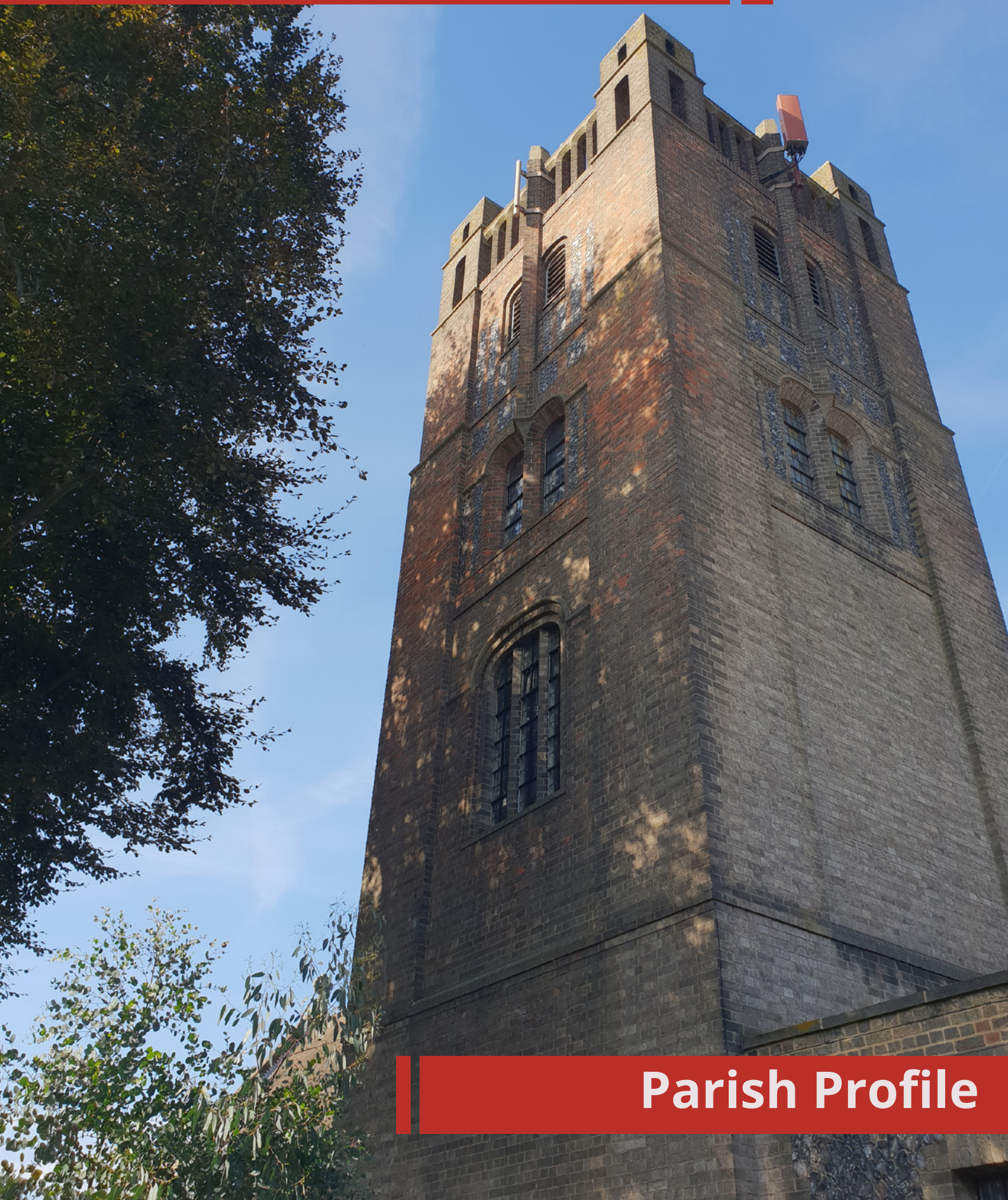


St. Thomas the Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich



Parish Profile

Contents

What's In Our Parish Plan

Who Are We?	3
Where Are We?	5
Our Building.....	6
Inspiring Ipswich	7
Youth and Children.....	8
Music	10
Ministry Team.....	11
Services and Church Opening	12
Prayer	13
Healing Ministry	14
Response to the Pandemic	15
Faith Groups	17
St. Thomas Pilgrim Community.....	18
St. Thomas Galilee Groups	19
The Vicarage	20
Are you the right person for us?	21
Diocesan Information.....	22
Inspiring Ipswich Information	24



Who Are We?

