

Thursday 30 November 2023



Bishop Martin celebrates opening of Depden Care Farm's New Animal House



Depden Care Farm is delighted to announce the official opening of its new Small Animal House, marked by a special visit from Bishop Martin Seeley. The farm provides learning and training opportunities in agriculture, horticulture and environmental projects for adults with additional needs within a community which promotes personal transformation, accountability and

integrity.

Bishop Martin is a passionate supporter of farmers and farming in Suffolk, he is active in the House of Lords on farming and environmental issues and is President-elect of the Suffolk Agricultural Association. He marked the opening with a short prayer and cutting a ribbon. Service-users and staff shared their stories and experiences, highlighting the transformative power of the farm in enhancing physical and mental health, promoting social inclusion, and providing a supportive community for all its participants. Read the full story on our website [here](#).

Advent and Christmas Events

Follow the Star: Join the Song



A recording of the new Follow the Star carol has been released on all digital platforms including Spotify, iTunes, Amazon Music and YouTube. It is performed by St Martin's Voices, with organ and brass quintet. The Follow the Star song is a new version of the time-honoured text, *The First Nowell*, written by renowned composer, and former King's Singer, Bob Chilcott. More than 3,000 people have signed up to sing the carol so far

so the song will be performed by choirs up and down the country, as part of carol services and concerts for Christmas and Advent. Find out more [here](#).

The 'Follow The Star' Advent calendar is now available from [Church House Publishing](#), and other outlets, priced at £3.99 each or 10 for £35. It has been created by Clare Williams, Head of Schools and Family Learning at Norwich Cathedral, and Charlotte Cooke, a children's illustrator. Featuring a fold-out, stand up crib scene, stickers for every day of Advent and a rhyming Nativity story sheet, it tells the story of how – and why – Jesus came to be born in Bethlehem. Click for [free accompanying daily activities](#) and a Nativity play script inspired by the calendar.

The latest Digital Giving Newsletter has the latest 'Join the Song' backgrounds for devices and online giving. Find it [here](#) and if you need any help or have queries contact emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org



What young people are looking for at Christmas by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell.

Drawing near to God – Advent course with Bishop Mike

The first session of this Zoom course took place on Tuesday 28 November and the recording is now [available here](#). If you would like to join Bishop Mike for the other three sessions on:

- Tuesday 5 December
- Thursday 14 December
- Tuesday 19 December

Please email lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org for the Zoom link. The sessions will all be recorded and available from the website.



Advent Vigil – singers

needed! St Michael's: Church, Framlingham IP13 9BJ is hosting an Advent Vigil on Sunday 10 December. Music will be directed by Christopher Borrett, with the choir of St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich; Framlingham College

Chapel Choir and the Sing Praise! school choir. As well as traditional advent carols there will be anthems by Weir, Warlock, Heyburn and Rutter. Additional singers are invited to join

by attending the final rehearsal at 2.00pm on the day. Tea will be provided before the service commences at 5.30pm. If you would like to sing, email musicadmin@stmaryletower.org

Christmas Tree Festival: St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich looks forward to welcoming you to its famous free Christmas tree festival opening today. The festival will include more than 100 real and artificial trees sponsored or bought by a whole variety of businesses, charities, community groups and individuals. For more information visit www.stmaryletower.org.

St Nicholas Party: Come along and join in the fun with Barrow Benefice as they get ready for Christmas. Crafts, story, singing and refreshments for all the family, on Saturday 2 December, 3.30pm - 5.00pm, at Barrow Village Hall. For further information please contact revnicolagrievs@gmail.com.



Suffolk Carols: A joint initiative from Suffolk Sounds Radio and Lightwave to promote carol singing in all sorts of venues, strengthen community and raise funds for local charities. Any community carol-singing event between 4 and 24 December can join in. Please visit 'Suffolk Carols' [here](#), and register your event and the charity you are raising funds for and this will be advertised on Suffolk Sounds radio programmes and via the Suffolk Carols Facebook page.

Inspiring Angels: Get creative and join our Christmas campaign. Angels are a symbol of love, of presence, pointing the way to the moment it all changed, when God came in the person of Jesus to be with us in the world, to share in love and pain alongside us. All the resources for this campaign are available on our website [here](#).

An Advent Pilgrimage: St Mary's Church, Woodbridge, are hosting their meditative evening service on 3 December 5.30pm through word, song and silence. With St Mary's Choir and "Pop-up" Choir. All are welcome!

Peter & The Wolf Short Film Screening: Enjoy a screening of the Oscar®-winning short film Peter & the Wolf, with the Orpheus Sinfonia performing Prokofiev's beautiful composition alongside. Performances will take place in an undercover all-weather auditorium in the Abbey Gardens in Bury St Edmunds. Half-price tickets are available to all performances on Thursday 7 and Friday 8 December by adding the code **PATW50** to your booking. To purchase tickets, please [click here](#).

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Christmas Concert: On Saturday 9 December, 6.00pm, the boy and girl Choristers, together with the adult singers of the choir, will be performing a range of wonderful music for the season, together with plenty of opportunity for the public to join in with their favourite Christmas tunes.. Tickets are on sale now from just £8.00 and can be booked [here](#)

Lights of Love: On 10 December at 3.30pm, St Mary-le-Tower are holding a special

service to remember precious babies gone too soon. You are most welcome to join however long ago or recently your baby died, and at whatever stage in your pregnancy.

Depden - The Living Nativity! Taking place at 5.30pm and 7.45pm on the 14, 15 and 16 December. Step into the shoes of Mary and Joseph as you join them on their journey to Bethlehem. Along the way, you'll encounter friendly farm animals, humble shepherds, and radiant angels, each playing their part in this mesmerising tale. To purchase your tickets, please [click here](#).

