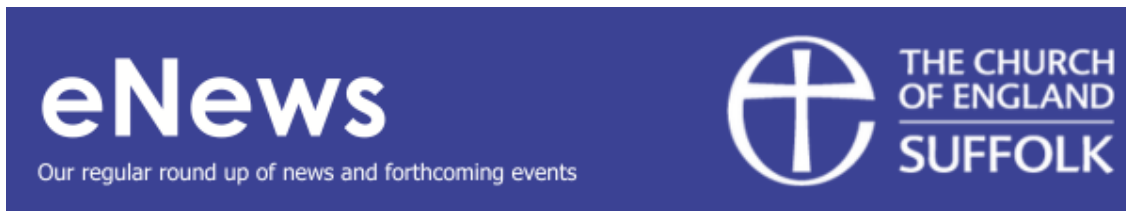


**Thursday 12 December 2024**



### **Supporting our Farming Communities**

Farmers from across the county staged a Go Slow Tractor protest between Ipswich and Felixstowe docks on Wednesday 11 December. This convoy of over 50 tractors from across Suffolk were protesting against the inheritance tax changes.

Graham Miles, Rural & Agricultural Chaplain for Suffolk joined in support and says *"Bishop Martin, President of the Suffolk Agricultural Association, fully supports this protest and for me to attend as Agricultural Chaplain. Our farming communities need our support, showing them that we really do care about farmers in Suffolk. Many farmers I have spoken with are so worried about the future of their family farms and the next generation of farming. This comes on top of many issues our farmers have been struggling with, from the weather, Blue tongue disease, to Avian flu, all of which cause stress, anxiety and depression"*. Graham Miles and the chaplaincy team are available to listen, support and - most of all - share God's Love. [Please email: graham.miles.lightwave@gmail.com](mailto:graham.miles.lightwave@gmail.com)

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### **Follow the Star: Calm and Bright**



December can feel like chaos – lots of social events, services, Christmas presents to buy, never-ending to-do lists and the pressure to create the perfect Christmas. But in the midst of this chaos, our churches can offer an opportunity to find peace during this busy time. The Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas 2024, **Follow the Star: Calm and Bright**, draws on the world-famous carol, Silent Night: *"Silent Night! Holy*

*Night! All is calm, all is bright..."*

Throughout Advent, the focus is primarily on how to find **Calm** during this busy period, with reflections offering people a chance to pause during the busy season and tips on how to prepare for a calm Christmas. Then through Christmas, this moves to **Bright**, with a series of daily reflections from Christmas Day to the Eve of Epiphany (5 January) by Sammi Tooze, Discipleship Adviser for the Diocese of York.

[You can find these reflections on the Everyday Faith App: download here](#)

[You can follow the online Advent calendar here.](#)

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**Use gas or oil to heat your church? Don't get left out in the cold!**

It's that time of year when the temperatures are dropping and all of us are turning to our heating to keep us warm. Remember: if your church is heated by oil or gas you could start considering how you will replace your system now. Consider what you could replace it with, and how you will keep your church warm in the event of a heating breakdown. Replacement of a fossil fuel heating system, even a like-for-like replacement, now requires a faculty and is no longer a quick fix for any winter heating woes! A great place to begin is by running through the Church of England's [guidance on heating your church](#).

Unfortunately, boilers do break down from time to time, so it's a good idea to have a plan of how you will keep people in your church warm if this does happen. There are many temporary heating options, ranging from hiring or purchasing free-standing infrared heaters and electric blowers, to temporary boiler hire which may be linked up to your existing heating system. The Church of England guidance document [Temporary Heating Options](#) gives advice on what you should consider and a few examples of temporary heating options. Be prepared and help your church to avoid being left in the cold!

If you want any further support or advice, then [email James Rolls](#), Diocese's Net Zero Carbon Officer for help and support.

## Events

### **Give to Go Green events - Santa's Grotto**

St Peter's Church, Stoke Park, Ipswich IP2 9TH  
Saturday 14 December, 3.00pm.