We are a welcoming, vibrant, friendly church on Bramford Lane, by the railway bridge. As the local Parish Church, we seek to serve all in our community. People of all ages are welcome to join us on our journey of faith! You can find us online at <https://stthomasipswich.org.uk>



Joining our church will be like joining a new family. We have a congregation with diverse ranges of ages and nationalities, from babies to those in their eighties. We are all on a journey to be more like Jesus and we have the Eucharist at the centre of our worship.

We pride ourselves on being kind and caring. We realise that everyone who joins us brings different gifts and we are keen to develop and nurture those gifts to make our church a better place. Three members of our congregation are currently taking a Growing Leaders course through the deanery, and we love encouraging people to develop their skills and confidence through things like reading or leading intercessions in church, serving at the altar, distributing the wine at communion, being part of the pastoral care team and much more.

Do you love food? We love to eat together! On the first Sunday of every month we hold a bring and share informal lunch. This is always well attended by our senior members of the church and people living alone. There are also plans to start a 'families' lunch once a month aimed at those with children.

We hold pancake parties on Shrove Tuesday (when we are allowed!). This is popular with the community and attracts people who don't usually come to church. It is enjoyed by all ages, especially the children! We've also run several Alpha courses where we share a meal together each week and welcome new people to explore faith.



In Holy Week we hold a Passover supper, which is always fully booked, where we hold a service of worship which includes a meal, and in the summer, for our Patronal Festival, we hold a BBQ in the vicarage garden! This is great fun and we've always been lucky with the weather! We bring and share salads, drinks and desserts to go with the hot food.

And of course, on Sunday mornings after the service, we serve coffee in the church and there are always biscuits or cake or homemade goodies, especially when people bring birthday treats to share! This is a great chance for people to catch up with friends and socialise. We've also found that having coffee in the back of church encourages new people to stay and join us. We love how eating together helps form community and build relationships!



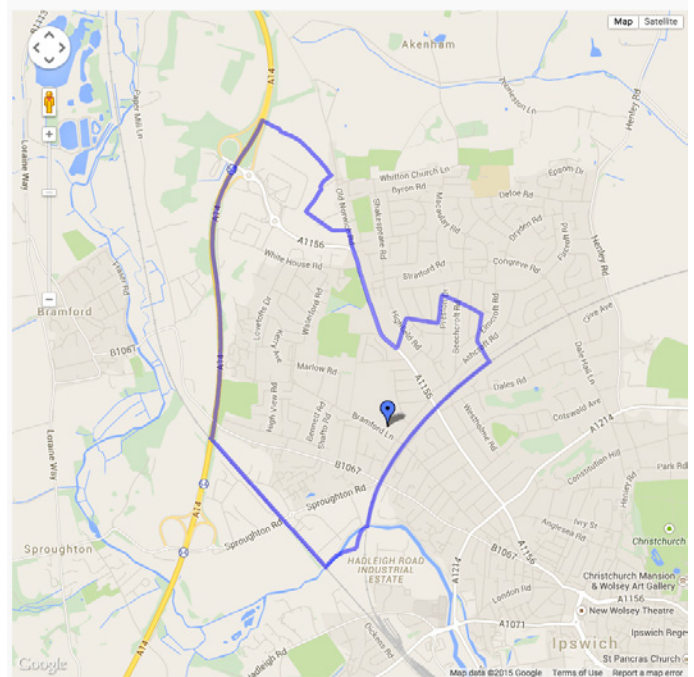
Where Are We?

St. Thomas' church is situated on the edge of the parish in the North West of Ipswich. It has good links by public transport to the centre.

Ipswich

Ipswich is the County Town of Suffolk, it has a rich history with every modern amenity.

We have a stunning waterfront that has undergone extensive regeneration in the past few years, with its quayside restaurants and bistros, a Dance House of international excellence, a university, and river cruises to help you enjoy the peace and beauty of the River Orwell.



The town has many beautiful parks and Christchurch Park, which houses the Mansion, is a must-see with its superb art collections.

