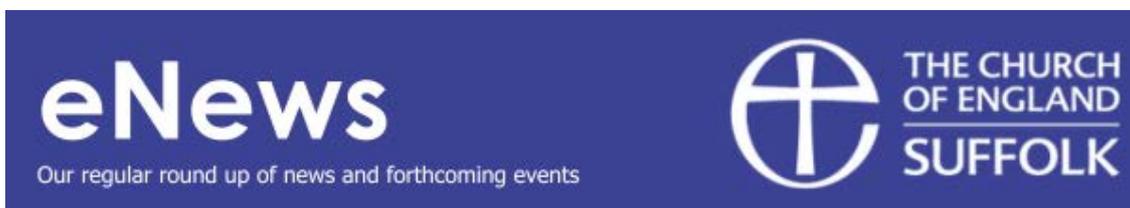


Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events from our diocese

[View this email in your browser](#)

Thursday 25 January 2024



Lent Appeal for Kagera 2024



Following Bishop Martin's trip to Kagera in the summer of 2023 and because of the forthcoming curates' trip to Kagera in February led by Bishop Mike, the bishops have decided that this year the theme of the Bishops' Lent Appeal will be '**Faith in Action – Transforming lives in Kagera.**'

Visitors to Kagera are always inspired by the people they meet and the work the church is doing there. Bishop Martin's presidency of the Suffolk Agricultural Association this year further connects us to our brothers and sisters in Kagera, many of whom are subsistence farmers, struggling with the effects of the climate crisis. The Diocese of Kagera is doing wonderful work to help its people and our support is vital. Read more about this work and what you can do to help at www.cofesuffolk.org/bishops-lent-appeal.

Last year over £25,000 was raised. Can we make it even better this year? **What can you do?** Priests across our Diocese have already received their information packs. Please ask them if you can help. We've delivered 500 Lent Appeal Booklets with prayers, stories from Kagera and fundraising ideas to churches already. Have you got yours yet? Order them today from kageralink@cofesuffolk.org.

Together with the Diocese of Kagera, we can make a huge and lasting impact on people's lives.

Funeral director praises close relationship with local clergy



A Suffolk Funeral Director has praised the close relationships the profession builds with local clergy to ensure those who have passed away get a fitting send off.

Alec Butcher, an Ipswich-based independent Funeral Director, said funerals had changed and were now much more personalised to the individual. Alec said, "*I started doing funerals 35 years ago and our relationship with the church has grown stronger and stronger since then, particularly with clergy.*" He added, "*It used to be clergy were stricter*

on what they would allow in a funeral, but they have changed with the times. As funerals have become more of a celebration of life, the nature of funerals has changed. We now have the opportunity to include secular music and secular readings alongside the usual content and they are much more personalised to each individual."

Alec said he was sceptical of the emergence of low-cost, 'direct' funerals and cremations, as he feels families are left with a 'vacuum'. *"With direct cremations, I never thought it would take off but they are now doing 20% of funerals - which is astounding. In some cases, very rare cases, they are the right thing to do. But rushing the funeral and getting back to work can leave you with an emptiness, a complete vacuum."*

The Revd Mary Sokanovic from St Mary's Church in Whitton, said: *"Funerals are much more complex than people think. I have often had people come up to me after a funeral and say 'we didn't realise how much we needed that.'" Mary added that, in psychological terms, funerals offer an important opportunity for the brain to process emotions and memories in a healthy way.*

To read the full story please click [here](#).

Suffolk primary school praised by Ofsted



Hintlesham and Chattisham Church of England Primary School was visited by the education watchdog, Ofsted, in November, with inspectors rating it 'good' in all areas. The glowing review praised its well-designed curriculum and happy, polite pupils. The report also praised the school's 'high expectations' for pupils' progress and the importance the school places on reading. The school is part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi

Academy Trust, and Jane Sheat, CEO said: *"The trust is a strong collaborative network of 21 church primary schools in Suffolk. I am delighted that Ofsted recognised the quality of education at Hintlesham. Mrs Jackson, the Headteacher, and her team should be proud of their achievements."* To read the full story on our website, please [click here](#).

