justice and environment policy, eco-training for church leaders, net zero plans, and communicating and working with partners. As 24 of our Eco Churches have awards, we had more than enough for a Bronze Eco Diocese award, and the work for Silver starts here! [Get in touch](#) if you want to help.

It was great to welcome Revd Lucy Foster, Eco Church Officer for the North of England to the cathedral and to hear her speak at a service led by Bishop Pete. As well as the Eco Diocese Bronze award, Lucy and Bishop Pete were busy presenting Eco Church plaques including a recent Bronze award to the cathedral. Dean Abi and her team gave us a warm welcome and are fully committed to Eco Church. St Mark's Broomhill and Broomhall were also presented with their Gold award. Archdeacon Malcolm Chamberlain accepted a Bronze award on behalf of Church House Rotherham,

also part of our Eco Diocese work. The plaques are pictured outside the cathedral in the sunshine...where a little fern taking root showed how nature finds a way!



We also welcomed partner organisations including Green Christian, Christian Climate Action, Friends of the Earth, Schools Climate Education South Yorkshire, Sheffield Greenpeace, South Yorkshire Climate Alliance and the Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust. Sheffield Action on Plastic and Better Buses for South Yorkshire were there to campaign on those great causes, and thanks to Broomhill's 'Fair Taste' shop, Fairtrade goodies were on sale. The cathedral chaplains provided a wonderful space to pray and think about creation and Lucy, the St Mark's team and Jo Chamberlain (CofE National Environment Officer) gave advice and support to our churches. The beautiful Creation tapestries by designer Alex Beattie made by St Mark's provided a lovely backdrop.

Frogs to craft were provided by the

ING... CELEBRATING OUR BRONZE

Dr Cathy Rhodes, Diocesan Environment Officer: environment@sheffield.anglican.org

Sally Hunter, Environment Support Officer: environment.admin@sheffield.anglican.org

David Castle, Net Zero Carbon Project Officer: david.castle@sheffield.anglican.org



cathedral Children's team alongside other sea creatures and Zoey Steele did her usual magic with eco-friendly face paints... including on Cathy our Environment Officer! We were delighted that Jonathan Moseley came to give an entertaining demonstration of fabulous ways to arrange local flowers and foliage for church without using plastic! He gave us great tips on using chicken wire, containers and jam jars. Jonathan's imaginative use of greenery, seed heads and even apples will inspire us all to think of God's precious earth and stop putting plastic from floral foam into our rivers and seas. The photos show the arrangements in all their glory in the cathedral, by a 'river' full of sea creatures.

Why a river? 'A Mighty River' is the theme of Creationtide from 1 September to 4 October, a season dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life. Bishop Pete preached on Amos 5:18-24 where the prophet tells us God 'takes no delight in your solemn assemblies.' Bishop Pete helped us understand that the final verse 'But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream' means that to please God, worship must be a companion to justice, or we are sitting in church with our fingers in our ears! Our faith must link to actions to love our neighbour.

We listened to a protest song which the Steel City Choristers sang with drums and singers from their workshop, and had a time for lament and confession for all we have done and not done for God's gift of Creation. Laments, prayers and pledges were written on paper fish to place into the 'river' and the Choristers sang a beautiful version of 'What a Wonderful World.' The service ended with these words of



blessing: 'Go forth confident in the hope in which you have been saved, praise God in all creation. Follow Christ through whom all things are made. In the power of the Spirit become a beacon of hope to the world.' I pray we'll all be renewed afresh for service, and become beacons of hope as co-workers in partnership with God in creation. Amen.

We have a certificate for every Eco Church so do please get in touch!

Find out more at ecochurch.arocha.org.uk or go to sheffield.anglican.org and search for 'environment and climate'



FAITH STORY IN GOOLE

Member of St John's Goole Audrey Harrison shares her faith journey and how God has helped through times of hardship.

As someone who has always tried to lead a Christian life, from Sunday school to present day at the age of 86, my faith has wavered several times. When I was very young, I remember listening to the Bible stories about the miracles Jesus performed with absolute faith and wonderment. Like all children, I felt it was amazing that someone who was born in a stable could grow to do such wonderful things. It made it easy for me to tell the same stories to my Sunday school pupils, where I taught from the age of 15.

As one gets older, we start to question things more and more. Coming from a very poor background (I was the only one in my family who attended church), I began to compare the unfairness in life. Why couldn't I have the things my friends had? Why couldn't I have holidays and lovely new clothes? I prayed for all of these things!

Life changed for me in my late teens when I started looking back at the things I had and what I had achieved despite the setbacks. I attended a grammar school; I was able to have a school exchange to Belgium and still have my dear Belgian friend to this day; I had a lovely job in the local library and then in the education office; I had a wonderful husband for over 65 years and now have a daughter and her amazing family. So yes, there is unfairness in the world but now I look at the things I have rather than the things I never had.

And yet I still waver! I see on TV children in war zones, with terrified looks on their little faces; I read about killings and extreme cruelty along with other dark sides of human behaviour. Why do all these things happen?

To me, faith is aiming to live a good life and trying to help others. I talk to God every

day in the hope that He understands all my doubts and fears, and I gain comfort as I look around at all the wonders He has created.

St John's Goole has always been a big part of my life. I started going to Sunday school when I was around 6 or 7 years old and loved it. I had such nice teachers and went along with my friends. One of my best friends, who died a couple of years ago, lived in Goole and also taught along with me at the Sunday school. Her parents were devout St John's members and I spent a lot of my time with them.

We had some amazing times on various trips. We all went on to join the GFS (Girls Friendly Society) led by Mrs Plewes and would look forward to our yearly trip to Filey to the GFS house. Because my family was not in a position to pay I went as a helper and went for free, along with another girl.

