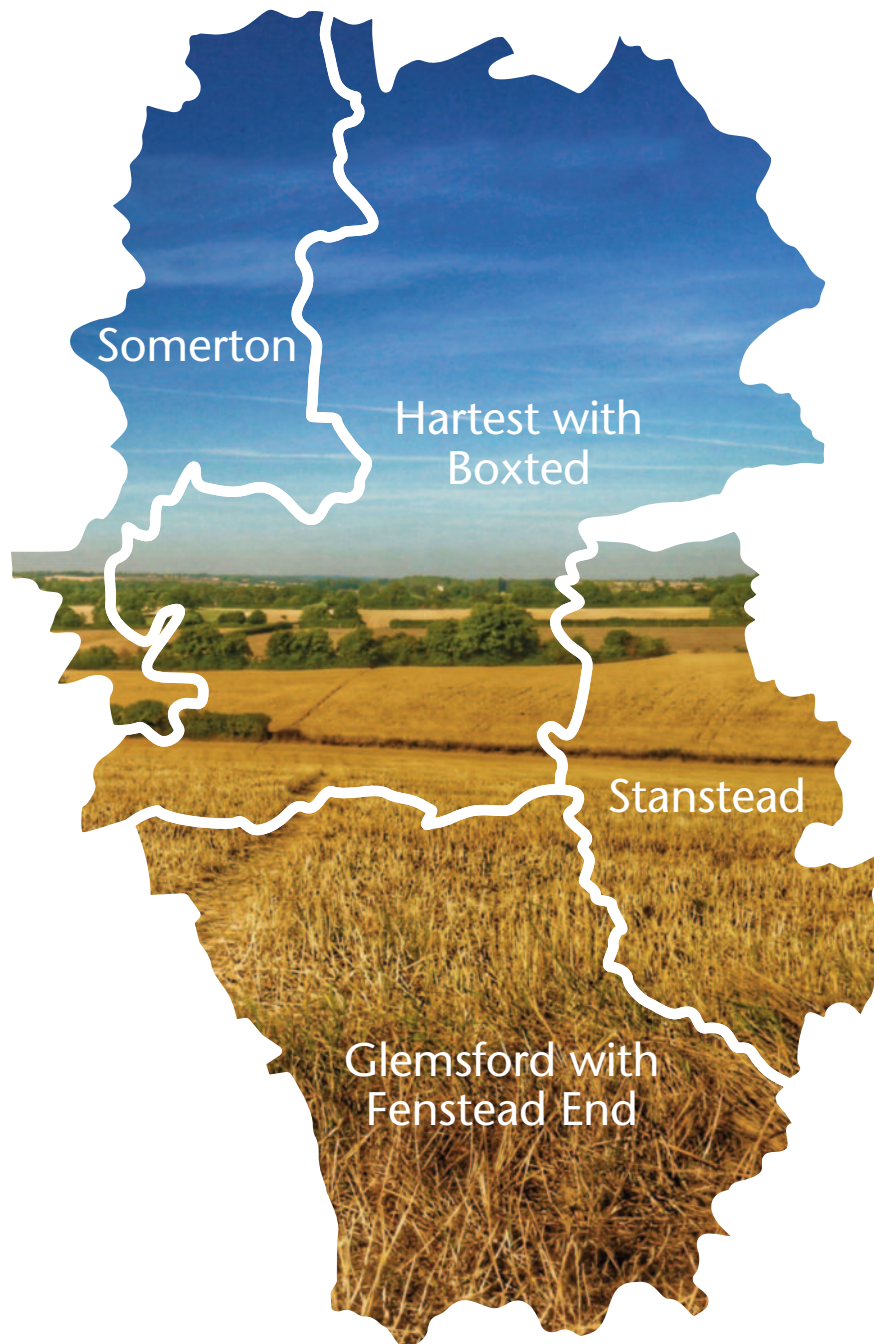




# The Glem Valley United Benefice

We're looking for a new incumbent



## The Glem Valley United Benefice

### B E N E F I C E P R O F I L E

**Welcome** Welcome to the Glem Valley Benefice, and thank you for expressing an interest in the role of Rector here.

In this profile you will find plenty of information about each of our five churches (in four parishes) and the people and the current activities going on in and alongside church. We have thought and prayed about the kind of person who might lead us and help us grow our congregation and be examples of God's love in our villages. Are you that person? What can you offer us that we have not thought of?

