

Thursday 7 December 2023



### Church among first in UK to commission new King's coat of arms



St Mary's Church in Raydon has unveiled a painting of the new royal coat of arms of King Charles III – thought to be the first commissioned in the county. The coat of arms, was unveiled at a special service by Judge John Devaux, a trustee of the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust – the organisation which provided grant funding for the piece. The Revd Manette Crossman, Rector of the 4-Mary's Benefice, said: "A member of our congregation had been saying the west

*wall was looking a bit bare and white and was keen to use the space. We had originally applied for a grant to get a royal coat of arms of Queen Elizabeth II to celebrate her Jubilee, but she sadly passed away before work on the piece began. We were still keen on having a coat of arms in church so decided to get the new King's instead. Because of this, we believe the new royal coat of arms is the first commissioned in the county. We had a beautiful unveiling service attended by more than 60 people. It was a wonderful event – the church was full and we had some lovely music to accompany it. Raydon Church gets lots of visitors and we hope they enjoy seeing the painting."*

To read the full story on our website, please [click here](#).

### Advent and Christmas Events

#### Broadcast Christmas Services

The Revd Sharon Grenham-Thompson joined the Rattlesden Benefice as Rector in September this year. Ordained in 1998, serving as a prison chaplain in Bedford for a number of years, Sharon has spent the last seven years as parish priest in Milton Keynes. Sharon says, "I came to Suffolk looking for a new start. My husband is originally from Suffolk and his father was the Rector in Rattlesden many years ago, and so it seemed that

*God intended for us to come here. I have been welcomed into the parish by some lovely people, they are very patient with me, particularly as I continue to get lost on the country roads!''.*

Alongside being parish priest Sharon has developed a career in radio, presenting programmes on the BBC World Service, Radio 2 and Radio 4. *"It all started with the World Service asking me to record a service for them and they then recommended me to do the 'Pause for Thought' slot with Janice Long and later with Chris Evans"* says Sharon, who excelled on radio and continues to be on the 'rota' for the Daily Service on Radio 4 and other programmes from time to time.

You can hear Sharon presenting The Daily Service on 11 December which will be available on Radio 4 DAB (available on their side channel which is automatically made available about a minute before the programme begins. Tune in to Radio 4 DAB, select 'Daily Service' (from your display) with the tuning wheel and press the selector button). Sharon also features on the Church of England's online service on Sunday 31 December which will be streamed from Facebook available here: [Facebook](#).

**Hope Together - Gift of Christmas: Enjoy this** wonderful Christmas book, Gift of Christmas, available to order on their [website](#).

### **Follow the Star: Join the Song**



A recording of the new Follow the Star carol has been released on all digital platforms including Spotify, iTunes, Amazon Music and YouTube. It is performed by St Martin's Voices, with organ and brass quintet. The Follow the Star song is a new version of the time-honoured text, *The First Nowell*, written by renowned composer and former King's Singer, Bob Chilcott. More than 3,000 people have signed up to sing the carol so far

so the song will be performed by choirs up and down the country, as part of carol services and concerts for Christmas and Advent. Find out more [here](#).

The latest Digital Giving Newsletter has the latest 'Join the Song' backgrounds for devices and online giving. Find it [here](#) and if you need any help or have queries contact [emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org)

**Stowmarket Christmas Tree Festival is in full swing:** In its 19th year, the Christmas Tree Festival is open from Tuesday to Saturday 9.00am - 3.00pm until Saturday 23 December for visitors to see over 300 trees so creatively decorated by local groups and organisations. You can also enjoy home baked refreshments and lunches in the Osier Café as well as join various special Carol Services and Concerts. On Wednesday 13 December at 6.30pm, Pam Rhodes, from Songs of Praise, will be hosting 'Liveability Icanho ho ho' supporting adults affected by personal injury. More information is available [here](#).

### **Drawing near to God – Advent course with Bishop Mike**

Recordings of the first two sessions of this Zoom course are available [here](#). If you would like to join Bishop Mike for the next two sessions, they take place on Thursday 14 December and Tuesday 19 December. Please email [lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:lesley.steed@cofesuffolk.org) for the

Zoom link. The sessions will all be recorded and available from the website.