St John's was a lovely place and surprisingly attended by quite a lot of young people then. We had our confirmations at the age of 13 and went up in pairs.

I was married there in 1956 and our daughter was christened there in 1958. I can't remember St John's not being part of my life and was so thrilled when my late husband, Harry, decided during lockdown that he wanted to be part of it too. All thanks to Hannah (Patton) and Zoom!

I still have lots of doubts and question so many things but the fact that I want to keep going and have so much to be thankful for, must be a sure sign of faith. Even Peter doubted, when Jesus asked him to walk on water. Oh Ye of little faith!

PEAK PILGRIMAGE 2023

'Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage' (Psalm 84:5)



A three-stage pilgrimage has brought together Christians from the Diocese of Sheffield for a spell of reflection and prayer. Pilgrimage routes seem to have seen a surge in interest in recent years. There have been several BBC series along different routes as well as programmes exploring the link between mental well-being and walking.

The Peak Pilgrimage runs from Ilam (itself a pilgrimage church) through to Eyam (the 'plague village'), taking in beautiful Derbyshire countryside including Dove Dale, Lathkilldale, Chatsworth and Curbar Edge. The route is waymarked (to some extent!), which is very helpful if you're trying to pray and don't want to have to have your head buried in a map.

Twelve churches along the route offer you a pilgrim stamp ('sello' on the Camino) and a Bible verse. The guidebook picks up on spiritual themes to enrich each stage and help it not to become just a long walk, as well as blessings and prayers at each



Peak Pilgrimage sign

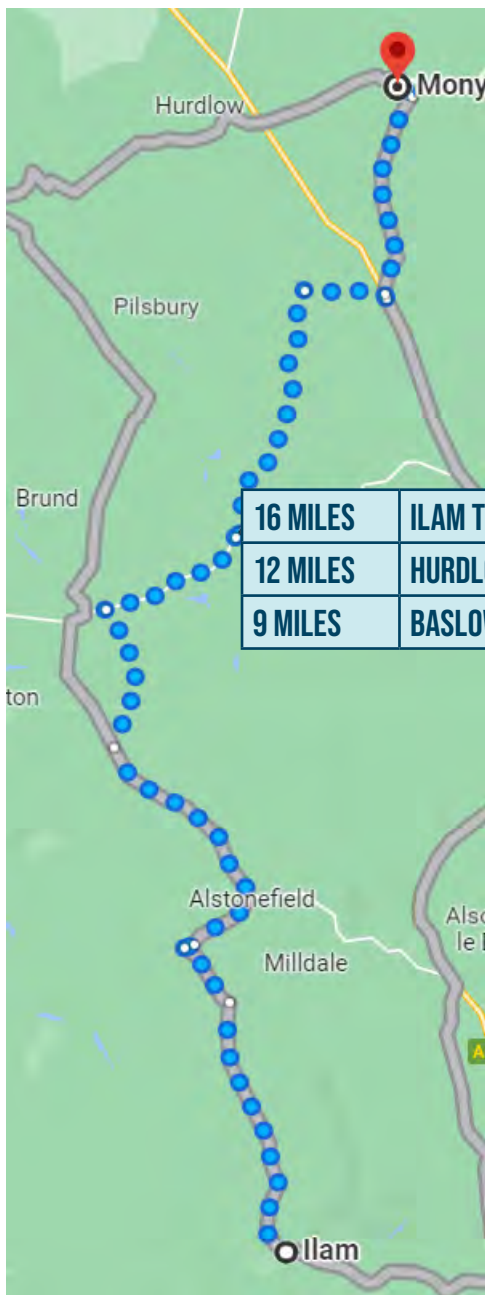
church.

Mission Development Adviser John Hibberd, who has led the Peak Pilgrimage walks, says:

'I did my first pilgrimage along the Camino to Santiago de Compostela in 2005 and

found it a profound experience. Perhaps it was the fact that it took a month, so enabling a rhythm of life to develop, or that daily needs are reduced to their simplest – a bed, food, health, space to engage with God and the balance of company in the evenings.

‘But I think that there is also something about praying on the move and with eyes open to the wonder of God’s creation; hence the link people rediscovered in lockdown about the simple benefit of walking. So, pilgrimage remains my preferred mode of retreat and I wanted to invite others to share in this somewhere quite local to us.’



PAULINE COPE

PPeak heat! – a scorching day in June.

Ilam, a place of ancient prayer – a fitting place to start.

Lots of time for silent thought – but chatter too.

Glorious views at Gypsy Bank and riverside paths aplenty – O Happy Day!

Rest was earned and at Parsley Hay – tea!

Inspirational Bible verse waiting at each Holy Place – and a pause to be still and pray.

Miles went by (16.5 in all) then home to rest – tired legs but a thankful heart

SIAN JOHNSTONE

It was a wonderful day with plenty of time to listen and to reflect. I particularly enjoyed visiting the different churches and seeing how they differed in their approach to worship.

CLAIRE WELCH

I like the unknown of it all - Who will I meet? What conversations will I have? What will I see? How will I meet with God through it all? On the walk we entered a number of churches where to my inner child's delight we collected a stamp and a Bible verse on a sticker to add to a booklet. We paused at the churches, reflecting on their history and their role in the life of the

community. Each had its own character and left an impression. I particularly consider the tiny Methodist Chapel at Milldale to be a highlight. There we picked up the verse, 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciple, if you love one another' John 13:35. The church is no longer open for regular Sunday worship but it is open always for those who want to pop in, especially walkers like us. Here I considered the generosity of remaining open to

all, to be there for those who have need. It reflects God's character, and I received it as an act of love from my fellow disciples. On the walk we had held a period of silence to listen to what God may be saying to us. At the chapel I enjoyed the coolness of the building that protected me from the heat of the sun which had been a constant companion. What a gift this chapel was. Here I paused. I reflected. I became refreshed. And then I was ready to go.