We are currently looking for a Rector working on a 0.75 basis (3.5 days per week plus Sundays), three quarters stipend plus housing. Further details may be obtained from Archdeacon David Jenkins. Read on and we hope you will be inspired to take the next step.



**Our Benefice** The Glem Valley United Benefice comprises four parishes (five churches) located in attractive undulating country- side in South-West Suffolk. It was formed in 1991. The population of the entire benefice is a little under 5,000, the majority (nearly 3,700) living in Glemsford, which has a range of shops and other amenities, including a primary school, library, GP surgery and pharmacy. The other parishes are Hartest with Boxted, Stanstead and Somerton; further details of each church and village may be found below.

Within easy reach are the vibrant and busy market towns of Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury, which offer many of the usual shops, as well as smaller independent retailers and some excellent cafés and restaurants. Regular bus routes through Glemsford and Hartest serve Sudbury and/or Bury St Edmunds, with dedicated school buses serving the secondary schools and colleges in the area.



There are two primary schools; Glemsford Primary Academy, with about 250 pupils, from 2-11 years old, and Hartest Church of England Primary School with 72 pupils ranging from 4-11. Both Primary School headteachers (Glemsford and Hartest) have good relations with their parish churches and the clergy have been involved in regular assemblies as well as occasional services

in the churches. The headteachers would welcome a deeper engagement with the parishes. Older pupils attend schools or academies in the surrounding towns of Sudbury, Clare, Haverhill or Bury St. Edmunds.

Bury St Edmunds is home to the local West Suffolk Hospital, which offers a range of specialities, as well as an A & E department.

The beaches and resorts of Aldeburgh and Southwold lie about an hour's drive to the east. Theatre, cinema, and concerts are in abundance in both the Sudbury area and Bury St Edmunds; the historic and preserved Theatre Royal and the Apex Centre, both in Bury St Edmunds, provide year-long programmes of plays and concerts to suit all tastes and age ranges, and the world-renowned Concert Hall at Snape Maltings near Aldeburgh provides the very best of classical music and opera.

## **The Opportunity**

**We are seeking someone who is:**

- An energetic priest with a passion for reaching out and engaging with the community
- A leader, but also a team player who can quickly establish a good working relationship with our Self Supporting Minister and the parishes
- Able to communicate with people from a range of backgrounds
- Keen to foster spiritual growth in our congregations and encourage the further development of mission and ministry, for example through study courses, pastoral care, and evolution of the Benefice Plan
- Willing to engage with families and young people through schools, Messy Church and creative Sunday services and other activities
- Supportive of modern, informal and traditional forms of worship, with an inclusive approach
- Sympathetic to the rural setting of our parishes and environmentally aware

**What we can offer:**

- Enthusiasm to work together with the priest as a benefice
- Shared desire to grow as disciples of Christ and encourage new followers
- Receptive to ideas for change and open to your ideas on developing our worship.
- A desire for our churches to be central to village life
- Active and co-operative communities with a range of talents
- Living in a delightful part of the country amongst friendly villages

Our committed congregations and part-time curate offer a warm welcome and a willingness to work together with you across all four parishes. Our churchmanship in the Glem Valley benefice varies a little across the parishes, but can be described as central Anglican. The current pattern of services is focussed on Holy Communion (Order 2 in contemporary language) and Morning Prayer, with a monthly BCP Evening Prayer at Boxted and BCP Holy Communion at Glemsford, which has a loyal congregation.

A more informal service, 'Sunday Celebration' is held once a month at Hartest with prayer, worship, songs and a talk. We have coffee and refreshments before the service which is a good chance to meet each other. It has been attracting a wider following, and is geared towards both adults and children. Since the disruption to services caused by the Covid pandemic, a mid-week Evening Prayer service has been held on Zoom.

