

# ADMINISTERING GRACE

“It’s that time of year again...” the congregation groans, “the church wants more of our money”.

It’s a reaction a lot of us can identify with, and it’s tempting to be cynical about the way the church dresses up the topic with talk of mission. It’s not an easy subject to talk about, but it is an essential one to the growth of the Church.

When we give to one another and to our churches, we are – in Paul’s words – ‘administering grace’ (2 Cor 8.20). All our giving, and therefore our asking, must point in that direction – not simply asking for money for the sake of it, but communicating what that giving supports, pointing towards the glory of God. It may feel like ‘dressing up’ the subject, but it is key to the message of why our churches are here, and to our responsibility as disciples to resource and finance that ministry and mission to our communities. Our communities can be a great source of support at church, parish and deanery levels – as we resource one another, we strengthen ourselves as the body of Christ in the world, and our relation-



ships as deanery families.

Together, we can offer our communities an image of the generosity of God.

I preached recently about giving in the context of enabling mission, and was asked afterwards what mission actually is. It’s so important to get the language right, to deliver messages that are understood and not too broad or vague. Our message must be clear and relevant to our communities, so the link is visible between ‘my giving’ and ‘our weekly coffee morning’, ‘our pastoral care’, or ‘our children’s group’. It’s equally important to share those stories, plans, strategies, ideas and insights within our deaneries so that in turn we share our graces, blessings and challenges.

As the Generous Giving Team visits Deanery Synods in the coming months, do come and speak with us – along with DFAs, we are your resource, and we look forward to supporting you.

**Sammi Tooze**  
Generous Giving Adviser

[www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/generosity](http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/generosity)



MAY 2019

## HARTHILL DEANERY EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

**We met at 6.00am, just as the sun was coming up over the horizon, on a disused aerodrome in the middle of the countryside, with fantastic views over the Yorkshire Wolds.**

31 worshippers from across the Harthill Deanery gathered for our inaugural Easter Dawn Service early on a chilly Easter Sunday morning, when most sensible people were still fast asleep.

Led by Area Dean Jacki Tonkin, the service lasted about 25 minutes and we sang 'Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia' and 'You shall go out with joy' to finish.

There were no near neighbours to disturb – except for a few chickens and a cockerel, who crowed as only cockerels do - but nobody here denied knowing Jesus.

As the sun rose above the horizon, we welcomed the Risen Lord with some rousing hymns and uplifting words of scripture.

Danish pastries and Pain au Chocolat



were enjoyed after the service and we all vowed to return next year – after all – we’ve done it once and it’s now a tradition!

Our thanks to all who made the event possible.

**Martin Adams** - Lay Dean of Harthill

# 'EASTER STORY' PASSION PLAY 2019

**Despite the cold East coast winds over the weekend of Palm Sunday, hundreds of people (including many from outside the churches) attended the South Holderness Deanery outdoor Passion Play, "Easter Story".**

After its success in 2017, the Deanery produced the play again by popular request at Withernsea on Saturday 13th April and Hedon on Palm Sunday.



Church members had made props and costumes in 2017, but there was still considerable work in acting, publicising and stewarding and catering on the day. Methodist and URC churches assisted as well as two local amateur actors, and we were sup-

ported by the two Town Councils. Our own excellent Roman soldiers were amply supplemented by the imposing and realistic Legio VI Roman reenactment group who were movingly fierce when Jesus carried his cross. Bishop Alison joined us at both venues to add a closing address and blessing.

The play had been developed and used for many years by a Sheffield church, where it frequently became an introduction to church for people who later became members. It is deliberately simple to perform: it uses narrated mime which gives confidence to church members to have a go at acting and reduces the amount of sound equipment needed; it is written in verse which helps the story to keep moving; it uses portable props which can be taken anywhere, including a cross that is raised; and the audience stand round the action and move with the cast between scenes, which gives them a sense of participation in the drama as well as eliminating the need for seating.

The simple, low budget method of production is nonetheless always extremely powerful in its effect. This year, for example, a couple in the audience commented, "We've been to the York mystery plays, but they're not a patch on this."

**Philip West** - South Holderness Deanery

# WITH ARMS OUTSTRETCHED

IN MIDDLESBROUGH DEANERY

**Amongst the challenges, the joy and the excitement of Middlesbrough Deanery, one of our priorities is Mission in the outer estates on the east of the town where there is multiple deprivation.**

The parish church of St Thomas suffered structural issues and was closed and then demolished in 2007, leaving a huge area of several estates now attached to a neighbouring parish. The vicar, Father Terry Leathley, after prayer and with the support of the Bishop of Whitby and the Deanery, raised funds for a 3 wheeled 'Tuk Tuk' vehicle which is fitted out as a superior coffee station; both van and cups are decorated with the slogan, "GIVEN WITH GOD'S LOVE." Father Terry, now trained as a barista, drives the van to his regular stopping places several days a week to give out delicious free coffee, chat and listen, get to know people and share his faith. A venture not without adventure!

The Deanery Leadership Team (DLT) meets regularly, sometimes with the

Bishop and Archdeacon, to set priorities, to plan next steps and to pray. Another result of this is TOMMY'S, a youth group set up in St Thomas' parish and named after it, run by the Trinity Youth and Children's Project from the neighbouring parish of North Ormesby. TOMMY'S meets in the community hub, has a regular attendance of 40 and has become a very important part of the Church of England's presence and service in east Middlesbrough.



As another encouragement, we are recruiting two Church Army officers to live and work in this area as part of the Diocese-wide 20s to 40s initiative. We feel that at last things are moving.

All of these developments have caused us to be 'surprised by joy'. We rejoice that the journey has been underpinned and

accompanied not just by the regular DLT planning meetings, but by cross-parish support with regular, frequent and specific prayer for the area, supported by a wide range of people. We deliberately meet to pray in the community hub, and before leaving turn to face out of the windows and with arms outstretched invoke God's blessing on the people of the area.

**Kate Morris** - Lay Dean  
**Dominic Black** - Area Dean