

Reaping where we've sowed:

shoots of growth from the diocesan Generous Giving Team

In 2017 the Diocese of York resolved to appoint a Generous Giving Team to support churches on their generosity journey; the team began work in 2018 and the latest set of yearly statistics released nationally by the Church of England shows encouraging results of that decision.

Newly published in March 2023, the national church's 2021 Parish Giving Statistics show that in the Generous Giving Team's (GGT) first three years, the average weekly gift in the Diocese of York grew by 25.5%, compared with a national average growth of 15%. This placed the Diocese in the top four for growth in the country.

Generous Giving Officer Phil McBride said "The results here are a reflection of the hard work that has been done in the Diocese since 2018 to support churches. This support has taken many routes - from looking at how to join the Parish Giving Scheme, to orchestrating giving programmes and beyond. All these factors will have an effect on the weekly giving but to see York Diocese sitting near the very top of the country



in terms of growth is an achievement we can really give thanks for."

Phil's colleague Jan Grey added "We know this has been a team effort, with all our predecessors, church leaders and members of the Diocese leadership team all having committed to improving the financial situation of our parishes. However, generous giving is not all about money, but about showing our gratitude towards our generous God and that giving is an act of worship".

The statistics tables also allow a direct comparison of work the GGT did in 2020 with 2021, and again the results show how much of an impact the team has had. Of those churches that actively engaged, and where a member of the GGT came in to run a giving programme, an average rise in weekly giving of 26.1% was seen compared to 7% across the entire Diocese.

- To read the 2021 Parish Finances Statistics report in full see bit.ly/cofeparishfinance2021.

www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/generosity



TheNews

MAY 2023





The Church of England is sharing a range of resources for churches, individuals and households to use to celebrate the Coronation weekend and pray for His Majesty King Charles III and his family.


You can find Coronation reflections, suggestions and guidelines about community celebrations and volunteering, and useful information for churches, young people and families at:


- www.churchofengland.org/coronation
- See pages 4-5


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...and there's more...

To the Saints of the Diocese of York

The Bishop of Selby,
Dr John Thomson, writes:

The Big Weekend

I'll be shouting 'God save the King!' from South Africa as His Majesty King Charles III is anointed and crowned on Saturday 6th May in Westminster Abbey; parish churches all across the country will Ring for the King as choirs joyfully Sing for the King in all sorts of settings.

A team of us are visiting our link dioceses around Cape Town so will miss the Services of Thanksgiving that follow on the Sunday, along with the Big Coronation Lunch and Monday's Big Help Out. Hopefully we can join the Coronation Concert at Windsor on the Sunday evening.

It will indeed be a Big Weekend, yet with all this going on it is easy to forget that human monarchy was not welcomed by all in ancient Israel, as we see in 1 Samuel 8-10. For some, human monarchy rivalled God's monarchy and challenged the idea that the Lord is King. This can also be seen in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, which speaks of the dangers of abusive monarchy in its charter for a good Monarch.

However, for others the Monarch was the anointed one, the Messiah, the

figure responsible for ensuring that the nation kept faith with God. For Christians this monarchy of the Messiah is seen in Jesus, who washed his disciples' feet and embraced a sacrificial death on behalf of his people. And it is this vision of servant monarchy which is at the heart of the anointing and coronation of King Charles III.

So this Big Weekend I'll be joining you from South Africa to pray for King Charles III, as he is set apart for his calling as King by anointing with holy oil, the symbol of the sacral character of his reign.

And as King, may he live Christ's Story, the story of the Servant King.

God save the King!



+John Selby

Community and Welcome in Sleights: the St Oswald Community

Tucked away far along a lengthy and twisty lane behind a gate off the A169 at Sleights is the home of the St Oswald's Community, which for the last three years has continued the prayerful work and ministry of the former Pastoral Centre run for half a century by the Order of the Holy Paraclete.

Just as the COVID-19 pandemic broke over us in 2020, the Revds Jackie and Paul Reily arrived in Sleights fresh from six years as members of the Scargill House Community in the Yorkshire Dales and threw themselves into the plan to pick up where the Whitby Sisters had left off. They have built a resident community of five, with six other members living nearby, as well as a growing number of friends and volunteers spread increasingly far and wide.

St Oswald's offers a modest programme of events including residential, art-based retreats, but the community is keen not to allow the programme to impinge too far on their ability to wel-

come individuals in search of peace, prayer, restoration or just rest. 'Walking Weeks' and individually-guided retreats (IGRs) are understandably popular,

while the Revds Fran and Dr Gavin Wakefield return to the Diocese of York in June with a 'Northern Saints Pilgrimage' based at St Oswald's.

The comfortable, single-storey main building houses a library, a chapel, and (like the gardens) a number of hidey-holes for those seeking solitude for a period, as well as a cosy lounge and inviting dining room. Eight bedrooms can accommodate up to eleven catered guests, with

three self-contained 'studio flats' and a five bedroom house in adjacent buildings for those preferring to do their own thing.

The St Oswald's community is serious about its calling to offer hospitality and welcome, with opportunities to join in the care of the grounds just for the joy of it even if not staying. Take a look online at www.stoswalds.community, or give them a ring on 01947 810496.



Living Christ's Story:

-from planning to doing

Each of the 21 Deaneries in the Diocese of York worked with their parishes for several months in 2022 to compile a plan in the light of our Diocesan vision of Living Christ's Story, to include goals for the future and the allocation of people and resources to achieve them.

As the Deanery Plans reached the Diocese last autumn, they initially provided information to complete the Living Christ's Story Strategic Plan 2021-2031 which was overwhelmingly welcomed and endorsed by the York Diocesan Synod in November 2022.