Messy Church, held bi-monthly in the Village Hall, was started in Glemsford in 2014 as an ecumenical venture with the local Methodist church and has attracted a varied following of regular and occasional families, most of whom had no previous contact with the church. Following Covid, the Messy Church team requires rebuilding prior to a re-launch.

'Family at Church' is a more recent initiative, started just before the pandemic. It is an interactive service, with small numbers initially, but one we see as having potential, with the increasing number of families that we are in contact with.

There is a pastoral Visiting Group currently in preparation, with representatives across the benefice.

If you would like to live in a beautiful part of the world, the Glem Valley offers a very appealing rural location.

Home life and a balance of work and other elements are important. A primary school, a GP surgery, library and shops are nearby. We respect the fact that your hours are part time and aim to support you in keeping your time boundaried, to help you thrive.

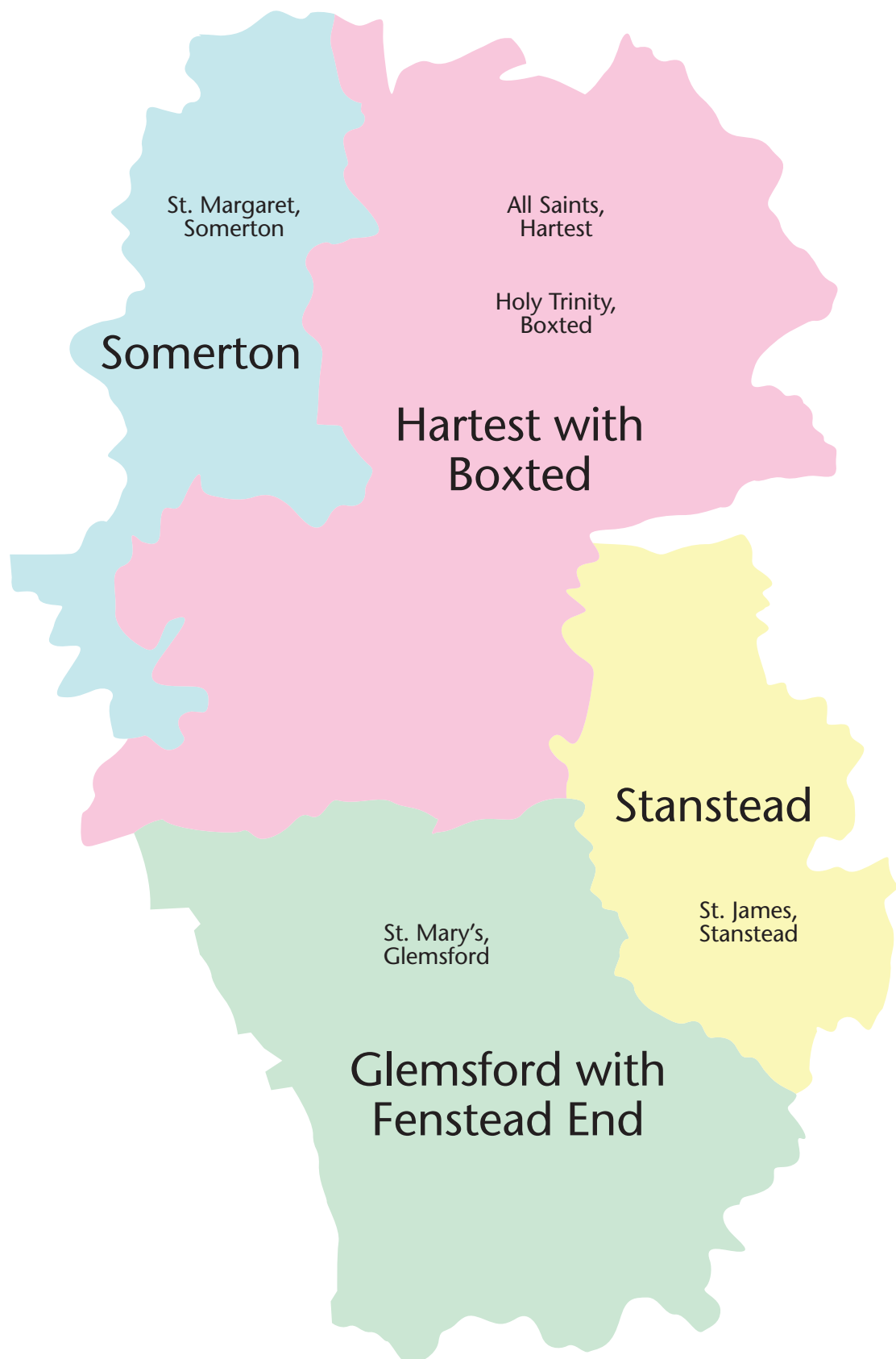
We are in the process of procuring a new Rectory, but will be offering a Green Guide compliant house in Glemsford.

