

PARISH PROFILE

Could you be our new 0.5 Rector?



St Mary Stoke, Ipswich 2021

Deanery of Ipswich
Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

1



St Mary Stoke...

...is looking forward to welcoming an ordained colleague to work as our Rector.

This 0.5 vacancy arises from exciting changes in our parish in which we are reconnecting with our historical past.

St Mary Stoke is the oldest church in what was the South-West Ipswich Team Ministry (SWITM).

Will you consider joining us?

We have various ministries which, like all parishes, we plan to re-start after covid-related restrictions are lifted.

Our worship style embraces both contemporary worship and traditional liturgy.

We are part of the *Inspiring Ipswich* initiative which is making strides to move all our parishes away from managing decline to attracting new believers. They are fully behind helping us to grow and create a more visible presence in the town.

These are brave new times in Ipswich for many churches and this is also true for us at St Mary Stoke.

It is a learning curve for all of us working as one church in one parish again, but we have much to look forward to, and with a new Rector to guide us, we embrace the future with some trepidation but also gratitude for what God has already done and what He has in store for us.

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What we are praying God will send us in a new Rector

An exciting post in a re-born yet ancient parish of 9,000 in the south of the town: a venerable history that underpins a parish bursting with opportunity and life.

A wonderful opportunity to live the Resurrection hope!

We are praying that God will send us a mission-minded Rector who will be:

- Prayerful and Christ-centred
- Reverent in prayer and relaxed in recreation
- Unafraid of making mistakes and acknowledging them!
- Inspirational – yet understanding human limitations
- Aware of our traditions in worship & able to build upon these
- Happy to engage appropriately with the schools in our parish
- Keen to engage with *Inspiring Ipswich* which includes an ambition for every church in the deanery to start at least one new worshipping community by 2025
- Keen to engage with our neighbours, Christians of other denominations and those with no faith
- Supportive of our committed SSM, Kay, and our PCC
- Careful to ensure they make time for themselves



What the PCC & others can offer a new Rector



- Prayer
- A willingness to adapt and develop
- Parish expenses paid in full
- Our Self Supporting Minister, Rev Kay Palmer (see left with her new licence), with pastoral and local knowledge
- Church officers who are committed and willing to learn

Services

NB The numbers are pre-pandemic

On Sundays

8am Traditional communion – av. attendance 8-10

10am – Parish Eucharist with prayer for healing and anointing – av. attendance 50-60 – a loyal choir and Sunday School

On Wednesdays

9.00am Wednesday Communion – average attendance 10

Home communion taken by licensed laity

Services held in 2 local care homes – Avocet Court and Prince of Wales Drive Residential



What our parish has to offer



- An *Inspiring Ipswich* Learning Community – a small team has a parish plan working on several projects including: embracing the principles of ‘Pathway to Jesus;’ walks with people of peace, friendly cuppa coffee mornings and special services including Education Sundays, Harvest Sundays with the allotment community and Retail Sundays to engage with those employed in our shopping centres
- Mothers Union – meets monthly and is full of fun!
- Smuppets muppets – always popular with children of all ages!
- ActivLives – lunch and activities for over 60s in the church hall
- Support of Ipswich Foodbank (FIND) *Families in Need*
- Many existing activities and groups
- Messy church – once a month
- A good church hall on site which provides an income and is used by a variety of groups
- Many occasional offices – opportunity for growth
- Electoral roll 89
- Annually 15 baptisms; 10 weddings, 30 funerals church and crematorium (not in 2020). We have a good relationship with funeral directors.
- An active flower arranging team
- A cleaning and gardening team
- NB The railway station is in our parish providing a good service to London & Norwich.

Pictures: Smuppets, MU party, Group photo outside the church, Advent scene, Remembrance Sunday, MU having fun!, Flower arrangement



How you can help us develop

- Help us expand our horizons with new ways of worship including different venues, styles and music.
- Help us develop evangelism in the parish
e.g. Alpha or Exploring Christianity
- Help us to encourage more worshippers to return to St Mary Stoke after the effects of the pandemic
- As a newly formed parish, no longer part of the *South West Ipswich Team Ministry*, we are committed to a new financial beginning and paying our share and would appreciate support with this.
- Youth work and a welcome to younger families.
- Access to the church for the mobility-challenged
- A fund for repair to the church roof – already started.
- Ecumenical links in the parish (Stoke Green Baptist, Bethel Apostolic).
- Schools work: Engagement with 2 primary schools and one secondary school
- Looking to develop our prayer life and bible study
- We would look forward to someone helping us to cultivate vocations
- We would welcome someone who could help us with our stewardship.