Milldale Chapel interior

ALEX SHILKOFF

In the last couple of years, I've been thinking about worship that engages all the senses. When singing was not allowed in the pandemic I realised how much of my own worship was over-reliant on singing. A bit like only watching TV in black and white! In recent years I've found time outside, engaging with God's creation has deepened my relationship with God. So, this prayer pilgrimage really appealed to me!

The weather, scenery and company were all wonderful – which definitely spurred me on for the last few miles when my legs were aching!

This walk started in the Staffordshire side of the Peak District – somewhere I was fortunate to spend time in when I was a child and teenager. As we were walking different sights and sounds were bringing back lots of special memories of times with family and friends. It was good to reflect back on all God's love, care and provision for me over the decades and to live confidently in the care of God now and into the future.

JANE DORAN

A new perspective on the Peak District, walking from church to church. Rather like the original "Steeplechase"!



Stepping stones

PLANS FOR 2024

Would you like an experience of this local pilgrimage? John Hibberd is willing to lead another group in 2024, this time taking it over four Saturdays through the year (11.5, 8.5, 12 & 9 miles). If you would like information, contact John on:

john.hibberd@sheffield.anglican.org.

MEET SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL'S NEW DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & SCHOOLS SINGING PROGRAMME

Tom Daggett has taken time out of his busy schedule to talk to us about his role and what attracted him to the Diocese of Sheffield



WHAT WAS YOUR MUSICAL UPBRINGING?

The early years of my musical life were sitting on the organ bench of a Methodist church in Harrogate in North Yorkshire, where my granny was an organist. I became fascinated by the instrument. In fact, I really started to play the organ before I had piano lessons! I've been a member of many churches and worked in all traditions, from the Salvation Army and Evangelical churches to Anglo-Catholic parishes and cathedrals.

When I was a teenager I was based in Blackburn Cathedral, where I had an organ scholarship during secondary school. The rhythm and ritual of cathedral music really got under my skin in every way – spiritually, socially and academically. I then studied for a music degree at Lincoln College Oxford, where I was an organ scholar. I started working with choirs and then naturally made my way to East London, having met Fr Angus Ritchie, where I worked for the Centre for Theology and Community as a church-based community organiser.

WHO WAS YOUR MAIN MUSICAL INFLUENCE?

There's a Priest called Father Niall Weir who's based in St Paul's, West Hackney. He saw his church community and all the groups using his building as more oil and water than gin and tonic, and he found a wonderful and inclusive way of using music and singing to bring people together.

He has often said that if he were a sailor, he'd be out on the reservoir teaching kids how to rig. What I learned from him as a musician is that no matter what your gifts are, this is a place for you and you have room to grow. He's been a great mentor, friend and guide, and he happens to be a very fine musician as well as a very fine priest. I come here with a strong mandate from him.

HOW DID THE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND COMMUNITY INFORM YOUR WORK?

Music and everything I've done has often had some kind of greater social purpose. I've worked with churches involved in social justice work, working with people with different beliefs and backgrounds to make the world a better place. Citizens UK, which was the umbrella organisation for the Centre, empowered normal people to systems of injustice in often very creative ways; music was a key part of the picture. This combination of music with social justice gave impetus for Choir Church, which is a model for new congregations in schools which are springing up across the country.

YOUR PREVIOUS ROLE WAS BASED AT ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. WHAT WERE YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES THERE?

I led a music programme based on choral and organ music. We took high quality music into schools where it wasn't likely to be seen, either due to a lack of resource or lack of awareness of how highly children could achieve in music when the bar is raised. The cathedral provided a platform for bringing in thousands of children to sing. I believe when children encounter music it builds up the building blocks of their spiritual DNA, which was very much my story growing up in all these different churches - finding that music animated my soul.

I hope I left St Paul's a different place than when I found it 9 years ago. That's not to say that I've singlehandedly managed to make a difference, but the thousands of children who come into the cathedral have shown how you can bridge the gap between something that is extremely precious, rarefied and historic and something which

has excellence at its heart while being ambitiously inclusive.

The only reason I feel able to leave St Paul's is the work developed over that decade feels in such a solid place, so I feel I've been given permission to move on and do the same here.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL?

It started three years ago when the cathedral had a difficult time and the former choir was closed. For some reason, Sheffield Cathedral appeared at that point very firmly on my heart and it hasn't really left. I did a great deal of discerning at the time, and I felt that there might be a role for me in seeing something new here and working with people very carefully through that.

It wasn't until this year when I was taking a break and really thinking about what was next for me, that the role was advertised. I read the first half of the first sentence and thought 'yes, I have to go here.' I very much found God's calling in pulling me to Sheffield and I can't quite explain it, but it's great to be sitting here as this logical next step. Dean Abi is herself a fine musician, and I must admit that meeting her made everything all the more appealing!

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAIN DIFFERENCES YOU'VE FOUND SINCE ARRIVING IN SHEFFIELD?

St Paul's has quite a transient congregation along with a massive team of volunteers, paid staff and musicians. I've enjoyed being part of that quite structured family at St Paul's with hundreds of thousands of people coming through our doors with an international reach. At Sheffield there is very much a parish and family vibe across the staff, team, volunteers and congregation, so

the boundaries between all those things feel much more porous.

I'm really struck by how friendly everybody is in Sheffield and I love the green spaces across the city; it's easier to find peacefulness and stillness than in the heart of London. I've also felt drawn to [The Archer Project](#) having done quite a bit of work with music and homelessness in the Diocese of London; I'm really struck by how comfortable people with different experiences of life feel in this building. It's a special place and I feel God's work present before my eyes here.

WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO ACHIEVE AT SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL?