Suffolk

Suffolk is a truly wonderful place to live, with Constable Country, the area around Dedham Vale made famous by the great artist, just 10 minutes' drive away. Close by are the Suffolk Wool Towns of Lavenham, Long Melford and Kersey. A short drive up the A12 will bring you to the gems of Woodbridge, Aldeburgh, Snape Maltings and Southwold.

Not to mention our fantastic links to London. You can be in the capital in 1 hour 15 minutes by train.



Our Building



Our church building is in good order with an up-to-date Quinquennial Report, and continues to be improved. The Church was built in 1938 and is Grade Two listed.

There are no fixed pews in the church so seating can be removed to provide a versatile space. We have a small kitchen in the north aisle which is used for coffee after church and there are also toilets located here. Our church room has a fitted kitchen and is an extremely useful space.

We have some exciting plans from the architect on how we can develop the building and serve our wider community.

The undistinguished brick and flint exterior conceals a famous architect, and an outstanding, devotional interior. Cachemaille Day's only major work in Suffolk maintains an Anglo-catholic presence in the largely non-conformist west side of town. Around it, the Victorian terraces and 1930s semis are anonymously urban; but St. Thomas has a curious Scandanavian edge to its otherwise Suffolk perpendicular shape. One often finds this hint in the late 1930s. The Second World War seems to have brought it to an end.

The interior is a surprise. It is of great character and beauty. The white vaulted ceiling, the narrow lancet lights above the long altar, the wide aisles with their Stations of the Cross, all conspire to create a sense of being part of a larger building, perhaps in the crypt of a great cathedral. The week after my first visit I was at Sacré-Cœur in Paris, and instantly recognised that this church would be quite at home as one of the underground chapels there.

(C) Simon Knott,
<http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk>



Inspiring Ipswich



**Inspiring
Ipswich**

You've seen the headlines...the trend of church attendance and religious affiliation in this country is angled towards decline...and the story has been the same in Ipswich.

As part of the Church of England in Suffolk's vision to 'Grow in God' Inspiring Ipswich exists to change the narrative from decline to growth.

We are really excited to be part of this project and have a committed team of people who have formed a learning community to help drive our church into growth.

Learning Community

The learning community consists of six members who all have a passion to see our plans put into practice. This small group meet regularly, normally once a month with our Mission Accompanier, Simon Goddard, to discuss the three major plans we have for our church.

1. Develop the church building as a community hub so that it has a reach of at least 1,000 people by 2025

2. Building on the existing presence in Westbourne Academy and the youth group, aiming to host a youth café in the church building.

3. Intrinsically linked to the other goals and the desire of the church to go out into the community, developing the St. Thomas Pilgrim Community (STPC), thus increasing the church's capacity for missional engagement.

We have taken the first steps in the plan to work with an architect to come up with a design to make our building more welcoming and accessible, to create a separate room for Sunday school and a community meeting space. To develop the North aisle to be used for a youth café and a new dedicated prayer corner.

We had begun to develop relationships with Westbourne Academy and Whitehouse Primary school as you will see further on in the profile. However these plans have been affected by covid-19 and school closures. We are still trying to connect with the Youth group online but this has been challenging!

We are still really keen to continue with the development of STPC and increase the church's capacity for missional engagement. We would like our new priest to share in the vision of a new monastic community for missional engagement.

Developing a vision for our community

Youth and Children

Sunday School

We have been running a Sunday school for the last 4 years, we have a small team of leaders who help run this 3 Sundays a month. On the first Sunday of the month, there is an All Age Eucharist where the children remain in church.

Quotes from the children:

"I like doing the arts and crafts, learning about Jesus and being part of the band"

"I like doing the colouring, listening to the stories and writing"

We have a small number of children who range from 4 to 11 years old, which proves a challenge. We would love to explore ways we can grow the number of children attending.

Youth Group

We began a youth group 2 years ago on a Sunday evening. It was held in the vicarage and aimed at young people from 11 to 16 yrs. We had some regular young people attending this where the group played games, shared food and learned about the Christian faith.

We also took the group to the Gather event at the Cathedral in Bury St. Edmunds in 2019.

This has been moved online during the pandemic and has been more difficult to engage the teenagers.



