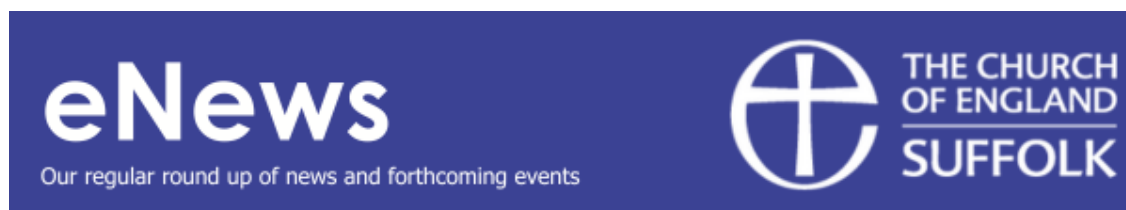


Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events from our diocese

[View this email in your browser](#)

Thursday 20 November 2025



Accessibility adaptations at primary school



Sir Robert Hitcham CEVA Primary School, Debenham celebrated the official opening of their accessibility adaptations with special guest Jane Sheat, Diocesan Director of Education, cutting a ceremonial ribbon alongside Headteacher, Mrs Laura Dumolo.

Included in the adaptations, which began in July 2025 and were completed at the beginning of November, are graded pathways, accessible toilets,

automatic doors and a specially designed changing place with hoist.

As part of the celebration, addressing the whole school and invited guests, Mrs Dumolo, spoke about her pride in Sir Robert Hitcham CEVA Primary School being a place where everyone belongs. She said, *"We celebrate that our community is inclusive, not as an afterthought, as a foundation. These changes are about saying, you belong here, exactly as you are."* [Read the full story here.](#)

A Season of Joy



We are thrilled with the Advent and Christmas resources for 2025, inviting churches, communities, and individuals across the diocese to embrace this year's theme: Joy.

As well as resources for churches in the [Resource Hub](#) (log in required to AChurchNearYou.com), there are also resources for individuals:

- **Reflections via email:** [Sign up](#) to Christmas reflection emails and receive daily messages straight to your inbox.
- **Downloadable reflections for 11-15 year olds:** Offering bitesize daily reflections for young people written by Lucy Rycroft. These can be downloaded in [full colour](#).
- **Daily reflections via Everyday Faith app:** You can read and listen to daily Advent and Christmas reflections from 1 December through the Everyday Faith app, which is available to [download here](#).

- **Women of the Nativity:** A collection of nine imagined stories told from the perspective of women, written by Paula Gooder, recreating the events of the Nativity. [Listen here](#).
- **Online services:** Can't make it to church this Advent and Christmas? [Watch weekly online worship services](#) from across the Church of England.

If you have a story to share about how your church is engaging with the local community over Advent and Christmas, do get in touch by email at comms@cofesuffolk.org

Candlelit Advent Carol Service | Sunday 30 November at 5.00pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

As we move towards the start of Advent, you are very welcome to join St Edmundsbury Cathedral to take time out and just 'be' as we begin the Advent season. All are welcome, especially if you are not holding an Advent service in your church. To help with our planning, please RSVP by emailing rsvp@stedscathedral.org.

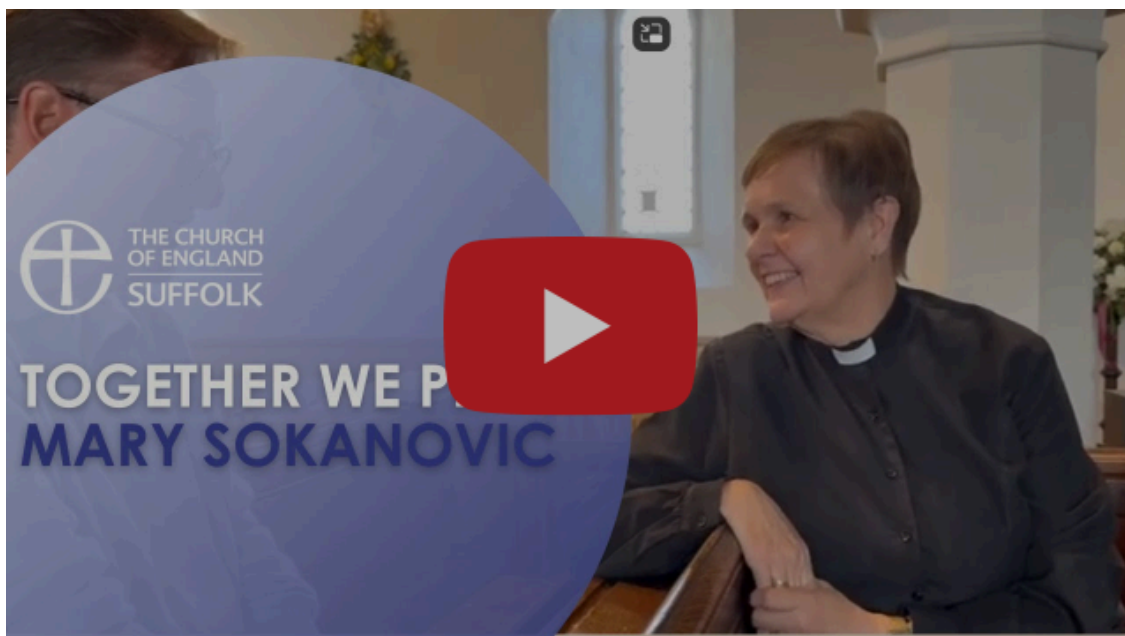
Christmas Market comes to St Edmundsbury Cathedral | Thursday 27 November to Saturday 29 November | 10.00am – 4.30pm each day | £1.00 entry fee

