Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events from our diocese [View this email in your browser]

Thursday 1 October 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK



Bishop Joanne says "Thank you to everyone who took part in our 'Together we are Listening' surveys".

Review of Lay Ministries: An Update

In line with the new framework for lay ministries in the diocese, described in Bishop Joanne's letter of 10 September 2026, we are introducing two new services celebrating lay ministry. An annual celebration service for Authorised Lay Ministers will be held at Pentecost each year, along with an annual celebration and licensing service for Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers (the new terminology for Readers) at a different time of year. These will take the place of the "Called Together" service that we have had in recent years. They will complement the existing annual celebration service for Lay Elders. The Lay Ministry service on Saturday 3 October is no longer going ahead.

Readers (Licensed, PTO and Emeritus) are very warmly invited to a Celebration of Reader/LLM ministry led by Bishop Joanne, which will take place at St John the Baptist, Caudwell Hall Road, Ipswich, IP4 5HF, on Sunday 1 November at 3.00pm. Further details are being sent to all Readers. We look forward to seeing you there.

Saving St Mary's Church



St Mary's Church, Glemsford has announced that it has received a grant of £250,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to help fund essential repair work to its historic building. This adds to a smaller grant already generously donated by the Rochester Bridge Trust.

The church is a Grade 1 listed stone and flint building of significant historic importance. Sadly, the southwest wall is now showing severe and dangerous cracking caused by nearby tree roots, exacerbated by the dry weather over the last few years. This new funding from the Heritage Fund will help to address these issues. The building is currently used not only for Church services but also for different events such as concerts, school events and a Christmas tree festival. These are well supported by local people whether members of the Church congregation or not. Read the full story on our website here.

2027 Dogs in the Cathedral Calendar

St Edmundsbury Cathedral is celebrating being a dog-friendly Cathedral once again with the launch of the 2027 Dogs in the Cathedral Calendar, the Cathedral's third canine-themed calendar. Dogs have long been welcome at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, provided they remain on a lead. Some even attend services regularly. Visitors will also find a water bowl outside the Cathedral and a warm welcome inside, where pups can expect a treat at the welcome desk. Calendars are available from the Cathedral Shop.

Canon John Parr to Visit the Holy Land

Canon John Parr, who has served the Diocese for more than 25 years in parish, Cathedral and ministry development roles, is preparing to visit the Holy Land next week.

John previously visited Israel and Palestine with the Amos Trust in 2022, meeting families, farmers and community projects supporting people affected by conflict and injustice. He was deeply moved by the hospitality, faith and resilience he encountered.

This year, through connections with Bethlehem Bible College and local Christian leaders, John will spend eight days visiting Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramallah and Nazareth. His aim is to listen to and learn from Holy Land Christians, hearing their experiences and exploring how faith in Jesus shapes their commitment to justice, peace and reconciliation.

The visit will contribute to a book John is writing on Jesus and the continuing impact of his presence in the land where he lived and ministered. He asks for prayers for those he will meet and looks forward to sharing what he learns with churches across the Diocese on his return. John said *"Most important for me is to listen to and learn from Holy Land Christians, so that when I return home I can share their stories".*

Magazine Award: We are delighted to announce that the parish magazine in Lavenham, *Lavenham Life,* has won bronze in the national competition for the best parish magazines. The judges from the Association of Parish Editors (ACE) comments include what a striking cover it has and that it is a lively magazine packed full of articles and news to interest

everyone with a good balance of Christian and community content. A quality publication" Congratulations!

Growing Younger in our Diocese



Youth Café is popular and growing!

A growing church-led youth cafe in St Peter's Stoke Church, Ipswich is bringing children together for fun, games and delicious cheese toasties. The after-school youth café started with just two members in September last year, but now sees more than 15 children attending each week.

Sue Bridges, Pioneer Children and Young People's Worker, said: "*We have children here aged nine to 12 from different schools, coming here from all over Ipswich. It started about a year ago and it has really grown since then. We have crafts and games, Lego and football – there's so much for them to do. It's a great chance for the children to make new friends and have fun.*"

One highlight of the week are the popular cheese toasties, which are prepared by volunteers Jackie and Rose in the church's kitchen. Towards the end of the session, the children gather for a quiet moment of reflection, for prayers and to learn about God.

Read the full story on our website here.