Christmas and Easter Craft Mornings

Each year we have held 2 craft mornings in the community room, where we have invited children of the parish to join us to make Easter and Christmas Crafts and a small service of worship. This has been well supported with approximately 25 children attending.



Schools - Whitehouse Primary and Westbourne Academy



Over the last few years strong relationships have been built with Whitehouse Primary School and Westbourne Academy (secondary school) in the parish. They are not C of E schools, but have welcomed clergy and youth workers to lead assemblies, run a lunchtime drop-in club for teenagers, and do Godly Play storytelling with Reception children. Classes from

Whitehouse have come to St. Thomas for Christingle services, and classes from both schools have utilised St. Thomas as a learning resource for RE classes. We are very keen to maintain and develop the links with both schools, especially alongside our Parish Plan project of opening a Youth Cafe.



Nature Den Pre-School



We have a close connection with Nature Den pre-school who are located in the former church hall. The nursery children with their teachers and parents have been welcomed to church for seasonal mini services at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. We have also held joint Christmas fayres with them, which gives us an excellent opportunity to meet with young families, staff and parents alike and collaborate on fundraising efforts.



Music



The music at St. Thomas' was flourishing in the lead up to March last year. Our robed choir had been built up to 12 members in recent times. Also, we have a church band consisting of an excellent drummer, a bass guitarist and some very keen singers. Both the choir and the band are led by our Director of Music.

The music sung by the choir has been a good mixture of traditional and more modern music/hymns. The pandemic has rather curtailed our activities but hopefully we will get things back up and running before too long.



Organist and Director of Music

Our Organist and Director of Music is Simon Clark. He studied as a composer at the Royal Academy of Music in London and is an "in house" composer for Kevin Mayhew Publishers. He is a Fellow of the London College of Music and an Associate of the Royal College of Organists (working on becoming a Fellow...). In 2019 he composed a communion setting for use in the parish, the "Mass of St. Thomas the Apostle".



Ministry Team

St. Thomas have an active and vibrant ministry team working on growth in the parish and we are looking forward to working with our new incumbent to develop God's plan for us.

Revd. Cat Connolly, Acting Priest in Charge and Curate at St. Thomas

Cat has been with us for nearly 3 years and has been a great asset, especially during the past year where she has helped move us online!

Revd. Jackie Sears, Revd. Pat Wright and Canon Chris Chapman are all retired clergy who have permission to officiate in the diocese and parish.

Malcolm Gibbs, Licensed Parish Evangelist

Malcolm has been leading our Faith Pictures course and is actively involved with the St. Thomas Pilgrim Community.

Mary Bullass and Gloria Elmer are both Licensed Pastoral Elders who work as part of our pastoral care team to provide home communions and care within our community.



Services and Church Opening

Our Sunday morning services are Eucharistic in the liberal Anglo-Catholic tradition. We are open and relaxed, and enjoy having a varied worship programme based on the liturgical church seasons. Our director of music has composed a communion setting “The Mass of St. Thomas the Apostle” for use in our services.

The service on Sunday at 10 a.m. is with organ and choir, and once a month takes the form of an All Age Eucharist and music with a band.

We have several baptisms a year; these take place during the 10 a.m. service on Sunday as we encourage them to be part of the church family. We prepare children and adults alike for confirmation too! We are seeking ways to encourage families to grow in faith and know Jesus Christ.

We have evening Compline services fortnightly on Sundays, a beautiful short service to end the day.

Christmas, Holy week and Easter are recognised with additional services including Passover supper, Eucharists, Taize Worship and Compline.

Our Services

Sundays:

8 a.m. Book of
Common Prayer
Service

10 a.m. Common
Worship Eucharist

Wednesdays:

10 a.m. Common
Worship Eucharist

ASA 63

AWA 94



At the Sunday 10 a.m. Eucharist



Advent Taize Service

Prayer

'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you' 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



Prayer is at the heart of all we do at St. Thomas, and we try to incorporate prayer into our activities and outreach projects. For example, we incorporate prayer into our children's craft mornings, and services with schools; we always begin PCC meetings with a time of prayer and reflection; and we

encourage individuals to be engaged in their prayer life and to support our plans and hopes for the future by praying for God to be at work among us. We've also enjoyed being creative and exploring different ways to pray, such as through our prayer stations, in Taize and Compline services, and through sharing resources.

