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

Thursday 17 September 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

Message from Bishop Joanne:

Bishop Joanne has offered her condolences to the grieving family of three-year old Noah Woods, and praised the community response after 1,300 people joined the police to try to find him. The toddler went missing from a playground on Tuesday and was found the following day in a nearby pond in Brantham. Bishop Joanne said, *"It is with immense sadness that we all learnt of the tragic death of young Noah. Noah, his family, and friends have been in our prayers. We lit a candle for him in the chapel as the search progressed, and our prayers continue now following yesterday's sad news. I pay tribute to all who joined in the search. The response shown by Suffolk police officers and villagers in trying to locate Noah typifies the strong sense of community in our county. The community rallied round with the emergency services, not hesitating to give up their time as they all searched relentlessly for Noah."*

"I will continue to hold in prayer all of those who loved Noah and who now grieve his loss, trusting that his family will be afforded the space and privacy they will need as they grieve."



Bishop Joanne addressed the House of Lords, warning that young victims of exploitation and trauma had been drawn into crime through County Lines. County Lines is the transportation of illegal drugs across boundaries by young people coerced into it by gangs.

Bishop Joanne said: "*Nobody is beyond hope or redemption. The criminalisation of children, and the entrenching of disadvantage through undignified punitive measures, can do much damage to the prospect that they might grow into citizens with a stake in our society. Our youth justice system must offer mercy to vulnerable children whose patterns of behaviour are not yet fixed, and it must provide them with the tools to develop new patterns and to flourish in the society that they will one day help to build."*

Read the [full story on our website here.]

2026 Suffolk Churches Ride and Stride annual fundraiser 2026

We were delighted that the roads of Suffolk and beyond had many more cyclists, and walkers last Saturday as people of all ages took part in the 2026 Suffolk Churches Ride and Stride annual fundraiser. A vintage and classic car rally, Pedal and Drive, was also held, with a record 120 cars assigned one of six routes from country houses in Denston, Elveden, Yoxford, Tattingstone, Langham and Bures via six churches to Lavenham, solving clues as they went. 38 horse-riders also took part in a Steeple to Steeple ride, 12 miles around six churches from Lindsay to Chelsworth, the second year this was held. There is still an opportunity to enter the photograph competition, please send your two favourite photos of yourselves taking part and of a church or church feature to shct@btconnect.com, by 18 September. More info from: http://www.shct.org.uk/

Organised by Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, half the money raised goes to a church of their choosing, the remainder to the Trust to give as building repair and improvement grants. Next year's events will be held on Saturday 11 September.

The Gift of Christmas



This year's Advent and Christmas theme focuses on the gift of God being born as one of us in Jesus Christ. To celebrate the great gift God offers to each one of us in the birth of Jesus, to receive that gift and all God gives to us with gratitude and joy, and to respond to God's generosity by serving others, especially those in need.

The Gift of Christmas: Meditations for the Twelve Days of Christmas is available to order as a booklet from Church House Publishing. During Advent, there will also be daily reflections exploring Advent from A to Z available from 30 November to Christmas Eve in the Everyday Faith app.

Many more resources are available from the website link here. You can also download editable resources from www.achurchnearyou.com.

Sing a Suffolk Christmas: a county-wide music and singing project and they are looking to bring musicians and singers from across the county together for some seasonal fun! The aim is to record as many people across our the county singing two brand new Christmas songs for release on all streaming platforms. The two new songs are called 'Sing a Suffolk Christmas' and 'On this Christmas day'. Any money raised will go to the charity Tearfund. All the details you need are on their website here or email: suffolkchristmas@wendyhousemusic.co.uk.

Free Advent Resources: fantastic free resources available for Advent! For those who are keen to get ahead - check out the Resource Hub on the A Church Near You page, there is no requirement to be an Editor on your ACNY page, just create a login. Click here to find out more.

