Thursday 9 April 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

Hundreds of schoolchildren enjoy 'Easter Encounters'



More than 600 schoolchildren have visited St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds to learn about the story of the resurrection.

Youngsters in years 5 and 6 from eight primary schools across west Suffolk were treated to a tour of the church as part of its week-long 'Easter Encounters' event, with scenes performed by actors in full costume.

Jenny Aston, St Mary's Children's leader, said: *"We have had 60-70 children coming in for each tour, lasting around 60 minutes each. The children were split into groups and toured different stations, hearing stories from the Bible along the way. It was a terrific event and the children were really inspired to learn more."*

Groups of children were met by three witnesses, Jesus's mother Mary, a Roman soldier and Joseph of Arimathea. At the first station they visited an 'Easter Garden' where they met Mary Magdalene and Joanna when they visited Jesus' tomb. In the garden, the children were invited to create tissue flowers before fixing them to a cross at the end of the tour. Next, the children visited Galilee to learn about the meeting of Peter, John and Jesus on the shoreline. There, children could hear an Easter poem written by Amy Scott Robinson. The children's next stop was The Upper Room where they heard the story of doubting Thomas. The children were asked to draw a question mark in a sand tray while thinking about what they would ask Jesus. The children then visited the Travellers on the Emmaus Road before setting off to their final stop in Jerusalem.

Read the full story here.

Constable church celebrates £230,000 refurbishment

St Mary's Church in Tattingstone received a grant of more than £232,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to upgrade the building's accessibility. The refurbishment included constructing new toilet and kitchenette facilities, alongside levelling the floors for ease of access and a complete redecoration.



The church dates back to the 1200s and was a favourite of John Constable, whose sketches of the building are now proudly displayed in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Churchwarden Linda Smalley said: *"It's been a very exciting time for the village. The church looks wonderful – we are thrilled. The church is a great asset for worshippers, but also for the nearby primary school and the rest of the village community. It's lovely to walk in and see it as it is now - it has made a real difference."*

The kitchenette and toilet facilities now mean the church can host events, including inviting children from the village's primary school for services.

To read the full story please click here.

Bishop Joanne's Maundy Thursday Sermon

To read a copy of Bishop Joanne's sermon from the Maundy Thursday Service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral please click here.

Together we Pray

Together we Pray will be led by the Revd Gary Jones next week, at the usual time of 8.30am on the Bishop's Facebook page.

Parish Accessibility Fund: The Church of England has made funds available to support parishes wishing to enable greater access to churches. These funds are supported by the Diocese in order to link parishes to the national scheme and ensure compliance and submission criteria are met. The fund can support adaptations to meet the needs of the disabled, visually or hearing impaired and the neurodivergent. Church of England consecrated church buildings and community halls in the ownership of the PCC that are used to promote mission are all eligible.

Grants are in the range of £5-50,000 and are subject to qualification and other criteria. The application is straightforward and the decision process relatively speedy. Any grants awarded are paid to parishes *before* the commencement of works. Since the withdrawal of the Listed Places of Worship scheme for reclamation of VAT on eligible projects, parishes may also wish to take advantage of the VAT exemption on certain qualifying projects aimed at increasing access to churches for relevant user groups.

Full details of the scope of the Parish Accessibility Grants' scheme are here and the VAT rules are here. As a first step you should contact contact **Toby Hart** at the Diocesan Office via email toby.hart@cofesuffolk.org

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Move to Cornerstone Grants from Church Grants from 31 March 2026: For the past few years, the Diocese has had a paid subscription to the Church Grants Database. This ended on 31 March 2026 and you will not be able to access Church Grants from this date. We will be moving over to the new Church of England Cornerstone Grants Database which will be free to use and is designed to support churches in identifying and securing funding opportunities.

- All those churches already registered with Church Grants will be contacted by the Parish Resources Team with an invitation to register with Cornerstone Grants. You do not need to pay to join Church Grants.
- If you need access before you receive our email please complete the Cornerstone form to establish your parish needs, verify your contact details and sign up for an online training session.
- The Parish Resources Team will be in touch to register you with Cornerstone on behalf of your parish.

The support from the Parish Resources Team remains and we will be providing training to help you get the most out of Cornerstone Grants. Emma Denton will continue to help you with all your grant queries, as well as writing bespoke Grant Strategies, reading applications prior to submission and supporting you through the process of applying for grants.

Birkett's Diocesan registry: Diocesan registry teams serving the dioceses of Guildford, London, Norwich and St Edmundsbury and Ipswich offer a website where you will be able to find answers to many frequently asked questions about the law relating to the Church of England and its clergy, dioceses and parishes. Please find their new website here: Diocesan Registry Website - Insight CofE Suffolk.

