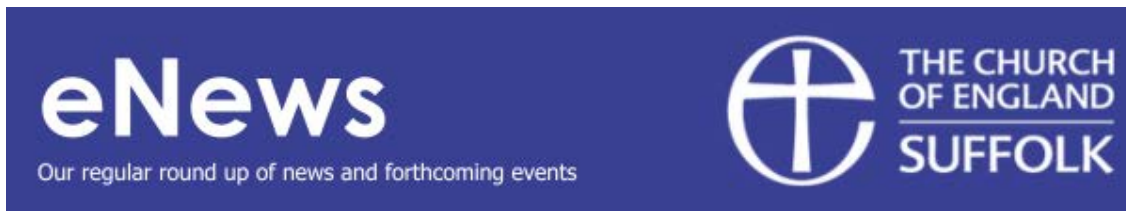


Thursday 2 October 2025



Called Together



We were delighted to welcome hundreds of friends and family into St Edmundsbury Cathedral last Sunday for **Called Together**, our special annual celebration of Licensed Lay Ministry. This year we licensed those who have completed their training including:

- Readers: **Christine Bryer**, Kesgrave with Little Bealings and Playford, **Jonathan De Bernhardt Wood**, Ipswich St Mary le Tower, **Ingrid Morelli**, Acton and Great Waldingfield, **Philippa (Pip) Smith**, Wickham Market with Pettistree, **Robert Whiting**, BSE St Mary with St Peter District Church, **George Woodward**, Ipswich St Margaret, **David Yaroslaw**, Rushmere.
- Children's & Families' Ministry: **Clare Ayres**, The Benefice of Beccles with Worlingham, North Cove and Barnby. **Paul Byrne**, Ipswich St Mary Stoke, **Karen Dowsing**, Ipswich St Helen, Holy Trinity, & St Clement with St Luke, **Kelly Petch**, The Blackbourne Team, **Nathan Thomas**, Bungay | Lightwave.
- Evangelists: **Jayne Jones**, The Two Rivers Benefice, **Julia Theulings**, The Benefice of Beccles with Worlingham, North Cove and Barnby
- Pioneers: **Sheila Pipe**, Four Rivers.

In addition, the following were welcomed during the service:

- Children's and Families' Ministers: **Pauline Milsted**, The Blyth Valley Team, **Emma Richards**, Ipswich St Peter, Stoke Park
- Youth Minister: **Emma Elwis**, Ipswich St Thomas.

Finally, the following was licensed and welcomed from another diocese during the service:

- Reader: **Helen Jackson**, Sole Bay.

Read the full story on our [website here](#).

The Joy of Christmas



With planning for the festive season well underway now, the resources are available for the Church of England's Advent and Christmas theme: Joy! The great joy of Christmas, of course, is the good news the angel declared to the shepherds - the news of Jesus' birth as Emmanuel (God With Us).

The national resources offered are all designed to help all ages to be drawn into the joy of the first Christmas.

- 1) To help schools and churches share the joy of Christmas with children and families, a heart-warming retelling of the Christmas story illustrated by Jago, the award-winning illustrator of *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. [The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas](#) tells the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of an owl who seems determined to miss all the excitement.
- 2) To help congregations to prepare for the joy of Christmas, a unique Advent resource of daily reflections exploring the symbolism behind the hymn 'O Come Emmanuel'. The reflections will also appear on the [Everyday Faith app](#) from 1 to 24 December, accompanied by a range of online music, artwork and creative suggestions for local use.
- 3) To help all who will engage with church this Christmas enter deeper into prayer, a set of funny and profound reflections for the festive period. This year, The Very Revd Nicholas Papadopoulos, the Dean of Salisbury, explores twelve classic hallmarks of the festive season - from Christmas jumpers to the Pantomime - in search of a deeper truth about the good news of God's love.
- 4) To access the largest ever selection of downloadable resources, visit [AChurchNearYou.com](#) (login required). Includes brand guidelines, logos and templates, all available to download, as well as activity sheets for children, digital Christmas card templates, icons, social media covers and templates, 'What's On' and 'Keep in Touch' flyer templates, poster templates and PowerPoint templates. There are also Christmas episodes from the Cheeky Pandas: these [free resources](#) feature cartoons, songs and Bible stories to help you engage the children in your church with the Christmas story.

You can watch the following webinar recordings:

[5 ways to thrive on digital this Advent and Christmas](#): Providing a sneak peak of our 2025 Advent and Christmas theme, and the digital resources that will be available.