Generosity Week Resources:
Generosity Week is a campaign to encourage your congregation to be generous in its giving. It can be run any time of the year - whether it's a Generous Lent, Generous Harvest, Generous Advent or another event, To help you get started, a range of generosity-themed service outlines, sermon starters and prayers are available. The



resources have been updated with fresh colours and pics. Click here to access these resources. If you need further support please contact our parish resources team by emailing: julie.podd@cofesuffolk.org

Growing Younger in our Diocese

Setting up a Youth Club

Want to set up a youth club? 'Youth Club in a Box' is for you! It contains example forms, guidance on policies, and recommended discipleship and game resources. Enough people mentioned on our travels around the diocese that this kind of resource would be helpful, so we have created it. Find our Padlet with everything you need here. If you feel we have forgotten something, or have any questions please get in contact with jamie.swinerd@cofesuffolk.org"

Free Youth 'Confirmation' Course | Introductory Webinars | Tuesday 15 September and Wednesday 7 October both at 1.30pm.

'Confirmation' is a brand-new course offered by Youthscape which supports and prepares young people journeying towards confirmation. 'Confirmation' provides leaders with a well-rounded suite of flexible resources so that leaders can build a bespoke course that's right for their group and setting. Funded by the Archbishops Council's Partnership funding, 'Confirmation' is now available for free to all clergy and laity in the Church of England. Download for free and find out more here: www.confirmationcourse.co.uk or attend either of these webinars to register, please email jemimah.allen@youthscape.co.uk

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

Season of Creation webinar series | Tuesday 22 September 5.30pm
You are welcome to join these sessions exploring the themes of Hope for Creation. Please sign up here: Hope for All Creation. To support this Church House Publishing has just released a new edition of *A Time for Creation*. It now includes the newly approved liturgy for the brand new Festival of Creation in Christ, which falls on the first Sunday in September, 6 September this year. It also features prayers in times of extreme weather. You can purchase the book here. Creation in Christ liturgy has also

been added to the lectionary and all the related digital apps and platforms. So it should automatically pop up now when you search for readings and prayers for that day.

PCC Online Workshop – Linking our faith to living a generous life | Thursday 24 September, 1.00pm
Join us for an online session where we will explore how our faith links to living a generous life, a subject that lies at the heart of our relationship with God and with one another. We will give you an insight into how you might approach the topic of giving and generosity with your congregation, fellow church members, and those in the wider community. This webinar is suitable for clergy and PCC volunteers, and we will share examples, ideas and preaching resources, together with plenty of time for discussion. Book here.

Church in Action Roadshow | 29 September 2027, London, 1 October 2027, Derby
The Cinnamon Network seeks to equip UK churches for social action in their communities, by developing Christian social action projects and supporting church leaders and volunteers. They've got two roadshows coming up, giving a chance to hear from people taking forward projects in different contexts, and find out more about the support offered by the Network. Click here for more details.

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.

Wednesday 30 September | Abbey House, Bury St Edmunds | 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm. Book here.
Tuesday 3 November, 1.30pm, 2.30pm or 3.30pm | St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich IP1 1UQ. Book here.

Enhancing Worship (2026) | Wednesdays Starting 30 September | Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green, Earl Stonham IP14 5HJ
This six-week module provides an opportunity to explore the nature of worship, varieties of worship in the Church of England, and the practical skills needed to both design and lead acts of worship. This module is open to all, it is also a requirement for Elders who lead worship and those on the Elizabeth Pathway. For information and to book please click here.

Find out more - 'How Beautiful' Reflective Morning | 9.30am - 12.30 Saturday 3 October | Christ Church Moreton Hall, Bury Saint Edmunds IP32 7EW
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. Sign up here.

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.

Chaplaincy Gathering | Wednesday 7 October, 10.00am | St Felix of Dunwich Church, Rendlesham IP12 2GG
A day of encouragement, inspiration and connection to equip and strengthen chaplaincy across Suffolk. This special day brings together chaplains serving in a wide range of settings for encouragement, reflection, and fellowship. Hosted by Archdeacon Rich, with contributions from Bishop Joanne and keynote speaker Dr Josh Hunt, Chaplain at Felixstowe School, the gathering will offer fresh insights, inspiration and opportunities to connect with fellow chaplains. Lunch provided. **Please note - bookings close on Friday 2nd October 2026.** To register, please click here.