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

Lark Rise Retreats
'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.

Safeguarding Training
In-Person **Foundation** Level Training is taking place at Huntingfield on **Wednesday 15 April -** book here.

Due to restricted capacity in the Safeguarding Training team, there will be fewer in-person training sessions this year. If you are a Volunteer, PCC member, children's/youth helper or other church member with Basic Awareness and/or Foundation level training that

is due for renewal, and you do not want to access the training online, please do not miss this opportunity for in-person training. Future Basic Awareness and Foundation training sessions will be located in Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich. Dates for these will be advertised on Insight as soon as possible.

In-Person **Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse** Level Training is taking place in Bury St Edmunds on **Wednesday 29 April** 2026, book here. Future courses in 2026 will be held in Huntingfield and Ipswich.

To book your place on any in-person safeguarding training visit Insight, where you, or your local safeguarding officer, can book you a place to attend a course.

If you are looking for Safeguarding Leadership training, please check Insight for the latest course dates. Additional dates will be published as soon as they are available, so please keep checking in to find the right course for you. There will be a combination of in-person and online Leadership courses available throughout 2026. For those people who want to get a head start on completing the pre-work for their Leadership Training, please click here to view and download the Leadership pre-work materials that all participants need to complete before attending their first booked session of Leadership Training.

Child Exploitation Awareness Training
Are you working with children and young people? Ensure you have the knowledge and confidence to keep them safe with Child Exploitation Awareness Training. Claire Prosser, Criminal Exploitation Project Manager from Suffolk County Council is delivering this course on 7 May 2026 in Ipswich. Please register to attend 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 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.

Eco Church Support | Tuesday 28 April, 6.00pm to 7.00pm on Zoom
Join this online support group for an interesting talk by Nigel Cooper about using Creation Care to engage with your local community. Register here.



Vocations Fair | Saturday 25 April 10.00am to 12.20pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral.
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.

This day focuses on encouraging individuals to explore God's call in their lives, including lay and ordained ministries. We have put together a collection of resources here, including reflections, prayers, orders of service and information about some of the vocations in the diocese.

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, this course 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.

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 our Diocesan Giving Advisors: emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org or trudie.harkin@cofesuffolk.org.

Wednesday 29 April | St Edmundsbury Cathedral | 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm
Wednesday 8 July | St Michael's Church, Framlingham | 9.30am, 10.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm
Tuesday 4 August | St Peter and St Paul's Church, Lavenham | 9.30am, 10.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm
Further dates across the county to follow. Click here to book any of these dates.

Net Zero Carbon Heating | Zoom | 30 April
Join this session on Decarbonising Church Heating Systems - Voices of experience, offered by the Regional Net Zero Carbon team. Click here to book.

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 | 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, 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 (including 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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Faith Story - Archdeacon Sam | 7.00pm, 18 May 2026 | Teams
All are welcome to join us for the next 'Faith Story' in our series as the Ven Samantha Brazier-Gibbs, Archdeacon of Ipswich, shares her faith journey with us. Have you asked 'How do I know what God is asking me to do?' Come and join the conversations with others about their faith journey. Book here.

Preparing for Retirement Conference 19-21 May 2026 | The Retreat House, Chelmsford CM3 1HA
This is suitable for anyone considering retirement in the next 5 years, stipendiary or SSM to reflect on transitioning from ministry in retirement. 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.

Leading your Church into Growth

Save the Date: Leading your Church into Growth is coming back to Suffolk in 2026!
12-13 June 2026 at Debenham Community Centre, it will run for the Friday evening and all day Saturday. Following the positive feedback from our Leading your Church into Growth (LYCIG) conferences in 2024 and 2025, we are delighted that the LYCIG team are coming back to lead another conference for us in 2026. The Insight booking link will be shared shortly. For more information, please email: the Revd Katie de Bourcier, Diocesan Mission Enabler, or Lisa Hicks, LYCIG Coordinator.

Date change: Elders Celebration service with Bishop Joanne
Our biennial service of thanks and celebration will take place in the Cathedral as usual this year but we have made a date change to avoid a clash in Bishop Joanne's diary. The service will now be on **8 November** at 3.30pm. The original date was 11 October. More information will be sent nearer the time.

End of Life Matters | Wednesday 15 April, 6.15pm for a 6.30pm start | Thomas Clarkson Centre, Hospital Road, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3JT (free parking on site!)