[2025 Advent and Christmas Resources](#): Exploring the resources for churches available this Advent and Christmas.

[Sharing The Joy of Christmas with children, young people and families](#): Unpacking the resources available for churches, schools and individuals this year.

Or join further live webinars including:

Ask us anything: Church websites at Christmas Wednesday 22 October, 2.00pm, online: This webinar will help you make strategic use of your church's website, whether it's on AChurchNearYou.com, another website, or both. Offering advice and exercises to help

you optimise your website, and look at how you can use AChurchNearYou.com to share church events and help people find you online. Plenty of time for Q&As too. [Register here.](#)

How can you make the most of Digital Giving this Christmas? Tuesday 14 October, 12.00pm, online:

This webinar will dive into Digital Giving and how it can help your church, whether it's online donations or contactless and in-person. Offering help to use the templates for promoting donation QR codes, and sharing on giving devices, and how to edit these on Canva - How you can maximise opportunities for giving over the Advent and Christmas period. [Register here.](#)

Special Offer on CollecTin donation devices available through Parish Buying!

Unsurprisingly December is the biggest month for contactless giving. CollecTin have put together a couple of special offers for individual churches who buy units before the end of October. These discounts are on top of the already reduced Parish Buying prices.

Festive30 - for existing customers: If your Church already has a CollecTin, you can now get another for £30 less. If you're a member of Parish Buying you can get the £30 offer on top of the already discounted pricing here [Parish Buying – CollecTin](#)

Festive25 - for new customers: You can now get £25 off the latest CollecTin More, with SumUp or Stripe. If you're a member of Parish Buying you can use the £25 offer on top of the already discounted pricing here [Parish Buying – CollecTin](#)

If you're not a member of Parish Buying it's well worth joining as it's free to do, and as well as the discounts on the purchase price, you get a free premium subscription to Give A Little, enabling you to collect Gift Aid, have multiple campaigns and customise your CollecTin with images and even video. This normally costs from £7.50 + VAT per month. Register here: <https://parishbuying.org.uk/register>

Ideal Christmas Present - St Edmundsbury Cathedral Dog Calendar

St Edmundsbury Cathedral is celebrating being a dog-friendly Cathedral once again with the launch of the 2026 Dogs in the Cathedral Calendar. Twelve local dogs were photographed for the calendar, which this year is a bigger wall 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.

Christian Aid Christmas Appeal



As the festive season approaches, a time traditionally marked by tidings of peace and joy, Christian Aid invites you to consider the reality of those facing unimaginable hardship due to violence. The campaign highlights the humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) caused by armed conflict across the east of the country, which escalated dramatically in early 2025.

Funds raised this Christmas could fund nutritious meals, medicine, blankets and other essential supplies. Working with partners, Christian Aid hopes to help people displaced by violence, providing tools to rebuild destroyed homes and businesses, and counselling for

those traumatised by war. But the fastest, most effective way of helping is giving cash grants. To get involved please visit [Christmas Appeal](#)

News from the Diocese

St Andrew's Church, Rushmere celebrates Gold Eco Church Award

St Andrew's Church in Rushmere, Ipswich is thrilled to announce they have been awarded a Gold Eco Church award by A Rocha. This award acknowledges their commitment to caring for the environment locally and globally. As a team their eco journey started in 2021 with gaining a bronze award, and now after working with others, including Rushmere Parish Council and Suffolk Wildlife Trust, they are thrilled to achieve this milestone.

Caring for God's Creation is embedded in their worship and teaching, which is one aspect of the survey, other areas are managing our land and buildings, engaging with the local community, and promoting an ethical and sustainable lifestyle. The journey continues with aiming to reduce their carbon footprint, which requires a more sustainable heating system in the church.

Ruth Silburn, Eco lead, said: *"We are grateful to all those who have supported us in various ways: recycling, car sharing, creating our wildlife areas around the churchyard, surveying wildlife habitats, preparing our land management plan and looking at ways of providing a more sustainable heating system. Every single contribution counts in helping us to provide a better world for future generations."*

Suffolk Community Awards



The Suffolk Community Awards, offered by Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, celebrate individuals and groups who have significantly improved the quality of life in communities across Suffolk.

