

Thursday 29 January 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events



The Welcome and Enthronement of the Right Revd Dr Joanne Woolway Grenfell



More than 800 well wishers along with young people and Bishops from Tanzania packed Suffolk's cathedral for a service of welcome and enthronement for the 12th Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

The service of welcome and enthronement was held on Saturday 24 January in St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds.

Bishop Joanne, who will also enter the House of Lords next month and is based in Ipswich, said: *"When it was first announced that I would become Bishop, I visited Suffolk. I was immediately encouraged by the warmest of welcomes offered to me from parishioners in their communities. This service marks my beginning as Bishop and I had been looking forward to meeting so many people there. I now look forward to building on this welcome, strengthening our ties throughout Suffolk and supporting the Church to be the light of Jesus Christ in every community."*

When Bishop Joanne first visited Suffolk after her appointment was announced last year she met young children at St Michael's Church, Framlingham, and was entertained by the Sing Praise group. These children performed in the service and teenagers had also been invited to ask Bishop Joanne what her role entails during the service, which had a strong element of young people being involved.

During December Bishop Joanne paid homage to King Charles III in a private ceremony in Buckingham Palace as part of her new appointment. She will enter the House of Lords next month as a member of the Lords Spiritual, championing the cause of Suffolk in a variety of topics.

Read the full story on [our website here](#).



We are delighted that the Revd Sally Letman is leading 'Together we Pray' from Monday 2 February. Tune in at 8.30am on the [Bishop's Facebook page](#) to watch live or visit the page to watch again later in the day.

Agricultural Chaplaincy

We give our heartfelt thanks to Graham Miles for his faithful and compassionate service as Diocesan Agricultural Chaplain as he leaves to step into a new role, leading Farmers Support UK. Graham has been a valued presence alongside our farming community, offering pastoral care, understanding, and advocacy during times of both challenge and change. We are deeply grateful for the commitment and wisdom he has brought to this ministry.

The diocese remains firmly committed to supporting our farming and fisheries community. The Agricultural Chaplaincy Steering Group will continue its work and will develop the chaplaincy over the coming months to ensure this vital support remains strong and responsive. Archdeacon Rich, Chair of the Steering Group, said: *"Graham has laid strong foundations for this work, and we thank him sincerely. As a diocese we are committed to building on this legacy and to walking alongside those who work the land and sea, listening carefully and responding faithfully to their needs."*

Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent: *'Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.'* James 4.8



The Church of England's theme for Lent 2026 is Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent. This year's 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.

During Lent, reflections are centred around a summary of the Christian Way from Common Worship, which identifies six activities essential to our calling as disciples. Each week a different contributor explores a different aspect of Christian discipleship – worshipping together, praying, exploring the Bible,

sharing communion, offering service and sharing the good news with others. Resources include:

- A 40-day challenge for families and children - exploring the life-giving habit of generosity produced in partnership with [40acts \(brought to you by Stewardship\)](#).
- Booklets for adults, available from [Church House Publishing](#).
- The [Everyday Faith app](#) will carry reflections for adults every Monday to Saturday throughout Lent.

These and schools materials and webinars are listed on the Church of England website here: [Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent](#)

Online Lent Course: Framing the Future, Wednesdays during Lent at 7.00pm

This year's Lent course at St Edmundsbury Cathedral will explore 'visions of a future church', responding to a lecture in the Cathedral given by Abbott Christopher Jamison on Shrove Tuesday titled 'Framing the Future.' Each week, beginning on 25 February, they will welcome experts in their subjects to explore ideas of a united church, the church in a scientific future, a just church, a caring church and a thinking and praying church. Find out more about our speakers, and register [here](#).

Funding renewal for churches: Please see the notice on our website following the announcement by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on the Places of Worship Renewal Fund:

The Church of England's Director for Cathedral and Church buildings (Emily Gee) [Weblink](#)
Government announces bumper £1.5 billion package to restore national pride: [Weblink](#)
Written statement made by: Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Lisa Nandy) on 22 Jan 2026: [Statement in pdf](#)

Safeguarding training: We are pleased that all Safeguarding courses are now available on Insight [please click here](#) to book your course. The Diocesan Safeguarding Training Team, are here to help you undertake the training that is required for the role you hold at church. If you need support please email safeguarding.training@cofesuffolk.org. Having difficulties logging in to the online National Training Portal? Please contact the National Church Team for any queries regarding logging on or resetting passwords: elearning@mail.safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org.

Generosity and Giving at Easter: The Diocesan Parish Resources Team have contactless giving devices available for loan allowing you to 'try before you buy'. There is still time to get a device in place before your Easter services and events. Or you could borrow a device for a specific event you have planned. If a device is not for you, what about online giving? Online giving is right for everyone. Does your www.achurchnearyou.com page have a link to your Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) page (for those in the PGS) or to your Give a Little donation page? We can help you setting up Give a Little accounts, joining the PGS, please email [Emma Denton](#) or [Trudie Harkin](#) for PGS questions, account set up, borrowing or buying devices.