We have ambitious plans to rebuild the music here around the singing programme, which is going to stretch across the Diocese. The plan is to equip schools with limited musical resources to raise musical standards and build all sorts of connections between children and their families, schools and communities.

We want a music department which has education at its core. Every interaction from the earliest years of a baby, through to being a teacher, should be about personal growth and progression. A child could come to us here and join our rhythm time sessions on a Thursday and then progress to our recently launched Little Lights choir, which meets every Sunday, before becoming a probationer and then a chorister. After that, there's the chance to join our teenage choirs (SSA and ATB, for those who know!), and then they can be a Choral Scholar and then go back in and feed the ecosystem by teaching children as part of the schools programme..

I'm really struck by how many people in Sheffield study at the universities and then choose to build their lives around this place, and I think music at Sheffield Cathedral can tap into that energy and spirit. Needless to say, I also hope for lots of people to catch this vision and to help make it a reality.

MY JOURNEY WITH CANCER: A FAITH STORY TESTIMONY

Michelle Hayes from St Peter's Greenhill shares a moving account of how faith sustained her through cancer treatment

Over the last year I have been journeying with breast cancer and treatment for breast cancer. It has been a journey of surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and discovering more about myself and a deepening of my faith as a Christian.

I will start with an apology - I process things through humour. I have taken my journey with cancer seriously but I personally find what is often dark humour helps, but I know from church some find this upsetting. I have apologised at church as well; this is not something to take lightly, and I don't, but I find humour helps.

It has been a tough journey, not just for me but for my husband who is Bipolar 2 and my two adult sons, who still live at home. They have been amazing in supporting me, cooking meals, sort of hoovering, sort of cleaning and many other things. I have also had a lot of support from family, friends, church family and my numerous work families, for which I am extremely grateful.

My journey started last August, whilst gardening up at church, I banged myself on the skip and discovered the lump (I have promised at church to never moan about church gardening again). I left it 4 weeks before I went to the doctors (yes, I know that is too long. I was hoping it would just go away). I then had a barrage of scans and biopsies and in October, I was told that I had breast cancer and that it had spread to my lymph nodes (I had no idea the human body had so many lymph nodes).

I decided from the start that the positive thing in all of this was that I was lucky, my cancer was treatable. I could count my blessings. I have a great support network, an amazing family, a home, clothes, food and heating.

There are a lot of people worse off than me. This hadn't been in my plans but that was fine.

I process things in a number of ways:

Prayer: To me prayer is talking to someone who knows me better than myself. As it is in the book of Psalms in the Bible, I can be angry with God, angry with life, cry, laugh, lament even discuss things when I am stuck at a crossroad and I don't know which path to take.

Analysis: Gather data, analyse the data, then decide on the best course of action. My job role is as an analyst. This is something that comes naturally to me, although my sons and church family now give me the same response of eye rolling with the suggestion of yet another spreadsheet. My cancer nurse advised against gathering too much data as did a friend that had been through cancer. I learnt that sometimes there is such a thing as too much data, so this was not an option that I have used during this journey, which has felt very strange.

Eat/drink chocolate: The world always seems a better place after a hot chocolate and a chocolate bar, and it helps to calm me to give me space to think. This didn't work through chemotherapy as my sense of taste changed and chocolate tasted awful - not great for a chocoholic.

Activities: Occasionally the hot chocolate doesn't work so, going for a walk, reading, jigsaws, board games, origami etc are a good distraction to create space. Through treatment, I was often not well enough to do any of these. Sometimes it took me an hour and a half to get ready in the morning, doing things in stages. If I was well enough to have a shower, then I might need a sleep after it; basic things took a lot of energy. It didn't

help that chemotherapy also affected my eyesight so things were often blurry, which makes completing a jigsaw entertaining.

This often left me with prayer as the only way to process things, I spent more time in prayer and listening to worship music. As a Christian I should know this should be my first option but quite often it isn't; I reach for the hot chocolate (a bad day might involve multiple hot chocolates) or bury myself in a sci-fi or fantasy book. With all my other ways of processing things removed that started my deepening of faith, what some Christians call a journey of moving my faith from my head to my heart.

I realise to some people that a journey with cancer would seem an odd time to deepen faith, to even feel peace, joy and hope, and I can't say there were not times of despair, of panic, of not knowing what to do, of being too tired and ill to think, but I did have prayer and taking everything to God carried me through this.

This is where my faith comes in. I truly believe that God didn't give me cancer but I do believe I was nudged in the right direction to get treatment. To some, that might seem like being lucky or a coincidence; to me it was a nudge from God.

Other moments when I felt God with me on my journey:

I wasn't allowed to take anyone with me for my treatment, due to covid restrictions still being in place. I never felt alone. I kept in mind part of the prayer of Saint Patrick's breastplate (prayer for protection): God is before me, behind me, either side of me, above me, below me and inside me. This gave me God's strength and courage to go to the treatments.

In the week after chemotherapy I suffered most from the side effects, such as needing to sleep after having a shower. For someone that likes to be busy, this was really hard to deal with. I had to slow down and I discovered that the world didn't end if I took time to rest. Slowing down actually gave me the space to pray more. It is much easier to hear from God when I am not rushing around all the time.

My appointment time for my Hickman line to be inserted was incorrect, so I ended up rushing to the hospital and I arrived in a state of panic with high blood pressure and a high heart rate. I needed to calm myself in order to have the procedure; for someone prone to panic attacks and overthinking this was not an optimal situation. I chose to meditate on the psalm that had been part of my prayers that morning, and not only was I filled with a sense of peace but unexpectedly a sense of joy. God's peace and joy can be found in the storms of life. It is a peace and joy that passes all understanding.

The wonderful NHS staff that I have met along the way, who have shown patience, understanding and love, from the cleaners who showed me where to go (my ability to get lost is legendary in my family), to the nurses and consultants who treated me.