Plans for Growth (Small Groups)



Creating a Plan for Growth
Small Group Guide



The Church of England's research into church growth suggests that "churches that intend to grow, tend to grow". In July 2022 we prepared a series of resources to help benefices develop their [Plan for Growth](#) and we are delighted that so many of our benefices have already done so. To support this further, we also recommend all Fresh Expressions of Church and the small groups behind them create a Plan for Growth to help them flourish in their own unique context. Therefore we have launched a new A4 booklet to help small groups create their Plan for Growth and where appropriate contribute

to a Benefice Plan for Growth. Please download your copy [here](#).

Deanery Drop in Sessions

We have looked at your Plans for Growth to see if there were any common themes or areas that you need help with. To support you we are offering a number of [drop-ins](#)



around the diocese to give you a chance to get the help you need, this is an exciting opportunity to meet the various teams from the Diocesan office who are there to offer advice on Children's and Families' Ministry, Youth Ministry, Giving, Grants, Discipleship, Communications, Vocations or anything else you'd like to ask – a real opportunity for us to have conversations and help

people.

For a full listing of the drop-in dates please click [here](#). Drop-in sessions coming up are:

Zoom Wednesday 27 February	3.00pm to 5.00pm: book here	6.00pm – 8.00pm: book here
St Luke's Church, Beccles NR34 9JQ Thursday 21 March	3.30pm to 5.00pm: book here	6.00pm – 8.00pm: book here
Thomas Clarkson Centre, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JT Tuesday 23 April	3.00pm to 5.00pm: book here	6.00pm – 8.00pm: book here
St Augustine's Community Hub, Ipswich IP3 8TH Wednesday 15 May	3.00pm to 5.00pm: book here	6.00pm - 8.00pm: book here .

Events

How to use Instagram for your church

Monday 29 January, 3.00 - 4.00pm

Are you looking to reach your community using Instagram? This webinar will cover how to create an account, what you could be posting, and more. Book [here](#).

Lightwave Small Group Leader training - in person

Wednesdays starting 31 January 2024, 7.15pm - 9.15pm

13 Spring Park, Chapel Road, Otley IP6 9NX

Join this course for Lightwave group leaders and helpers. Lightwave groups do life together - worship, serve, learn from the Bible, pray and help new people to find faith too. This six-session course takes place in person and ideally, you will need to complete all six sessions. Come prepared to learn, to laugh, to pray and be both supported and challenged. This course is free of charge. For further information please contact nina.seaman@cofesuffolk.org.

Candlemas Solemn Eucharist

Friday 2 February, 7.30pm

St John the Evangelist, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SN

Come along to St John's Solemn Eucharist led by the Revd Ali Miller, featuring The St John's Singers with organist, David Honeyball. This event is to be followed by a party. All welcome.

Lay Elder training and social morning

Saturday 3 February 2024, 9.30 AM

Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

This Lay Elders event was postponed as a result of the storms in October - we are delighted that we have been able to set a new date with the same guest speakers. The Ven Rich Henderson, Archdeacon of Suffolk, will give a keynote address, and bookings are being taken for either pastoral or liturgical workshops led by Karen Gardner and the Revd Canon Sharon Potter. After the morning's training we will share some social time while we eat our lunches - cake will be provided! For more details and to register for your free place, please click [here](#).