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.

PCC Workshop 2026: 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.

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: Do you like helping others? Have you got access to a computer and a willingness to share your skills? Are you the right person to become a local Safeguarding Trainer? 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 in September.

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.

Church Community Services and Events

Classical Keyboard Spectacular | St Peter & Paul Church, Eye, IP23 7BD | Saturday 26 September, 7.30pm
Join this fundraiser for the repair to stained glass windows and enjoy the internationally acclaimed Jonathan and Tom Scott showcasing a programme of organ and piano duos plus animation on Tickets £25 (adult) £15 (under 18). For further details visit www.eyeparishchurch.org or for tickets click: here.

Flute recital | Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, CO10 9DL | Saturday 26 September, 6.00pm
Featuring the music of Schubert, Poulenc & Ferroud. Tickets £10 please email Elizabeth Rossi (ejcobb@talktalk.net or call 07932 233431) or available on the door.

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
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.

Faith Community Drop in Session | Thursday 8 October, 2.00pm | St Nicholas Hospice Care, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2QY
Come along to a welcoming drop in session for members of different faith communities - find out more about how the hospice serves their community. Refreshments provided. To book your place, email education@stnh.org.uk.

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.

Notices

General Synod Elections 2026–2031

The voting period for the new quinquennium opens on 21 September 2026, closing on **13**

October 2026 at 5pm 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 www.cofesuffolk.org/about-us/diocesan-goverance/general-synod/. For questions regarding your eligibility or for general information, please contact the diocesan elections team at elections@cofesuffolk.org.

Articles of Enquiry: Parishes are kindly asked to complete the online Articles of Enquiry via the Online Parish Return System (OPRS) https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/

The questions are posed by the Archdeacons and cover key areas of parish life, including Safeguarding, Environment, Discipleship, Giving, and Church Buildings. We really appreciate your time completing the form as your answers help us understand where parishes are thriving and where support may be helpful. **Please complete the form by 30 September** to help us produce a summary of trends across our diocese. If you require login details, are unable to submit the information online, or you need any other assistance regarding the online portal, please contact statistics@cofesuffolk.org We really appreciate your time completing the form.

New Building Management Portal to replace Online Faculty System: The Church of England is introducing the 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 in early October 2026. The existing faculty, List A, and List B processes are not changing, but the new portal will provide a clearer digital route for preparing, submitting, reviewing, and managing applications. Further detailed information will be provided in eNews in the coming weeks.

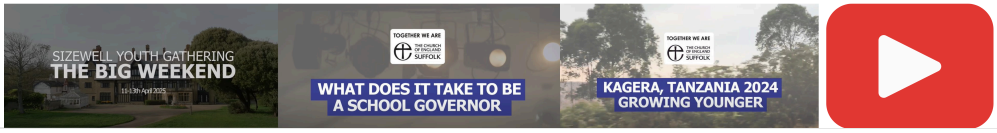
Vacancies

Associate Vicar for Mission | St Augustine's Church | Closing date: 25 September
Children & Families Worker | The Benefice of Holy Innocents, Great Barton and St Peter's | Closing date: 25 September
Rector | Sancroft Benefice | Closing date: 30 September
Archdeaconry Mission Enabler | Closing date: 30 September
Vicar of Ipswich Minster | Closing date: 10 October
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Associate Mission Priest / Lightwave Hub Leader | Bungay Benefice
Kids Pastor | Full-time | River Church
Internship for 18-30s with theological training from St Mellitus College | River Church
Tenor Vicar Choral | Non-Executive Safeguarding Chapter Member | Volunteers | Senior Non-Executive Chapter Member | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

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TOGETHER WE ARE
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

Watch our stories from around Suffolk



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