



Thursday 17 September 2020

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Growing in God

Information and guidance for churches during the Covid-19 pandemic is being updated. Please visit the Church of England page [here](#) and the Diocesan guidance page [here](#) for the most up to date information.

Harvest Festival 2020

We expect a number of creative and different harvest festivals will be happening across Suffolk, each set to help bring communities together.

The North Samford Benefice drive-in service will take place with members of the community sat in their own cars. The Revd Annette Shannon said: *"The coronavirus pandemic has brought about many changes to the way communities can come together and I was determined to find a way to lift community spirits in whatever way possible. Although the harvest festival will look and feel a lot different to previous events, the aim remains the same; to bring communities together. After putting out a plea for a location to hold the event, we are incredibly lucky to have been offered a beautiful location in Ipswich which will allow us to celebrate and come together all while abiding by the government's guidance."*

The Revd Canon Dave Gardner will be a guest speaker. Activity packs have been created for children attending and these include making a cow mask as well as creating a model sheep and a model tree.

Annette added: *"The event is open to everyone however we have a limit of 50 cars and therefore urge anyone that wants to attend to book their space via Eventbrite. We are incredibly fortunate to be able to hold this event and we look forward to celebrating the harvest festival with the community."*

Entry is free but there is a recommended donation of £5 per person. Donation buckets and contactless options for those who wish to donate will be available and all funds will be split between Families in Need, which provides food parcels to help people through a crisis, as well as the ministry and North Samford Benefice. The drive-in harvest festival will be held on Street Farm in The Street, Belstead, on Sunday 4 October, gates will open at 10.00am with the service due to start at 11.00am. Families are welcome to stay after the service has finished to enjoy a socially distanced picnic. You can book your ticket via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/drive-in-harvest-tickets-117750096709>

The traditional harvest festival celebration at St Edmundsbury Cathedral is also moving to a drive-in service at Trinity Park showground. Bishop Martin and the Dean of St Edmundsbury, Joe Hawes, will be leading the 'Big Thank You Harvest' service. The service is by invitation-only and limited to 200 people due to restrictions. A socially-distanced band will replace the choir while a combine harvester is set to provide a pulpit, and Suffolk Young Farmers are managing the 'track-and-trace'. It is hoped to continue the agricultural theme with a plough, a drill and an assortment of tractors. There will be the

usual collection of food and cash to help food banks across Suffolk, with gifts being presented to the altar on a tractor and trailer. Further information is available [here](#).

The Revd Sally Letman is hosting 'Barn and Apple bobbling' in Great Wenham and an outdoor harvest is being hosted in the grounds of Helmingham Hall by the Revd Susan Bates. To find a service near you please visit: www.achurchnearyou.com.

We would love to see photographs of your creative harvest festivals, please send them to capturingmyfaith@cofesuffolk.org for inclusion on our Instagram account.

New resources for harvest to encourage giving and generosity

To coincide with harvest, the national stewardship team have prepared a harvest themed giving and generosity campaign. 'Generosity Week: Harvest' offers eight days of service and worship materials for churches to use during Harvest to encourage people to live generously. To find out more please visit [here](#).

Preparing for Advent and Christmas 2020: Comfort and Joy



This year the Advent and Christmas theme reflects the current Covid context and we hope that Comfort and Joy will better enable us to reflect where the country is and will be by the end of this year.

Comfort and Joy holds together the hope that Christmas will bring joy and celebration after a uniquely difficult year with an acknowledgement that – for those who have lost loved ones or livelihoods, or who are potentially still not able to be together with loved ones – it may be the Church's role, both nationally and locally, to provide consolation, rather than assume everyone will be ready to join in jubilation. We also have to anticipate there may be further spikes. In the words of St Paul in Romans 12.15, '*Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep*'.

Reflections - Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas will mirror the structure of a traditional carol service, exploring both biblical texts and the words of much-loved Christmas carols. The reflections are being edited by the Ven John Kiddle, Archdeacon of Wandsworth and will be published in booklet form by Church House Publishing and also made available freely via app, smart speaker, audio and email. There will also be a series of youth reflections available in December.