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

Find out more - 'How Beautiful' Reflective Morning | 9.30am - 12.30 Saturday 3 October | **Please note a change of venue: Lady Chapel at Holy Trinity, Long Melford** Join us for a reflective half day, focused on mapping and giving thanks for our own walk with God. We celebrate those who introduced us to Jesus and those with whom we share our faith and continue to journey alongside. We notice the patterns and rhythms of our everyday faithful walk with God alongside, naming key moments and encounters. A short time of centring worship is followed by times of input and opportunities to reflect on and map our own journey of faith. If you would like to book last minute or discuss the change of venue please email Gail Southgate.

A morning with Julia Mourant | Saturday 3 October, 10.00am to 1.30pm | Salvation Army Hall, Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket IP14 1NE
You are invited to attend a morning offered by Julia Mourant, author of 'The Spiritual Director: Practising the Charism of Presence and Attention', writer and Spiritual Director. She will explore the distinctive nature of spiritual direction as both vocation and spiritual

gift, grounded in experiential formation, theological reflection, and the capacity for personal growth and transformation. The cost will be £10, payable in cash on by card on the door. Please register here.

Decarbonising Churches – Voices of Experience | 7.30pm-8.30pm, 8 October | Zoom
Are you in the early stages of thinking about replacing your heating system or know it's something you'll need to be doing in the next few years? Come along to hear how other churches have managed this process, including managing discussions with your PCC, where to go for advice and knowing when and how to engage with consultants and DAC. This is a webinar for parishes across the East of England which is being hosted on Zoom by the Diocese of Ely. You can book your place on the webinar here: www.elydiocese.org/church-in-action/environment-and-sustainability/nzc-news/voices-of-experience.php

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Sight Loss Sunday | 11 October
An initiative by Torch Trust, Sight Loss Sunday is a great opportunity to celebrate those who are blind and partially sighted in our congregations and communities; and to equip the church to achieve it's aim of welcoming all of God's people. Even if there is no one in your church who you can currently think of that has sight loss, the RNIB suggest that one in five people will live with sight loss in their lifetime. Their website has a wealth of resources that you can access please visit www.torchtrust.org or get in touch slfc@torchtrust.org

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Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) – Follow-On Day | Saturday 10 October, 9.30am-1.00pm, The Coddenham Centre, Mary Day Close, Coddenham IP6 9SR
This follow-on day is particularly intended for those who came to the 2026 LyCiG conference, to help you continue on your journey of mission and growth, with further exploration of LyCiG's teaching and the chance to reflect and plan together as benefice teams. However, it is also open to teams who came in previous years as a refresher. We will be joined by one of our LyCiG speakers and members of the diocesan Mission and Ministry team. Booking here.

Christian Activism in Today's World – a study day for Lay and Ordained Ministers | Saturday 10 October, 9.30am Salvation Army Hall, Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket IP14 1NE
Supported by Mark Sheard (Diocesan World Mission Officer) and Richard Stainer (former Diocesan World Development Adviser) and joined by speakers from the CAP (Christians Against Poverty), Open Doors and the Mothers' Union (on Modern Slavery), this promises to be a rich day of exploration and reflection. For further information and booking please click here.

Prisons week | 11 - 17 October
Prisons Week aims to encourage prayer and awareness of the needs of prisoners and their families, victims of offenders, prisons staff and all those who care. Download this information leaflet here.

PCC Workshop 2026:
Digital Giving (contactless and online, including QR codes) | Tuesday 13 October
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. Book here.

Grants & Funding | Wednesday 4 November at 1.00pm - Teams
Join Emma Denton, Giving Advisor and guest to find out about how the Cornerstone database can help you navigate the grants and funding options available. Also, how the Diocese can help advise and source grant funding for you, and hear about first hand experiences, and success stories. Book here.

Digital Surgeries: Meet the Parish resources team! Get help with purchasing or borrowing a device, how to have an effective online presence, setting up online giving with a QR code. Tuesday 3 November, 1.30pm, 2.30pm or 3.30pm | St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich IP1 1UQ. Book here.

Safeguarding Sunday



Safeguarding Sunday is an annual awareness campaign led by Thirtyone:eight, held on 15 November (or when you are able). This year's theme is *Love Protects*, helping churches explore safeguarding as an expression of care, protection and love. Registration is now open for free resources including service-planning materials, and ready-to-use content. Many of our churches hold a Safeguarding Sunday during the year and find it a really positive experience. If you would like some assistance or would like to know more, email safeguarding@cofesuffolk.org

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Safeguarding Training: If you would like to know more about becoming a Level One Safeguarding Trainer, please click here to view a role description and enrol on one of the short, online training courses taking place.

