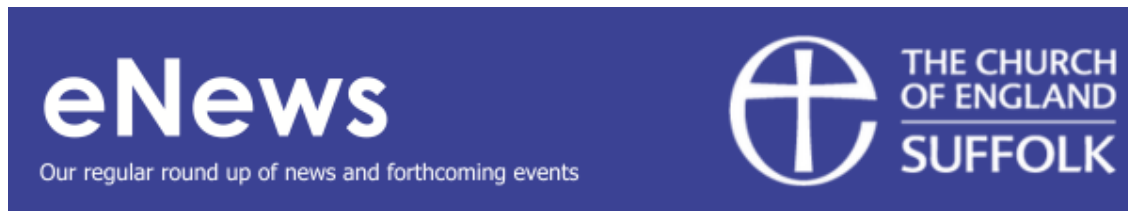


Thursday 27 February 2025



Bishop Martin's letter



As I retire, I am grateful beyond words to God and to you for the opportunity to serve in this wonderful Diocese and County. As I think back, I am overwhelmed by the ways in which God has blessed all of us, and by the fruit that has been borne through your continuing faithfulness. I will pray for you as you continue to respond to God's call to be witnesses to the Gospel in who and how you are, in your being and in your doing, for the people of Suffolk and beyond.

I am grateful too for the many ways in which our partnerships with other organisations and within our communities have also borne wonderful fruit. Being part of the fabric of our communities is vital and we see this across the county. I personally have been thankful for partnerships in farming, supporting young people, health, education, the military, and local politics, as well as for the opportunities that come through serving in the House of Lords – something I was never expecting to happen!

I am also very mindful of regrets, regrets at my failings not least in being your pastor. I can think of a long list of occasions where I have not reached out when I should have done. Our pastoral life, our showing and sharing God's love through care for one those among whom we live and work, our care for the stranger and those in need, our care for one another, this is the heart of being the Church. We live out our love of God and love of our neighbour, through prayer and worship, and care and service. I am sorry for the many ways in which I have failed in these areas, which are of course at the heart of the calling of a bishop.

I want to thank you for the generous gift from the Diocese which I will use towards buying a new lathe to continue to develop my woodturning, for which retirement I trust will provide a lot more time. Thank you, and thank you to all of you who came to the Candlemas farewell service at the cathedral – that was a profound moment of transition for me, and I am grateful for all of you for your support and prayers.

I am very grateful to Bishop Graeme who will take up the responsibilities as Acting Diocesan Bishop on March 1st, and to Bishop Tim who will provide further episcopal

support for the Diocese. With them and with the rest of the Bishop's Staff Team, I can retire knowing that the Diocese is in very safe hands!

We are living in turbulent times. The world has become even more unpredictable, and forces inimical to what many of us hold as core to our faith seem to be gaining sway. At the same time, there seem to be glimmers of hopes for peace both in the Middle East and in Ukraine, yet it is hard to untangle and understand what is really going on. The signs of peace on the one hand, and drastic cuts in overseas aid, petroleum companies reinvesting in oil and gas exploitation, deals being done to exploit another country's mineral reserves, on the other hand.

As we walk towards Ash Wednesday and Lent we are being given an opportunity to ask where God is at work in all of this. This is a time when we are brought once again face to face with our frailty and our mortality, and so with our utter dependence on God. I would encourage you to spend time thinking, praying, reflecting, listening to God through Scripture, reading and meditation, to discern what God is calling us to in this strange season. This is surely a time for discernment, prayerful and careful discernment, to align with God's call and will which is always a call and will to love, to healing, to reconciliation.

I encourage you to spend deliberate and intentional time praying for ourselves and our world, seeking God. The phrase that has been ringing in my ears for the past couple of months is "pray more, do less", not, I hasten to add, just as retirement advice, but as words for the Church. That will mean different things to each of us, but at the heart it is about genuinely listening to God. I will continue to pray for you, and ask you to pray for me, as together we pray for our world, seeking God.



Events

Commissioning of the Acting Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Sunday 2 March, 3.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

All are warmly invited to attend the Commissioning of Bishop Graeme Knowles as Acting Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. This is a wonderful opportunity to relay our support for Bishop Graeme as he fulfils his duties throughout the recruitment process. Refreshments will follow the service. For seating and catering purposes, please confirm your attendance by emailing: erinseligman@stedscathedral.org as soon as possible.

Diocesan Growing Younger Conference

Saturday 8 March 10.00am - 3.30pm | St Michael's Church, Framlingham IP13 9BH

Growing Younger is at the heart of our mission. We seek to support and enable those working with children, young people, families and young adults, and to come alongside



young people to help them grow in their faith and become confident disciples of Christ. Archdeacon Rich and the Growing Younger team are hosting a Growing Younger Conference, and we are delighted that Lucy Moore, founder of Messy Church and who now leads the CofE Growing Faith Foundation, will be the keynote

speaker. The day will also include worship, workshops and networking. Come along as individuals or bring a team, booking is via [Insight here](#).