The Suffolk voluntary sector – made up of many thousands of registered charities, community groups and social enterprises – is now known as the VCFSE. The F was added to recognise the many faith-based initiatives in our Country. Perhaps many of us don't realise that as a group of Church of England charities in Suffolk, together we make up the largest charity in the county. This year the Faith Award was presented to 'Tools with a Mission' a Christian charity that collects unwanted usable tools, refurbishes them, and sorts them into trade tool kits for livelihood creation, supplying refurbished tools to over 500 organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

'It is always uplifting to join a room of kind and hardworking people who are doing great things for others. It is an honour too to be presenting The Faith Award on behalf of our Diocese. I was particularly enthused to see how strong the partnerships are growing between faith groups, other charities and the public sector. This has to be a good thing', said Tim Holder, Diocesan Director of Engagement, *"Thanks to all the volunteers and staff*

of all the local charities in Suffolk. Our county would grind to a halt without the time, talents and financial support you offer."

Centenary Fund

The Centenary Fund has been established by our Diocese to promote community engagement by our churches by funding projects that benefit the local community. Projects could include for example: work on buildings to make them more accessible to the community such as disabled access toilets, ramps and kitchens; initiatives in children's or youth work; parish nursing; a joint project with a school; or projects supporting vulnerable and/or isolated groups in the community. Grants up to £4000 are available and the deadline for 2025 is Friday 17 October with outcomes at the end of December 2025. For full details of the criteria and how to apply for funding visit: [Centenary Fund - Suffolk Community Foundation](#)

Mission and Ministry Events

Lay Elder Training and Social Morning, Saturday 11 October, 9.00am | The Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

We are delighted to invite you to the next Elders' training and social morning. As part of our two-year cycle of training and celebrating, we are holding an Elders training and social morning with special guest speakers from across the Diocese. The workshops have been designed to help and resource you in your ministry. We are also very pleased that our keynote speaker will be the Ven Dr David Jenkins, Archdeacon of Sudbury. To register, please [click here](#).

Line Management Skills for Incumbents | Wednesday 15 October, 10.00am | The Sanctuary, Diocesan Office, Ipswich IP1 1UQ

A training day exploring good people management practice for incumbents who manage employees such as administrators, children's and families' workers, youth workers, and others. Led by the Diocese's People Director, Penny Longford, and Diocesan Mission Enabler, the Revd Katie de Bourcier, it will explore good practice and employment law to help you manage people well so that they flourish in their roles and contribute to the life and growth of their parish(es). Only 20 spaces are available, to book click [here](#). Please ensure you are logged into Insight to book this session. For further information please contact Vanessa Kidd, vanessa.kidd@cofesuffolk.org or call 07394 568406.

Handling Conflict Constructively Monday 3 November, 9.00am - 4.30pm | Lavenham Village Hall, Sudbury CO10 9QT or Saturday 17 January 9.00am - 4.30pm | Saxmundham Church Hall, Saxmundham IP17 1ES

As part of the commitment to equip Church Leaders for the challenges of ministry, we are running two separate Bridge Builders 'Handling Conflict Constructively' training days. The days will start at 9.00am with welcoming drinks, with the course starting promptly at 9.30am. Lunch is included. For more information on Bridge Builders as an organisation [please see their website](#).

Places are free of charge but numbers are limited and are being offered on a first-to-respond basis. If you would like to take up the offer of this valuable training, please book the date and let us know if you can make the alternative date, if necessary. To register please [click here](#).

Clergy and spouse Preparing for Retirement Retreat Day | Thursday 13 November, 10.00am | Pleshey House of Retreat, Pleshey, Chelmsford CM3 1HA

By popular request from those who have attended our Clergy Preparing for Retirement Conference, we warmly invite clergy who have reached the age of 60yrs and their spouse to this additional event. Enjoy a day together in the quiet surroundings of Pleshey Retreat House that may help you – practically, psychologically and spiritually – prepare for this next transition in life. The day will include professional input from a psychotherapist and guest speakers. For more information please [click here](#).

Introduction to Preaching | Starting Saturday 22 November, 9.30am | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Preaching is just one way by which we can grow in depth as disciples of Jesus Christ. In the Church of England this is a public ministry and a vital part for those exploring faith who visit on a Sunday or attend a baptism, wedding, or funeral. Equally those who are attracted to an activity of a new worshipping community event can benefit from an opportunity to hear the word of God explained and applied to living out faith in everyday life. If this is something you feel called to then we want to encourage this gifting by offering an accessible means to enter this ministry. The course runs on 22 November, 24 January, 7 March, 20 June and 11 July. For more information, [click here](#).