Over 50 stallholders will showcase their products, filling the Cathedral Nave. There will be refreshments available along with daily entertainment. Special Tower Tours will be running available to pre-book [here](#). Tours are £12.00 per person and are the last opportunity to climb the tower before March 2026 as Tower Tours go on their winter break.

Christmas Updates from the Digital Giving Team

In collaboration with Digital Labs, the Digital Giving team have produced a range of resources to help you encourage digital giving in your churches this Advent and Christmas. Click here for this [Guide to Digital Giving blog](#). You can also watch Luke Johnson from the Giving team share his advice in [this short video here](#). You can access all these resources, alongside all our Joy-themed assets and templates, in the [Resource Hub](#) on AChurchNearYou.com.

Generosity at Christmas Webinar | Tuesday 2 December at 1.30pm - 2.30pm | Online
Join this special webinar designed to equip clergy on how to celebrate and encourage giving and generosity over Christmas. The birth of Jesus, one of the greatest acts of generosity, is a great time to consider how we can live out generous lives, inspired by a generous God. There will be lots of practical ideas for clergy to take away to put into practice this Christmas. [Book here](#).



The Revd Mary Sokanovic will be hosting Together we Pray next week.

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.](#)

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.](#)

Save the date - Fieldwork: Celebrating Rural Mission and Ministry in Suffolk |

28 February 2026



Join this diocesan day conference for church members, PCC members, those in our church schools, lay ministers and clergy from our rural parishes, as a time to hear from great speakers, 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. More details including a booking link will follow soon.

Flourish | Saturday 2 May 2026, 9.00am | 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.](#)

Events and training

Understanding and working with relationship and family dynamics Friday 28

November, 9.00am to 4.00pm | St Andrew's Church Hall, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich IP5 1DH

This workshop is offered by Inspire Counselling and Training. Facilitated by Dr Jan Fish, an

accredited counsellor, supervisor and trainer. This day is suitable for student and qualified counsellors, supervisors, ministers and church leaders, pastoral and youth workers, teachers and teaching assistants together with anyone with an interest in working with families. The day will be interactive and experiential, exploring approaches to understanding the human need for relationships and the powerful unconscious dynamics that occur within families. Full information is available [here](#).

Advent retreat day - 'I am the Vine, you are the branches' - led by Sarah Wallington-Smith

Thursday 27 November | Lark Rise, 230 Ferry Road, Felixstowe (4 spaces left)

Events on Friday 28 November and Saturday 29 November are now fully booked

The day runs from 10.00am – 4.00pm and costs £25/person including refreshments and lunch. More details and bookings are on www.larkriseretreats.org or call Catherine Bond or Jane Pearse on 01394 284213.

Crossroads Retreat hosted by Quiet Waters

Tuesday 9 December 9.30am - Wednesday 10 December 4.00pm | Quiet Waters Christian House, Bungay NR35 1PD

A Crossroads Retreat is for you when you sense something is changing in your life but are not clear about the way ahead. This two-day retreat is a chance to take time out, free from any pressures or expectations, to listen deeply to yourself, get a fresh perspective and discern the 'good way' forward that is yours and yours alone. All in a secure and peaceful environment where you'll be free to share as much or as little as you'd like. The retreat costs £270.00 and is full-board. To book, please contact the QW office at mail@quietwaters.org.uk or call 01986 893201.

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

Church Community Services and Events

Light Up a Life Remembrance Events | St Nicholas Hospice | Various locations starting from 23 November. Full list of dates and locations [available here](#).

The Light Up a Life events are free and open to all. They offer a meaningful way to come together as a community during the festive season and share a moment of reflection, with music and readings. You are invited, should you wish, to have the names of those you want to remember read out at an event. You can do this by visiting their [website here](#).

Christmas Crib Weekend | 29-30 November, 10.00pm to 4.00pm, All Saints' Church, Great Glemham IP17 2DA

The Christmas crib or Nativity scene originates from Saint Francis of Assisi's first 'living' nativity in Greccio, Italy in 1223, inspired by his pilgrimage to Bethlehem. This weekend, why not visit Great Glemham church which will be full of cribs so you can enjoy many versions of this traditional scene and read their stories. Refreshments will be served. At 4.00pm on Sunday 30 November there will be a Advent Service of Darkness to Light with special music from the Alde River Choir.