Lent Course - Christian Ethics

Sundays 9 March, 13 April, 4.00pm - 5.30pm | Darsham Village Hall, IP17 3FA

Discussing principles of Christian ethical thinking, going to war, medical ethics, justice, money and human rights. Led by the Revd Tim Rogers, with guest speakers: Major General (Retd) John Sutherland, David Burgess, Jill Stuchfield, the Revd Nic Stuchfield, Prof Lara Coleman. There is no cost, but donations toward the expenses welcome. Refreshments will be provided. All are welcome.

Online Lent Course: Unforgivable?

Wednesdays 12 March to 9 April, 7.00pm – 8.15pm | online

The Cathedral's Lent theme in 2025 is 'Unforgivable', exploring the limits of forgiveness. Each week, experts in their subjects are welcomed to talk about and explore the limits of forgiveness. Hosted by the Canon Theologian, the Revd Dr Victoria Johnson, [book your place here](#).

Grandparents' Day

Saturday 15 March 10.30am – 2.30pm | St John's Church, Cauldwell Hall Road, Ipswich IP4 4QE

This event, organised by the Mothers' Union and the Growing Younger team is designed to bring together grandparents and honorary grandparents of faith (from little faith to strong faith) and of any denomination. Join us to feel supported, encouraged and affirmed as a spiritual influencer to your grandchildren through a programme of worship, workshops and key speakers including the Revd Laura Mumford, Diocesan Growing Younger Enabler. [Free tickets available here](#).

Poetry and Prayer

Saturday 22 March | St John the Baptist Felixstowe

Poet and Priest Malcolm Guite will explore the links between poetry and prayer, particularly the ways in which poetry can enrich and deepen our spiritual life. He will focus particularly on George Herbert's poem *Prayer* and how each of the powerful images in that poem can unlock for us different aspects of prayer. £25 pp. There will be refreshments but please bring your own lunch. To book www.larkriseretreats.org or call us 01394 284213

The F Word: Stories of Forgiveness

Friday 28 March to Sunday 13 April | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

The Cathedral's Lent theme in 2025 is 'Unforgivable', exploring the limits of

forgiveness. You are invited to the Lent exhibition offering a thought-provoking collection of arresting images and personal narratives exploring forgiveness in the face of atrocity. [More information available here.](#)

Resound with Joy! Readers, LLMs and Elders study morning

Saturday 29 March, 9.00am | Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

Visiting Canon Theologian, The Revd Dr Victoria Johnson, will take us on an unusual journey to explore how the voice of God has been represented and portrayed in worship, art and culture leading us to ponder anew how God speaks to us today. The concept of 'voice', whether human or divine, encompasses the spoken, sung and heard. Her musings, through humour and wisdom, will broaden our own theological insight and deepen our spirituality. The morning will encompass both pragmatic responses to how we use our voices and the deeply spiritual. Elders, Readers and LLMs: [Reserve your free space now!](#)

Digital Surgery with the Diocesan Parish Resources Team

Join members of the Parish Resources Team at the first of a series of surgeries to find out more about enhancing the digital giving presence in your parish. Come along and have a one-to-one session with one of our Giving Advisors to find out about purchasing or borrowing a contactless device, setting up online giving (including QR codes), get your contactless device repaired or updated with new campaigns, and finding out how to have an effective online giving presence on your ACNY or website pages. For more information email [Emma Denton](#) or [Emma Rowlinson](#), Diocesan Giving Advisors.

- Wednesday 2 April - St Edmundsbury Cathedral from 10.00am - 12.00pm and 2.00pm - 4.00pm | [Book here](#)
- Wednesday 11 June - Diocesan Office, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich from 2.00pm - 4.00pm | Book coming soon

The Big Weekend

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

The Big Weekend is 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... a different kind of introduction to the New Testament

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

This course looks at the beginnings of what became Christianity, by examining the New Testament as a series of 'stories we live by' rather than as the foundations of the doctrines that emerged much later. It explores some of the pressures faced by multi-cultural churches in an uncertain and sometimes hostile world, to help us learn about ways of living with similar-but-different pressures in our own day. 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 Bishop Graeme, 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. You can choose three workshops from a wide range of subjects to attend, to help your church become more informed and better resourced to grow a generous culture and reach financial sustainability. For more information and to book please click [here](#).

Christians and Assisted Dying - Day Conference

Thursday 22 May 2025, 10.45am - 2.45pm | The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham | Walsingham NR22 6EE

Listen to a range of speakers on the topics of Incarnation, Attitudes to Death and Assisted Dying. Open to clergy, ordinands and laity of all denominations. Cost is £25, and includes coffee/tea and lunch. Further details are [available here](#). To book your place, please email mihoward@btinternet.com.

