



**Thursday 18 March 2021**

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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.**

Please download the [current guidance for the four-step roadmap](#) which reflects the information we have on the upcoming changes to restrictions. Please note that the dates given are indicative and that further information may not be available until we approach each step.

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## **A Message from Bishop Martin**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to thank everyone across the Diocese for your incredible generosity, hard work and prayer, and we thank God that all our efforts have been blessed and our prayers answered.

Last October we asked individuals and parishes to give generously and sacrificially, and make all possible efforts to overcome the projected deficit we were facing of £1.9m. The Church Commissioners had generously made a grant of £600,000, but that still left a £1.3m projected shortfall. Above all we asked every parish to pray, and particularly to pray throughout the month of October to All Saints Day for us to give as we have received, abundantly, generously and joyfully.

Everyone's hard work, generosity and prayer has resulted in a near break-even end-of-year result, almost eliminating the deficit, a truly miraculous outcome! We are delighted that more than 60% of parishes met their full contribution and more than 30 parishes paid over their Share allocation to support those unable to meet their commitments. Everyone's effort, creativity, determination and sacrifice, undergirded and strengthened by persistent prayer, has enabled us to reach this goal.

Once again, thank you for your continued and generous support for the mission, ministry and work with which we are together engaged. Our prayers are with you for all that you are continuing to do as we support one another through these times of unprecedented uncertainty.

With every blessing,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, starting with a cross symbol and the name 'Martin'.

**Loving God,  
you are always with us,  
and give us all we need to be your church in Suffolk.  
Help us, we pray, to give as we have received:  
abundantly, generously and joyfully,  
that our worship and our service  
may bear witness to your  
Kingdom of unfailing love.  
In the name of your Son  
who gave himself for us,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

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## **National Day of Reflection 2021**



The National Day of Reflection, coordinated by the charity Marie Curie and officially supported by the Church of England, will designate a special day to reflect on collective loss and grief.

On 23 March 2021 there will be a national minute's silence at 12 noon to create a moment that shows support for the millions of people who've been bereaved.

We have heard from a number of churches who are getting involved, St Augustine's Church in Ipswich is planning to light their tower yellow (weather permitting) and St Mary's Church in Woodbridge will be live streaming a Eucharist from the Seckford Chapel, concluding with the minute's silence at 12 Noon ([www.stmaryswoodbridge.org](http://www.stmaryswoodbridge.org)). There are many more ideas, further information and all prayer and social media resources on the campaign website [here](#).

## **St Edmundsbury Cathedral Teardrop Installation**

Tuesday 23 March to Maundy Thursday 1 April

A special teardrop installation created from over 200 tiny glass tear-shaped tea-light holders will be suspended under the Cathedral tower. Each individual teardrop symbolises one of the many people who has been impacted by Covid-19, whether that is through death, illness, loss of work, anxiety, loneliness or isolation.

The Revd Sarah Geileskey, comments, "...the individual teardrops form one larger teardrop reminding us that we do not weep alone. Throughout this past year, at the Cathedral, we have connected with people through our daily prayers, livestreamed and online, as they have dealt with so many difficult situations. Now, at this moment, we have a chance to pause and reflect. Tears speak volumes when there are no words."

In addition, on 23 March, weather permitting, teardrop shapes will be chalk-painted on the Cathedral lawn, as St Edmundsbury Cathedral joins with churches, cathedrals and other communities across the country to mark this poignant anniversary with opportunities to reflect. The chalk tears will gradually be washed away by the rainfall in the coming days. After Easter, the glass installation will be broken into individual tear-shaped tea-light holders. These will be available for sale from 12 April in the Cathedral Shop, priced £4 each, with proceeds supporting the Cathedral's work with those affected by Covid-19.

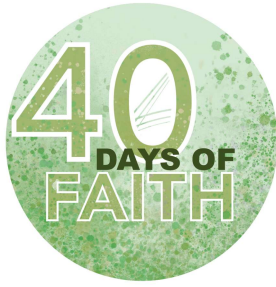
During this period, the Cathedral is open for personal prayer and worship only.

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## **Lightwave launches 40 Days of Faith**

The Lightwave team have been sharing stories of joy and love throughout 2021, with 40 days of hope, followed by 40 days of kindness. Now we're spending the next 40 days exploring faith! We would like to share across the diocese what faith means to different people and how it affects their lives.

We would love you to get involved and send us a 60 second video expressing what faith means to you, and we will then share these between Easter and Pentecost. Let's share with others what faith in God is like for us and let us celebrate what God has given us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus! Please send your videos to [becky.luetchford@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:becky.luetchford@cofesuffolk.org)



## Yemen and aid cuts update

Many thanks to the many who have written to their MPs about the cut in aid to Yemen and other countries. You may have read this week that MPs will not get a vote on the government's plans to cut aid spending, according to Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaking in the House of Commons, as the cut is intended to be temporary. Voluntary Service Overseas said this week that they are preparing to shut operations in 14 countries as a result of government cuts to the foreign aid budget. Unless the government steps in to support the grant, the VSO will also suspend its Covid-19

response initiative in 18 countries, cutting off support to 4.5 million people. Richard Stainer would be interested to hear what responses you receive to the letters sent to your MPs, please email: [richard.stainer14@gmail.com](mailto:richard.stainer14@gmail.com).

## Radical Faith: Inspirational Christians' Lives for Challenging Times

St John of the Cross - The Dark Night of the Soul and the Living Flame of Love by the Revd Dr Sam Hole  
Wednesday 24 March 7.00pm to 8.00pm

The Spanish friar John of the Cross (1542-91) wrote a number of poems and prose works that have been spiritual classics for centuries. His is a story of growing up in poverty, of barefoot evangelism in the snow, kidnapping, escape from prison, and of final years in the wilderness – yet marked, whether in darkness or celebration, by his steadfast belief that God remained present and faithful. The Revd Dr Sam Hole is Associate Vicar of St Luke's and Christ Church, Chelsea.

To book please email [michael.robinson@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:michael.robinson@cofesuffolk.org). For a full biography please download this [pdf](#).

## Save the date - Rural and Wild

11 - 12 May 2021

Join this conference for conversations on emerging patterns of mission and pioneering ministry in the countryside. Co-sponsored and facilitated by Rural Ministries and the Fresh Expressions rural team. Come and join the conversation about the possibilities of a wild and beautiful rural church, together discovering and seeing anew the practical, strategic, prophetic and theological dimensions of how we respond to God in this new adventure. For details are available [here](#).

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## Notices:

**The Bishop's Lent Appeal:** There has been a problem with the [kagera@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:kagera@cofesuffolk.org) email account and some emails have gone astray. The account is now up and running again. If you have placed a bid for our 'Buy a Bishop' auction, and have not received an acknowledgement email from us, please could we ask you to resend your bids. Thank you.



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