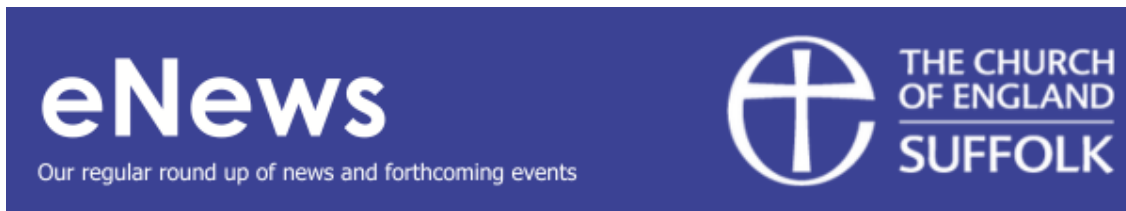


Thursday 11 December 2025



Christmas and the environment

Please find below a couple of steps for December for your church on your eco journey:

A Greener Christmas - December is filled with preparations for Christmas. In '[How Bad Are Bananas](#)', Mike Berners-Lee calculates that the excesses of Christmas have a significant carbon footprint – whilst a low-carbon Christmas creates 4kg CO2e per adult, the UK average is 280kg CO2e per adult, and a high carbon Christmas can create 1.5 tonnes CO2e per adult – and that's only including the 'excess' (so unwanted presents, wasted food, avoidable travel, non-LED fairy lights and cards). There are lots of [ideas for reducing the impact of Christmas](#) out there, so start thinking early about how you might adopt some or all of these.

Twelve Days Wild - 25 December to 5 January. Join in with [12 Days Wild](#). This Wildlife Trust festive nature challenge, encourages you to do one wild thing a day from 25 December to 5 January each year. In those quiet days between Christmas and New Year, winter wildlife is just waiting to be explored. Your wild acts could be little things to help nature - like recycling your Christmas tree or feeding the birds – or ways to connect to the natural world, like trying stargazing.

Christian Aid Christmas Appeal

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, Christian Aid asks us to not forget communities affected by conflict. While many of us share a joyful and peaceful Christmas in our homes and churches, you are invited to consider families facing unimaginable hardship after fleeing violence. Your support funds cash grants that help mothers buy the food and medicine their children need. For more information and to make a donation please visit [their website here](#).

Together we pray: We are delighted that the Revd Canon Eleanor Goodison will be presenting the prayers for next week, followed by a two week break for Together we Pray over Christmas.

Daily prayers will resume in the New Year from the week beginning 12 January 2026 led by the Revd Diane Grano.



Together we pray



We are delighted that the Revd Canon Eleanor Goodison will be presenting Together we Pray next week beginning 15 December.


The Gathering



We are taking a different route with the Diocesan weekend for young people, in 2026 we will be joining Ipswich CYM's residential which is called The Gathering held at CYM Hub Vauxhall Farm, Colchester CO7 6FJ.

The Gathering is a termly youth worship night organised in partnership with Ipswich CYM and youth leaders from across Ipswich. Part of the weekend will be The Gathering on Friday night where some young people will be joining us and then not staying for the weekend. We have the excellent Tim Alford joining us on the Friday night who will do a great job in delivering a Gospel talk. Vauxhall Farm has exciting facilities available to us, including various outdoor activities (take a look at www.c-y-m.org.uk/basecamp) for an overview. We will have time in worship together, time around the campfire, a choice of seminar streams and of course food!

 **Dates:** April 24 - 26

 **Arrive:** Friday, 6.00pm - **Depart:** Sunday, 2.00pm

 **Cost:** £110 per young person.

Group bookings are available which are managed by CYM Ipswich. Leaders within a group get one leader free for every 10 young people. Additional leaders above that at a cost of £65pp. For those booking individually, there will be an additional £1.50 booking fee for using the online *Ticket Taylor* system. This event will have a capacity of 100 young people, some will be sleeping in the lodges and if we run out of those some will be camping on site. (We will help with finding tents, but will also be asking around for who has camping equipment we can borrow). Do book on quickly to secure your place. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to get in contact: jamie.swinerd@cofesuffolk.org.
[To find out more and book please visit our website here.](#)

Connect Essentials



Children's and Family's ministry is vital to church growth and we are relaunching our Connect course as Connect Essentials, compiled by the National training: [Children's Ministry Essentials \(CME\) | The Church of England](#). In the course, we will look at child development, learning and spiritual styles, discipleship, intergenerational worship, and how we walk with families through life's key transitions.