Theological Refreshment in Ministry (TRiM) 2025 | *Wisdom from the Desert: A Reflective Retreat Inspired by Charles de Foucauld, Carlo Caretto and the Desert Fathers* | 10.00am Monday 24 November - 2.00pm Tuesday 25 November | The House of Retreat, Chelmsford CM3 1HA

Immerse yourself in stillness, community, and spiritual insight. This retreat for clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers will be led by the Revd Canon Stuart Batten and offers space to explore life lessons drawn from the spiritual writings of Charles de Foucauld, Carlo Caretto and the Desert Fathers. You'll experience time for personal reflection rooted in desert spirituality and sacred themes, with quiet times to allow for rest or solitude or to walk and spend time in nature. There will be time in community; time to talk and share, to pray, eat and contemplate. [Book here](#).

Flourish | Saturday 2 May, 9.00am | 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](#).

Events and training

Ignite: How to share faith, build community and do church, differently

Tuesday 7 October 2025, 7.00pm | Online

Authors Debbie and Patrick Ellisdon will present the highly acclaimed, tried-and-tested, Ignite project. Attendees will experience how an Ignite session works, hear a short history of how Ignite was created and hear a leader's perspective on what it's like to run Ignite. There will be a video about Ignite and there will be time to ask questions. [Book here.](#)

PCC Workshops | Zoom

You are invited to join topic-based one-hour Zoom meetings led by Diocesan staff and parish experts. Suitable for Treasurers, Churchwardens, PCC members and administrators, as well as clergy and LLMs. Each session will involve sharing information and a short presentation. Here are the details of the workshops:

Gifts in Wills | 12.00pm, Thursday 23 October | [Book here](#)

Digital Giving | 12.00pm, Wednesday 12 November | [Book here](#)

Friends | 1.00pm, Thursday 13 November | [Book here](#)

Writing a Net Zero Carbon Action Plan for your Parish | 12.00pm, Tuesday 18 November | [Book here](#)

Talking Toddlers | Thursday 23 October, 10.00am -11.30am, Webinar

Join Hope Together to explore how to make Christmas a welcoming and inclusive time for every child aged 0-4. Explore how toddler groups can create simple, accessible celebrations - especially for children with additional needs. [Please sign up here.](#)

Church Heating Q&A | Zoom | Thursday 23 October, 7.30pm to 8.30pm

Come along to this session to learn about the impact of moving to electric heating in your church, digging into the detail of running costs, and how to go about choosing the right system. This session is for anyone in the Dioceses of Ely, Norwich, Chelmsford, St Albans and St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. [Register here.](#)

Talking Money: Preaching and Teaching Generosity | Thursday 23 October, 12.00pm - 2.00pm | Online

To equip clergy to teach and preach about giving - to encourage a deepening of discipleship in believers and to stimulate a culture of generosity within churches as they outwork their vision. The session will be run by Jonathan de Bernhardt Wood, the Director of Giving and Income Generation and the Regional Giving Advisor Team from the Church of England's Giving Directorate. [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 [Emma Denton](#), Diocesan Giving Advisor.

Wednesday 5 November - Diocesan Office, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich from 2.00pm - 4.00pm | [Book here](#)

Tuesday 18 November – St Edmundsbury Cathedral from 10.00am - 12.00pm and 2.00pm - 4.00pm | [Book here](#).

Church Community Services and Events

Annual County Harvest Festival Service | Sunday 5 October, from 11.00am | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

We would love you to join us at the Cathedral for a wonderful celebration of Harvest in our glorious county. The Harvest Festival brings Suffolk together to give thanks for what has been gathered from land and sea, showcase the excellence of Suffolk's culinary delights and collect provisions for local foodbanks. There will be farm animals and machinery on the Edmund Green outside the Cathedral from 11.00am, and food and drinks will also be available to purchase. Our Harvest Service will then take place at 3.30pm inside the Cathedral. The service at 3.30pm will include the reception of the Love British Food Harvest Torch, interviews with Suffolk farmers, live sheep and well-known harvest hymns. For more information or to book a stall please contact: [Graham Miles](#), Diocesan Agricultural Chaplain 07413 683368.

Homelessness Sunday | 5 October

This year, the Homelessness Sunday theme is 'Love thy neighbour'. With rough sleeping continuing to rise, the aim is to raise awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness. By taking time to reflect church congregations could consider what they can do in their own community to alleviate homelessness, suffering and poverty. [Please find the resources here](#) to support church communities if you would like to run your own Homelessness Sunday Service at a time to suit you.

