TOGETHER we are listening

Rooted in Prayer, Growing in God

Attuning our hearts to God's voice as we listen, discern, and step into the future together.

TOGETHER WE ARE
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

JOIN US FOR A PERIOD OF PRAYERFUL LISTENING

- At the start of our strategy review process, we listen to God and to people across the diocese.
- We begin by creating space to listen—attentively, expectantly, and together.
- This is a season where every voice matters, every context is valued, and the whole Diocese participates in shaping what comes next.



Together We are Listening is an invitation to everyone in the Diocese to engage in a rhythm of prayer throughout the process of listening and discernment that will shape our future strategy.

A SHARED JOURNEY OF PRAYER

A shared journey of prayer as we discern our future strategic direction

- Our Diocese stands at a hopeful and collaborative moment.
- We are learning from past seasons, noticing new growth, and preparing – together - for where God will lead us.
- In step with the National Church, we long to be Simpler, Humbler, Bolder.
- As we ready ourselves for the future, we commit to seeking God's direction through prayer, shared listening, and collaboration across every context of diocesan life.

We give thanks for the many traditions, spiritualities, and forms of ministry within our Diocese, recognising that we pray, worship, and discern in different ways while sharing one life in Christ.

DIOCESAN RHYTHM OF PRAYER

Our rhythm of prayer will be something we build with one another — a pattern that reflects the diversity of our communities and the unity of our shared purpose.

- Time to Pray (in daily prayer) calendar and prayer guide
- Live morning prayer and evensong led by St Edmundsbury Cathedral, broadcast on YouTube
- 'Called to Pray' gatherings, in person and online
- Prayer-walks within the diocese
- 24 hours of prayer at key moments.

At the heart of our shared life are Word and Sacrament, prayer and worship, through which Christ gathers, nourishes, and sends His people.

A framework to help us become a people who are:

- Listening for God's leading
- Discerning God's direction
- Growing in unity
- Ready for growth
- Fruitful in mission
- Faithful in ministry
- Shaping together a shared vision through the gifts and wisdom of all God's people.

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WHERE CAN WE START?



SCRIPTURES FOR THIS SEASON OF LISTENING

- "Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you."

  (Luke 11:9–10) Jesus invites us to pray with persistence and trust.

- "It is the Lord who goes before you… Do not fear or be dismayed."

  (Deuteronomy 31:8) God leads us into the future and prepares the way.

- "My purpose shall stand, and I will fulfil my intention."

  (Isaiah 46:10–11) God's plans are sure, and God brings them to completion.

- "Be still, and know that I am God."

  (Psalm 46:10) Stillness opens us to God's voice.

HOW WE LISTEN

- Asking where God is leading
- Seeking to hear from the whole people of God — across parishes, chaplaincies, schools, fresh Expressions, rural and urban contexts
- Knocking on new doors and daring to ask, "What if?"
- Praying personally and corporately
- Dwelling in Scripture
- Gathering at the Eucharist
- Listening deeply to one another
- Noticing signs of fruitfulness and opportunity
- Making space for quieter voices and emerging leaders
- Honouring the diverse experiences and callings within our Diocese
- Testing all things prayerfully in the light of Scripture, and with the wisdom of tradition, reason, and experience.

This is not a top-down process. It is a shared act of discernment, shaped by the breadth and richness of our Diocesan family.

Within the shared life of the Diocese, Bishops, clergy, and lay people alike are called to listen prayerfully together for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

WHERE WILL WE LISTEN?

We hope this can integrate within the existing rhythms of prayer and activities of your parish, benefice or ministry.

For instance, you could consider:

- You may be holding PCC meetings, prayer meetings or other regular activities which could be used as a listening event
- You could ask your regular church user groups, such as a youth club, lunch club or Messy Church group to share their thoughts with you
- Hold a prayer listening meeting with your congregation during or after a Sunday service.
- Post the congregation survey link on your socials.

Use existing meetings and events to pray

SUFFOLK LISTENING PRAYER

TOGETHER we are listening

Living God,
Speak to your Church in this
season of listening and
deepen our life in Christ.

As we give thanks for the growth
you have begun,
open our hearts to your voice
and lead us by your Spirit into the
future you prepare.

Amen.

Breath prayer

Living God, open our hearts
to your voice.