This course is perfect for anyone already doing some children's or family ministry who wishes to consolidate their learning, access new resources and join a network of like-minded people who share their enthusiasm for this ministry. Successful completion of this course may lead to licensing as a Children's and Family's Minister. There are seven face to face sessions on the following Saturdays mornings: 17 January, 21 February, 21 March, 18 April, 16 May, 20 June and 18 July, in Earl Stonham Village Hall. After these sessions we will run an additional three sessions (two face to face and one online) and the final session will include a presentation of work and awarding of certificates.

Please [register on Insight here](#). For more information please contact [Charlotte Gooch](#), Diocesan Growing Younger Project Support, or phone 07802 428626.

Mission and Ministry Events

Exploring the Old Testament | Wednesday 14, 21, 28 January; 4, 11, 25 February; and 4 March 7.30 - 9.30pm | Earl Stonham Village Hall IP14 5HJ

The Old Testament is the larger part of the Bible and has far more to say than the New Testament about things like the life cycle (birth, marriage, death), sickness and health, daily work, the environment, social justice, and so on. In other words, it relates to life as we know it on a day-by-day basis. In this short course, Hugh Williamson will try to open our eyes to some of this wealth by surveying in an engaging manner all the different types of material in the Old Testament, very much with an eye on how we can apply it in our own times in both church and society. [Book here.](#)

Handling Conflict Constructively | Saturday 17 January 9.00am - 4.30pm | Saxmundham Church Hall, Saxmundham IP17 1ES

As part of the commitment to equip Church Leaders for the challenges of ministry, we are running a Bridge Builders 'Handling Conflict Constructively' training day. The day will start at 9.00am with welcoming drinks, with the course starting promptly at 9.30am. Lunch is included. For more information on Bridge Builders as an organisation [please see their website](#).

Places are free of charge but numbers are limited and are being offered on a first-to-respond basis. If you would like to take up the offer of this valuable training, please register [here](#). (Please note: this link is for Clergy and LLM only - log-in is required).

The only way is Ethics! | 20, 27 January; 3, 10, 24 February; and 3 March | 7.30 – 9.30pm | Earl Stonham Village Hall IP14 5HJ

The Christian Ethics module is a six-session course which explores the history of ethical thought and also everyday issues and moral questions from capitalism to the environment. This module, led by the Revd Rachel Revely, aims to further develop moral thinking, appreciation and judgment that is appropriate within the context of Christian teaching and pastoral ministry, and Christian living. [Book here](#).

Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent | Wednesday 21 January at 12.30pm | Online



Join this special webinar to explore Lent and Easter 2026 resources for churches. The Church of England's theme for Lent will be **Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent**. The resources have at their heart the theme of a 'rhythm of life' – habits and patterns which help us grow as disciples of Christ day by day, especially as we prepare to celebrate the great mystery of God's saving love at Easter. [Sign up here](#).

Enhancing Pastoral Ministry | 28 January; 4, 11, 25 February; and 4, 11 March | 7.30pm - 9.30pm | Earl Stonham Village Hall IP14 5HJ

Enhancing Pastoral Ministry is a six-session course for people who are involved in pastoral care (for example, Readers, Lay Elders, clergy, pastoral visitors) as well as those interested in a deeper understanding. Guest speakers will include: Karen Galloway and members of the Diocesan Safeguarding team; Annabel Turner, member of the Diocesan counselling team, and the Diocesan Growing Younger team. [Book here](#).

Fieldwork: Celebrating Rural Mission and Ministry in Suffolk | 28 February 2026, 9.30am to 4.00pm | Wingfield Barns, Nr Diss IP21 5RA



Join this Diocesan day conference for church members, PCC members, those in our church schools, lay ministers and clergy from our rural parishes. We will hear from a great keynote speaker, the Revd Jo Neary – Tutor in Rural Ministry and Mission (part-time) at Sarum College, Salisbury, alongside her part-time post as team vicar and pioneer priest in the Beaminster Area Team in Wiltshire, who will encourage us to think about the distinctive identity, calling and potential of the rural church. There will be time to share our stories of joy and challenge, and

be encouraged and inspired. It is being organised by rural ministers with the help of Diocesan staff and is free to attend. [To register please book here.](#)

Flourish | Saturday 2 May 2026, , 9.30am for 10.00am – 3.00pm | The Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