Join this webinar 'Digital Giving at Lent and Easter' on Tuesday 17 February at 12.00pm for a dive into Digital Giving and how it can help your church, whether it's online donations or contactless and in-person.

Mission and Ministry Events

Church of England Talk Series: Archdeacon Rich Henderson - The Rural Church | 29 January, 7.30pm | Ipswich Minster IP1 3BN or on YouTube [here](#)

Join this talk, there will be a Q&A session after each talk and refreshments will be served for those attending the Minster. All welcome, no booking required. To find out more please visit [Ipswich Minster on Facebook here](#).

Being a Treasurer: The Basics | Thursday 29 January, 5 and 12 February, 7.00pm - 9.00pm | Online

Offered by ACAT, these sessions will help Treasurers navigate the complexities of being a church treasurer. Learn with confidence through this comprehensive three-session course covering legal duties, financial processes, budgeting, gift aid, and more – all presented by experienced trainers in a live Zoom webinar setting tailored for both new and seasoned treasurers. Click to book [here](#).

All our PCC treasurers are entitled to free membership of ACAT (Association of Church Accountants & Treasurers) through our diocesan block membership. If you would like to become a member please email [Julie Podd](#), Parish Resources Manager. Once you have joined ACAT you have access to their online training (at a small cost), their latest courses are listed on their website. We also encourage you to join our diocesan online **Treasurer Forum** which is a great place to network with other treasurers, and we regularly post useful information and resources for treasurers. Please email [Emma Denton](#) to receive your invitation to join.

PCC Workshop on Planning for Growth – what, why, who, how? Thursday 12 February, 7.30-8.30pm | Online



Come and join this TEAMS webinar, led by Revd Katie de Bourcier, Diocesan Mission Enabler to find out more about Planning for Growth in benefices and deaneries. Planning for Growth is one of the ways in which we seek to fulfil our vision to be a diocese that is Growing in God. Plans for Growth encourage us to work prayerfully, collaboratively, and creatively as we seek to share God's love in word and action. At this webinar, we will introduce the revised Plan for Growth templates and resources, talk about why Planning for Growth matters and how a Plan for Growth can be developed, and

explain the help and support on offer from the Mission and Ministry Team. There will be a chance to ask your questions too. To book, please email mission@cofesuffolk.org.

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.](#)

Interested in Reader Ministry? Saturday 21 March, 10.00am to 12.00pm | Best Western Brome Grange Hotel, Norwich Road, Nr Eye, IP23 8AP

Come along to our informal Coffee Morning - an opportunity to find out more about Readers (Licensed Lay Ministers). Led by Diocesan staff and those currently serving as and training to be Readers. Even better, there will be cake! Please email [Lauren Moore](#) to express your interest, ask any further questions and to enable us to arrange catering.

Lark Rise Retreats

'The Pilgrim's Progress - exploring the themes of John Bunyan's novel' a study day led by Jane Jennison on Saturday 28 March at St Nicholas Church, The Ferry, Felixstowe

'The resurrection appearances of Jesus', a quiet day led by the Revd Penny Brinkley on Saturday 11 April at St Nicholas Church, The Ferry, Felixstowe

'Faith on the edge - Jesus heals at the margins', a retreat day based on Luke 8.40 to 56, led by the Revd Helen Rengert on Saturday 9 May at St Edmunds Church, Langer Rd, Felixstowe

Days run from 10.00am – 4.00pm and cost £27/person including refreshments and lunch. A bursary fund is available. More details and bookings are on www.larkriseretreats.org or call Catherine Bond & Jane Pearse on 01394 284213.

In the beginning was the story. A different approach to the New Testament |

Starts Wednesday 29 April 2026 for seven weeks at Earl Stonham Village Hall

Led by the Revd Canon John Parr, Approaching the New Testament takes a story-shaped approach to the heart of Christian faith. This course looks at the beginnings of what became Christianity, in the writings of the New Testament, and explores their narrative features. The New Testament writers passed on the gospel of Jesus Christ not as a collection of facts or doctrines, but as a series of stories that shaped people's lives. What can we learn from them about the challenges we face in doing the same in our day?

[Please book here.](#)

The Gathering | Friday 24 April 6.00pm - Sunday 26 April 2.00pm | Vauxhall Farm, Great Wenham CO7 6QQ

The Gathering is a residential weekend organised in partnership with Ipswich CYM and youth leaders from across Ipswich. The excellent Tim Alford will be joining for the Friday night who will do a great job in delivering a Gospel talk. The cost for this weekend is £110 per young person. Bookings are managed by CYM Ipswich using the online *Ticket Taylor*



system. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to email [Jamie Swinerd](#). To find out more and book please visit our website [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](#).