Heigh-Ho, the Holly! Hexachordia Concert: A wonderful evening of medieval and Tudor mirth and merriment in words and music awaits on Saturday 16 December at 7.00pm, in All Saint's Church, Barrow. Tickets cost £12 and include mulled wine and a mince pie. To book, please [click here](#).

Christmas Tree Festival: Come along and celebrate with St Mary's Church, Stratford St Mary, 16 - 17 December for their Christmas Tree festival. From 10.30am - 4.00pm, £2 entry and children go free, with music and refreshments available. The festival will finish on Sunday with Carols by Candlelight at 4.00pm. Also happening is a festive preview evening on 15 December, at 7.30pm with drinks, canapés and a special performance from the Constable Singers. Booking is essential for the preview evening, please email harrietannaruth@gmail.com to book.

Christmas Carol Service: Come along to St Mary the Virgin, Thorpe Morieux, for their Christmas Carol Service on 31 December at 4.00pm. The service has been running for a few years and has a focus on refugees and aid work. Also present will be a choir -Tudor Rose, led by Kevin Slingsby, and refreshments will be available afterwards.

Events

The Work of the Bury St Edmunds Cathedral Archaeologist

Thursday 30 November, 7.00pm

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Come along for the final 'Cathedrals at Night' session with the Cathedral Archaeologist, Alison Dickens BA MCIFA. Alison will talk about what being a cathedral archaeologist entails, looking at the legal setting, responsibilities and how the archaeology of the Cathedral Precinct sits within the broader context of the historic Abbey of St Edmund. Tickets are just £10.00 for the talk, refreshments and a tour. [Book here](#).

Vocation Conversations

Tuesday 5 December 7.00pm - 8.00pm by Zoom



This is the second in a series of evening conversations for anyone who is thinking about the question 'how do I know what God is asking me to do?'. Everyone is welcome to join us on Zoom, this time Archdeacon David will share his vocational journey, with plenty of time for comments, questions and conversations. To book, please

[click here.](#)

Deanery Drop-In Sessions



Join various teams from the Diocesan office who are offering their advice on Children's and Families' Ministry, Youth Ministry, Giving, Grants, Discipleship, Communications and Vocations – a real opportunity to have conversations and help people. Do you have a burning question that you need advice about? Tell us in advance and we will be ready for you!

Our next Drop In Sessions are on:

St Mary's Church, Hadleigh IP7 5DT

| Wednesday 6 December | 3.00pm to 5.00pm book [here](#) or 6.00pm – 8.00pm book [here](#)

Zoom | Tuesday 23 January | 3.00pm to 5.00pm book [here](#) or 6.00pm – 8.00pm book [here](#)

Thomas Clarkson Centre, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JT | Tuesday 6 February

| 3.00pm to 5.00pm book [here](#) or 6.00pm – 8.00pm book [here](#)

St Augustine's Community Hub, Ipswich IP3 8TH | Monday 13 May | 3.00pm to 5.00pm book [here](#) or 6.00pm - 8.00pm book [here](#).

Emergency Services Carol Service

Monday 11 December, 7.00pm

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

You are invited to the annual carol service for our emergency services – police, fire and ambulance - from across the county. It is an opportunity for you to gather to thank them for all they do to protect people in Suffolk. The address this year will be given by Bishop Mike, there will be traditional carols, and music from the Suffolk Rock Choir, the Stowmarket Salvation Army Band and County High School Chamber choir. Please come along and join in, all are welcome.

Enhancing Pastoral Ministry

Wednesdays starting 10 January 2024, 7.30pm

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green IP14 5HJ

Enhancing Pastoral Ministry is a six-session course for people who are involved in pastoral care (e.g. Readers, Lay Elders, clergy, pastoral visitors) as well as those interested in a deeper understanding of this ministry. Covering a range of themes including: an introduction to Pastoral Ministry, Safeguarding and Pastoral Ministry, Developing our Listening Skills and more. The course is open to all and free of charge. To book and for more information, [please click here](#).

So What About the Old Testament?

Wednesdays starting 24 January 2024, refreshments from 7.00pm, sessions 7.30 - 9.30pm

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green IP14 5HJ

In this short course, Hugh Williamson will try to open our eyes to the different types of material in the Old Testament, with an eye on how we can apply it in our own times in both church and society. The course is open to all and is free of charge. This module is commended to those who are seeking Permission to Preach. For course dates, more information and to book please click [here](#).

In the beginning was the story... Approaching the New Testament

Starts 1 May 2024 7.00pm to 9.30pm

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green IP14 5HJ

This course looks at the beginnings of what became Christianity in the writings of the New Testament, and explores their narrative features. The New Testament writers passed on the gospel of Jesus Christ not as a collection of facts or doctrines, but as a series of stories that shaped people's lives. What can we learn from them about the challenges we face in doing the same in our day? The course is open to all and free of charge. Please book early [here](#).

Notices

Dwelling in the Word Passage for 2023-2024: At Advent 2023 we will change our Dwelling in the Word passage from Col 1.15-29 to a new passage - please forward suggestions for that passage (which we use at many diocesan meetings and other gatherings through the Church's year) by email to [Bishop Mike](#).

National Churches Trust Big Give Christmas Challenge: Thanks to an anonymous donor, donations to the National Churches Trust will be doubled up to Monday 4 December. Your donations give a last chance to protect and save some of our nation's churches. Donate [here](#).

Vacancies

[Director of Music](#) | Woodbridge

[Priest in Charge and Archdeaconry Mission Enabler](#) | Sproughton with Burstall, Copdock with Washbrook and Belstead

[Rector](#) | Beccles

River Church, Ipswich are recruiting various posts - all details at:

riverchurchipswich.org/vacancies

[Click here to print and share with others](#)

**The Bishops
of Suffolk**





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