An invitation to all Readers, Licensed Lay Ministers and Lay Elders to join us for our annual study day. The guest speaker this year is the Revd Dr Thomas Sharp from St Augustine's College of Theology. A core part of Thomas's teaching focuses on human flourishing, especially how Christians care for others in times of hardship. The morning session focuses on Pastoral Care in a Broken World and the afternoon session is on the Theology of Safeguarding – what does it mean to care? Reserve your free space now! Click here: [Flourish - Insight CofE Suffolk.](#)

Church Community Services and Events

Christmas Fayre | Saturday 13 December | Great Blakenham Parish Room | 11.00am to 2.00pm

Come along for craft stalls, Christmas gifts, refreshments and an opportunity to visit Father Christmas in his grotto in the church.

Advent Event for Bury St Edmunds | Sunday 14 December, 7.00pm | St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1RT

St Edmundsbury Cathedral's InHarmony project is working with Cantus Firmus Trust and Churches Together in Bury St Edmunds and District to present an Advent event for the town, entitled 'Sharers in the Promise'. The presentation uses music and drama to reflect on the coming of Jesus Christ – a promise of hope and salvation in which all can share. Admission is by free ticket, available at cantusfirmus.org.uk There will be a collection to help cover costs.

Great Blakenham Village Carol Singing | Friday 19 December, 6.30pm | St Mary's Church, Great Blakenham

Meet at the church to walk along the local area and take part in family carol singing. Finish at Tesco's for some mince pies! Everyone welcome - make sure to wrap up warm and bring a torch.

Remembering Loved Ones at Christmas | St Mary's Church, Great Blakenham | Saturday 20 December, 3.30pm to 5.00pm

Join this gentle candlelight service to pause, reflect and remember loved ones during the festive season. Share hymns, music, prayer and the lighting of candles.

A Seasonal Celebration of Song | Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford CO10 9DL | Saturday 20 December, 5.00pm

Come along and join a seasonal celebration of song, with HappySounds Community Choir

and special guests Sudbury Sings and The VIPs. Tickets cost £10 in aid of Compassion/Macmillan, contact info@happysounds.co.uk

Society of Catholic Priests (SCP) | Thursday 26 February, 11.00am, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

The St Edmundsbury and Ipswich chapter of the SCP was relaunched three years ago. They meet four times a year, usually at the Cathedral, for a Eucharist, talk, lunch and conversation. The society is inclusive - for ordained men and women - and it celebrates humanity in all God-given diversity with respect to ethnicity, gender and sexuality. It is in the catholic tradition found within the Anglican communion and is centred on the Eucharist. If you are new to the diocese, recently ordained (including deacons), and feel this could be a spiritual home and place of encouragement and support for you, then come along. The next meeting lead speaker will be the Revd Canon Stuart Batten on Desert Spirituality. For more information please contact Mother Ali: teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com

Notices

Online Parish Returns System (OPRS): This is open to parishes wanting to input attendance figures on the number of people attending their church in person for services and other acts of worship during the first four weeks in October. This includes the number of people attending on Sundays and during the week (Monday to Saturday). The OPRS can be accessed via following link <https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org>. If you need help creating an account for the Online Parish Returns System, please send an email to statistics@cofesuffolk.org and we will be happy to help you.

Vacancies

[Team Vicar](#) | [Sole Bay Team](#) | Closing date: TBC

[Team Vicar](#) | Forest Heath Team Ministry (House for Duty - Sunday + 2 days) | Closing date: TBC

[Non-Executive Safeguarding Chapter Member](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

[Cathedral Volunteers](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

[Risk, Audit and Review Committee Member](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

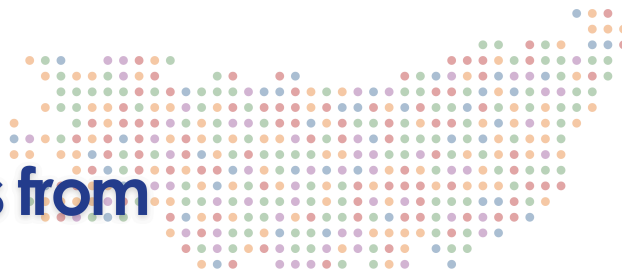
[Associate Chaplain](#) | Sizewell C

[Part-time Youth Worker](#) | All Saints' Church, Ipswich

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Watch our stories from around Suffolk



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