Youthscape Essentials

Youthscape Essentials is all-round training for every youth leader. This course is free and includes an extensive training manual which will be given to you before the first session. We are delighted that there are two learning streams available, online and in person.

Face to Face: 28 March, 9 May, 6 June with an online top-up session organised with delegates | venue will depend on the location of the delegates. To sign up to the face-to-face stream please click [here](#) and use course code "2201492"

Online by TEAMS: (Weds 7.00pm - 9.00pm): 16 September, 7 October, 11 November, 9 December, 13 January 2027, 10 February 2027, 10 March 2027, 14 April 2027, 12 May 2027 and 9 June 2027. To sign up to the online stream, please click [here](#) and use course code "2201540"

If you are interested in Youthscape Essentials but cannot make some/any of the above dates, then please do email [Jamie Swinerd](#), Diocesan Youth & Young Adults Enabler.

Church Community Services and Events

United in Solace and Grace

Saturday 7 February, 11.00am | St Edmundsbury Cathedral including an exhibition by local artists and survivors organisations and Sunday 8 February, 4.00pm | All Saints Holbrook 'United in Solace and Grace' is a series of reflective church services which are designed to reach out to survivors of abuse of all kinds, families, supporters and professionals. You are invited to join the above services to mark 'It's Not OK Week'. For more information about United in Solace and Grace please visit www.solaceandgrace.co.uk or email the Revd [Jenny Seggar](#).

Concert | Saturday 14 February, 4.00pm | St Margaret's Church, Soane Street, Ipswich, IP4 2BT

A late afternoon concert featuring members of Trianon Symphony Orchestra, Ipswich Choral Society and the Ipswich Gilbert and Sullivan Society. Warm welcome and warm drinks. Retiring donations. Parking available in St Margaret's School car park.

Open Table Eucharist | Saturday 14 February, 5.00pm | St Edmundsbury

Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Join us for our Open Table Eucharist. This service is for LGBTQIA+ people, their friends, families and allies. We welcome those of any faith or background, every gender identity and sexual orientation. All are welcome, but please respect that this service is created to be a safe, sacred space for those who need it.

Strictly St Mary's | Saturday 14 February, 7.30pm - 11.00pm | St Mary's Stoke, Ipswich IP2 8BX

Come along to an evening of ballroom and latin dancing at St Mary's Church, with a raffle also available on the night! Bring your own refreshments. Tickets cost just £5 and [are available here](#).

Also on this day at St Peter's Church Stoke Park, why not come along and enjoy a table top sale from 3.00pm to 5.00pm - pick up a bargain and enjoy some refreshments too.

Teach Rex | Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 February 10.30am & 2.00pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Join us this half term for everything dinosaur!  Come along and experience an audience with a T-Rex! Tickets on [sale here](#).

Benedict Lecture with Abbot Christopher Jamison | Tuesday 17 February 6.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

In our inaugural Benedict lecture, Abbot Christopher Jamison explores how we might frame the future. Pessimism is the frame of the future for many people in Britain today. Why? What frame does Christian faith generate? Tickets cost £5 and [are available here](#).

Jubilate Choir Choral Evening Song, All Saints Church, Easton IP13 0EE. What3Words: finer.worth.cracking | Sunday 15 February, 6.00pm

Orebeck Benefice is delighted to invite you to join the Jubilate Choir when they will sing Choral Evensong according to the order of the Book of Common Prayer. Jubilate consists of between 12 and 16 experienced singers including a cantor. It makes no charge for its services and exists to promote and preserve the service of Choral Evensong and its inclusion in traditional parish worship. You will be very welcome to join this moving traditional service.

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 meet four times a year 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. Join the next meeting by the Revd Canon Stuart Batten on Desert Spirituality. For more information please email [Mother Ali](#).

PsalmScape | Saturday 28 February 2026, 11.00am to 4.30pm, All Hallows Church, Ipswich IP3 0EN

Join the Cantus Firmus Choir for a day to explore the Psalms through music. You will sing a variety of music inspired by the Psalms, in a broad range of musical styles. There will be

reflections on the Psalms, led by Revd Emma Steadman. The day will end with a short act of worship, incorporating some of the music learned during the day. The event is suitable for all who enjoy choral singing. Details and booking at cantusfirmus.org.uk

Considering ordination in the Church of England? | Thursday 26 March, 1.00pm or 7.30pm, Zoom

Oak Hill College is running a one-hour online event designed to help you explore whether God may be calling you to ordained ministry in the Church of England. Join on Zoom for an hour of biblical reflection, honest insight and practical guidance. You'll hear from experienced church leaders who have each walked this path and now serve in significant roles within the Church as well as from some current ordinands. For more info and to sign up click [here](#).

