



**WEST YORKSHIRE
ECUMENICAL
COUNCIL**

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Press Release; 1000 8th March 2011, for immediate use

Senior Church Leaders Support the Victims of Public Spending Cuts

- Senior Church Leaders in West Yorkshire have issued a joint Prayer for the most vulnerable people in society who will suffer in the cutbacks in public spending. They are urging churches across West Yorkshire to use it in their church services.
- At Leeds Civic Hall, at 12 noon, Wednesday 9 March – ‘Ash Wednesday’ – Church of England, Methodist and Roman Catholic leaders will hand a copy of the prayer to Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council. [*Leeds has to save £150m, and up to one in six employees risks losing their jobs*]
- The Church Leaders taking this action will be:
 - The Revd. Dr. Liz Smith, Chair of the Leeds Methodist District;
 - The Rt. Revd. John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds;
 - The Revd. Mgr. Michael McQuinn, Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Leeds.
- For the text of the prayer, and for a photograph of these three Church Leaders together, see www.wyec.co.uk

Speaking on behalf of the organisers, West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council, the Revd. Dr. Clive Barrett said,

“The churches share a concern for the most vulnerable people in our society. Children and elderly people will lose essential services, including from faith and voluntary sector charities reliant on public grants. This Ash Wednesday prayer is for the people who will lose vital services, people who will lose their jobs, and those who have the difficult task of deciding which cuts to make.

In prayer and practice, the Church Leaders are showing we must take responsibility for people in greatest need, for these are the people who are being hit the hardest.”

Following this, at 1.15pm, there is a special joint service in St Anne’s Roman Catholic Cathedral, Leeds. It brings together senior West Yorkshire Church Leaders from ten major Christian traditions. They will ask forgiveness for the part we have all had in causing the financial crisis. They will say this prayer for victims of the cuts, showing united Christian responsibility and solidarity for people in greatest need.

**For interviews and information,
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“God of compassion and justice, Give us courage to stand alongside those in greatest need” -Ash Wednesday prayer

BAPTIST CHURCHES members of Yorkshire Baptist Association
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Bradford, Wakefield, Ripon & Leeds
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
THE METHODIST CHURCH Leeds District, West Yorkshire District
THE MORAVIAN CHURCH Yorkshire District

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH Diocese of Leeds
THE SALVATION ARMY Yorkshire Division
THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS Yorkshire General Meeting
THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH Yorkshire Synod
WEST YORKSHIRE AFRICAN CARIBBEAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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