Inspiring Ipswich prayer for growth:

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your Church, send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our

actions and power to our witness. Help your Church here in Ipswich to grow younger, to grow in numbers and to grow leaders; in spiritual commitment to you and in service to our local community.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



Healing Ministry

'Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.' James 5:14

The St. Thomas Healing Ministry started in early 2018.

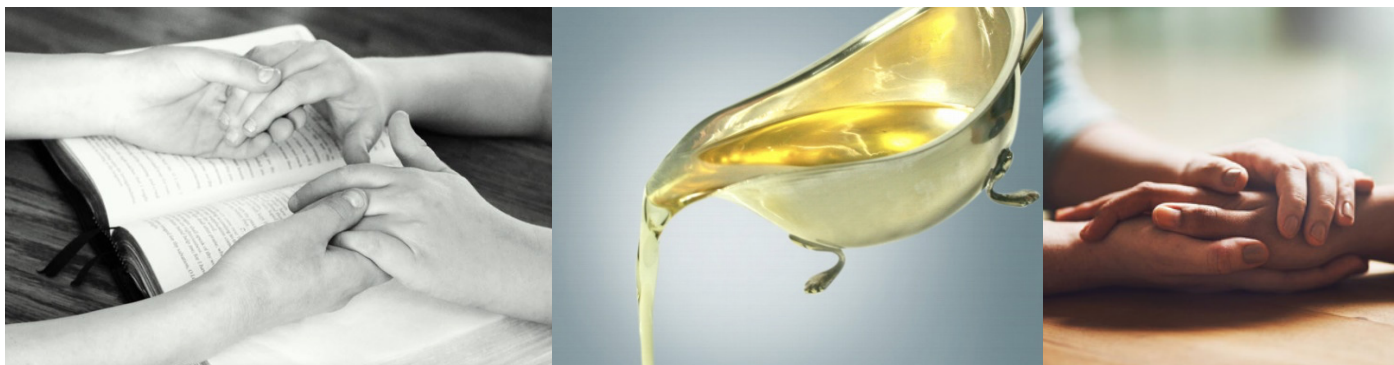
The aim is to offer prayer to those who would like to receive prayer, for themselves or for other people. The ministry is offered once a month, during the Eucharist on a Sunday morning. People receive Communion and make their way afterwards to the Lady Chapel in the South aisle and ask for prayer.

We follow a 'model' of ministry, and a team of trained lay and ordained people who offer the prayer. We meet about 4 times a year to pray together as a group.

When Healing Ministry is offered:

- There are two people - ideally a male and female - who offer prayer at each healing morning. We pray together before the service for God's guidance.
- Confidentiality is observed, unless there is a safeguarding issue. During the ministry, the person can ask for specific prayer, either for themselves or another person.
- We offer anointing with oil to bless each person before they leave.
- Scripture and prayer cards are offered.

There are a team of six people at this moment who are part of the healing ministry team. God has blessed us greatly when offering this ministry - and we hope to develop it a little more - and hope to have healing services regularly.



Response to the Pandemic

Worship During The Pandemic - Online and Off



We have opened the church for prayer for 2 hours a day on a Monday and Thursday. It's been a great opportunity to be here for the community to sit in quiet and pray. It has opened conversations with people who use the church site for other purposes and passers-by. We would like to expand this as part of our plan for growth.

We have continued services in person when it has been safe to do so, adhering to all the government guidelines. These services have also been live streamed on Facebook and streamed on Zoom too.



We have uploaded videos of the sermon and lessons each Sunday onto YouTube for those who have the internet.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZep3sm6S_vmU1ARt4UIXxYhBLt9nCohR

While in full lockdown, and with the church being unable to open, we moved church services to Zoom. These are always well-attended and it's so lovely to still remain connected each week. Our choir and Director of Music have put together hymns each week, which are played in the Zoom service.

Staying In Touch With People With No Internet Access

For those in the congregation who do not have access to the internet, we have been sending them the weekly sheet which includes the lessons and sermons via the post. Alongside this, we have collected accounts from congregation members of what they have been up to in lockdown and sent a newsletter of these each week to help people feel connected.

At Christmas, our Ladies' Group leader put together a number of care parcels which were distributed to members of the congregation who are living alone and/or haven't been to church since the start of the pandemic.

Children's Craft In A Box!