### **Who you will be working with**

There is a self supporting assistant priest, Revd. Julia Perkins, who gives 20 hours per week in the Benefice. Julia was ordained priest in 2021 and is currently completing the final elements of her training. She has lived in Glemsford for over 20 years, and was previously a Lay Elder in the Benefice, having been instrumental in setting up Messy Church here.

There is a small Methodist congregation in Glemsford, with an excellent relationship and covenant with the Anglicans in Glemsford. Each church promotes the others' services.

# Our Churches and Villages



## Parish of Glemsford



Glemsford as a community is notably friendly and very lively. Its population is made up of many families, as well as the retired, professionals, tradespeople and the self-employed. It is a village with an industrial past (silk weaving, horsehair and coconut matting manufacture) as well as an agricultural one. There are: two small supermarkets, one a general store which includes the village Post Office, selling everything from milk to paint, and a more conventional Spar mini-market. The village boasts two takeaways, a fish and chip/kebab outlet and a well-regarded Chinese. There is an excellent farm shop and café on the road between Glemsford and the nearby village of Cavendish. Mobile fish and butcher's vans visit weekly. There is also a combined surgery and pharmacy which serves the wider area and which hosts four GPs.

Other outlets include hairdressers, a beauty salon, cycle and garage services and a tyre factor.

There is a thriving Primary Academy housed in an attractive Victorian building, and an active village library with associated clubs and reading schemes.

The village is fortunate in having numerous clubs and societies, representing many interests. These include the Women' Institute, Gardening Club, Film Club, Kurling and Exercise Classes, with the largest numerically probably being Glemsford Local History Society, with some 70 members. The Friday Café is a popular rendezvous for mums and toddlers run by volunteers, started some years ago by church members.



There are four meeting rooms in the village. The Old School Hall (previously the Church Hall), is a separate charity which is managed by Trustees appointed by the PCC. This is the meeting place for a number of village groups, including the Brownies and WI, in addition to church-sponsored events such as the Tuesday Coffee Shop and the Lunch

Club, attended by around 20 older village residents each week.

Glemsford village hall is currently undergoing renovation and gaining a new extension and is the meeting place for larger events. The Methodist church also has a recently modernised hall attached (The 'Tye Green Centre') and Glemsford Social Club, with a hall and stage, also offers some catering facilities. All are available for villagers to use. Glemsford has one small residential care home, 'The Briars' where, prior to the Covid pandemic, a joint Anglican/ Methodist team held short monthly services. We have just been invited to re-start services there. St Mary the Virgin, is situated at one end of the village, overlooking the Glem Valley. Like many East Anglian churches it is built in the late-perpendicular style of the C15th consisting of stone, flint and a few Roman bricks from a previous church on the site. It overlooks the north slope of the village towards Stanstead





and commands a view of that parish church. St Mary's is Grade 1 listed. About 10 years ago, toilets were installed and some pews were removed, providing a large carpeted area and servery at the back of the church, suitable for a variety of events. Part of the churchyard has recently been devoted to a wild flower and wildlife area in common with other churchyards in the benefice. St Mary's has recently achieved a bronze environmental

award from A Rocha UK under its *Ecochurch scheme* and is working towards a silver award. We are also part of CTiS – 'Churches Together in Sudbury & District', taking part in joint initiatives and supporting each other.

There is a peal of six bells in the tower, with practice taking place each Monday. The ringers also support bellringing at Hartest – and vice-versa.

