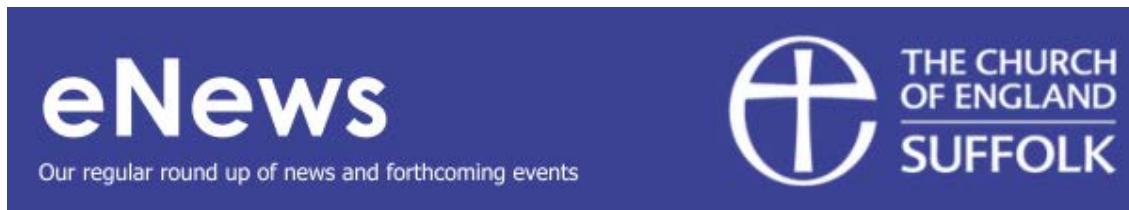


Thursday 8 February 2024



Bishop Martin helps launch the 2024 Big Farmland Bird Count



This year Bishop Martin is the Suffolk Show President-Elect, and last week he was a guest at Lodge Farm, Westhorpe, near Stowmarket. The Barker family, who run the farm, launched this year's Big Farmland Bird Count. The first such counting of wild birds was held at the farm in 2014.

Now an annual event, the aim is for thousands of farmers and land managers across the UK to spend 30 minutes in the first two weeks of February to observe the wild birds that flock to their land. Last year more than 19,000 birds from 100 different species were spotted at 93 counts in Suffolk.

The event is organised by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) and sponsored by the National Farmers' Union (NFU). Bishop Martin said: *"I started as Bishop here back in 2015 and ever since then I have been keen to support all the good work that our farmers do in our county, including the ways in which they care for our precious natural environment. Patrick Barker's experience and knowledge shone through as I learnt more about birds, winter feeding, habitat improvement and even about moths. I came away seeing once again that a farmer's day is never finished – and that in Suffolk we owe so much to our farmers who strive on our behalf to put food on our table and are the custodians of the countryside."* Read the full story [here](#).

Top-up shop tackles challenges faced by rural communities

The Revd Mandy Reynolds is a team vicar in the Wilford Peninsula Benefice, which includes the churches of St Felix and St Gregory in Rendlesham. Over the last five years, St Felix Church has grown into a thriving community hub, offering a Top-up shop and community café, which run every Tuesday. Mandy said people living in rural areas face different challenges to those living in towns and cities and require community resources to match those needs. *"Social isolation is a big challenge faced by people in rural communities,"* she said. *"In fact, many people come to the Top-up shop for the social aspect as well as to top-up their shopping. The social aspect has been so important – we hope this enables people to come along who wouldn't otherwise."* The Top-up shop is supported by the BASIC Life charity, which supplies food for the project. Lots of people attend the shop including pensioners Brian and Jean, who have been coming to the Top-up shop since it opened. Brian said: *"We are not regular church-goers but we come here because it's friendly and welcoming. We feel like we are part of the family."* Read the full story [here](#).



Celebrating Lay Elders



Over 100 Lay Elders from across the diocese gathered in Stowmarket for a Resource Morning on Saturday 3 February. Archdeacon Rich gave an extremely encouraging key note

address based on Acts chapter 2, the Revd Canon Sharon Potter led a workshop for Liturgical Elders and Karen Gardner and the Revd Canon Dave Gardner led a

workshop for Pastoral Elders. Here is a comment from someone who attended the morning: *"Thank you very much for providing us with such an uplifting morning on Saturday. We felt loved and appreciated. Archdeacon Rich's presentation and the other sessions and workshops were inspiring, helpful and encouraging, and the inclusion of thirty minutes in such a friendly setting for coffee, cake and chat was a great idea! I had several conversations with people I didn't already know, and the morning also created an opportunity for we four Elders who travelled together from our church to share thoughts, ideas and concerns."*

Lent

Bishop's Lent Appeal



The theme of the Bishops' Lent Appeal this year is **'Faith in Action – Transforming lives in Kagera.'**