Grandparent Day | Saturday 14 March, 10.30am - 2.30pm | Thomas Clarkson Centre Hospital Rd Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JT

What does it take to be a Grandparent of Faith? Come to be affirmed, supported and encouraged. The day will start with worship, and will include key speakers and workshops. Free tickets are [available here](#).

Icon Workshop with Sr Annette Lawrence DMJ | September 7 -11 2026 | St Mary and St Botolph Church Whitton, Ipswich IP1 6LT

A rare opportunity to attend a non residential icon workshop for just £250. Residential workshops cost between £800 and £1000 plus. Sr Annette is an extremely experienced and talented teacher and guide with many years of experience running these workshops. No experience or artistic ability needed - suitable for complete novice or experienced iconographers! The blessing of your own icon to take away at the end of the week. You will need to be a to attend fully every day. Numbers are limited to 12 maximum so early booking advised. For more information and a booking form email [The Revd Mary Sokanovic](#) Rector Whitton with Thurlestone and Akenham or call 07824323073

Notices

Energy Footprint Tool launched on 12 January 2026: The Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) is now open for churches to enter energy use from 2025. Recording your energy use is an unseen but essential act of caring for people and the planet. Complete your EFT on the Parish Returns Portal [here](#). If you require log-in details or any other assistance with the online portal, please email statistics@cofesuffolk.org If you need help with the EFT please email [James Rolls](#), our Net Zero Carbon Officer.

Statistics for Mission: Thank you to all parishes who have completed their Statistics for Mission forms - the data you provide helps to offer insights into trends such as attendance and electoral roll. The National Church deadline is 31 January 2026. 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 email statistics@cofesuffolk.org. Further information regarding Parish returns, including videos on how to submit, can be found here: [Stats for Mission - Insight CofE Suffolk](#).

Raffle for Free CollecTin More Contactless Device: The Parish Resources Team have a CollecTin More device which we would like to offer to a parish **FOR FREE!** Churches must have Wi-Fi installed in the church for the device to work. Please apply by emailing [Julie Podd](#), Parish Resources Manager by 30 January 2026 if you would like to go into the draw. Churches will be notified by the middle of February if they have been successful and will need to send us a picture of the installed device to use in our promotion materials.

George van Kooten's book: "Reverberations of Good News: The Gospels in Context, Then and Now": Based on the sessions George van Kooten led in the Bishops' Teaching Mornings, his new book has just been published by [SCM here](#).

Parish/Benefice/Deanery visits to St Edmundsbury Cathedral: There is an opportunity to come together to the cathedral during this year on the following Sunday afternoons: 19 April, 10 May, 14 June, 5 July, 18 October. The established pattern is to arrive in good time for a Reflective Pilgrimage at 2.00pm; Choral Evensong at 3.30pm where visiting clergy/LLMs are invited to robe and for the first lesson to be read, the group remembered in prayers, followed by tea and cake in Pilgrims' Kitchen afterwards, departure is usually by 5.00pm. Please email the Revd Canon [Mark Haworth](#), Cathedral Chaplain to book a date and for any further information.

Vacancies

[Kids Pastor](#) | [Worship Pastor](#) | [Executive Assistant](#) | River Church | Closing date: 31 January

[Choir Director](#) | All Hallows Church, Ipswich | Closing date: 31 January

[Rector](#) | Box River Benefice | Closing date: 4 February

[Diocesan Director of Education](#) | Diocesan Office | Closing date: 9 February

[Team Vicar & Associate Priest](#) | Blyth Valley Team Ministry | Closing date: 11 February

[HR Administration Assistant](#) | Closing date: 12 February

[Church Administrator](#) | Christ Church Felixstowe | Closing date: 20 February

[Youth Minister](#) | St John's Woodbridge | Closing date: 27 February

[Lightwave Pioneer Leader](#) | Bridge Communities, Suffolk

[Team Vicar](#) | Sole Bay Team

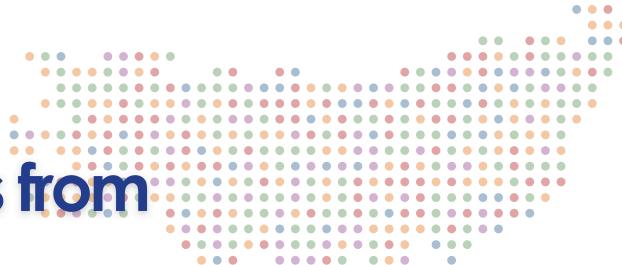
[Team Vicar](#) | Forest Heath Team Ministry

[Non-Executive Safeguarding Chapter Member](#) | [Cathedral Volunteers](#) | [Risk, Audit and Review Committee Member](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

[Associate Chaplain](#) | Sizewell C

Royal Naval Chaplaincy | email the Chaplain Recruiter, the Revd [Alastair Blaine](#) RN.

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