During one morning prayer, I was meditating on a different passage and the image of Jesus nailed onto a cross came to mind, and I remembered that Jesus whilst nailed to a cross was pastoral and was mindful of both the thief nailed onto a cross next to him and his Mother. This was a gentle nudge that I too could still be a pastoral worker for my church family and a MHFA when I was managing to be in work. I might be tired and not physically able to do much but I could still listen to people and pray for them. This helped me shift my focus from me to others.

I found radiotherapy exhausting, mostly having to travel to the hospital five times a day, I found that I couldn't do everything that I was asked to do and I discovered that the world does not end if I say no. A valuable lesson to learn.

My journey with cancer has been an interesting one; it has allowed me to find my boundaries, to learn new things and deepen my faith. I truly believe that God didn't give me cancer, I truly believe that God answers prayers and I truly believe in healing and miracles, but I also know that Jesus said life would not be easy, there will be storms in life, and that we would not be alone in those storms. He will be with us through every storm.

MISSION AREA SUPPORT: CHRISTMAS PLANNING IN THE PARISHES

As we head through the busy Autumn season it can be daunting to think about ensuring plans are in place for Christmas, especially when the festive season is such a crucial time of the year in the Christian calendar. However, we are fortunate in the Diocese of Sheffield to have dedicated teams of clergy, staff and volunteers ready to help parishes in planning ahead.

The Mission Area Support team are here to help make sure people are utilising digital resources as best as possible when communicating with others. A key priority in Christmas preparations is keeping features like [A Church Near You](#) up to date with service times and access details, so members of the public have quick access to information on what churches have planned.

We're highlighting a 'top five' list of what people can do to help boost their Christmas planning:

1. Can visitors find you and your Christmas service times online?
2. Contactless Giving for one-off donors – are you ready?
3. How are you being a light for Christ this Christmas?
4. Is your church welcoming and warm?
5. Do you have a follow up plan, or something for your visitors to take away that invites them back?

The national Church of England's Follow the Star theme returns in 2023, this time with the added call to [Join the song](#). Alongside some familiar elements, the campaign has new features helping schools, churches, cathedrals to connect with Join the song, including:

- An invitation to all choirs and singing groups to sing a new version of 'The First Nowell'
- Free resources to help choirs of all ages and stages learn and perform the carol
- Supporting resources for schools including collective worship sessions
- Daily Christmas reflections inspired by the words of familiar carols

*'The shepherds went back,
singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen;
it had been just as the angel had told them.'*

Luke 2.20 (Good News Bible)

Mission Area Support Project Lead Libby Culmer says:

'Christmas is a great time to reach out and connect with the community around you, but it can involve a lot of additional work for PCCs and volunteers which is why we are here to help! Please get in touch at generosity@sheffield.anglican.org and we would be happy to support you.'

You can also join the national Church of England Digital Labs for an interactive session to look at the resources available for this year's Christmas campaign. [Sign up to join the webinar on Wednesday, 11 October.](#)

CENTENARY PROJECT TESTIMONY IN DONCASTER

Centenary Project Worker Josey Bryant shares her journey at the Church of The Good Shepherd after almost a year in post



I began working at The Church of The Good Shepherd in December 2022 and it has been so wonderful to join a welcoming church and be supported and encouraged. I have become part of the church family and I really love my job!

On Tuesdays after school, we run Church Together. This has been so encouraging and we've recently baptised a family of five who began coming to Church Together and then started to attend church on Sunday. I was asked to be a witness for the adults and I am also a Godparent to the three boys, which is a real honour. Church Together is a real team effort and we are

seeing God moving in what we do and offer the community.

In my role, I work closely with families and I visit them at home. This has proved invaluable in making relationships and getting to know the parents and children more. The children who come along to children's church on Sunday know me much better. Church family is very important to us and church is not just something we do on Sundays.

We are involved with a number of schools. Canon Popham is joined to our church and we provide for Collective Worship every two weeks and it is so much fun! We visit several other schools for seasonal assemblies which is great, and we continue to develop those relationships. It's not always easy to get to know a local school, but recently I've contacted a new school. I went along one day and gave the staff a box of biscuits and a card to introduce who we were and what we could offer in terms of support and assemblies. They have been in touch and we plan to deliver an assembly during our Mission Week 'looking for hope' in October. I am so excited to be able to use the training that I had in Prayer Spaces in School. It's great to have a space in school during Mission Week that will connect with the assembly, but will also enable the children and staff to have a time of reflection.

As part of my role I also take part in 1-to-1 Bible sessions, which are very new for me. It's exciting to be sharing the Bible with another person in our church family who is at the start of their journey of faith and discussing what God is saying

through His word. It's all about learning together and getting to know God's word.

Our Sunday Church for the children during the service has a mix of ages and it's so encouraging to see the children growing in confidence, asking questions and contributing to the group. The children now offer to pray in our group and we read the Bible together. The sessions are always lots of fun!

We are launching our new Toddler group during October called 'Little Lambs'. It will be at Rokeby Gardens every Friday 9.15 - 11am during term time. This is going to be so exciting to see how God will work through us and use us to connect with the younger age group and families. We identified we had a gap in the ministry that we already had and felt God leading us to open this new group. There will be free play, a Bible story and then songs to finish with. I can't wait to get started as this is a particular area of ministry that I am passionate about.

None of what we do would be possible

without our team of volunteers. We are blessed to have such a committed team. They are amazing and we have seen growth in their own discipleship.

Revd Tom Brown said:

"Having Josey as part of the team (and family!) here has been an immense blessing to us all, but particularly to me as the vicar. Her love for Jesus, faithfulness to His word, and humble servant heart are a wonderful testament to the Lord's work in her, and a powerful witness to those she works amongst.