In 2020, we were unable to hold a Christmas craft morning, so instead we produced 40 shoe boxes to distribute to our church children and those who have attended our craft mornings in the past.

These were well-received and have led onto the idea of producing Messy Church in a bag and Messy Church in person as and when we are able to!



Fundraising

In 2020, as we couldn't hold our summer and Christmas fayres, we have had to think outside the box on ways to fundraise!

This included a Christmas Fayre by mail order, hamper raffle via live stream and JustGiving, and a hymn and carol marathon (50 hymns and carols played and sung by our talented director of music and choir) via JustGiving, and Christmas card sales in our car park after the Sunday services.

Compline has also been on You Tube and has had over 800 hits. Using social media will continue going forward so we continue to reach out.

Suffolk Baby Bank

Since the end of October 2020, we have been housing the Ipswich hub of the Suffolk Baby Bank in our community room. This has been a lifeline for families in need within our parish. We have had a lot of footfall from social workers, young families and those who volunteer for the Baby Bank. It has been a wonderful way to involve the church with the community and give something back in what has been a challenging year.



Faith Groups

In the last five years we have spent a lot of time encouraging the congregation to grow deeper and one of the ways we have done this is through our faith groups. We have a wide range of faith groups that meet regularly; these groups are for our existing congregation who want to grow deeper and for new people who are yet to know Jesus and want to explore faith.

All groups have continued as appropriate during the Coronavirus Pandemic with many moving to online meetings through Zoom and Facebook in particular.

Bible Study

These are held fortnightly, and are currently on Zoom due to the pandemic.

Advent and Lent Groups

These have been well-supported, particularly when we've run them during the day after Wednesday morning Mass.

Alpha

We've found this course brilliant for introducing new people and this has really helped to grow our church. For the past three years, we have run this once a year in the vicarage. Sharing food, a video, and an informal space to talk openly has successfully created new disciples. Our current Alpha course is being run on Zoom.

Faith Pictures

This Church Army course has been run twice in the past year and is a different way for people to come and talk about faith and God in their lives. The courses are open and welcoming, and suitable for all age groups and for all people at all stages of their journey with God.

Meditation Group

This inter-denominational group meets weekly for silent meditation, prayer, and to be present to the presence of God.

Pastoral Care Group

The pastoral care group consists of around eight church members, both lay and ordained, who offer pastoral care to church members and some in the wider community who we have connections with. In particular, during the pandemic, they have ensured each church member is contacted regularly, and have been an important network in making sure those who have been more isolated or shielding maintain a sense of family with the wider church.

Social Committee

The Social committee is a loyal group of parishioners who meet regularly to plan social and fundraising events, both involving church members and those in the wider community. The committee have been very inventive with fund raising during the pandemic.

Ladies' Group

St. Thomas Ladies' Group welcomes ladies of all faiths and none, meeting on the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month. They host a variety of speakers on different subjects, and also have quiz and craft nights, meetings out and about (including the popular fish and chip lunch!), and support various local charities at the same time.

St. Thomas Pilgrim Community



The St. Thomas Pilgrim Community is a new monastic community, a fresh expression of the church of St. Thomas, the Apostle, Ipswich. As of January 2021, it has eleven non-residential members, who have developed a new 'rule of life' and held their second commitment service in January 2021.

The St. Thomas Pilgrim Community aspire to be a hospitable community of people, journeying together prayerfully, with a rhythm of life, in the adventure of seeking God and being engaged in loving service in North West Ipswich and beyond. It offers a prayerful and contemplative space, where people can explore faith and share their journeys with others. Since it started in 2016 it has been an important presence in the parish and deanery, contributing to the Diocesan vision of Growing deeper, in number and influence. The Community is rooted in a regular pattern of individual and corporate prayer, which has continued online since the first lockdown. Prior to COVID we had developed a rhythm of eating together, hospitality, study, and mutual support, as we are discerning God's call for us offering loving service in our daily lives- in North West Ipswich and wherever we are.

The Community currently meets at St. Thomas' Vicarage. It is open to anyone, of any age, background, church or circumstance in life, who wants to share

their journey with God and with others in community. About half of its members are part of St. Thomas' Church, others live across Ipswich and beyond. We pray that by offering our lives in this way, we might together become a resource and treasure that enriches the whole life of the church, and that a new incumbent at St. Thomas would be supportive of the community and its ongoing discernment.