AChurchNearYou.com - this website is available for churches to list the full range of church building and online services taking place. The site also includes a Resource Hub providing free adaptable content (such as customisable videos, images and approaches to online giving). Please register all your Christmas services on the site.

Online services and events - In collaboration with a range of Christian charities and organisations, the Church of England will produce nine online services throughout Advent and Christmas. Charities involved include Christian Aid, Church Army and Embrace. Please share and re-post content on your social media channels where possible.

Singing and music - For centuries, music has been integral to both Advent and Christmas and this year it will be even more important. The national team will be offering resources to help socially distanced and online choirs and worship groups to share music from across the traditions. This will include providing music for churches to use as part of online and physical services and events.

Printed materials - Bookmarks, Christmas cards, banners, flyers, posters, booklets and other printed items will be made available for churches to purchase, as in previous years.

For further information please visit our [website](#) which will be updated as resources become available.

Diocesan Growing in God Growth fund - grant applications now open

The Growing in God Growth Fund has relaunched and has grants of £200 - £1,000 available to encourage churches' mission and evangelism activities. Here are two types of projects we are currently looking to support (applications for other ideas also welcome):

1) Developing online church services - are you looking to continue your online services for the foreseeable future? Do you need a bit of extra money to pay for technical resources? Do you want to develop and improve what you have to offer so that it reaches new people? To get ideas of how you could improve your online services are available on our website [here](#).

2) Looking for some resources to help your Christmas festivities flourish - with unknown coronavirus restrictions this Christmas, this year is a great opportunity to get creative and try something a bit different. Could you organise a giant advent calendar that each day appears in different house windows? Could you create Christmas activity packs for families to help them reflect on the arrival of baby Jesus? Last year the Benefice of Martlesham with Brightwell received Growth Fund money to purchase the Church of England's 'Follow the Star' reflection booklets. The Revd Toby Tate, says: *"We gave out 200 'Follow the Star' booklets and 50 'Everyday Faith' booklets over the Christmas period last year. The message was the same each time - this is a gift and is an easy way to help you engage with the Christmas story. The booklets were small and could fit in your handbag - making it easy to read on the bus or wherever! There was an option to hear more by downloading an app. Those who tried it liked the app, and the opt in part was good because they didn't feel pressured. These booklets provided an easy way to encourage people to reflect deeper on faith and the meaning of Christmas. I'd recommend you trying them at your church!"*

If you would like to apply for a grant, the application deadline is Wednesday 7 October. To find out more and to see if you are eligible visit our website [here](#).

Please note the grant amount given could vary in size depending on the number of applications received and so we encourage you to be prepared to top up whatever you may receive with your own sources of funding.

Annual Remembering Together Service

Saturday 19 September, 3.00pm
St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds

This special annual service is for all who have experienced the death of a child, whatever their age and whatever the cause and it is open to all. Due to the ongoing restrictions, the service will take place in the nave of the Cathedral, which allows those attending the chance to find their own space. There is no need to pre-book but those attending will be asked for their details on arrival in order to comply with NHS Test and Trace (details are kept for 21 days only).

Clergy and health professionals work together to offer this service in response to an awareness that people often try to deal with these sorts of issues on their own, when in fact there are many ways to gain support and help. Please note that the Cathedral will be closed to visitors from 2.00pm on Saturday 19 September to allow for preparations for this service. For further information about the service, please email canon.pastor@stedscathedral.org.

Church fundraising webinar: grant applications

Wednesday 23 September, 4.00pm - 5.00pm

This webinar will help to develop your fundraising knowledge and give specialist guidance into researching and applying for grants to help your church raise funds. The key speaker is Caroline Underwood OBE, CEO Philanthropy Company, in collaboration with Ecclesiastical:

- What do grant funders support?
- How do I create a strong grant application?
- Where do I look for funding and how do I organise my research?
- How do I organise the timing of my project and grant application?
- Who should I involve in the process of writing a grant application?

Register online [here](#) and the details for the webinar will be sent directly to you via email.

Share!

Tuesday 6 October 2020

Share

Exploring the call to licensed evangelistic ministry

contexts. The Share! course explores this ministry and, for those who wish, leads to Licensed Ministry.