"In particular, she's grabbed opportunities with both hands, sharing Collective Worship with me, talking on our midweek fresh expression, and meeting 1-to-1 for bible studies with several ladies, visiting families to get to know them and helping with faith formation at home. What a gift to the church she is.

"Having said that, if anyone else is thinking of poaching her I'll happily re-word all of the above because we do not want to lose her!"



PARISH PILGRIMAGE IN THE RIVERS TEAM



Revd Debbie Coyne from The Rivers Team gives thanks for a fruitful Parish Pilgrimage which led to positive discussions about faith

Over the summer our Sunday worship in The Rivers Team is all-age, as we encourage our children's workers to take a well-earned rest. This year in our summer services we have explored what it means to be a 'Pilgrim People' by following the Israelites' journey out of slavery in Egypt, through formation in the desert, and into the promised land as the People of God.

Typically, we would begin and end our summer series with outdoor services, however given the theme, we felt a Parish Pilgrimage was an appropriate alternative to finish with and mark the start of a new series. So, on Sunday 10 September 2023, congregation members embarked upon a Parish Pilgrimage to pray and worship

in each of their five communities: Treeton, Waverley, Catcliffe, Brinsworth and Tinsley. We wanted to offer everyone in our worshipping community the opportunity to join in the pilgrimage in some way, so we welcomed people to walk, drive, or remotely join us in praying and worshipping in each of our communities. Our itinerary and prayers were made available through our communication networks to facilitate this.

We have a variety of groups and services meeting during the week across our church buildings to engage missionally with our communities, and on a Sunday morning we gather from across the parish at 10:30 am in St Lawrence's Tinsley for worship (and excellent refreshments). However, the



Sunday of the Parish Pilgrimage started differently. At 8:30 am we gathered at Treeton Community Centre for bacon sandwiches and drinks. Filled and ready, the group then moved to St Helen's Treeton to pray. Wandering down the hill, they moved to Waverley, which is a new housing estate. As there is no church building in Waverley, the pilgrims gathered outside of the Primary School to pray. Warm from the humidity and concerned it might rain, they headed to St Mary's in Catcliffe ready for our 10:30 am Worship4All service. Our Sunday morning services are usually live-streamed through our Facebook page, and this was no exception, so we timed things so we could still enable people who were unable to join us in person to join us online at the usual time. Following the service, we moved over the parkway and under the M1 to St Andrew's in Brinsworth, for communion. Finally, motivated by the promised fellowship around a 'bring and share' lunch, we strode into Tinsley and gratefully enjoyed more refreshments together.

People of all ages joined us for the entire walk. Some drove between locations and

others joined us for one or a more of the stations on the journey; these included some new faces and others who attend midweek activities but don't join us for worship on Sundays. At each station we gathered saying "Lord, you are here, You go before us, and we meet you in this place", and then prayed specifically over the needs of that community. The Pilgrimage enabled people within our church family, especially those who were new, to understand the shape and context of the wider parish, and created the opportunity be a visible presence and to pray for and engage with our communities in a new way, as we continue to live as Lights for Christ.

A couple of pilgrims commented that "they had lived in one of our communities their whole lives and hadn't been along or realised there were paths where we walked". One Pilgrim said "That was awesome! I really enjoyed it." It is clear to us God is doing some exciting things across our Parish in The Rivers Team and we are excited to keep joining in with the Holy Spirit in that. Let's see where God will lead us next as a Pilgrim People...!



CHURCH IN SCHOOLS PROJECT: PORTER CROFT SCHOOL IN SHEFFIELD

Team Leader of 'Faith and Fun for Families' Heather Waller looks back on a year of celebrating diversity

The Diocesan-wide Church in Schools project has enjoyed a number of highlights this year in a multi-cultural inner-city school in Sheffield.

The Church in School congregation, 'Faith & Fun', finish each session with a British Sign Language-signed UK Blessing. In February, a teaching assistant burst into the hall during this time because she was so

moved by the music and felt compelled to come and see what it was. Then in March, a cleaner paused during her shift and at this point came into the hall to stand and soak in the atmosphere. One of the dads who is also not a church-goer was sitting with his eyes closed, really seeming to be connecting with God.

A brilliant session was held in April which





included baking for the first time! This went down a storm with multilingual and multigenerational groups getting stuck in, meaning people stuck around who might otherwise dart off before the end because they were waiting for the scones to bake!

During the singing, Hindu and Muslim mums were dancing and enthusiastically singing about God loving us, and a number of parents were intently listening with their hearts to the blessing song. Visiting grandparents commented on their way out about how they felt the presence of God and were tearing up during the singing: they loved the tangible sense of God's spirit amid the mayhem of life. One of the Hindu mums asked when we will next be looking at the Bible together in our schooltime Bible conversation group for parents, and then she reminded us later to make sure we remember to tell her!

We meet weekly in local cafes in small numbers after school drop-off (the day after Faith and Fun so we can easily invite people to come 'tomorrow') with parents who want to go deeper and look at the Bible/pray/worship together. We hope this group will develop in the coming year, potentially reaching beyond the school community as well as within it. One Faith and Fun dad in particular is finding this really helpful and rediscovering his faith. He came to our attention initially by bumping into us in a different context where he really wanted to continue spiritual conversations. It turned

out he'd been talking to people at the pub about the stories at Faith and Fun, and starting discussions there even though he doesn't go to a church himself. He also came to the school church service at our link church, St Mary's Bramall Lane, and sat and talked openly for some time after that.

One week in April, we were sitting as a group in a pub; two Christians, an agnostic, a Muslim and the aforementioned dad. We were talking about faith and looking at the passage from the Bible that had been the story the previous day. A random lady from another table came across and said "excuse me, I just heard what you were talking about and it sounds fascinating", so we invited her to join us and she was really pleased. We took her number to invite her in future. She has since joined a new church but found it really helpful and inspiring to find a group of people digging into the Bible together.