The Rectory

1 Salmet Close, Ipswich

The Rectory is a modern, five-bedroomed property with double garage, built in 2003 to a very high standard including double glazing and gas fired central heating. Solar panels were installed in 2011.





One of our younger members

Opportunities for Outreach

- The primary schools – Hillside and Halifax; and Ormiston Academy
- Suffolk Pride – there is contact with a local volunteer
- There is contact with a Credit Union, which has a shop in the parish
- The Learning Community is embracing the concept of the 'village of Stoke' – with a full parish plan, regular meetings and ideas, some as shown on page 6.
- The Mothers' Union co-ordinates food collections for FIND and sends baptism cards to the children baptised in the parish
- 'Selig' is a Suffolk charity helping the homeless; one of their projects is a 'Hope into Action' house within the parish. For 5 years St Mary's was one of the host churches for the locally-based Winter Night Shelter project
- A locally-based charity TEECH distributes Christmas boxes, many of which are donated and packed by St Mary's people
- It is hoped to establish contact with a locally-based charity concerned for the homeless: The Bus Shelter Project
- It would be good to explore the possibility of having, as several Ipswich churches do, a Basic Pop-up Shop – linked to the 'Basic Community Pop Up Shop'.



THE DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY & IPSWICH 'The Church of England in Suffolk'

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 the historic ruins of the old Abbey.

Ipswich is the county town with a population of about 150,000. 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. The busy port of Felixstowe is at the end of the A14, which runs via Cambridge to the Midlands; the A12 gives access to London and to the Norfolk Broads.

Who are we?

The diocesan bishop is the Right Reverend Martin Seeley, and the suffragan bishop (of Dunwich) 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. Amongst a plethora of other tasks, they 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 over 450 churches where visitors will find a variety of worshipping styles, from the traditional to the contemporary, as well as fresh expressions and growing numbers of 'Lightwave' groups for those who haven't connected with traditional church.

As part of this vision, we have recently received Strategic Development Funding for two major projects: *Inspiring Ipswich*, overseen by the Archdeacon of Ipswich, which aims to grow the church in Ipswich through church planting, revitalising existing parishes and reaching out to those who live in the town; *Growing God in the Countryside*, overseen by the Archdeacon for Rural Mission, which focuses 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 – 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.


Growing in God



How can we do this?

We value our huge range of different ministries: we have over 100 stipendiary clergy, plus many SSMs, like Kay, and PTO clergy, as well as lay and ordained chaplains who can be found in such diverse places as schools, prisons, hospitals, the Army, RAF, and the police. Some clergy are ordained to serve in their local benefice through our pioneering 'auxiliary ordination pathway' which enables peoples' vocations to ordained ministry to be discerned within the diocese.



What is our diocesan vision?

Our diocesan vision is to be 'Growing in God', aiming to grow 'flourishing congregations making a difference'. The 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.
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- Parishes are encouraged to use a simple Mission Action Planning tool to help us all to focus on these priorities and how they might be worked out in each different context. We are trusting God that this vision, underpinned by a commitment to Christian stewardship, will bear fruit as we look to the future.
 - All clergy work alongside lay ministers – Readers, elders, and the growing number of people exercising recently introduced licensed ministries: pioneer ministers, evangelists, youth ministers and children's and family workers. 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, enabling peoples' 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. For more details visit www.cofe.suffolk.org



Inspiring Ipswich is an imaginative and exciting new initiative of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. It spans six years from early 2019 until the end of 2024 and during this period it seeks to strengthen the existing 24 churches within the deanery of Ipswich, helping them 'to communicate good news and make new disciples', as well as adding 25 new worshipping communities into the mix. Front and central is the overall aim of praying for and nurturing the faith of 1500 new Christians across the town.

