



Diocese of Leeds

The Diocese of Leeds has marked its 10th anniversary this past weekend with a special service at Bradford Cathedral.

The service was in part led by the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, who has been visiting the region as part of the celebrations.

The service featured worship led by the Bradford Cathedral Choir and the worship band from Fountains Church Bradford, and began with a welcome from the Very Revds Andy Bowerman, John Dobson and Simon Cowling, Deans of Bradford, Ripon and Wakefield respectively.

Archbishop Stephen was welcomed by the Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, before moving to a time of hearing about the work of God in our five episcopal areas.

The Rt Revd Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford, spoke to the Revd Linda Maslen, Vicar at Fountains Church Bradford, about the ministry happening there and how they are working to bless the whole city.

The Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon, spoke to the Revd Chris Lawton about the challenges and joys of rural ministry, including his work as chaplain at Leyburn Auction Mart.

The Rt Revd Smitha Prasadham, Bishop of Huddersfield, spoke to Jo, Tilly and Bailey, young people who serve at Holy Nativity Mixenden, about their work supporting their local community.

The Rt Revd Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield, heard from a refugee from El Salvador, and shared about the work of City of Sanctuary in Wakefield.

The Rt Revd Arun Arora, Bishop of Kirkstall, spoke to the Revd Jon Swales about Lighthouse, a ministry to those battered and bruised by the storms of life based from St George's Crypt in Leeds, one of the biggest homeless shelters in the region.

As part of this time, Lepton School Choir sang a song about Loving, Living and Learning, matching our diocesan values.

The reading for the service was Ephesians 3: 7-21, and was given by Linda Baines, before Archbishop Stephen preached.

As part of his sermon Archbishop Stephen said: "The story of the Diocese of Leeds is nothing other than the story of God's love for us in Christ – the story of persistent love, and the story of a love that lives and learns.

"It's simply the latest chapter in the story of God's love taking root in this land, establishing itself, then growing and developing according to the needs and opportunities that arise, adapting to the conditions, never changing but always new.

"The Diocese of Leeds – its people, parishes, the beautiful, complex, diverse, challenging communities it serves; this is the place where God is

pleased to dwell, and out of this fair land, and built upon this rock, the people of God here, by the power of the Spirit, bear fruit.”

Prayers were led by the Chair of the House of Clergy in our Diocesan Synod, the Revd Canon Rachel Firth; Canon Matthew Ambler, Chair of the House of Laity; and Jonathan Wood, Diocesan Secretary.

The service ended with a commission from the Archbishop to all to carry on faithfully serving God in our region, before Bishop Nick and students from Lepton School cut the cake made to mark our anniversary.

Of the 10th anniversary Bishop Nick said: “The last ten years have seen some remarkable people do some very courageous things in letting go of past forms, creating new ones and helping grow a new diocese through constant change.

“In the last ten years we have faced and overcome many challenges – not least COVID and its consequent ongoing impact.

“There will be many more in the future as we seek to be faithful to God and the Church, sacrificially serving our communities and reaching out with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

“Each Anglican Christian and parish church can be confident that the God who calls us is faithful and empowers us by his Holy Spirit to be joyful and confident in our common mission and ministry.

“To all in our churches who have been part of growing a uniquely new diocese, I say a huge ‘thank you’.

“To those who doubted, but came on the journey anyway, I say an even bigger ‘thank you’.

“To those who bear the scars of this venture, I thank God for you and your commitment.

“We look back with gratitude and learning.

“We look forward to the next ten years with joy, confidence and anticipation.

“For Christ has risen; the Spirit has come; and together we are his Body.”

Photographs from the Missionary Visit Weekend:



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