Safeguarding training courses available for you to access at any time via the National Training Portal include Basic Awareness, Foundation, Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment & People Management: please click here to access the Portal. To book all in-person and diocesan led safeguarding courses, visit Insight. Here you, or your local safeguarding officer, can book you a place to attend. Courses bookable via Insight include Leadership; In-Person and Online via MS Teams, plus In-Person versions of Basic Awareness, Foundation, Leadership PTO and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. We look forward to seeing you at a training event soon. Any questions, please contact us at safeguarding.training@cofesuffolk.org.

Theological Refreshment in Ministry (TRiM) 2026 | Monday 16 November | The House of Retreat, The Street, Pleshey, Chelmsford CM3 1HA

Rooted in Deuteronomy 6:5, this retreat invites participants to explore wellbeing as a holistic gift from God, encompassing our emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical lives. Through prayer, reflection and practical exercises, we will create space to deepen self-awareness, strengthen resilience and take ownership of habits that support flourishing. This, our annual regional short residential conference, is open to all ordained and licensed lay ministers. More information and booking details here.

Elder's Celebration Service | 8 November, 3.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 1LS

A warm invitation for all Elders with family and friends to join this service giving thanks for Elders and celebrating their ministry. Bishop Joanne will be leading the service and the is an opportunity to meet the bishop and stay for refreshments afterwards.

Introduction to Preaching Course | Saturdays 21 November 2026, 23 January 2027, 27 February, 1 May and 10 July.
Preaching is just one way by which we can grow in depth as disciples of Jesus Christ. If you feel called to preach then we want to encourage this gifting by offering an accessible means to enter this ministry. This five-session course is a mix of face-to-face teaching and practice in your context and you will be supported by your Incumbent and ministry team. This learning module is offered to everyone and is a requirement for Readers-in-training and those on the Elizabeth Pathway. For further information please visit here. Please email the Revd Lauren Moore if you have any questions.

Advent retreat days | Thursday 26 November and Friday 27 November from 10.00am to 4.00pm | Lark Rise, 230 Ferry Road, Felixstowe IP11 9RU
Run by Lark Rise Retreats and led by Vanessa Herrick, the topic is John the Baptist 'Harbinger of Hope'. More details on www.larkriseretreats.org and book on the website. Email larkriseretreats@gmail.com or phone: 01394 284213.

The Wisdom of St Francis | Saturday 28 November, 10.00am-3.00pm | St Michael's Church, Framlingham IP13 9BJ
Come along to a pre-advent quiet day led by the Revd Chris Davey. Please bring a packed lunch, tea and coffee provided. Please indicate your attendance either by signing up in church or emailing framparish@gmail.com

Church Community Services and Events

The African Choir of Norfolk | St Michael's Church, Beccles | Saturday 3 October, 7.00pm
Come along to see this choir which performed at the inauguration of Archbishop Sarah Mullally. Tickets cost £15 per person and can be bought on the door or reserved beforehand. For further details, please email: faith@darch.plus.com.

Suffolk Harvest Festival | Sunday 4 October | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS
Bringing the community together for a county Harvest Festival to celebrate people and organisations across Suffolk who work the land and sea, and to give thanks to God for this year's harvest. Activities between 10.00am - 3.00pm include: Suffolk Trinity animals, machinery, stalls, family activities, food and drink. Followed by the 3.30pm Harvest Service giving thanks for Suffolk's Harvest. Download this flyer to promote locally.

Ronald Blythe Lecture | Friday 9 October, 7.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS
Sir James MacMillan, classical composer and conductor, will deliver this year's Ronald Blythe Lecture here at the Cathedral. During the lecture, he will explore the intersection of the arts and faith, with time following for a Q&A. Tickets are just £5 and are now on sale here.

Wind and Brass Ensemble Concert | St Peter and St Mary's Church Stowmarket
7 November 3.30pm Join this concert with the Trianon Music Group for an afternoon Wind and Brass Ensemble Concert. Tickets are free but please reserve your place here.