St Mary's Parochial Church Council meets regularly and consists of a mix of long-serving members and new blood. There is a Fabric sub-committee charged with guiding the PCC on matters concerning the church structure.

Fundraising helps to raise the church's profile and takes place at various venues; in recent years this has included a Summer Fete, a Fashion Show, Cheese and Wine evening, a Gala Auction and a Christmas Bazaar. These events draw in a wider group of supporters.

## **Parish of Hartest with Boxted**

### **Hartest**



Hartest is a small village surrounded by arable farmland with numerous and well-marked public footpaths and bridleways providing unparalleled access to this picturesque part of the Suffolk countryside.

The villages of Hartest and Boxted lie adjacent to each other within the Glem Valley, about eight miles equidistant from the vibrant and busy market towns of Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury. Hartest has 450 inhabitants. At the geographical centre of Hartest is the village green next to which sits the popular Crown pub, and the Hartest & Boxted Institute, a beautiful village hall.



This is home to the numerous and well-attended village clubs and societies as well as the popular monthly Farmers' Market selling local produce and crafts.

Also sitting by the Green and at the heart of our community in Hartest is All Saints' Church. All Saints' Church, together with the Institute and Hartest C of E Primary School nearby, form the busy hub of the Hartest village community. It is a beautiful



mediaeval building with a peal of six bells rung regularly. There are twice monthly services providing worship for adults and children. On the third Sunday of each month there is a service of Holy Communion (Common Worship) at which the attendance is generally in the region of 20 people.

Hartest Church School has regular assemblies given by the Rector and occasional services held in the church. To develop and strengthen these connections, we have been working

with the school and the PTA to provide support materials for teachers to use in the church building; in investigating their local history and surroundings, by exploring the sounds of bells, organ or voices within the building or by measuring, drawing and writing about features of the building's shapes or materials. In the new year we hope to be working with the teachers to pilot these ideas in practice and encourage local children to feel that this ancient building is part of their lives and their inheritance.

Our PCC is a vibrant group reflecting a variety of backgrounds, life-experiences, and ministry skills and we work closely and in harmony with the other PCCs in the Glem Valley Benefice, working on joint strategies for ministry in the community and in the administration of the parish. This is supported by a dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers providing cleaning and maintenance expertise. In the past two years we have installed a new kitchen, and disabled lavatory facilities in the church.

Our fundraising has been assisted by the receipt of grant funding from the National Churches Council and other bodies as well as the continued help of the Friends of Hartest Church. The 'Friends' is a large organisation of villagers whose fund-raising over many years has been a blessing. Concerts and activities are held regularly in the church. In 2022 we have held a number of sell-out concerts given by local Suffolk ensembles, one of which raised over £2,000 for the Ukrainian Refugee Appeal, and was attended by members of a Ukrainian refugee family who have been housed in the village by one of our parishioners.

Our biggest fund-raising event is the annual Hartest Village Fete which is held on the village green every August Bank Holiday. This is a traditional event and popular throughout Suffolk, which in recent years has developed to involve local entertainers. The fete is organised by the church and the village school PTA and all profits are split equally. The fete this year brought in more than £7,000.

As you can see, we are a vibrant, enterprising, and forward-looking parish and we look forward to welcoming a new Rector who will continue our growth in faith, sharing our vision and energy for the future and reaching into our flourishing village community here in Hartest.



## Boxted



The Church of Holy Trinity, Boxted is situated on a hill to the west of Boxted Hall, the seat of the Poley and the Weller-Poley family for approx. 600 years. The parkland between the Hall and the Church was described in 1631 as “*the church hill lying up to the church with the warren of Conyes*”. It is possible that the building was erected as a chapel-of-ease to Hartest. The livings of Hartest and Boxted have been held together since 1224 when the Badwell family was living at the Hall.



The church is filled with floor-stones and hatchments of the Poley family, but the earliest surviving monument is a palimpsest brass to Richard Poley (1468-1547).

In 2005, the decision was made to use the Hall as a business base, available for short term rent for corporate events and individuals; in the main it is taken by family get-togethers but it is also extremely popular for weddings with the luxury of being able to walk from the church, down the park, to the Hall. We welcome couples to our Evening service as they prepare for their marriage.