COLLECT

Living God,
who speaks to your Church
through Scripture, prayer, and the breaking of bread:
open our hearts to your voice,
deepen our life in Christ,
and lead us as your people
into the future you prepare;
that, growing in faith and love,
we may be ready for all to which you call us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Living God,
You have fed us with the bread of life
and met us in this holy place:
as we go, continue to speak,
to guide, and to grow your Church;
open our hearts to your voice,
and lead us together
in the way you are opening before us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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TAKING PART



PRAYER EVENTS IN THE DIOCESE

Monday 6 July
7.00pm – 9.00pm led by Archdeacon Rich
St Margaret's Church, Leiston

Monday 13 July
7.00pm – 9.00pm led by Archdeacon David
St Peter's Church, Cockfield

Tuesday 28 July
7.00pm – 9.00pm led by Archdeacon Sam
St Margaret's Church, Ipswich

Saturday 18 July
11.00am – 1.00pm led by the Revd Canon Sharron Coburn
Online

Together we are listening

You are invited to join one of the prayer events being held across the diocese.

We look forward to meeting you there.

SURVEYS

We have launched different surveys to reach key audiences

- Licensed Clergy
- All other ministries (PTO, Readers, Chaplains, Licensed Lay Ministers)
- PCC members (via Churchwardens and Treasurer)
- Congregations and general public.

The surveys ask people to reflect on where God has been at work and where they discern God is leading in the future.

For the first three surveys you will need to log in to Insight so it can link to your role in the diocese.

You can find the submission points here:
www.cofesuffolk.org/together-we-are-listening

- We encourage input at any time over the summer.
- The final date for input into the surveys will be Friday 28 August.

How we will feedback

- The Bishop and Diocesan leadership team will reflect on the responses as they come in, and provide interim feedback later in the summer
- During September we will collate all the input for presentation to Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod. We will share a report with key findings.
- From October onwards, we will hold focus groups to engage with specific groups of people to seek deeper discussion.

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TOOLKIT TO GET INVOLVED

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RESOURCES

Download our resources:

- Leaflet
- Bookmark
- eMail Footer

Available on:

www.cofesuffolk.org/together-we-are-listening

A limited number of printed prayer cards are available from the diocesan office. Please email communications@cofesuffolk.org



GUIDE TO LISTENING PRAYER

Listening prayer is not complicated. It is simply making space to be attentive to God to Scripture and to one another.
This pattern can be used alone or in groups.

1.Prepare (1–2 minutes)

- Sit comfortably.
- Breathe slowly.
- Ask God to make you attentive.
- Pray the breath prayer: "Living God, open our hearts to Your voice."

2. Read (1 minute)

- Choose a short passage of Scripture. Read it slowly, aloud if possible. (Examples: Luke 11:9–10, Psalm 46:10, Deut. 31:8.)
- Let one word or phrase catch your attention.

3. Reflect (2–3 minutes)

- Sit with the word or phrase. Ask gently:
- Why this?
- What might God be drawing my attention to?
- What does this stir in me, hope, challenge, comfort, curiosity?
- No forcing. No pressure. Just noticing.

4. Listen (3–5 minutes)

Hold silence together or alone. Pay attention to:

- a picture or image
- a nudge or prompting
- a sense of direction
- something God is already growing
- a person or place that comes to mind
- a question that surfaces

5. Respond (1–2 minutes)

Offer what you've noticed back to God:

- "Is this consistent with Scripture and the love of God?"
- "What could I /we do in light of this noticing?"
- "How might this shape our Diocese?"

Keep it simple and honest.

6. Share (optional, in groups)

If praying with others, share briefly:

- what you noticed
- what stood out
- what you sensed God highlighting

Listen to one another with reverence. No correcting. No analysing. Just receiving.

7. Record (any time)

Write down what you sensed. Small impressions often become clearer over time.

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WHAT IS NEXT?

TOGETHER we are listening

TOGETHER WE DISCERN

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

(Psalm 119:105)

This is a time to:

- Gather what we have heard from every corner of the Diocese
- Ask deep and honest questions
- Repent of where we have failed to love well or steward faithfully
- Allow God to renew and reshape us
- Take a spiritual and missional "health check"
- Discern together what God is calling us to prioritise
- Shape a shared vision that reflects the wisdom and experience of all God's people.

In the Autumn,
we will move to a period of discernment to
shape the vision and strategy.

There will be further engagement opportunities.

A refreshed
Vision and Strategy will be presented to Diocesan Synod in March 2027.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you want more information, please visit our website:

www.cofesuffolk.org/together-we-are-listening