St Peter's are looking to raise £10,000 to be match funded to replace their church windows. Please join this fun event £5 per child including the visit and a present. [Book here.](#)

### **Felixstowe Parish Christmas Events**

St John's Church IP11 7PW and St Edmund's Church IP11 2HR

**Nine Lessons and Carols with Ipswich Deaf Signing Choir** - Sunday 15 December, 4.00pm, St John's Church

**CTF Advent** - Tuesday 17 December, 12.00pm, St Edmund's Church

**Eucharist with Carols** - Thursday 19 December, 10.30am, St Edmund's Church

**Pitstop Carols** - Friday 20 December, 6.00pm, St Edmund's Church

**Nativity** - Sunday 22 December, 3.00pm, St John's Church

**Midnight Mass** - Tuesday 24 December, 11.00pm, St John's Church

**BCP Eucharist and Eucharist with Carols** - Wednesday 25 December, 8.00am and 10.00am, St John's Church

### **Angel Festival**

St Matthew's Church, Leavenheath CO6 4US  
Sunday 8 December, 10.30am onwards

Join St Matthew's church for an all-day Angel festival with crafts and refreshments, as well

as a Carol sing-song later on in the day at 2.30pm. The church will be decorated with angels and stars made by the community. The festival will then be open each day until Christmas. All are most welcome.

### **Depden Living Nativity**

Wednesday 11 December - Saturday 14 December, 5.30pm and 7.00pm  
Depden Care Farm, Bury St Edmunds IP29 4BU

Twice-nightly performances of the Living Nativity at Depden near Bury St Edmunds for the second year running. Experience the magic of the Christmas story as you travel around the farm meeting the animals, with local people taking on the starring roles. Cost is £12 for adults and £6 for under 11s. Full details of the performance and tickets [available here](#).

### **Christmas tree festival followed by Christingle and crib service**

St Mary's Church, Boxford CO10 5DU  
Sunday 15 December 10.00am to 3.50pm, service at 4.00pm

A lovely way to begin the build-up to Christmas with crafts, cakes, refreshments and a children's trail. Service includes singing from the Boxford School Choir.

### **Waking the Women**

Tuesday 7 January, 7.00pm - 8.30pm by Zoom

Women over the age of 40 are by far the biggest and the most active demographic in the Church of England. But while a huge proportion of any given congregation will likely have experienced menopause, it still remains largely unacknowledged, unspoken and unaddressed. Join Jayne who will be discussing her book *Waking the Women*, the menopause and the church with the Diocesan Advisor for Women's Ministry, the Revd Ali Miller, on Zoom. All are welcome to come and join the discussion. [Click here to register](#).

### **Youthscape Essentials**

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Stowmarket IP14 5HJ  
Tuesdays 14 January, 21 January, 28 January, 4 February, 11 February, 25 February, 4 March, 11 March, 18 March and 25 March 2025, 7.30pm - 9.15pm

Youthscape Essentials training is for all youth workers, youth ministers and youth helpers! Led by skilled practitioners using discussion, videos, skills practice, young people's insights and much more, to gain a foundational understanding into the lives of young people and how we can disciple them to know and love Jesus. Cost of the course is £10, including the course handbook. To sign up and find out more, please [click here](#).

### **Connect Family Ministry Course**

The Woolpit Institute, Woolpit IP30 9QH  
Saturdays 18 January, 22 February, 29 March, 24 May, 21 June and 19 July

In this course, we look at what families look like in the Bible and how the early church ministered to families. We then look at child development, learning and spiritual styles, discipleship, intergenerational worship, schools ministry and how we walk with families through life's key transitions. This course is perfect for anyone already doing some children 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. Please sign up [here](#).

### **The Only Way is Ethics**

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Stowmarket IP14 5HJ

Tuesdays 21 January, 28 January, 4 February 2025, 11 February 2025, 25 February 2025 and 4 March 2025, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

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. Led by the Revd Rachel Revely, the course 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](#).

### **Enhancing Pastoral Ministry**

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Stowmarket IP14 5HJ

Wednesdays 22 January, 29 January, 5 February, 12 February, 26 February and 5 March 2025. Registration and coffee at 7.00pm, sessions 7.30 – 9.30pm

Enhancing Pastoral Ministry is a six-session course for people who are involved in anyway in pastoral care (for example, Readers, Lay Elders, clergy, pastoral visitors) as well as those interested in a deeper understanding of this ministry. The course is open to all and is free of charge. For more information on the course, please contact Lesley Steed at [lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org), and to book onto the course please [click here](#).

