Thursday 12 March 2026



Diocesan Synod 7 March 2026

Diocesan Synod members met at the Salvation Army Hall in Stowmarket last Saturday. In Bishop Joanne's presidential speech, she shared news from her recent trip to Rome and talked about staying close to the kingdom values which Jesus wanted to see taking hold among the people he loved. To read the full text it is available on our website here: Bishop Joanne's presidential Speech.

Bishop Joanne and the Revd Canon Sharon Potter led the key debate on Living Love and Faith which included a motion which was passed by Synod members. The full presentation, including details of the motion is available to download here: Synod presentation.

Other presentations included an update from our Link diocese in Tanzania and a feature on chaplaincy led by Archdeacon Rich. The Chaplaincy video will be added to our website shortly as all Synod coverage from previous Synods are included here.

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 13 March 2026, however parishes can still file returns to us for us to input. 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.



Together we pray: As a follow up to Synod we have two chaplains leading the prayers for the next two weeks. Firstly, Police Chaplain, **t**he Revd Stéphane Javelle from Monday 16 March. 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.



Vocation Fair and Vocation Sunday

Jesus called his first disciples with the words, 'Follow me' - and he offers the same invitation today. He calls each of us to use our gifts and talents in Christlike ways in the world around us.

There are a series of national resources available for Vocation Sunday which this year falls on Sunday 26 April. We hope these resources will be useful for services and events where vocations is a focus: Service of the Word | Service of Holy Communion | Our short vocations film based on the 23rd Psalm.

In our diocese we are holding our own vocation fair on Saturday 25 April in St Edmundsbury Cathedral. We would be delighted to see as many of you as possible. Come along by yourself or with congregation members, to meet the Revd Canon Stuart Batten and his team who are ready to greet you and share the latest news about training and opportunities available in this diocese. For our local diocesan resources please have a look at our Padlet of resources here.

The vocations team will also be participating in 'nine days of prayer' in the days leading up to the event. The prayers will appear on our social media channels and Deacon Charlotte Harkness will be leading Together we pray that week too. The prayers are available in this booklet which contains passages and reflections to help you on your vocational journey and understanding of what God is calling you to do: Nine Days of Prayer - Insight CofE Suffolk

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Parish Share Congregational guide

We are delighted to announce the production of a new leaflet for everyone in our congregations on Parish Share, please download your copy here.



Tim Holder, Director of Engagement commends the new Parish Share leaflet.

Diocesan & Mission and Ministry Events

Digital Surgeries
Join members of the Parish Resources Team 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@cofesuffolk.org , or trudie.harkin@cofesuffolk.org Diocesan Giving Advisors.

Tuesday 17 March | 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich IP1 1UQ | 1.30pm, 2.30pm, 3.30pm
Wednesday 29 April | St Edmundsbury Cathedral | 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.30am, 2.00pm, 3.00pm
Wednesday 8 July | St Michael Church, Framlingham | 9.30am, 10.30am, 2.00pm, 3.00pm
Tuesday 4 August | St Peter and St Paul Church, Lavenham | 9.30am, 10.30am, 2.00pm, 3.00pm
Further dates across the county to follow. Click here to book any of these dates.

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 Road, 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 and Jane Pearse on 01394 284213.

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 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.

Vocation Fair | Saturday 25 April, 10.00am to 12.20pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Come and visit the many stalls representing our ministries: Chaplaincy, Children's and Families, Church Army, Elders, Pioneers, Evangelists, Mothers' Union, Ordained Ministers, PCC Officers, Readers, School Foundation Governors, Spiritual Directors and Youth Ministers. Discover where you fit in!

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.

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.

Celebrating our Care for Creation | Save the date: Saturday 9 May, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

To mark the 10th anniversary of A Rocha's Eco Church Award Scheme, we are holding a day of celebration of all that is happening in our Suffolk churches to care for God's Creation. The event will begin with a morning of talks, focusing on the importance of our environmental mission and ministry in our communities and globally. There will then be an opportunity to explore exhibitions and stalls showcasing both what is happening around the diocese and also organisations who support this work. The day will culminate in a service of celebration for representatives from all our churches who have achieved an Eco Church award, who are currently working towards an award or who would like to get involved. If you would like to contribute to the day, please contact: Environment@cofesuffolk.org To register please book here.

PCC Workshop: Digital Giving (contactless and online, including QR codes) | 12.00pm, 13 May 2026 **|** 12.00pm Tuesday 13 October 2026 | Teams

Understand the need, options, availability, cost and impact of Digital Giving. Every parish should have some form of online giving available (includes QR codes) and we can help you find the best option, including tips on how best to promote it to your congregation and wider community. A contactless donation device might be right for your church, and we will show you what's available to buy or you might choose to borrow one of our diocesan devices for an event or trial. We can help you find the best solution for your parish. Book here for May | Book here for October

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Preparing for Retirement Conference 19-21 May 2026 | The Retreat House, Chelmsford CM3 1HA
An opportunity for clergy considering retirement from parochial or chaplaincy roles to reflect on transitioning into ministry in retirement. Many people look forward to retirement as a time when they can at last be in charge of their diaries. Some dread the thought of moving away from activities and relationships that have given their lives a sense of purpose for decades. For clergy, and especially those who have been in full-time ministry for many years, retirement raises questions about identity and meaning.