The Parish of Boxted consists of 49 houses, which in the main are in Boxted village itself. Fenstead End, which is a hamlet about a mile to the west of Boxted is officially in Glemsford parish, but residents tend to use Boxted as their parish church. Boxted is a quiet parish with the facilities offered by its larger neighbour Hartest close at hand.

We at Boxted are looking forward to welcoming our new incumbent who is prepared to accept the challenge of taking on a rural benefice in the beautiful rolling West Suffolk countryside.

## Parish of Somerton



The village of Somerton features attractive undulating countryside and is one of the highest points in Suffolk. It is of modest size, the population only numbering around seventy souls, but they are a good mix of young and old with three new young families moving here this year. The majority of some forty houses cluster around the church in Upper Somerton, with the remainder down the hill in Lower Somerton situated in the Glem Valley. Somerton is basically agricultural but with many small businesses and home workers.

There is a strong community spirit and recent modifications to the church vestry now provide an important meeting place for the whole community.

We have a Friends Committee that raises funds for the church as there is a very strong feeling that our church must remain, be well maintained and continue to be a place of worship for those who live in Somerton and nearby.



Several well received concerts have been held in the church in recent years. A street party celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was held outside the church being a prominent central location in our hamlet. Almost all Somertonians were there and a Jubilee tree was planted in front of the church by three young children. So our community spirit is strong and the presence and position of St. Margaret's Church is a vital factor.



Our attractive small stone and flint church of St. Margaret's is well liked throughout the Benefice. It sits in the peaceful setting of Upper Somerton, and it overlooks Hawkedon and delightful Suffolk countryside. It is small in comparison to other churches nearby but it has the advantage of an intimate atmosphere and is well suited for many events. It dates from Norman times, with an early English chancel, sixteenth century tower and four bells.

Ten years ago funding was secured and major work took place to completely replace the heating system and wiring. Additionally, the side Vestry was renovated and it now provides a meeting room for upwards of 20 people. New LED driven exterior floodlights have been installed and these are switched on during the winter months.

A recent Quinquennial Survey has highlighted that the Nave Roof needs a full renovation (approx £75,000) and applications are currently in progress to charities to secure funding for this important work. Towards 50% of this funding has already been raised. It is hoped to commence this work in Spring 2023.

Services in St. Margaret's are monthly and include an annual Christmas Eve candle lit carol service that is always well attended. Harvest Festival, too, with a number of farmers living in Somerton, is well supported. Our strong hope is that a new incumbent will provide the energy and ideas to encourage and attract more parishioners, both old and new, to our monthly services.

### Parish of Stanstead



Stanstead is a small village (population approximately 300), not to be confused with Stansted, Essex or its airport. The village is set within beautiful and peaceful farmland, and the river Glem runs along the lower part of the village. There is a good selection of footpaths, and there are two vineyards within walking distance. There are still some old Stanstead families living here (and their family names are found in the churchyard) but there are also many newcomers. New houses have been built recently which will bring some new families to the village. There is a Community Centre with activities including coffee mornings, BBQs, dance nights and the beer festival. Alongside is a playground.

There has been a site of worship here for 1000 years, and St James' is a beautiful little church, set peacefully beside the village green, and sheltered by mature lime trees. Visitors often comment on its calmness and tranquillity; it stands on a hill overlooking the Glem Valley. It is mainly perpendicular with Victorian restorations. It consists of a nave, chancel, 19th century vestry, south porch, embattled tower with five bells. Windows are perpendicular, the east said to be older. There is early stained glass in one on the north side. The churchyard, with its orchids, is mown in such a way as to encourage wildflowers.



Although the congregation is currently quite small, the monthly service is usually supported by more people from the other parishes. We will work with the new Rector to increase this in the future, and would like to run more fundraising and social events.

Our Churchwarden is one of the new Parish Visiting team that is a Benefice wide project to reintroduce visits to the bereaved or anyone in need of support, and we are planning to build on this as time goes on.