**Suffolk Carols:** A joint initiative from Suffolk Sounds Radio and Lightwave to promote carol singing in all sorts of venues, strengthen community and raise funds for local charities. Any community carol-singing event between 4 and 24 December can join in. Please visit 'Suffolk Carols' [here](#), and register your event and the charity you are raising funds for and this will be advertised on Suffolk Sounds radio programmes and via the Suffolk Carols Facebook page.

**Inspiring Angels:** Get creative and join our Christmas campaign. Angels are a symbol of love, of presence, pointing the way to the moment it all changed, when God came in the person of Jesus to be with us in the world, to share in love and pain alongside us. All the resources for this campaign are available on our website [here](#).

**Christmas Concert - St Mary's Church, Boxford:** Enjoy a magical evening with Madrigalia and the Boxford String Quartet at their Christmas Concert on Friday 8 December, 7.30pm. Tickets cost £10 and are available [here](#).

**Christmas Coffee Morning - All Saints' Church, Newton:** Come along to a Christmas Coffee Morning featuring festive stalls at All Saints' Church, Newton on Saturday 9 December, 10.00am-11.30am.

**St Edmundsbury Cathedral Christmas Concert:** On Saturday 9 December, 6.00pm, the boy and girl choristers, together with the adult singers of the choir, will be performing a range of wonderful music for the season, together with plenty of opportunity for the public to join in with their favourite Christmas tunes.. Tickets are on sale now from just £8.00 and can be booked [here](#).

**Advent Vigil – singers needed!** St Michael's Church, Framlingham IP13 9BJ is hosting an Advent Vigil on Sunday 10 December. Music will be directed by Christopher Borrett, with the choir of St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich; Framlingham College Chapel Choir and the Sing Praise! school choir. Additional singers are invited to join by attending the final rehearsal at 2.00pm on the day. Tea will be provided before the service commences at 5.30pm. If you would like to sing, email [musicadmin@stmaryletower.org](mailto:musicadmin@stmaryletower.org)

**Christmas Tree Festival and Christmas Fayre - St Mary's Church & Boxford Village Hall:** Taking place on Sunday 10 December from 10.00am to 3.30pm, enjoy a wide range of stalls and activities for all ages. Crafts, gifts, hot and cold food, children's activities and more. Tickets just £2 for adults, free of charge for children. Followed by Advent Carol and Christingle service at 4.00pm.

**Lights of Love:** On 10 December at 3.30pm, St Mary-le-Tower are holding a special service to remember precious babies gone too soon. You are most welcome to join however long ago or recently your baby died, and at whatever stage in your pregnancy.

**Emergency Services Carol Service** on Monday 11 December, 7.00pm at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS: You are invited to the annual carol service for our emergency services - police, fire and ambulance - from across the county. It is an opportunity for you to gather to thank them for all they do to protect people in Suffolk. The address this year will be given by Bishop Mike, there will be traditional carols, and music from the Suffolk Rock Choir, the Stowmarket Salvation Army Band and County High School Chamber choir. Please come along and join in, all are welcome.

**Depden - The Living Nativity!** Taking place at 5.30pm and 7.45pm on 14, 15 and 16 December. Step into the shoes of Mary and Joseph as you join them on their journey to Bethlehem. Along the way, you'll encounter friendly farm animals, humble shepherds, and radiant angels, each playing their part in this mesmerising tale. To purchase your tickets, please [click here](#).

**Heigh-Ho, the Holly! Hexachordia Concert:** A wonderful evening of medieval and Tudor mirth and merriment in words and music awaits on Saturday 16 December at 7.00pm in All Saint's Church, Barrow. Tickets cost £12 and include mulled wine and a mince pie. To book, please [click here](#).

**Christmas Tree Festival:** Come along and celebrate with St Mary's Church, Stratford St Mary, 16 - 17 December for their Christmas Tree festival. From 10.30am - 4.00pm, £2 entry and children go free, with music and refreshments available. The festival will finish on Sunday with Carols by Candlelight at 4.00pm. Also happening is a festive preview evening on 15 December, at 7.30pm with drinks, canapés and a special performance from the Constable Singers. Booking is essential for the preview evening, please email [harrietannaruth@gmail.com](mailto:harrietannaruth@gmail.com) to book.