Visitors to Kagera are always inspired by the people they meet and the work the church is doing there. Bishop Martin's presidency of the Suffolk Agricultural Association this year further connects us to our brothers and sisters in Kagera, many of whom are subsistence farmers, struggling with the effects of the climate crisis. The Diocese of Kagera is doing wonderful work to help its people and our support is vital. If you would like to raise

funds for Kagera please visit our website [here](#). You can order our fundraising booklets from kageralink@gmail.com

Follow Bishop Mike and others during their visit to Kagera

Bishop Mike is currently in Kagera, along with several curates and others gaining insights into life in communities abroad where people of faith not only survive at the sharp end of climate change but demonstrate enthusiasm and joy. To see the thoughts and reflections of those accompanying Bishop Mike please visit this website page [here](#).



You can follow stories about the trip on our website blog [page](#) and our Facebook page [here](#).

Watch and Pray Lent Resources



The Church of England's Lent theme for 2024 is Watch and Pray: Wisdom and hope for Lent and life. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus kneels in darkness in the

Garden of Gethsemane. Though he pleads with his disciples, "*Stay here with me ... Watch and pray,*" they all fall asleep, leaving him alone in his hour of deepest suffering.

This Lent, we are all encouraged to draw on the wisdom of Black Spirituality, particularly the practice of "tarrying" (waiting) as a community to draw closer to Jesus and to each other. Combining exuberant singing, fervent prayer and quiet lament, such services typically take place at night and last somewhat longer than the "one hour" Jesus asked of those first followers. For further Lent resources please visit our website [here](#).

Come and See Lent Course

In person: Thursdays starting 15 February, 1.30pm-3.00pm

Online: Wednesdays starting 21 February, 7.00-8.00pm

St Edmundsbury Cathedral/Zoom

Join either virtually or in-person for 'Come and see', a five-session Lent course at St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Using new material from his forthcoming book "Meeting God in John", David Ford, Professor of Divinity Emeritus at the University of Cambridge, invites you to reflect upon how John's Gospel draws us into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ who is 'The beginning and the end' and 'in whom all things were made'. To join online, please email chriseyden@stedscathedral.org to receive the Zoom link. To join in person, please [book here](#) and choose either the free-to-attend Lent course, or the Lent course with lunch (£5.00 per session). Spaces are limited.

Walk the Way of the Cross with the Blyth Valley Churches this Easter!

This spring the churches of the Blyth Valley are giving you the opportunity to visit the Holy Land without leaving Suffolk! Across their 14 churches they are presenting an exhibition of original paintings by nationally acclaimed, local religious artist Iain McKillop. Opened by Bishop Mike leading a full set of reflections for a seated congregation at All Saints', Blyford, at 7.30pm on Friday 15 March. The Queen's Head, Blyford, will be open afterwards so people may stay and buy refreshments. On Saturday 23 March, Team Rector Dominic Doble and colleagues will lead a pilgrimage presenting a short contemplation at each parish church in the benefices. All churches will be open during daylight hours. For all the details please visit [here](#).

Bread of Life course

Each Saturday in Lent beginning 17 February and ending on 23 March. Starting 10.00am at St John the Evangelist, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3QW. This course will help

you explore faith through the lens of the Eucharist. All welcome. For more details contact the Revd Ali Miller on 01284 728714.

Events

Big Weekend of Prayer for Farming

16-18 February



We would love for you to pray for our farming community in whatever way which is appropriate to you, in your location/context. Please share any thoughts/reflections from your time of prayer on the Facebook page [@suffolkinprayer](https://www.facebook.com/suffolkinprayer), or email them to Suffolkinprayer@gmail.com.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral to welcome prehistoric visitors

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1LS

February half-term 19 - 23 February



The dinosaurs are from Teach Rex, who provide creative workshops that ignite young minds and imaginations. On Wednesday 21 February, the dinosaur animatronics will be teaching and entertaining audiences at two sessions, one at 10.00am to 11.30am and the second from 2.00pm to 3.30pm. Tickets are on sale and are £8.00 each. As well as Teach Rex, there will be additional free-to-attend prehistoric-themed activities for

families. These arts and crafts sessions will be on Tuesday 20 February at 10.00am and Thursday 22 February at 2.00pm. Both sessions are two hours in duration and the whole family is welcome.