Come and See Lent Course

In person: Thursdays starting 15 February, 1.30pm-3.00pm

Online: Wednesdays starting 21 February, 7.00-8.00pm

St Edmundsbury Cathedral/Zoom

Join either virtually, or in-person for Come and see, a five-session Lent course at St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Using new material from his forthcoming book "Meeting God in John", David Ford, Divinity Emeritus at the University of Cambridge, invites you to reflect upon how John's Gospel draws us into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ who is 'The beginning and the end' and 'in whom all things were made'. To join online, please email chris.eyden@stedscathedral.org to receive the Zoom link. To join in person, please [book here](#) and choose either the free-to-attend Lent course, or the Lent course with lunch (£5.00 per session). Spaces are limited.

Big Weekend of Prayer for Farming

16-18 February



Suffolk in Prayer invite you to join them as they we pray for all those connected to the farming community in our county. They will be sharing a variety of things you can pray for during the weekend. Here are a few prayer ideas to get you started: good weather for crops, mental health of farmers and their families, including those struggling with suicidal thoughts; finding farm workers and training up new farmers; living in rural and isolated areas, rest and peace of mind; partners of farmers who are home-schooling, bookkeeping, offering emotional support and doing so much more.

All the details are on Facebook [@suffolkinprayer](#) or their website [lightwave.community/suffolk-in-prayer](http://www.lightwave.community/suffolk-in-prayer)

Churchwardens' Gathering (for Sudbury and Suffolk Archdeaconries)

Saturday 24 February at 10.00am-3.30pm

Sizewell Hall Christian Conference Centre, Leiston IP16 4TX

Archdeacon David and Archdeacon Rich invite churchwardens to gather for a day of fellowship, worship and reflection. The keynote speaker will be Bishop Graeme Knowles.

Offering a space to be with others to share ideas, support and encourage. Bring your own lunch, drinks are provided. Booking essential as places are limited. Book via [Eventbrite here](#).

How to make your toddler group more missional

Saturday 24 February, 2.00pm

Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

An opportunity for anyone involved in toddler group ministry to explore ways to make your sessions more intentionally missional. You'll hear from those who are already doing this well and also explore resources and strategies which can help you. There will be time to share your own ideas, hopes and frustrations, plus a chance to pray for one another. Refreshments will be provided. [Book here](#).

A Greener Lifestyle

Monday 26 February, 7.30pm

Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF

Come along for this interesting talk by James Pearce-Higgins, from EcoChurch. The event is ecumenical, presented by Museum Street Methodist Church and St Mary Elms. For further information email [Nicholas Jardine](#).

Christian Ethics

Starting Tuesday 27 February, 7.30pm-9.30pm

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green IP14 5HJ

This module explores the history of ethical thought and also everyday issues and moral questions from capitalism to the environment. The module aims to further develop moral thinking, appreciation and judgment that is appropriate within the context of Christian teaching and pastoral ministry, and Christian living. The sessions are on Tuesdays for 6 weeks, starting 27 February 2024 and finishing 16 April (no meetings during Easter). Refreshments will be served from 7.00pm for a prompt 7.30pm start and finish by 9.30pm. This module is open to all but a requirement for locally deployable curates. To book, please [click here](#).

Lark Rise Retreat Days 2024

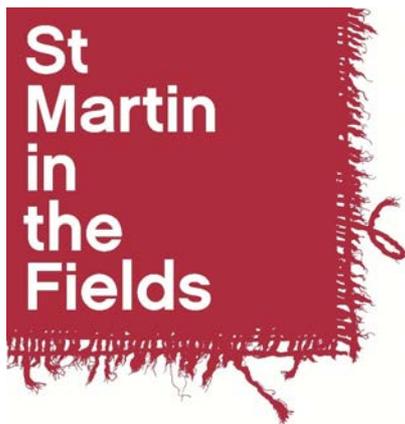
Lark Rise Retreats provide a space and time for people to relax with God. Upcoming events all held in Felixstowe include:

- Thursday 29 February | An Introduction to Franciscan spirituality | The Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin.
- Thursday 14 or alternatively Saturday 16 March | The women who sat at Jesus' feet | The Revd Catherine Bond.
- Thursday 4 or alternatively Saturday 6 April | Exploring the resurrection appearances of Jesus | The Revd Penny Brinkley.
- Friday 7 June | Celtic, green and godly | The Revd Dr John Bell.
- Friday 7 June | Using imagination to unlock scripture | The Revd Dr John Bell.
- Saturday 8 June | Come and sing workshop | The Revd Dr John Bell.