### **Exploring the Old Testament**

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Stowmarket IP14 5HJ

Wednesdays 22 January, 22 January, 29 January, 5 February, 12 February, 26 February, 5 March and 12 March 2025. Registration and coffee at 7.00pm, sessions 7.30 – 9.30pm

In many of our churches, where the weekly service may be some form of the Eucharist, the Old Testament nowadays is never read. And even where it is, it is often ignored. But it 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. Of course, there are some challenging bits which need also to be confronted in an honest manner, but they should not deflect us from the riches of what was, after all, Jesus' Bible. (Where did he get the first and great commandment ... and the second is like, namely this...?) 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. To book your place on this course please [click here](#).

### **Lower than the Angels**

St John's Street Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SN

Thursday 6 February 2025 at 7.30pm

Join Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch as he speaks about his recent book. Admission £12 + 10% booking fee. Advance tickets from [We Got Tickets](#).

## **The Big Weekend**

Friday 11 April, 11.00am - Sunday 13 April, 4.00pm  
Sizewell Hall, Leiston IP16 4TX

The Big Weekend is organised by the Church of England here in St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and run by experienced youth workers from around Suffolk. It's a weekend of craziness, worship, games and friendship all focused around learning more about living as a Christian in the C21st. The event is for young people from school years 7-13. Whilst it is Christian in ethos and focus you don't have to call yourself a Christian to be able to attend and have fun! Cost of the weekend is £60 per person. [Book here.](#)

## **In the beginning was the story... Approaching the New Testament**

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Stowmarket IP14 5HJ  
Wednesdays 30 April, 7 May, 14 May, 28 May, 4 June, 11 June and 18 June, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

This course looks at the beginnings of what became Christianity, in the writings of the New Testament, and explores their narrative features. Led by the Revd Canon John Parr, Approaching the New Testament takes a story-shaped approach to the heart of Christian faith. To book your place please [click here.](#)

## **Building a Generous Church conference**

Saturday 17 May, 9.30am  
Bridge Community Church, 68 Queen's Road, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3EW

We invite you to join Archdeacons David and Rich; Gary Peverley, Diocesan Secretary; Diocesan staff and others to be inspired by three keynote speakers focusing on compassionate communities and the impact on our society, and how to put generosity at the heart of our lives. There will be a choice of 12 workshops to attend to help your church become more informed and better resourced to grow a generous culture and reach financial sustainability. Bishop Graeme will open the conference. All those who are part of the Church of England Suffolk community are welcome. For more information and to book please click [here.](#)

**Save the Date- Growing in God in the Countryside** 22-23 September 2025 | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

## **Notice**

**Statistics for Mission:** Thank you to all parishes who have started their Statistics for Mission forms. The National Church deadline is 31 January 2025. Returns should be submitted via the [Parish Returns Online](#) Returns System.

If you require log-in details or any other assistance with the online portal, please [email: statistics@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:statistics@cofesuffolk.org). Further help can be viewed on our website [Please click here for Parish returns.](#)

**Parish Share:** We are delighted to share with you our latest publications, please download these from our [Parish Share website page](#).

**Parish Giving Scheme - Office hours over Christmas:** The PGS office will close for Christmas at 12.00pm on Tuesday 24 December 2024, and re-open on Thursday 2 January 2025. For assistance, please contact the team at [info@parishgiving.org.uk](mailto:info@parishgiving.org.uk) or call us on 0333 002 1260 or you can contact the Diocesan Team at [pgs@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:pgs@cofesuffolk.org)

## Vacancies

[Organ Scholar](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral | Closing date: 14 January

[Diocesan Correspondence Secretary](#) | Mothers' Union

[River Church Opportunities](#) | Kids Pastor (full-time), Debt Centre Manager (part-time) and internships | Ipswich

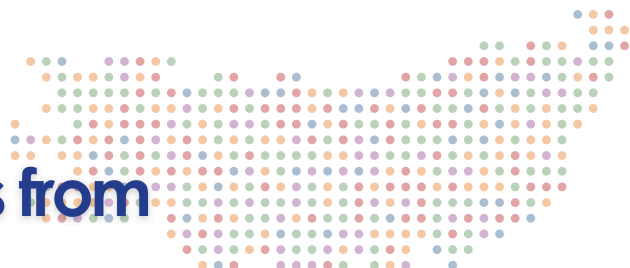
Part-time Youth Worker | Brandon | Please email [enquiry@stpetersbrandon.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@stpetersbrandon.co.uk)

[Top-up shop Manager](#) | Safe Harbour, St Helen's Church, Ipswich

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# Watch our stories from around Suffolk



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