## **The Sudbury Deanery and your colleagues**

Our benefice forms a significant part of the Sudbury Deanery which lays in the south of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich. The Deanery is supported by a Rural Dean who shares in the Episcopate of the Bishop and acts as a representative of the Archdeacon.

The chapter currently comprises six stipendiary clergy (plus our vacancy), six self-supporting ministers, and six other clergy with permission to officiate. Monthly chapter meetings are very helpful and supportive, giving an opportunity to share joys and challenges, and to pray together for our needs.

Our deanery comes under the Archdeacon of Sudbury, the Venerable Dr David Jenkins.

## **And something about our Diocese**

### **Where are we?**

The Diocese covers the county of Suffolk, excluding the area around Lowestoft in the north-east, and one parish in Essex. It is a mainly rural Diocese with a large number of small villages, plus market towns including Woodbridge, Halesworth, Sudbury and Beccles and the cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds with its historic ruins of the old Abbey. Ipswich is the county town with a population of about 137,000. Suffolk's population is c.650,000. The county embraces historic places of interest such as Sutton Hoo, culture at Snape with the famous annual Aldeburgh music festival, is on the Heritage coast and is a haven for lovers of natural history and birdlife.

### **Who are we?**

We are often known as 'the Church of England in Suffolk'. The diocesan bishop is the Right Reverend Martin Seeley, and the suffragan bishop is the Right Reverend Dr Mike Harrison. Both work from the Bishop's House in Ipswich. They work together closely to help us shape our vision and strategy, and amongst a plethora of other tasks offer regular teaching mornings to nurture the faith of people in our congregations – and a regular Vlog which can be found on Facebook. There are three archdeaconries and more than 450 churches where visitors will find a wide range of worshipping styles, from the traditional to contemporary, as well as Fresh Expressions and growing numbers of 'Lightwave' groups for those who haven't connected with traditional church previously. The Cathedral of St Edmund and St James in Bury St Edmunds is the mother church of the Diocese and is proactive in offering support to clergy and parishes including welcoming parishes on pilgrimage. We also work closely with our 88 Church of England primary schools. All this is, of course, supported by a small and committed diocesan staff based in the diocesan office in Ipswich.

### **What is our vision?**

Our diocesan vision is to be 'Growing in God', aiming to grow 'flourishing congregations making a difference'. This vision was accepted by Diocesan Synod in 2014 and since then we have been focussing on four key priorities:

- **Growing in Depth:** responding to the call of Christ in every part of our lives
- **Growing in Number:** drawing the contacts we have into the life of God's kingdom
- **Growing in Influence:** reaching beyond ourselves in our impact on the wider world
- **Growing Younger:** building churches whose age-range reflects our communities

As part of this vision, we have received Strategic Development Funding for a major project 'Growing God in the Countryside', overseen by the Archdeacon for Rural Mission, which focusses on developing Rural Resourcing Churches and nurturing and discipling new Christians through small Lightwave groups.

We have also been part of a pilot scheme exploring how we can use our church buildings more creatively both for those who worship regularly and for the benefit of our communities and many churches have benefitted from this.

We are broadening our vision through a growing partnership with the Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania, with fruitful visits and links being established.

#### **How can we do this?**

We value our huge range of different ministries: we have over 100 stipendiary clergy, plus many Self Sustaining Ministers and clergy with permission to officiate, as well as lay and ordained chaplains who can be found in such diverse places as schools, prisons, hospitals, hospices, the army, RAF and the police.

Our ministry deployment principles encourage teams or clusters of lay and ordained ministers to work together so that clergy feel less isolated and ministry resources the mission of the church more effectively. We are just beginning to develop the principle of 'local ministers' in our benefices, releasing people's gifts to serve in their locality.

#### **So, in summary:**

As our Growing in God vision states, we aspire to be people who know that 'God is with us, gathering us as Christ-centred communities, calling us to make Christian disciples, sending us in loving service, empowering us by the Holy Spirit'

**We hope you will come and join us on our journey!**

**To find out more, visit:**

[www.cofesuffolk.org](http://www.cofesuffolk.org)

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/search/?lat=52.096553&lon=0.6685219&place=Glemsford%2C+Sudbury+CO10%2C+UK&postcode=CO10&text=>