Please visit their website [here](#) for more details and to book.

Concert and Workshop

Wednesday 6 March, Workshop 4.00pm to 5.00pm, Concert 6.30pm to 8.00pm
Hitcham All Saints' Church, Ipswich IP7 7NN



Invitation to join a singing workshop led by the St Martin-in-the-Fields Choral Scholars, directed by Andrew Earis. Suitable for local choirs/singers and anyone who is interested. The concert will include reflections from the Revd Sharon Grenham-Thompson. Tickets cost £7.50 to include refreshments. Please note the church has a toilet and a large car park signed from the B1115 - Sat Nav IP7 7NR. There will be a break from 5.00pm - 6.00pm, please bring your own packed meal, tea and coffee will be available.

Contact RNFCurrie@gmail.com to register your interest

and receive more information.

Edmund Lecture | Dame Barbara Woodward DCMG OBE

Friday 15 March, 6.30pm-7.30pm - **NEW DATE**

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Thank you so much for your patience, we are delighted that the Edmund Lecture with Dame Barbara Woodward DCMG OBE has been rebooked. The Ambassador will explore parallels between the Magna Carta, as the 'great charter' which laid the foundation for the modern British values of rule of law and equality before it, of liberty and rights, and the UN Charter, which established the international rules and values that have underpinned relative peace and stability since the second World War. The Lecture will be followed by a special service of Vespers at 7.30pm to which all are welcome. Vespers is a liturgy of evening prayer that, for centuries, was part of the daily rhythm of prayer kept by the monks at the Abbey of St Edmund. To book your place, [please click here](#).

Walk the Way of the Cross with the Blyth Valley Churches this Easter!

This spring the churches of the Blyth Valley are giving you the opportunity to visit the Holy Land without leaving Suffolk! Across their 14 churches they are presenting an exhibition of original paintings by nationally acclaimed, local religious artist Iain McKillop. These Stations of The Cross focus the attention of visitors on the last known movements of Jesus, among them: his mock trial, him meeting women in the crowds and his execution.

The Blyth Valley Stations of the Cross 2024 will open with Bishop Mike leading a full set of reflections for a seated congregation at All Saints', Blyford, at 7.30pm on Friday 15 March. The Queen's Head, Blyford, will be open afterwards so people may stay and buy refreshments. A copy of each of the images will be prayerfully presented in each of the 14 churches of the benefices for the following week. From 7.30pm on Friday 22 March, the artist Iain McKillop will talk about his creative encounters with the Stations concept. Again, refreshments may be purchased at the Queen's Head afterwards.

On Saturday 23 March, Team Rector Dominic Doble and colleagues will lead a pilgrimage presenting a short contemplation at each parish church in the benefices.

All churches will be open during daylight hours. There is no charge for any of these events. However, our church committees are grateful for your generosity towards maintaining the parochial ministry that underpins events such as this.

Gather: The Big Weekend 2024

Friday 12 April 2024 6.00pm to Sunday 14 April 4.00pm

Sizewell Hall, Leiston IP16 4TX



A weekend of craziness, worship, games and friendship all focused around learning more about living as a Christian in the C21st. The Big Weekend is organised by the Church of England in St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and run by experienced youth workers from around Suffolk. Offering young people from school years 7-13 the chance to explore

faith and have fun! Book [here](#).