Navigating the end of life for a loved one is always a challenge, and we often see families struggling with avoidable burdens due to a lack of prior discussion. To support those of all ages in our area, we are hosting a free event featuring experienced geriatricians, palliative care doctors, local funeral directors and other experts in this field. The evening will be guided by the context of our Christian hope. This event is free and open to everyone. Please let us know you're coming by filling out the form at tinyurl.com/endoflifematters

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A Piano Recital of Joyful Music to Celebrate Easter | Sunday 19 April, 5.30pm | St Mary's, Woodbridge
Join Andrew Leach for a special piano recital including: Bach, Scarlatti, Schubert, Liszt, Chopin, Schumann and Grieg. Andrew was a music scholar at King's College, Cambridge and is now conductor of Woodbridge Choral Society, with whom highlights in recent years have included: Verdi Requiem, Britten War Requiem, Mendelssohn Elijah, Mozart Requiem and Ben Ponniah.

Lower than the Angels: A history of Sex and Christianity | St Mary's Church Hadleigh, Monday 20 April, 7.00pm
An opportunity to hear from Diarmaid MaCulloch, Emeritus Professor of the History of the Church, University of Oxford. Includes a book signing. Admission are £10 and are available from office@stmaryshadleigh.co.uk.

An evening with Julian and Jiaxin Lloyd Webber, Saturday 2 May 7.00pm. St Andrew's Church, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich, IP5 1DH.
This evening with internationally renowned cellists launches St Andrew's 2026 May Festival which includes something for everyone, concerts, exhibitions, Christians in sport breakfast, evening meal, talks, children's events and special services. The theme this year is 'Drawn to Jesus?'. Tickets £25, under 18s £10.For more information and booking: www.standrewschurchrushmere.onesuffolk.net

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Rogationtide run or walk | Saturday 9 May, 10.00am | St Martin's Church, Exning CB8 7HF
Join a stewarded, waymarked circular walk tracing the ancient parish boundary of Exning, Newmarket. With a distance of 13.2 miles or a 10-mile shorter option. Please book here: www.exning.net/walks.html

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Festival concert: New Awakenings | Saturday 9 May, 7.00pm | St Andrew's Church, Rushmere, Ipswich IP5 1DH
Cantus Firmus Choir is drawn from churches across Suffolk and North Essex. The concert will feature some choral classics, such as Finzi's 'My Spirit Sang All Day', Elgar's 'As Torrents in Summer', Rutter's 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' and Haydn's 'The Heavens Are Telling', as well as arrangements of contemporary worship songs. The guest artist is violinist Natasha Petrovic, who will also be talking about her Christian faith. Tickets £13 (under 18s £5), from cantusfirmus.org.uk

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College of the Resurrection, Mirfield - Open Day 2026 | Sunday 10 May
If you are considering where to undertake your theological training and formation, you are welcome to join the next College Open Day, come along and meet the team. Please visit

the College website to register for the Open Day. For an informal chat about life at the College please contact the Revd Canon Andrew Dotchin who is a member of the College Council. Mobile: 07814 949828 Email: revdotchin@gmail.com

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Model Railway Exhibition Saturday 16 May, 10.00am – 4.00pm, St Peter and St Paul Church, Lavenham
Layouts of all kinds, in a range of scales, regions and countries (with special focus on East Anglia), together with trade stalls. Refreshments available. Adult admission £7.00, family tickets £12.00

(purchased in advance to guarantee entry). In aid of Christian Aid.

Cathedral Reflective Pilgrimages for 2026 for Parishes, Benefices and/or Deaneries
Your cathedral awaits your visit! St Edmundsbury Cathedral has unfilled dates and would be very pleased to hear from you. Please do be in touch with Cathedral Chaplain, the Revd Canon Mark Haworth markhaworth@stedscathedral.org tel 01284 748720, for further information and booking.

Notices

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

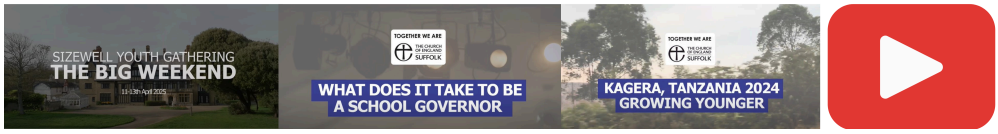
Deputy Diocesan Director of Education | Closing date: 20 April
Rector | North Bosmere Benefice
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Team Vicar | Sole Bay Team
Team Vicar & Associate Priest | Blyth Valley Team Ministry F/T Stipendiary Post
Tenor Vicar Choral and Non-Executive Safeguarding Chapter Member | Cathedral Volunteers | Risk, Audit and Review Committee Member, Finance Committee Member | St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Rector | Box River Benefice | Closing date: tbc

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

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TOGETHER WE ARE
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Watch our stories from around Suffolk



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