

Issue date: 23 December 2021



### **Bishop Martin's Christmas message**



We have witnessed the incredible kindness of health care staff, of school teachers, of delivery drivers and so many others who have not just done their job but over and over again have gone above and beyond in acts of kindness.

Staying by our loved one's bedside when we were not able to visit, making sure children at home had food, making sure that a parcel is delivered with a socially distanced conversation

with the person living on their own. And family, friends and neighbours have been just the same, reaching out, checking up, going the extra mile with kindness. And having caught sight of just how fundamental kindness is, we notice when it is not there, whether in our own family, neighbourhood or work, or on the larger scale, nationally and internationally.

Kindness comes from the same word that means "sort," as in, we're the same kind. And that comes from the word kin, so family. And that is what we have learned, have seen so extraordinarily during this time, that we are all kin, across the globe, and kindness is what really matters between us, because we are the same kind.

God joins our kind in the birth of Jesus. God's kindness – God's love – is revealed in becoming one of us, to make us and the world a better – a kinder place. And we know that we respond kindly if we are treated kindly, so God's action in becoming human, to be like us, to help us become more like him, is the supreme act of kindness to help us be kind. So we find ourselves instinctively responding in kindness to others.

There is a danger now though – we can lose sight of this truth very easily, and find ourselves being selfish, unkind all over again.

Christmas is the antidote, and celebrating Jesus' birth gets us out of ourselves, out of our fearful self-centredness, back into the realm of kindness. I do hope we can sing carols this

year – even if masked. One of my favourite carols begins,

*Hark! The herald angels sing*

*"Glory to the new-born King"*

*Peace on earth and mercy mild*

*God and sinners reconciled.*

And another, "While shepherds watched," ends with

*"All glory be to God on high*

*And on the earth be peace*

*Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men*

*Begin and never cease".*

Both of these carols tell of the angels' song when they announce Jesus' birth to the startled shepherds. Their song declares that his birth is about God's longing for peacefulness between all people. In these two carols peace, mercy mild, reconciled, goodwill, are all made possible by kindness. Unkindness does not produce peace, or mercy, or reconciliation or goodwill.

We are all so grateful for the kindness that has helped us and our world through these challenging times. Let us renew our instinct for kindness this Christmas when we celebrate God becoming one of us, and remember that kindness really is what makes the world go round.

*+ Mark*



**Live Nativity at Thorndon last Sunday** - The Connect team in Thorndon invited their local communities to join them in a 'live nativity' which started with carol singing at the local pub/community shop and, following a lantern procession through the village, finished with the telling of the Christmas story under the porch at All Saints' Church. This atmospheric start to Christmas brought together over 60 people, a horse, some cows and sheep while the cast of the nativity included a star, camels, angels, shepherds and kings as well as Joseph and Mary.

**Hampers for those on their own** - Ingham parish church transformed into a hamper making station as they set about making up nearly 70 hampers for those living on their own, those who have had a particularly tough time this year, and local key workers. The food was kindly donated by local food companies.

**Christmas gift for All Saints', Little Bealings** - Receiving a £10,000 National Churches

Trust Cornerstone Grant will help fund urgent work to All Saints', including the installation of a kitchen, safeguarding unique local heritage and making it possible for All Saints' to support local people in new ways. Helen Clarkson-Fieldsend, who has been overseeing the restoration project on behalf of the church, said: *"This grant will make a world of difference to our church and to our community...We are delighted that the National Churches Trust is helping us realise our goal of ensuring our church will survive and remain at the heart of the village for many generations to follow."*



#### **Nativity Trail, Trimley St Martin's Church -**

With five stations depicting the story of Christmas and some simple activities for families, this trail links to the St Martin website and a QR code by each station enables visitors to hear children speaking the words of the Christmas story through various characters. The trail is particularly attractive after dark because the figures are illuminated. The 'Men's shed' spent many hours creating these amazing figures. For pictures please visit the church Facebook page [here](#).

#### **School 'Discovers Advent' at local church -**

Nearly 80 pupils from Elmswell Community Primary School visited St John the Divine, Elmswell, to engage with 'Discover Advent' – a creative way for the children to engage in and reflect upon the meaning of Advent for the world and for themselves personally. A super team from the church led four stations focusing on Mary, Joseph, the angels and the shepherds. The pupils loved the day and it was a privilege to share the hope of Christmas with them.