Doctrine

Tuesdays starting 30 April 2024, 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Venue to be announced

A six-session course unpacking the Apostles Creed so we can apply this to our own lives, understand our faith better and be able to articulate the faith to others helpfully. Subjects include God (including as the Trinity); Jesus; The Cross; Resurrection; Holy Spirit and Eternal Life. Bishop Mike will provide notes beforehand so most of the sessions can be spent in conversation, Q & A and going more deeply into areas participants want to explore further. For more information please [click here](#)

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

Starts 1 May 2024 7.00pm to 9.30pm

Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green IP14 5HJ

This course looks at the beginnings of what became Christianity in the writings of the New Testament, and explores their narrative features. The course is open to all and free of charge. Please book [here](#).

Clergy Retreat - Led by Bishop Martin

7 - 11 October 2024

St Andrew's Abbey, Zevenkerken-Brugge, Belgium

The best kept secret in the Diocese! Since 1960 when there was a formal link with Brugge a group of hardy clergy have braved the sea and weather to travel to the Abbey to spend time with the wonderful brothers at St Andrew's Abbey. Speakers in the past have spoken on a range of subjects from World Mission, The Psalms, and more. There are approximately 15 spaces available and you can come with spouses/partners. For more details or to book please contact the Revd David H Messer on 01964 563987 | davidharrymesser93@gmail.com.

Notices

Statistics for Mission: Thank you to all parishes who have already submitted their Statistics for Mission forms. The National Church deadline has been extended to 17 March 2024. Returns should be submitted via the [Online Parish Returns System](#). If you require log-in details or any other assistance with the online portal, please contact statistics@cofesuffolk.org. Further help can be viewed on our website here: [Stats for Mission Help](#).

Parish Visits to St Edmundsbury Cathedral 2024: Parish Visits provide an opportunity to enjoy a reflective pilgrimage of the Cathedral and to experience the Cathedral Choir at Choral Evensong, followed by tea and cakes in the Cathedral Centre where you will meet with members of the Cathedral's community, clergy, and Friends of the Cathedral. Please be aware that spaces are limited. For more details of the programme, [click here](#). To book a date, please contact Naomi Sturges by email at liturgy.admin@stedscathedral.org.

National Churches Trust (NCT) Training: Every year the NCT delivers training sessions to help empower churches in their work. Most of the events take place online, making them easily accessible for you no matter where your church is located. Over the next few months sessions include Creating the perfect welcome and Fundraising fundamentals, with the Chief Executive Claire Walker. Find out more and register for [free here](#).

Diocesan Affirming Catholicism Group: This Diocese remains the only diocese with an active group for AffCath, promoting liberal catholic thinking in today's issues. Fully inclusive of race, gender and sexual orientation for lay people and clergy. Offering two to three meetings or Quiet Days throughout the year in different venues across our Diocese. The next scheduled meeting is Saturday 13 April in Felixstowe with a Eucharist and an update on General Synod's Living in Love and Faith process. This year's Quiet Day will be Friday 14 June 2024 in Eyke, centred on 'Caring for Creation'. If you would like to become a member (subscription only £5 per annum!), please contact Michael Wilde 01284 767415 or email: cormack246@gmail.com.

Vacancies

[Insight Technical Support \(Temporary, part-time\)](#) | Closing date: 29 January

[Diocesan Schools' Adviser](#) | Closing date: 29 January

[Team Vicar](#) | The Forest Heath Team Benefice | Closing date: 2 February

[Priest in Charge](#) | Wickham Market & Pettistree | Closing date: 6 February

[Chaplain and Leader of Youth Orientated Congregation](#) | Debenham High School | Closing date: 8 February

[Rector](#) | Walton and Trimley | Closing date: 11 February

[Priest in Charge & Archdeaconry Mission Enabler](#) | Sproughton, Burstall, Copdock with Washbrook | Closing date: 13 February

[Rector](#) | The Benefice of Badwell Ash & Walsham-le-Willows | Closing date: 19 February

[Diocesan Mission Enabler](#) | Closing date: 19 February

[River Church Opportunities](#) | Ipswich

[New Opportunities in Ipswich](#) | Inspiring Ipswich

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