Current Licensed Evangelists in this diocese minister in Church groups, in a pub, within new housing areas, run courses like Alpha and Faith Pictures, run Fresh Expressions like Café Church, are engaged in chaplaincy and are involved in online services and outreach - amongst others. They are supported locally as part of a diocesan team and can join the Church Army Mission Community nationally.

Licensed Evangelist Tracy runs a Fresh Expression Friday Café Church at St Mary's, Haverhill as one of her ministry activities. Tracy says, *"It's been a year since I was licensed and what a difference it makes! I feel able to make decisions with confidence and try out new things, and if they don't work out, move on and try something else! I feel part of the ministry team and that I'm really making a difference in the church and community."*

If you want to explore more then contact Andrew Payne, Diocesan Evangelists Adviser on 01473 601438 or email evangelist.adviser@cofesuffolk.org.

Christianity in the Public Space

Saturday 10 October, 10.00am - 12.30pm



Join us online for this year's Diocesan World Mission Conference. Key speakers include Andrew Bradstock speaking on how Christians can engage in world issues at all levels. He will be joined by Luke Harman from Christian Aid who will talk about a successful campaign using a range of activities to raise awareness of an issue in the public space. There will be opportunities for questions and discussion.

Book your free place:

[MissionConference.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

More info: richard.stainer14@gmail.com

Freedom Week

From Monday 12 October

This is a time to remember those trapped in modern day slavery, and people – professionals and volunteers – who try to tackle this abhorrent crime. It culminates with Anti-slavery Day on Sunday the 18 October. Slavery, by its very nature, is hard to spot, but we know it is happening across Suffolk, perhaps in in your city, your town, and even your village. We need to raise awareness of this crime so that people know what signs to look for, slaves can be freed and supported, and those responsible can be brought to account. We hope that churches across Suffolk will find time and space to include the issue of modern day slavery in their services at some point during the week.

There are plenty of excellent church resources available from the Clewer Initiative [website](#) or visit

our website [here](#). If you would like to know more then please contact Richard Stainer at richard.stainer14@gmail.com.

Let's talk about Finances – Connecting with us

By Zoom

Wednesday 30 September, 11.00am-12.00pm

Monday 19 October, 2.00pm-3.00pm

Thursday 5 November, 3.00pm-4.00pm

Earlier in the summer we held a number of Zoom sessions with Treasurers to provide a financial update and offer an opportunity to share their own parish's financial and current situation and for us all to support each other around new resources and initiatives. These sessions were attended by Julie Podd, our Parish Giving Adviser; Mark Pendlington, DBF Chair; Anna Hughes, Diocesan Secretary, and Gary Peverley, Diocesan Finance Director.

Some comments from those attending meetings included: *"Letting parishes know that you understand their situation/problems and are not expecting them to do the impossible and to be honest and transparent about the Diocesan situation"* and *"It was good to know the potential financial outcome for the year and the steps that have been and are being taken to make that as good as it can be"*.

We are aiming to hold further sessions throughout the autumn for those Treasurers who have not as yet had the opportunity to attend. We would also like to extend this invitation to Church Wardens and clergy if they would like to take part. Each session lasts about one hour and is limited to 12 – 15 participants to enable all to contribute and ask questions!

If you are interested in attending, and haven't already attended a session, please contact Lorna Todd at lorna.todd@cofesuffolk.org to book a slot.

Would you like to know what's going on in Kagera?

Chris and Anji Dawkins are link coordinators for Kagera, they were recently very happy to take part in services both online and in church at Debenham a couple of weeks ago. If you would like to invite Chris and Anji to be part of your service please do get in touch as they would love to help. Please email Chris and Anji at kagera@cofesuffolk.org.

There are resources available on our website so you can include Kagera in your services yourself – there's a talk and slideshow online at cofesuffolk.org/kagera-link-diocese which you could use.

Vacancies

[Parish Funding and Grants Adviser](#) | Closing Date: 30 September

[Parish Finance and Resource Adviser](#) | Closing Date: 30 September

Part time Youth & Young Adults Pastor in Beccles Parish .(Two year fixed term contract). Further details available from the Revd Rich Henderson richhenderson@btinternet.com tel. 01502 349143.



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