For the summer party, a bring and share community food festival was organised with lots of amazing international food! There were giant bubbles and garden games, and an upfront game where two dads volunteered to be made into human ice creams with squirty cream and sprinkles! The story was about Daniel being transported to Babylon and how he coped with the changes demanded of him as we thought about "moving on".

This leads to a brief testimony from Sports

Day which was the next day. A mum who had been at Faith and Fun the day before, and only attended a handful of times, opened up. She is moving on as her son starts secondary and years ago had attended the school community's coffee morning on her son's first day of school. She was quite guarded back then but has seemed to soften over the years and her occasional attendance at Faith and Fun has been testament to that. She's been through some tough times. At Sports Day during some small talk, she shared that she wants to start going to church. The impression was Faith and Fun had helped bring her to this point and meant she knew who she could talk to about spiritual matters. Unable to attend the Bible conversation group and wanting somewhere on a Sunday, St Mary's Bramall Lane was suggested. She wanted to go somewhere where there would be a Faith and Fun peer. What's encouraging is we never know what God is doing in someone's life and it's a privilege to play some small part in their journey with Him. It's such a joy to know her son's discipleship can continue beyond school despite them moving on.

We so value prayers that people's lives will be transformed as they meet with Jesus.

Faith and Fun's budget relies entirely on donations. If you would like to donate, the BACS details are here:

Account: SHEFFIELD ST MARYS BRAMALL
LANE PCC
Reference: Faith and Fun
Sort Code: 40-41-13
Account Number: 21389505

Attendance figures for Faith and Fun (January 2023-June 2023)

Total attendance Number of children

Jan: 52	Jan: 28
Feb: 103	Feb: 60
March: 102	March: 68
April: 83	April: 51
May: 52	May: 28
June: 78	June: 45

Number of adults

Jan: 24
Feb: 43
March: 34
April: 32
May: 20
June: 33



DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD PODCAST: WORDS OF GRACE

In August we launched the Diocese of Sheffield podcast, and have been delighted with the reception from listeners and the fruitful discussions held with each interviewee.

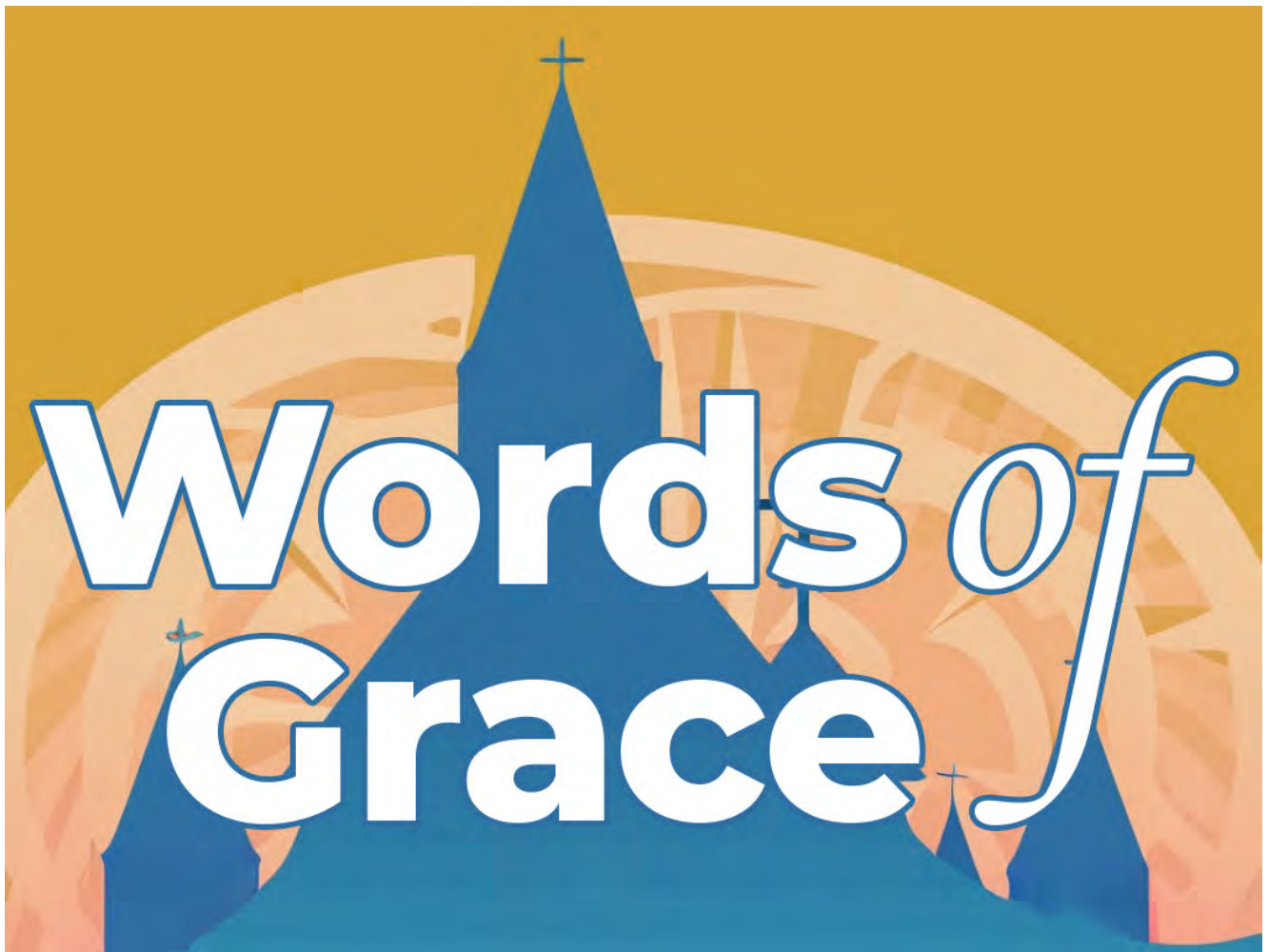
Hosted by Giving and Generosity Officer Paul Sheridan and Communications Officer Ben Fearn, each episode features guests from a broad range of backgrounds and traditions within the Church of England to discuss faith journeys and fellowship.