Diocesan Choral Festival | Sunday 8 November **|** St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS
For the attention of choir leaders and singers**:** Individuals and groups are invited to sing in Suffolk's beautiful cathedral. Rehearsal 2.00 pm, service 3.30pm. FREE, but sign-up essential.
All are warmly invited to join the Cathedral Choir to sing for this year's Diocesan Choral Festival Service on Sunday 8 November. The afternoon will be led by the Cathedral's Director of Music, Claudia Grinnell, and accompanied on the mighty Cathedral organ by Assistant Director of Music, Richard Cook. At the same service we will be giving thanks for the ministry of Diocesan Elders, so it promises to be a real celebration. For more information and to sign up, please visit: Diocesan Choral Festival 2026 Tickets.

Notices

General Synod Elections 2026–2031: The voting period for the new quinquennium opened on 21 September 2026, closing on 13 October 2026 at 5.00pm for portal votes and 12 October for postal votes. Eligible electors will be able to participate in choosing representatives who will help shape the future direction and governance of the Church of England. Candidate Addresses and Statements can be viewed online through the Civica portal or via the diocesan website here. For questions regarding your eligibility or for general information, please email the diocesan elections team at elections@cofesuffolk.org.

Notice of Statistics for Mission October Count: Could all parishes complete and submit their annual Statistics for Mission October Count. The October Count is an important tool that helps us understand the health, reach, and growth of our communities. This data provides a clear picture of how God is working through our parishes by measuring in-person and at-home attendance across the first four weeks of October. It allows the national church and the diocese to allocate resources effectively, support parishes productively, and celebrate areas of growth. Please submit your figures through the official Online Parish Returns System. Key dates:

- What is counted: Traditional church services, "Fresh Expressions" of church, and school services held either in the building or in the community.
- Age Categories: Split into Adults (16 and over, including clergy/leaders) and Children/Young People (under 16).
- Timing: Separated into Sunday attendance and Weekday attendance (Monday through Saturday).
- Church at Home: Remote engagement including live-streamed or pre-recorded online services, phone services, or distributed paper service sheets.
- Where to Submit: Enter your data directly into the Online Parish Returns System

Please email the diocesan office if you have forgotten your parish log-in details via statistics@cofesuffolk.org The national system accepts entries until 31 January, but Returns can be saved and updated throughout the year, making the process easier and reducing the workload later. Thank you to everyone who dedicates their time to compiling these statistics. Your input ensures that every member of our worshipping community is counted.

New Building Management Portal: The Church of England is introducing a new Building Management Portal, which will replace the Online Faculty System for applications relating to works on churches, their contents, and churchyards, with a planned release date of 6 October 2026. The new portal has been designed to make the application process easier to follow and to improve consistency in the way casework is managed. It will give users clearer information about application stages, supporting documents and the actions needed as an application progresses. The existing faculty, List A, and List B processes are not changing. The new portal provides a different digital route for preparing, submitting, reviewing, and managing applications. Existing and historic Online Faculty System cases will be migrated into the new portal. If you have a current application, please be aware that on Tuesday 29 September at 5.00pm the Online Faculty System will move to read-only access. More information is available on Insight here. If you have an urgent query not answered by the information provided, you can email us on dac@cofesuffolk.org

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Parish Accessibility Fund Grants: There are funds available to improve physical access to churches. Grants of up to £5,000 can be secured quickly and easily and can fund projects 100% with no match funding. For full information is available on Insight: LINK or contact Toby Hart, by email toby.hart@cofesuffolk.org

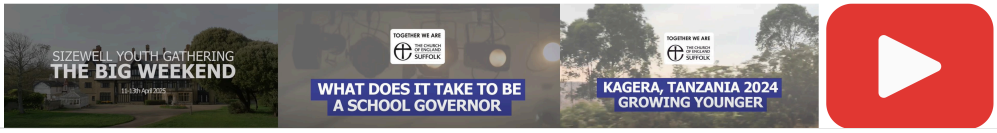
Vacancies

Vicar of Ipswich Minster | Closing date: 10 October
Mission & Ministry Team Administrator | Closing date: 14 October
Diocesan Growing Younger Children and Families Adviser | Closing Date: 21 October
Counselling Centre Manager **|** Inspire | Closing date: 23 October
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Kids Pastor | Full-time | River Church
Internship for 18-30s with theological training from St Mellitus College | River Church
Tenor Vicar Choral | Volunteers | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

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