Advent celebration | Sunday 30 November at 6.00pm | St Mary at the Elms, Ipswich IP1 2AA

Join the Copt Hall Singers for an Advent Carol Service, Free of charge - retiring collection.

Coptic Pilgrimage | Tuesday 2 December, 10.00am - 4.00pm | Arranged by St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Shephalbury Manor in Stevenage has been home to The Coptic Orthodox Church Centre in the UK for over two decades. The pilgrimage includes an audience with Archbishop Angaelos of London, and the option to celebrate an Anglican Eucharist. Tickets cost £15 and will cover drinks and lunch. Transport will be via rail or shared cars. If you are interested in taking part in the trip, please contact [Mark Haworth](#).

'Christmas through the Keyhole' | Saturday 6 December, 30 minute tours from 1.00-3.30pm | St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds

Offering an interactive Christmas trail telling the Christmas story starting in the present day, then visiting Mary's home, the shepherd's field, the Maji's observatory, Joseph's workshop, ending up in the Bethlehem stable. At each zone you will be invited to use all your senses to find out more about the characters in the story and how each one became involved in the amazing story. This is a great opportunity to experience the Christmas story. With an opportunity to do some Christmas crafts and have tea and cake. No booking required. For more information jennifer.aston@btinternet.com

Local Houses of Prayer Training Day | All Saints' Church, Newmarket | Saturday 6 December, 10.00am to 4.00pm.

This is a movement of Christians from many different churches who have the desire to pray specifically for their own town and villages, the streets where they live, and those who live and work around them. They are tiny prayer groups, typically starting off with 2-3 people, which adopt a small geographical area. This training day offers an opportunity to learn more about the underlying biblical principles, to hear stories of what God has done and is doing in different places, and find out what the next steps might be for us here in our own local area. The invitation is to all members of Churches Together in Newmarket and the surrounding area, and any others who might be interested. For more information visit the website here: localhousesofprayer.org/events

Hexachordia: Heigh-ho, the Holly! | Sunday 7 December, 4.00pm | St Margaret's Church, Ipswich IP4 2BT

Come along and hear the Medieval and Tudor origins of today's familiar carols in one of Hexachordia's final concerts together as they play the gittern, vielle, crumhorn, lute, viol,

recorder and bagpipes. Complimentary hot drinks and cake served after the concert. Tickets £8.00 standard, £5.00 concession for children, students and carers. [Click here](#) for tickets or contact office.stmagsips@gmail.com or text/phone 07733 609661.

Francis Young "Terrors made flesh: M. R. James and the theology of the Christmas ghost story" | Friday 12 December, 6.00pm | St John the Evangelist, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SN

Join this lecture by Francis Young, a historian and folklorist who was born and brought up in Bury St Edmunds. He is the author of over 20 non-fiction books including *Twilight of the Godlings* and *Silence of the Gods*, as well as a couple of collections of ghost stories. Tickets from [We Got Tickets](#) or contact Adrian Mann on 01284 753984 or email: [Adrian Mann](mailto:Adrian.Mann).

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.

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.

Articles of Enquiry: the term 'Articles of Enquiry' refers to a set of questions or topics which are posed by the Archdeacons. 2025 was the second year it was agreed to collect information. This year's chosen themes related to the Environment, Discipleship, Giving / Stewardship, Mission, and Safeguarding. To read an Executive Summary of the results please click [here](#).

Mobile network and broadband Survey: Technologies have revolutionised daily home and work life for many of us in recent years, and the part they play in our places of worship can be just as important. The National Church is researching the issues around connectivity and need parishes to help them to build an accurate picture across the country. Please fill in the survey via this [link](#) and be a part of the solution.

Vacancies

[Executive Assistant to the Diocesan Bishop](#) | Closing date: 21 November

[Bishop's Office and Finance Manager](#) | Closing date: 21 November

[Vicar at St Peter & St Mary's Church](#) | Stowmarket | Closing date: 27 November

[DAC Chair](#) | Voluntary Role | Closing date: 30 November

Treasurer | All Saints' Church, Thorndon | Closing date: 30 November | Please [email here](#) for more information.

[Kids Pastor](#) | River Church | Closing date: 30 November

[Worship Pastor](#) | River Church | Closing date: 30 November

[Organist/Pianist and Choir Leader](#) | St Mary's East Bergholt, Constable County Benefice | Closing date: 7 December

[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

[Click here to print and share with others](#)



Watch our stories from around Suffolk



SIZEWELL YOUTH GATHERING
THE BIG WEEKEND
18-19th April 2025



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE
A SCHOOL GOVERNOR



KAGERA, TANZANIA 2024
GROWING YOUNGER





Copyright © 2025 Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, All rights reserved.

This email is generated from the Communications Office at the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Our mailing address is:

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, England IP1 1UQ

[Add us to your address book](#)

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

This email was sent to lauren.bridgwater@cofesuffolk.org

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich · St Nicholas Centre, 4 Cutler Street · Ipswich · Suffolk, England IP1 1UQ · United Kingdom