Our first few episodes include interviews with Revd Amanda Barraclough (Rector of St Mary's Sprotbrough and Dean of Women's Ministry), Hannah Sandoval (Lights for Christ Enabler), Fr Grant Naylor (Vicar of St Matthew's Carver Street), Revd Dr Sally Myers (Director of Focal Ministry), Revd Dr Tim Gill (Vicar of St Mary's Ecclesfield and Priest in Charge of St Mark's Grenoside), Alex Shilkoff (Strategic Programme Director), LJ Buxton (Director of Communications) and Revd Amy Hole (Curate in Charge of Heeley Parish Church).

We're also looking forward to welcoming both of our bishops onto the podcast this Autumn for a double bishop special!

If you'd like to submit questions to our guests, or are interested in coming on the show, email wordsofgrace@sheffield.anglican.org

You can listen to the Words of Grace podcast [here](#) or wherever you get your podcasts.



QUANTITY AND QUALITY: FOCAL MINISTRY SO FAR

Director of Focal Ministry Sally Myers talks about reasons to be thankful for the dedication of Focal Ministers in the Diocese



As Focal Ministry reaches the halfway point in the Transformation Project it is a good time to take a step back and reflect on how things are going. I have been in the Diocese for two and a half years now as Director of Focal Ministry, and have been supported by Rachael in her role as Focal Ministry Programmes and Pathways Assistant for the past year. At the time of writing we have just over ninety people either authorised as Focal Ministers or about to be, with many more enquiries being followed up. Everyone is happy about the numbers, but that really is only half the story. We have been blessed

with both quantity AND quality.

The range of experience and gifts that those being nominated for this ministry are bringing with them is truly humbling. I have been fortunate enough to visit a lot of places and meet a lot of people so far, and I am always moved at the sheer holiness, dedication and spirit-filled-ness (I know that isn't a word!) of those that I encounter.

What is particularly pleasing for me is that the theory is actually working in practice, and Focal Ministry is indeed taking different shapes in different parishes; releasing the gifts of people on the ground and meeting local needs in a great diversity of contexts. Not only this, Focal Ministers are lively and increasingly diverse themselves and what they are doing; from ambitious online mission projects, to new nurture groups, to leading others in prayer.

If you think God might be calling your parish to explore Focal Ministry, please take a look at our webpage for more information.



We look forward to meeting you!

PARISH NURSING PROJECT AT ST MATTHEW'S CARVER STREET

Lead Parish Nurse Michaela Suckling shares an update on how the project is helping disadvantaged people in Sheffield

OUR VOLUNTEERS HAVE STEPPED UP

The nursing project has remained busy. I had to take some time out earlier this year for some extended carer's leave, but that was really showing how fantastic the volunteers are because there hasn't actually been much impact on the service that clients would have identified really. That's a real credit to them.

THE HIGHEST INTERVENTIONS ARE AROUND REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION

We're still seeing lots of people who we may be the only person they're meeting with on a daily basis. Our professional liaison interventions have gone up quite a lot, which has strengthened our network in partnership working. Interestingly, our spiritual interventions have gone up as well, I think as people have become more confident in us as a service. As our team builds those relationships and clients feel they can trust us, then they might ask us for prayer for a particular thing.

It can be simple things like offering to light a candle for someone if a loved one has recently died or if they're struggling with something. Mental health is still quite a big need, but that tends to be more of a core group of people rather than previously.

SOME OF OUR PREVIOUS CLIENTS

ARE NOW VOLUNTEERS WITH US

We had three guys who were clients originally through some of our outreach and recovery work who are now clean of alcohol and drug dependency, and volunteer with the project. They bring that real lived experience, which makes a massive difference when they're out on the street.

It's been really encouraging to know we are definitely making a long-term difference. We know we also help in the short term because a cup of tea for someone makes a difference. But it's that sustained kind of change in lifestyle that we're starting to see now, and that does impact on people on the streets and gives them hope as well.

WE'VE APPOINTED AN ADDITIONAL PARISH NURSE

We're excited about adding a new member to the team, especially someone who is a mental health trained nurse. It will increase our capacity massively to boost our interventions and make sure as we take on more volunteers that they're supported properly. It takes time to train volunteers and we want to invest in them. They are giving us their time and we want them to know they're valued.

INTERVENTIONS WILL INCREASE THIS AUTUMN AND WINTER

Two of our former clients have secured significant funding for a wellbeing café on

a Friday evening, to help serve people in recovery. The Anderson Green Programme (named after Scott Anderson and Ted Green) will help with lived experience and will certainly increase our interventions.

As the weather gets colder there will be people who don't have the money to pay for their electricity and heating bills. We've been doing a little bit of work with the warm welcome space in the market,



which is manned by the Council. We're looking at doing some joint work in and giving them a bit of a health focus. Hopefully with the addition of our new nurse we can meet that demand.



JAN-JUNE 2023 IN NUMBERS

Total volunteer hours:	438.5
Clients seen:	425
New clients:	133
Non-Christians:	311
Total interventions:	1,155

You can find out more about the Parish Nursing Project at

stmatthewscarverstreet.co.uk/parish-nursing-project

The High Sheriff of South Yorkshire on a recent visit to Carver Street on Parish Nursing Sunday.

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*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.*



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