'Leading your Church into Growth': LyCiG is back for 2025!

Friday 13 June, 5.00pm to 9.00pm and Saturday 14 June, 9.00am to 6.00pm | Debenham Sports & Leisure Centre IP14 6BL



We invite you to come with a team from your benefice, parish or worshipping community – that could be a team of three or a team of 12, the PCC or a few people keen on mission, or whatever combination works for you. This Suffolk-based LyCiG conference will be led by guest speakers from the National LyCiG Organisation. It will take the form of an open seminar with interactive talks, practical exercises, workshops and time for personal

reflection. The aims of the course are to:

- Inspire you as leaders to help lead your church(es) into growth
- Encourage you to feel that in your own way, at your own pace, and with God's help you can do it
- Equip you with a straightforward and workable strategy
- Give you teaching resources so you can share LyCiG with others in your church
- Enable you to create (or update) and implement a Growing in God Plan for Growth.

This is a free event! Spaces are limited so please ask your Incumbent or Churchwarden to book early. Please [visit here to book](#).

Other up coming events:

Being Missional Today: Disruption, Liminality and Reconciliation | Tuesday 10 June, 9.30am - 5.00pm | Coventry Cathedral, 1 Hill Top, Coventry CV1 5AB | [Book tickets here](#).

All Together | Messy Church Conference | Friday 20 June - Sunday 22 June 2025 | High Leigh Conference Centre, Hertfordshire EN11 8SG | [Find out more and secure your place here.](#)

LoveRural - National Rural Mission Conference 2025 | Monday 22 September, 11.30am and Tuesday 23 September, 3.00pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS | [To book please click here.](#)

Elders' Training morning | Saturday 11 October 2025, Save the date!

CofE NST Spiritual Abuse and Healthy Culture 2025 | Wednesday 11 June, Tuesday 8 July, Thursday 4 September, Wednesday 8 October, Tuesday 4 November. A series of sessions exploring issues of Spiritual Abuse: Coercion and Control within Christian organisations and communities alongside building Healthy Christian Culture. These may be of interest to Clergy, LLMs and Parish Safeguarding Officers. [More information please click here.](#)

Notices

We are delighted to announce that Graham Miles has been licensed as Lay Agricultural Chaplain in Suffolk, supporting farmers and their families who may be struggling in this difficult time. To contact Graham, please call 07413 683368 or email:

graham.miles@cofesuffolk.org

New Electoral Roll: The Electoral Roll is a list of names and addresses of every person who can vote in the annual parochial church meeting. It is revised annually but replaced in its entirety every six years. The current electoral-rolls (created in 2019) will be replaced with brand-new rolls this year (2025). Everything you need to help you with this is on our website: [APCMs and electoral roll - Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich](#).

In accordance with the [Church Representation Rules](#), following your APCM and no later than 1 July in each year, parishes should give the Diocesan Secretary written notification of the number of names there are on the roll of the parish as at the date of the annual parochial church meeting. To facilitate this requirement, please return your completed Electoral Roll Certificates by email to diocesan.secretary@cofesuffolk.org. We ask that wherever possible forms are returned electronically, however if you have no means to do this, they can be returned by post at the address: Diocesan Electoral Roll Officer, The Diocesan Office, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich, IP1 1UQ.

Statistics for Mission

Thank you to all parishes who have completed their Statistics for Mission forms. The National Church deadline has been extended to 14 March 2025. Returns should be submitted via the Online Parish Returns System, which can be accessed here: [Parish Returns Online](#). If you require log-in details or any other assistance with the online portal, please contact statistics@cofesuffolk.org. Further information regarding Parish returns, including videos on how to submit, can be found here: [Parish returns - Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich](#).

Vacancies

[Rector](#) | North Bosmere Benefice | Closing date: 24 March

[Rector](#) | Haughley with Wetherden and Stowupland | Closing date 14 May

[Rector](#) | Woolpit and Drinkstone Benefice | Closing date: 21 May

[Part-time Associate Priest](#) | Carlford Benefice

[Volunteer Independent Chair of Safeguarding Committee](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

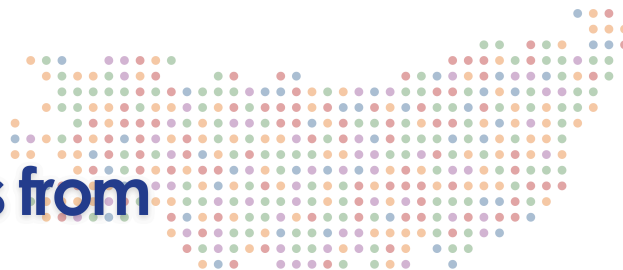
[Volunteer Independent Data Protection Lead](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Youth Pastor | St Augustine's church, Ipswich | [More information available here](#).

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