With the help of a substantial and unprecedented grant from the Church Commissioners and a central Inspiring Ipswich team the project aims to support every parish with regular learning community gatherings and with a highly skilled Mission Accompanier. Central courses such as 'Leading your Church into Growth', Evangelist training, Alpha training and the 'Growing Leaders' course are part of the offer and the support of two Deanery Pioneer Developers is available for those leading fresh expressions of Church.

The Deanery aims in everything to be 'relational, pastoral, missional and inspirational' and aspires to offer a good welcome and ongoing support to all its clergy, primarily through its Deanery Leadership Team, its Deanery Chaplains, clergy chapter meetings, Missional Leaders' Lunches and through the Archdeacon's ministry, which is focused solely on this one area.

One of the primary goals of Inspiring Ipswich is to help at least 5% of the population (around 7,500 people) enjoy an opportunity to explore faith and our prayer is to offer Alpha or an equivalent to hundreds of people each year across the deanery.

In short, we believe that any Rector of St Mary Stoke would find themselves at the heart of an inspiring vision and team in the deanery.





Historical Perspective - Our Parish

St. Mary Stoke is steeped in history. From pre-Roman times, when Stoke, was a Saxon stockade (from which Stoke was derived) it remained largely untouched, by raids from the Danes, being protected by river and marshes. The first significant bridging of the river was around 900 AD.



Our new parish boundary

Back then, Stoke hill hosted a Christian site and was eventually given by King Edgar to the Convent of Ely in 970 AD and continued as a typical Suffolk village church. In 1846 the railway arrived in Ipswich and the parish population of around 300 rose tenfold with house building and industrial growth, resulting in some enlargement and refurbishment of the church building. In 1870 a new nave was built on the south side by William Butterfield, a 19th century architect of international repute. St Mary's was the only Ipswich church he touched. The list of his worldwide Victorian architectural triumphs is impressive, with cathedrals in Australia, India, Canada, and the UK, in addition to numerous famous colleges and public buildings. As a result of his involvement in St Mary's, in 2004 a Grade 1 listing was awarded in recognition of its special architectural and historic importance – one of only two Anglican churches in Ipswich to be so classified. Of the twelve medieval churches in Ipswich, six are closed – although being put to good use. St Mary's is open most days – thanks to a team of key holders – as part of our outreach, staffed openings are held when visitors can be shown around this holy, historic, Christian place.



Historical Perspective

Our Wider Community - Ipswich

Ipswich is one of England's oldest towns and as long ago as 1200 King John himself thought Ipswich important enough to receive a royal charter.

Our most famous son is Cardinal Thomas Wolsey who faithfully served King Henry VIII as powerful Lord Chancellor until he fell from grace in 1529 for failing to secure an annulment for the King from Catherine of Aragon. From the Anglo-Saxon 'Gippeswic' to the Victorian ship-building mecca, Ipswich has a tradition of sustained historical significance.

Ipswich has much to offer visitors to the area - including shops, sports and social facilities, pubs, cafes, parks, cinemas, and theatres. The unspoilt Suffolk Countryside is within easy reach, as are unique villages and towns such as Woodbridge, Lavenham & Long Melford.

The Suffolk Coastline is close, and the port of Felixstowe and the seaside towns of Aldeburgh and Southwold are within easy reach. The ferry port of Harwich is also on our doorstep, offering easy access to Europe.

Excellent road links to London and the Midlands. Stansted Airport is about a one-hour drive. Central Ipswich and the dockside are the largest area of urban re-development in the East of England.

There has been much progress in the development of the Ipswich Waterfront with hotels, apartments, restaurants, and bars.

The parish lies within Ipswich Borough Council boundary.

Ipswich Waterfront

An education quarter has been developed over recent years on the former Suffolk FE college site to house Suffolk New College. In addition, the now established university- the University of Suffolk, has been built within the waterfront development. Developments on the south side of the waterfront are within our parish.

Several recently proposed developments throughout Ipswich suggests the population may rise considerably over the next decade.

What next?

We hope you have been inspired and that you will consider applying for this exciting 0.5 post ie 3 days a week and a Sunday.



For an informal conversation about the parish please contact Archdeacon Rhiannon on archdeacon.rhiannon@cofesuffolk.org



For an application form and to see the Role Description please go to the Diocesan Website www.cofesuffolk.org/vacancies



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Please be assured of our prayers