Mendlesham Armoury Conference | Saturday 11 October, 10.30am | Mendlesham Primary School, Stowmarket IP14 5RT

Come along to an exciting day including presentations by eminent historians, armour specialists and volunteers of the Armoury Research group, funded by a grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Cost of the day is £40, including coffee and lunch, and will conclude in the church with visits to the unique Tudor armoury, led by Toby Capwell.

Sight Loss Sunday, 12 October

Sight Loss Sunday is an initiative by Torch Trust, an organisation dedicated to enabling blind and partially sighted people to encounter Jesus, grow in their faith and thrive in Christian community. There is a whole suite of resources available on their [website here](#) including a fully planned all-age service, a recorded sermon, a video celebrating the leadership gifts and experience of those with sight loss and lots more.

The English Constitution | A Church For England, 15 October, 7.30pm | Ipswich Minster IP1 3BE

Ipswich Minster is welcoming the Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey, The Revd Dr James Hawkey, to speak on the topic of the English constitution, how it has been shaped by Christianity and the church, and how it has in turn shaped our national life, our history and our institutions. In light of current affairs, this talk is of special interest and importance. For more information [please click here](#).

Prisons Week Service, Sunday 19 October at 10.30am | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

We invite Prison governors, chaplains and others locally who are involved in the Criminal Justice System to this service. Serving prisoners will join us for discussion and refreshments after the service. The preacher this year will be the Venerable James Ridge who is Chaplain General and Head of Faith Services at His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. All are welcome.

Safeguarding Sunday | 16 November

This initiative, spearheaded by Thirtyone:eight, invites communities to come together to reflect on their safeguarding journey, and highlight all the good work that is being done to create safer places. [Find out more about Safeguarding Sunday and read our Frequently Asked Questions](#). Last year over 5,000 churches took part in Safeguarding Sunday, with an estimated reach of 250,000 people. This year, can we make an even greater impact to vulnerable people across the UK. If you [register](#) you will have access to lots of free digital resources to help make your event a success including sermon ideas, children's talks, intergeneration service ideas, bible study, videos, victim-survivor support and much more!

Light Up a Life Remembrance Events | St Nicholas Hospice

Various locations starting from 23 November. Full list of dates and locations [available here](#).

The Light Up a Life events are free and open to all, not just those connected to someone cared for by St Nic's. They offer a meaningful way to come together as a community during the festive season and share a moment of reflection, with music and readings. You are invited, should you wish, to have the names of those you want to remember read out at an event. You can do this by visiting their [website here](#).

Francis Young "Terrors made flesh: M. R. James and the theology of the Christmas ghost story" | Friday 12 December, 6.00pm | St John the Evangelist, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SN

Join this lecture by Francis Young, a historian and folklorist who was born and brought up in Bury St Edmunds. He is the author of over 20 nonfiction books including *Twilight of the Godlings* and *Silence of the Gods*, as well as a couple of collections of ghost stories. Tickets from [We Got Tickets](#) or contact Adrian Mann on 01284 753984 or at adrian.mann@btinternet.com.

Notices

Digital Transformation Update on Downtime: The Parish Giving Scheme has confirmed the revised downtime dates for the PGS website. The PGS website will be taken offline from 3.00pm Monday 13 October, remaining unavailable until the new system launches on Thursday 30 October. Updates will be shared via email to Statement Receivers and Givers over the coming weeks, so please keep an eye on all communications from PGS to stay informed. If you need any help or assistance please contact the PGS directly info@parishgiving.org.uk or the diocesan Parish Resources Team pgs@cofesuffolk.org

Vacancies

[Team Vicar & Associate Priest](#) | Blyth Valley Team Ministry | Closing date: 10 October
[Team Vicar](#) | Forest Heath Team Ministry | Closing date: 15 October
[DAC Chair](#) | Voluntary Role | Closing date: 30 November
Treasurer | All Saints' Church, Thorndon | Closing date: 30 November | Please [email here](#) for more information.
[Risk, Audit and Review Committee Chair](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral
[Team Vicar](#) | Sole Bay Team
[Associate Chaplain](#) | Sizewell C
Part-time Youth Worker | All Saints' Church, Ipswich | Please [email here](#) for more information

[Click here to print and share with others](#)



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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

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WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE
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KAGERA, TANZANIA 2024
GROWING YOUNGER



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