Concert of Hope

Friday 23 February, 7.00pm

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1LS

A charitable concert for Hospices of Hope to mark the date of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Featuring Eileanora and Tap, Alina Rybina, The Buskerteers Choir and more. Money raised from the concert will go to First Children's Hospice in Nadvirna, Ukraine which is supported by UK-based Hospices of Hope. Tickets and more information from [here](#).

Major Donor Training

Monday 19 February, 7.30pm or Tuesday 20 February, 10.30am

Bookings are now live for the ChurchGrant training on major donor fundraising for church appeals. From decades of church-related major fundraising capital appeal experience, you will learn how to identify major donors already within your networks, how to find new major donors and know how best to approach these and gain the confidence in how to 'present the ask' and 'close the ask' [Book here](#). Don't forget to use CHURCH10 to get 10% off.

Churchwardens' Gathering for Sudbury and Suffolk Archdeacons

Saturday 24 February at 10.00am-3.30pm

Sizewell Hall Christian Conference Centre, Leiston IP16 4TX

Archdeacon David and Archdeacon Rich invite churchwardens to gather for a day of fellowship, worship and reflection. The keynote speaker will be Bishop Graeme Knowles. Offering a space to be with others to share ideas, support and encourage. Bring your own lunch, drinks are provided. Booking essential as places are limited. Book via [Eventbrite here](#).

How to make your toddler group more missional

Saturday 24 February, 2.00pm

Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

An opportunity for anyone involved in toddler group ministry to explore ways to make your sessions more intentionally missional. You'll hear from those who are already doing this well and also explore resources and strategies which can help you. There will be time to share your own ideas, hopes and frustrations, plus a chance to pray for one another. Refreshments will be provided. [Book here](#).

Deanery Drop in Sessions



We have looked at your Plans for Growth to see if there were any common themes or areas that you need help with. To support you we are offering a number of [drop-ins](#) around the diocese to give you a chance to get the help you need, this is an exciting opportunity to meet the various teams from the Diocesan office who are there to offer advice on Children's and Families' Ministry,

Youth Ministry, Giving, Grants, Discipleship, Communications, Vocations or anything else you'd like to ask – a real opportunity for us to have conversations and help people.

For a full listing of the drop-in dates please click [here](#). Drop-in sessions coming up are:

Zoom Wednesday 27 February	3.00pm - 5.00pm: book here	6.00pm – 8.00pm: book here
St Luke's Church, Beccles NR34 9JQ Thursday 21 March	3.30pm - 5.00pm: book here	6.00pm – 8.00pm: book here
Thomas Clarkson Centre, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JT Tuesday 23 April	3.00pm - 5.00pm: book here	6.00pm – 8.00pm: book here
St Augustine's Community Hub, Ipswich IP3 8TH Wednesday 15 May	3.00pm - 5.00pm: book here	6.00pm - 8.00pm: book here .

Church Army Discovery Days

Monday 26 February, 7.00pm to 9.30pm, online
or Saturday 13 April, 10.00am to 3.00pm, Wilson Carlile Centre, Sheffield.

If you have a heart to see people reached with the Good News of Jesus Christ, then you're invited to attend this event and discover how you can train as a Church Army Evangelist. Free to all. Further information is available [here](#).

Christian Ethics

Starting Tuesday 27 February, 7.30pm-9.30pm
Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green IP14 5HJ

This module explores the history of ethical thought and also everyday issues and moral questions from capitalism to the environment. The module aims to further develop moral thinking, appreciation and judgment that is appropriate within the context of Christian teaching and pastoral ministry, and Christian living. The sessions are on Tuesdays for 6 weeks, starting 27 February 2024 and finishing 16 April (no meetings during Easter). Refreshments will be served from 7.00pm for a prompt 7.30pm start and finish by 9.30pm. This module is open to all but a requirement for locally deployable curates. To book, please [click here](#).