Since taking up her post shortly after the Synod meeting, Diocesan Director for Strategic Transformation Sam Nicol has been reviewing the Deanery Plans and taking time to liaise with colleagues across the Diocese to understand both the contents and the status of each plan.

After Easter, consultations will take place to guide proposals for a way forward towards implementation of the plans.



"The Diocesan Leadership Team is committed to supporting deaneries and parishes with the implementation of their plans," said Sam. "This will be key to the next steps, along with ensuring that our available resources are used effectively."

Archbishop Stephen said, **"I'm thankful to everyone who plays their part in the consultations and the surveys."**

"We can never forget that we are people who are called to be part of the story of God's love, living and sharing that story with others."

"It's our call to Living Christ's Story that draws us together, gives fresh impetus to our mission, enables us to find new and inspiring ways to share the story with others - and that's where we pray our plans will lead us."

"That's the goal, and the prize."

www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/living-christs-story

Step Forward - vocations event for 18-30s

Archbishop Stephen welcomed about 45 visitors from across the northern province to Bishopthorpe Palace on the 11th March for Step Forward, an event for those aged 18-30 who are considering ministry in the Church of England; they would learn, reflect and pray together about God's calling on their lives.



After opening worship led by the Revd Hannah Richardson from the Diocese of Durham, participants reflected on their sense of calling in small groups, taking inspiration from the CPAS 'Talk Calling' resource. They explored the practical side of the discernment process with vocations advisers and Diocesan Directors of Ordinands (DDOs) from the Dioceses of Newcastle, Durham, and York.

Vic Wilson, coordinator of the Ministry

Experience Scheme (MES), introduced and explained the Scheme, and encouraged people to consider it both to gain practical experience and to give time to a discernment process. Ordained ministers from a wide variety of backgrounds spoke with groups about their own callings, their experiences of training, and their expressions of ministry in diverse contexts.

Chaplains, youth workers, self-supporting ministers and parish priests shared their experience of the range of roles clergy can hold.

Archbishop Stephen took on a number of challenging questions, and gave encouragement for people to commit themselves to Christ and in service to the world.

The Revd Canon Nick Bird, DDO for the Diocese of York, said: "The event was a

great success, and it was incredibly encouraging to see so many young people passionate about living out their calling to serve God. The feedback from those who attended was very positive, and we look forward to repeating the event next year."

- **Step Forward is a joint event organised by the Dioceses of Newcastle, Durham, and York.**

www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/vocations

The Coronation of HM King Charles III

- a pastoral letter from the Archbishops of York and Canterbury

March 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings in the name of the Lord!
We are writing to you to share with you our hopes, desires and prayers for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III on the 6th May.

The Coronation will be a historic moment in the life of our nation; a time to reflect on our history, reflect and celebrate something of who we are, and look forward.

The Coronation is steeped in this country's traditions and filled with great symbolism. It is essentially a consecration to service. Happening within a Eucharist, the most basic and the central act of Christian worship, it includes oaths, regalia and crowning. Through it we receive from Jesus the one who comes to us as a servant; the one who is the king of Kings.

The Coronation weekend and bank holiday is aimed at bringing the nation together in common meals and in helping and serving our communities through the Coronation Big Lunch and the Big Help Out.

It is, of course, part of every Christian's witness to commit joyfully to a life of

service to God and one another; a commitment the King has exemplified throughout his life. We pray this would be a moment for all to encounter afresh the person of Jesus Christ – the servant King – and be renewed in our calling to serve Him by serving others.

At the heart of communities across the country, particularly through your ministry, the Church of England will provide space for prayer and worship, as well as events where people of all faiths and none can gather together. This is an moment for us to witness to the love of Jesus Christ and a chance, in partnership with many others, to reach out and serve our communities.

You will know best how to do this in your own context and with the resources you have. We hope that no matter the size of your parish, cathedral or diocese, you will find an opportunity to celebrate and mark the Coronation in a way that is creative, joyful and meaningful with those in your local area.

The journey to the Coronation weekend starts after Easter, with a season of prayer. The Church of England has published a special book of prayers called 'Prayers for the Coronation of King Charles III'. Running for 28 days, from the 9th April (Easter



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Sunday) up to the Coronation Day, the prayer book has daily prayers, readings and reflections. It is available from Church House Publishing.

Nationally, the Church of England has produced a wide range of resources to help people pray, plan and mark this occasion – we warmly commend them to you. If you haven't had a chance to look at them yet, they are all available on the Church of England's website [cofe.io/Coronation] to download and adapt to your setting. They provide lots of simple ways for churches and congregations to get involved – from services and celebrations, to volunteering and community events.

To help the public find any services and events you may be organising, please do ensure you've listed these on

[AChurchNearYou.com](https://www.AChurchNearYou.com) as well as, [edenprojectcommunities.com](https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com) and [thebighelpout.org.uk](https://www.thebighelpout.org.uk).

The Church of England has the great privilege of a role at the heart of our national, local and community events. That also means we get to work in partnership with those around us – so do consider reaching out to other communities, traditions and groups and doing something together. Or perhaps endorsing and supporting a community-led event or initiative, if that works best for you in your context.

However you choose to mark the Coronation weekend, we hope this will be a time celebrating God's love and generosity, and making that love known in our communities and national life.

Finally, our prayer is for the fruitful ministry of Jesus Christ through each of us in these next weeks. As we come together to celebrate this historic occasion in our national life, we pray that we would all know the empowering of the Holy Spirit in each of us, personally and in those with whom we minister. May this be a wonderful time of serving others, reaching out to our neighbours, and celebrating our unity in diversity.

Yours in the service of Christ,

Stephen Cottrell; Archbishop of York
Justin Welby; Archbishop of Canterbury

www.churchofengland.org/coronation