St. Thomas Galilee Groups

The St. Thomas 'Galilee Groups' are people and organisations outside the church we have contacts with or those we want to have more contact with and, in some cases, those we have had contact with in the past. They form part of our mission and growth plan for spreading the good news of the Bible and encouraging new Christians in the parish.

Some of those groups are...

Residential Care Homes

Mayo Court, Dunwich Court, Shamrock House and Silver Birch residential care homes are all in the parish. The Pastoral Care Team regularly offer to provide pastoral care or services to residents, but relationships have proved hard to build in the past. We hope that this is a potential area for growth, especially at Silver Birch which is new, and were eager to invite clergy to conduct a prayer of blessing for their opening.

Industrial Estates

Sproughton Road Industrial Estate and Whitehouse Industrial estates are both in the parish and offer opportunity for mission and spreading the good news of the Gospel.

Supermarkets

Asda at Whitehouse and Morrisons at Sproughton Road are both in the parish. A new Aldi store is being built on Sproughton Road. Nearby Ulster Avenue has a parade of shops, including the Co-op. The parish has had a chaplaincy at Asda in the past, and the stores offer the opportunity for this to start again as part of our wider growth plan.

Passers-by

Most days, over 500 people walk past the church on the way to schools, shops and workplaces. These people are part of our wider mission for growth in the parish.

Contacts with outside organisations and the groups listed above have been limited by the coronavirus restrictions, reducing the chance to meet people.

The Vicarage

The vicarage is a 1980's 4 bed detached house with driveway, garage, study & utility room located next to the church. There is a good-sized private back garden, and a small garden on the church side of the vicarage, which has been transformed into a Peace Garden for community use. We would love our next priest to consider keeping the Peace Garden as a community resource.



Until the pandemic, the vicarage was used as a meeting place for various church groups, as

well as the St. Thomas Pilgrim Community. As our previous priest lived elsewhere, we also rented out bedrooms, and were working towards having members of the Pilgrim Community live at the vicarage in return for offering their time and support to the mission of the church.

We know that the housing needs of our new priest will come first, and have priority over other uses of the vicarage. However, we hope that our next priest will be eager and willing to support the Pilgrim Community, and as we look ahead after navigating all the changes of the last year, we seek an individual with a heart for growth and community service.



The opening of the community Peace Garden

Are you the right person for us?

We are hoping for a priest who can aspire to Philippians 2 and offer joy and humility in serving the Lord at St. Thomas. To lift up holy hands in prayer (1 Timothy 2: 8) and to keep hold of the deep truths of the faith (1 Tim 3:9)

We are looking for a compassionate leader on a 0.8 post who will discern with us God's plans and dreams for our growth, and be excited by the Inspiring Ipswich project; someone approachable, who listens well, cares for each unique individual, encourages, enables and nurtures the gifts of all, and has a heart for young people. Good liturgical worship is important to us, along with preaching which relates scriptures to our lives today. Kindness and pastoral sensitivity will be key to help any who feel anxious about change. We would love someone prayerful, with a passion for spreading the word and love of God in our parish.



Diocesan Information



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

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 135,000. 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 and the A12 which gives access to London and the Norfolk Broads.

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 3 archdeaconries and over 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. 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

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.

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 and reaching out to those who live in the town, and '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 SSM and PTO clergy 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. Some clergy are ordained

to serve in their local benefice through our pioneering 'auxiliary ordination pathway' which enables people's vocations to ordained ministry to be discerned within the diocese.

All clergy work alongside lay ministers – Readers, elders, and the growing number 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, releasing people's gifts to serve in their locality.

We are excited about these new developments which are playing an important part in our diocesan vision of Growing in God.

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

Inspiring Ipswich Information



Inspiring Ipswich is an imaginative and exciting new initiative of the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich. It spans six years from early 2019 til 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*', '*Mission Shaped Ministry*', Evangelist training, Alpha training

and the '*Growing Leaders*' course are part of the offer and the support of three full-time 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 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 over 1000 people each year across the deanery.

In short, we believe that any prospective Priest-in-Charge at St. Thomas would not only find themselves warmly welcomed within this parish but would also find themselves at the heart of an inspiring vision and team in the deanery.