**Suffolk's own online carols -** With many people now forced to isolate over Christmas, and some Christmas services cancelled, the InHarmony collection of 46 Christmas carol videos provides a way to enjoy Christmas worship at home. They were all recorded in Autumn 2020 by singers and musicians from churches

across Suffolk, and are available on the InHarmony web pages [here](#). Find your favourite and include a link in your Christmas email greetings to friends and family.

## **Events**


  
 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
 SUFFOLK

## Growing Younger Sunday

30 January 2022



On Sunday 30 January we are encouraging churches to recognise that young people are co-pilgrims on our journey of faith and they can teach, share and reflect in a relevant, reverent and innately spiritual way.

Join children, young people and their families as we share in the planning, leading and serving in worship on this or every Sunday.

- 1** Include the Growing Younger Prayer in your worship - written by young people and commissioned by our Bishops.
- 2** Use our short YouTube video in your worship or in mailings to your communities and school.
- 3** Look out for our online resource bank of ideas and experiences - Liturgy, Music, Prayer, Talk and Listen.

Any enquiries? Please contact:  
 hilary.wordsworth-sewell@cofesuffolk.org (Children and Families)  
 or matt.leveitt@cofesuffolk.org (Youth and Young Adults).  
 www.cofesuffolk.org




  
 St Edmundsbury  
 Cathedral

26 and 27 February 2022


  
**Workshop: Sing World Praise**  
 Saturday 10 am – 1 pm  
**Concert: Zimbe!**  
 Saturday 7 pm  
**Service: Kagera Praise**  
 Sunday 5 pm

Full details at  
[stedscathedral.org/inharmony](http://stedscathedral.org/inharmony)



## Notices

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

### Vacancies

[Lightwave Community Choir Director](#) | Bungay | Closing date: 31 December 2021

[Youth Project Lead](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral | Closing date: 4 January 2022

[Lead Evangelist](#) | Closing date: 5 January 2022

[Priest in Charge](#) | Alde Sandlings Benefice | Closing date: 6 January 2022

[Rector](#) | St Gregory's Sudbury and All Saints' Sudbury | Closing date: 10 January 2022

[Chief Finance Officer](#) | Diocesan Multi-Academy-Trust | Closing date: 24 January 2022

[Priest-in-Charge](#) | Waterfront Parishes, Ipswich | 0.5 | Closing date: 26 January 2022

[Rector](#) | Suffolk Heights Benefice | Closing date: 7 February 2022

[Vicar](#) All Saints' Newmarket | Closing date: 9 February 2022

[Interim Priest in Charge](#) (3 years full-time) | Mid Loes benefice | Closing date: 20 February 2022

[Vicar](#) | Bures with Assington and Little Cornard | Closing date: 25 February 2022

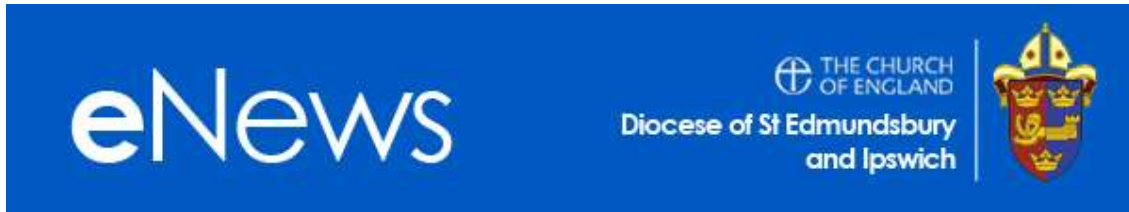
[Rector 0.5](#) | St Mary Stoke, Ipswich

[Trusts and Foundations Manager](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral  
 Organist and Director of Music | St Mary's Woodbridge & Great Bealings | Please contact [fnprior10@gmail.com](mailto:fnprior10@gmail.com) Tel. 01394 610424.

**Diocesan Office Christmas Hours:** The office team will be available until Friday 24 December at 5.00pm. The office will re-open on Tuesday 4 January 2022 at 9.00am.

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF ENEWS WILL BE SENT ON THURSDAY 6 JANUARY 2022**

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