Listening to Your Soul

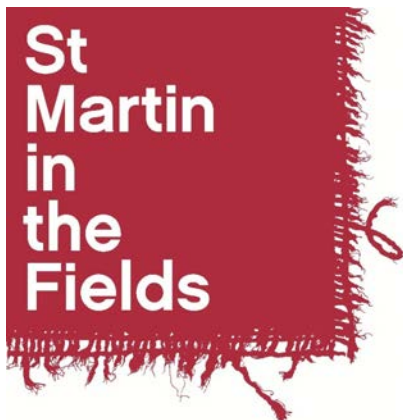
Saturday 2 March, 9.30am - 12.30pm
Stowmarket Salvation Army Hall, Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket IP14 1NE



"If you could be your own best friend, that would be your soul... she holds wisdom, insight and experience, compassion and courage - and offers them to you." How do we find wisdom for the spiritual journey? A morning to feed your soul. Led by the Revd Julia Mourant, Programme Leader for the Course in Spiritual Direction at Sarum College, Salisbury, where she also teaches in the Centre for Formation in Ministry. This free event is open to all. To book, please [click here](#).

Concert and Workshop

Wednesday 6 March, Workshop 4.00pm to 5.00pm, Concert 6.30pm to 8.00pm
All Saints' Church, Hitcham IP7 7NN



An invitation to join a singing workshop led by the St Martin-in-the-Fields Choral Scholars, directed by Andrew Earis. Suitable for local choirs/singers and anyone who is interested. The concert will include reflections from the Revd Sharon Grenham-Thompson. Tickets cost £7.50 to include refreshments. Please note the church has a toilet and a large car park signed from the B1115 - Sat Nav IP7 7NR. There will be a break from 5.00pm - 6.00pm, please bring your own packed meal, tea and coffee will be available.

Contact RNFCurrie@gmail.com to register your interest

and receive more information.

Edmund Lecture | Dame Barbara Woodward DCMG OBE

Friday 15 March, 6.30pm-7.30pm - **NEW DATE**

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Thank you so much for your patience, we are delighted that the Edmund Lecture with Dame Barbara Woodward DCMG OBE has been rebooked. The Ambassador will explore parallels between the Magna Carta, as the 'great charter' which laid the foundation for the modern British values of rule of law and equality before it, of liberty and rights, and the UN Charter, which established the international rules and values that have underpinned relative peace and stability since the second World War. The Lecture will be followed by a special service of Vespers at 7.30pm to which all are welcome. Vespers is a liturgy of evening prayer that, for centuries, was part of the daily rhythm of prayer kept by the monks at the Abbey of St Edmund. To book your place, [please click here](#).

Here I am

Friday 22 March, 9.30 - 4.00pm

Ridley Hall, Cambridge CB3 9HG

A day conference for young women and non-binary people to explore ordination. Come to reflect on God's call, to hear about practicalities, to ask, to meet and to pray. Hosted by Church of England ministers from a range of perspectives and experiences. All are welcome. More information is available from The Revd Wendy Thomson at wendy@chatteris.org. To book visit [here](#).

Gather: The Big Weekend 2024

Friday 12 April 2024 6.00pm to Sunday 14 April 4.00pm

Sizewell Hall, Leiston IP16 4TX



A weekend of craziness, worship, games and friendship all focused around learning more about living as a Christian in the C21st. The Big Weekend is organised by the Church of England in St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and run by experienced youth workers from around Suffolk. Offering young people from school years 7-13 the chance to explore

faith and have fun! Book [here](#).

Doctrine

Tuesdays starting 30 April 2024, 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Venue to be announced

A six-session course led by Bishop Mike unpacking the Apostles' Creed so we can apply this to our own lives, understand our faith better and be able to articulate the faith to others helpfully. Subjects include God (including as the Trinity); Jesus; The Cross; Resurrection; Holy Spirit and Eternal Life. Bishop Mike will provide notes beforehand so most of the

sessions can be spent in conversation, Q & A and going more deeply into areas participants want to explore further. For more information 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 course is open to all and free of charge. Please book [here](#).