If you would like to join us, book here. The conference cost will be covered by the diocese and won't come from your CMD grant. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email Lesley Steed.

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.

Online by Teams: (Wednesdays 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

Grandparent Day 'What does it take to be a Grandparent of Faith?' | Saturday 14 March, 10.00am for 10.30am start - 2.30pm | Thomas Clarkson Centre Hospital Road Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JT
This event is organised by the Mothers' Union with the diocesan Growing Younger team and is open to everyone. The day is designed to bring together grandparents and honorary grandparents of faith (from little faith to strong faith) and of any denomination. The programme includes worship, key speakers and small group workshops addressing topics such as reaching the Missing Generation. The venue is fully accessible with ample car parking on site. Free tickets are available here.

Concerts | St Mary's Church, Newmarket CB8 0HP

Jublitate Choral Evensong | Sunday 15 March, 6.00pm
Cantilena Singers performing a Lenten concert | Saturday 21 March, 4.00pm. Tickets £10, under 18s free
Community Choir concert | Saturday 18 April, 7.30pm raising funds for Nexus.

Easter Encounter | 21 March, 12.00pm - 3.30pm | St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds
Come along to this interactive Easter story offering a new presentation to meet the characters who witnessed Jesus' death and and his resurrection. This is a family event but children must be accompanied. Followed by Easter crafts and refreshments. To book your place and for further information contact: jennifer.aston@btinternet.com

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Cherishing the Earth Day Conference | Saturday 21 March, 9.30am-4.00pm | St John's Church, Woodbridge IP12 1HS
Come along to a day conference dedicated to supporting church through caring for the environment. With an address from the Rt Hon Lord Deben, John Gummer. Cost £5 to cover refreshments, please bring your own lunch. To book, please click here.

Living Well with Dementia | Thursday 11 June, 10.45am- | The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk NR22 6EE
Come along to a day conference to learn more about making your church dementia friendly, and caring for those with dementia spiritually and pastorally. Booking costs £25, including coffee/tea and a 2 course lunch. To book your place, please email: mihoward@btinternet.com.

British Sign Language Worship Workshop | Saturday 20 June, 10.00am-4.00pm, Thomas Clarkson Centre, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JT
Simple lunch provided.
Signs of God will be delivering training in British Sign Language in the context of worship. A simple lunch will be provided. Cost £20 per person, to book please click here.

Notices

Safeguarding Training: Due to a lack of capacity in the Safeguarding Training team, there will be fewer 'in-person' training sessions this year. If you are a PCC member, children's/youth helper or other church member with Foundation level training that is due for renewal in the first half of 2026, and you do not want to access the training online,

please do not miss this opportunity for in-person training located in the centre of our Diocese. To book your place please click here where you, or your local safeguarding officer, can book you a place to attend this course. If you are looking for Safeguarding Leadership training, please check Insight here for the latest course dates. Additional dates will be published as soon as they are available, so please keep checking in with Insight to find the right course for you. There will be a combination of in-person and online Leadership courses available throughout 2026.

Energy Footprint Tool: 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.

Vacancies

Vicar at St Peter & St Mary's Church | Stowmarket | Closing date: 19 March
HR Administration Assistant | Closing date: 30 March
Children and Families' Worker | Alde Sandlings Benefice | Closing date: 3 April
Diocesan Director of Education | Closing date: 6 April
Rector | North Bosmere Benefice
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Team Vicar & Associate Priest | Blyth Valley Team Ministry F/T Stipendiary Post
Non-Executive Safeguarding Chapter Member | Cathedral Volunteers | Risk, Audit and Review Committee Member | St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Tenor Vicar Choral | St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Finance Committee Member | St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Associate Chaplain | Sizewell C
Royal Naval Chaplaincy | email the Chaplain Recruiter, the Revd Alastair Blaine RN.
Children's and Families' Minister | Parish of Whitton

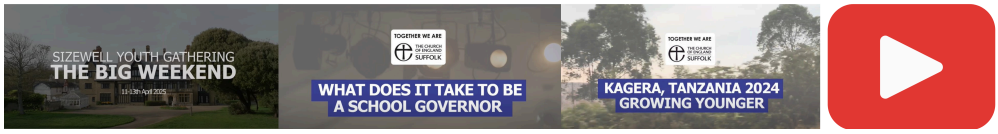
Organist or Pianist | United Benefice of Stanton | For more information please contact Ali Wakelin on 07717 125743.

Team Vicar | Sole Bay Team
The Sole Bay Church team are holding 24 hours of prayer in St Edmund's, Southwold. Starting with a simple 'shabbat-style' meal. All are welcome to join in by holding the team in their prayers over the weekend, or in-person at Southwold church from 6.00pm Friday 13 March to 6.00pm Saturday 14 March. More information here.

Click here to print and share with others

TOGETHER WE ARE
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Watch our stories from around Suffolk



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