**Christmas Carol Service:** Come along to St Mary the Virgin, Thorpe Morieux, for their Christmas Carol Service on 31 December at 4.00pm. The service has been running for a few years and has a focus on refugees and aid work. Also present will be the Tudor Rose choir, led by Kevin Slingsby, and refreshments will be available afterwards.

**Spotlighting Modern Day Slavery:** For Advent, The Clewer Initiative is shining a spotlight on the vital role healthcare professionals play in identifying and caring for victims of modern slavery. To help raise awareness, they have written a number of articles about how the NHS is on the frontline in tackling modern slavery in this country and issues surrounding vulnerable patients, prayers for Advent and provided a series of social media materials to use in churches. Please visit [here](#).

## Events

### Deanery Drop-In Sessions

Join various teams from the Diocesan office who are offering their advice on Children's and Families' Ministry, Youth Ministry, Giving, Grants, Discipleship, Communications and Vocations – a real opportunity to have conversations and help people. Our next Drop In Sessions are on:



**Zoom** | Tuesday 23 January | 3.00pm to 5.00pm  
book [here](#) or 6.00pm – 8.00pm book [here](#)

**Thomas Clarkson Centre, Bury St**

**Edmunds IP33 3JT** | Tuesday 6 February  
| 3.00pm to 5.00pm book [here](#) or 6.00pm –  
8.00pm book [here](#)

**St Augustine's Community Hub, Ipswich**

**IP3 8TH** | Monday 13 May | 3.00pm to 5.00pm  
book [here](#) or 6.00pm - 8.00pm book [here](#).

### **Enhancing Pastoral Ministry**

Wednesdays starting 10 January 2024, 7.30pm  
Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green IP14

5HJ

Enhancing Pastoral Ministry is a six-session course for people who are involved in pastoral care (e.g. 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 free of charge. To book and for more information, [please click here](#).

### **So What About the Old Testament?**

Wednesdays starting 24 January 2024, refreshments from 7.00pm, sessions 7.30 - 9.30pm  
Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green IP14 5HJ

In this short course, Hugh Williamson will try to open our eyes to the different types of material in the Old Testament, with an eye on how we can apply it in our own times in both church and society. The course is open to all and is free of charge. For course dates, more information and to book 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 early [here](#).

## **Notices**

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**Statistics for Mission Returns:** If you have not already done so, we encourage you to complete your Statistics for Mission via the National Church's Online Parish Returns Portal. The portal may be accessed [here](#) and the deadline is 31 January 2024. The Statistics for Mission team recently held two webinars on using the portal and the videos of the webinars are available to watch [here via YouTube](#). A letter and timetable on 2024 Parish Returns, from Gary Peverley, Diocesan Secretary, was emailed to parishes on Tuesday, to help with your planning. If you were not on our mailing list but should have been, or if you

have any data-related questions, please contact [statistics@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:statistics@cofesuffolk.org) for support.

**Parish Visits from the Dean of St Edmundsbury:** The Dean's 2024 diary is now open for Parish Visit requests. Dean Joe would very much like to preach and/or preside at churches across the Diocese, particularly those he has not yet had the pleasure of visiting yet. The Dean also welcomes the opportunity to attend Deanery Chapter when his schedule allows. For further information or to request a visit, please contact his PA Erin at [deanspa@stedscathedral.org](mailto:deanspa@stedscathedral.org) or 01284 748722.

## Vacancies

[House for Duty Priest](#) | Lakenheath with Santon Downham and Elveden | Closing date: 5 January

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

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

[Director of Music](#) | Woodbridge

[Priest in Charge and Archdeaconry Mission Enabler](#) | Sproughton with Burstall, Copdock with Washbrook and Belstead

[Rector](#) | Beccles

River Church, Ipswich are recruiting various posts - all details at:

[riverchurchipswich.org/vacancies](http://riverchurchipswich.org/vacancies)

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



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