Supporting Bereaved Children and Young People

Thursday 16 May, 10.45am to 3.00pm

Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk

Open to clergy and laity of all denominations and organised by the Guild of All Souls, an Anglican charity whose objects are praying and caring for the sick, dying, departed and bereaved. Visit their website [here](#).

Cost of the conference is £20, including welcome coffee/tea and a two-course lunch. To book, please email mihoward@btinternet.com.

Clergy Retreat - Led by Bishop Martin

7 - 11 October 2024

St Andrew's Abbey, Zevenkerken-Brugge, Belgium

The best kept secret in the Diocese! Since 1960 when there was a formal link with Brugge a group of hardy clergy have braved the sea and weather to travel to the Abbey to spend time with the wonderful brothers at St Andrew's Abbey. Speakers in the past have spoken on a range of subjects from World Mission, The Psalms, and more. There are approximately 15 spaces available and you can come with spouses/partners. For more details or to book please contact the Revd David H Messer on 01964 563987 | davidharrymesser93@gmail.com.

Notices

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Pews for sale: St Edmundsbury Cathedral is evolving, and part of its change is introducing chairs to the Nave. This means Cathedral pews will be offered for sale to the community and local people in February, both as they are, and as refurbished furniture and useful items. If you are interested in buying a Cathedral pew, or hearing more about their refurbishment project with Rough Stuff, please visit their [website here](#).



Christian Aid Week (12 - 18 May 2024): It may seem a long way off but it will upon us before we know it! If you would like someone to speak on the work of Christian Aid either during that week or in the weeks before, please get in contact with The Revd Richard Stainer, who will be happy to speak either as part

of a service or to any group that would like a speaker to raise awareness about Christian Aid. Please email richard.stainer14@gmail.com

Martyn's Law consultation: The Home Office has announced a public consultation on the standard tier of Martyn's Law, which will apply to nearly all churches and church halls. New legislation is proposed to ensure stronger protection against terrorism in public places. The consultation is seeking views to make sure the new requirements do not place 'undue burdens' on smaller businesses. Please share the [consultation link](#) widely and encourage participation. The Home Office is offering a webinar for tier 1 premises impacted by the proposals. This will be on Tuesday 13 February 3.00-4.00pm. [Click here](#) to join the meeting (Meeting ID: 363 528 239 546, Passcode: g6w29o).

Felixstowe schools' chaplain to improve mental health: The Federation of Fairfield and Colneis School in Felixstowe have appointed a volunteer chaplain for the first time to help children with their mental health. Read the full story [here](#).

Annual Diocesan Confirmation Service: A reminder that you are again warmly invited to bring candidates to this year's annual Diocesan Confirmation Service led by Bishop Martin at St Edmundsbury Cathedral: 10.30am on Sunday 5 May 2024. If you plan to bring candidates on that day, please get in touch with Canon Philip Banks in good time to make arrangements: precentor@stedscathedral.org.

National Lottery Heritage Grants is open: The new National Lottery funding programme is launched including the Heritage 2033 guidance for grants from £10,000 up to £10m. Applications have been simplified and requirements are more proportionate to the amount of money you're applying for. Find out more [here](#).

Vacancies

[Rector](#) | Walton and Trimley | Closing date: 11 February

[Priest in Charge & Archdeaconry Mission Enabler](#) | Sproughton, Burstall, Copdock with Washbrook | Closing date: 13 February

[Rector](#) | The Benefice of Badwell Ash & Walsham-le-Willows | Closing date: 19 February

[Diocesan Mission Enabler](#) | Closing date: 19 February

[Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Officer](#) | Closing date: 26 February

[Welcome Assistant](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral | Closing date: 27 February

[Director of Music](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral | Closing date: 5 March

[River Church Opportunities](#) | Ipswich

[New Opportunities in Ipswich](#) | Inspiring Ipswich

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





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