



Thursday 7 January 2021

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Growing in God

Message from Bishop Martin

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want once again to thank you for all you are carrying through this time, practically, emotionally and spiritually, and assure you of my continuing support and prayers. I realise that for many of us we are entering this next stage with much less energy than we did back in March, and perhaps more apprehension given the virulence of the current virus variant.

We are grateful that the Government has not prohibited public worship. This reflects the Government's data that apparently there have been only 47 cases of Covid-19 linked to places of worship through the whole pandemic and across some 30,000 individual places of worship. This has been due, of course, to the incredible diligence and care with which protocols have been followed. Now with this new variant, we must make doubly sure we maintain all proper procedures both during acts of worship and in arrangements for arriving at and leaving services

I do recognise that for some, clergy, wardens and PCCs, holding physical services may not feel safe. Key personnel may feel particularly vulnerable, and some congregations may not wish to risk gathering physically. The decision to hold physical services must be a local decision, of incumbent and PCC. I have decided to grant a blanket suspension of the obligations to hold a service of Holy Communion in at least one church in each benefice on all Sundays and principal Feast Days, for the duration of the national lockdown.

Of course, if physical gatherings are suspended, then provision needs to be made or continued online and by other means that you have devised during this time so that the spiritual life of the community is sustained. And many of those who do continue with physical worship will also be continuing with online provision.

I want to stress that no one who feels vulnerable, clergy or laity, should have pressure placed on them to contribute to physical acts of worship. We must recognise our calling to make decisions 'with all humility, and gentleness with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' (Ephesians 4.2-3). Whatever decision each church makes, we will all need to focus our energy on continuing the mission and work of the Church in our communities, who will need us now more than ever.

Epiphany blessings

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.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Cathedral will be open for **worship only**:

Tuesdays at 12.30pm for the Healing Eucharist
 Wednesdays at 1.00pm for BCP Holy Communion
 Thursdays at 12.30pm for Silent Meditation followed by Eucharist

Sundays for services at 8.00am and 11.00am. Places at Sunday services must be pre-booked. The number of spaces available has been reduced. Full details are on the Cathedral [website](#).

Developing Online Church Services - webinars in January

The national church digital team are offering a new series of webinars, looking at different ways your church can use digital communications to keep connected with those who attend your services and events, as well as reaching out and caring for those in the local community around you. The offering includes basic introduction sessions as well as webinars for those who are doing online church and want to develop their skills further. You can book onto a session and watch the webinar as a recorded session at a time to suit you. All bookings and download links are available here: www.churchofengland.org/resources/digital-labs/digital-labs-webinars. Topics include:

Five ways to keep your church connected - Friday 8 January 10.30am
 Basics of livestreaming on Facebook and YouTube - Friday 8 January 12.30pm
 Video presenting skills - Wednesday 20 January 10.00am
 Setting up live streaming in a church - pre-recorded available to download (in above link)
 Livestreaming with OBS - pre-recorded available to download (in above link)

Their Digital Lab blogs are also available [here](#). Visit our website page [here](#) which includes useful videos by The Revd Toby Tate and The Revd Jackson Crompton-Battersby.

Events

Plough Sunday

Sunday 10 January 2021, 9.15am



This is a traditional English celebration usually held on the Sunday after Epiphany, between 7 January and 13 January. In days gone by this would have been the beginning of the agricultural year and falls just before the ploughmen. St Edmundsbury Cathedral and parishes have previously celebrated this festival by bringing a plough into church grounds with prayers for the blessing of the land. Although the nature of farming has changed over the centuries, Plough Sunday is seen as a way of generally honouring farming and the work of farmers. If you would like some Plough Sunday Resources suitable for personal prayer or online services, please go to www.light-wave.org/plough-sunday.

You are also very welcome to join an all-age Plough Sunday Zoom Worship event at 9.15am. Please email lightwave.community@cofesuffolk.org for joining details.

New housing webinar

Wednesday 20 January 2021, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

This webinar is for those seeking to reach out in smaller areas of new housing. How to develop a welcome culture, working as a welcoming team and listening to the needs of

newcomers, with The Revd Canon Dave Gardner, Archdeacon for Rural Mission, Sally Gaze and special guests.

The cost of this session is £5 per person, which includes a free download. To book your place and ticket go to; <https://lightwave.churchsuite.com/events/limtffdl>. For further details please contact Nina.Seaman@cofesuffolk.org.

Mission Shaped Ministry Flexi

Discipleship in Recovery 30 January and 1 February 2021

Many of us during lockdown have been forced to reflect on what it means to be the Church. How do we share the love of God with the whole community when our church buildings were closed? During the first Lockdown 20% of the population engaged with some form of online service, or daily office, or Christian spiritual input. What does that say about the longing there is in the hearts of many, especially when facing difficulty about the need for guidance beyond themselves?

This forum is open to all for a small cost of £10, not just those signed up to MSM flexi. For those already on the MSM Flexi course, the cost is included in the overall course costs. Please select MSM Flexi participants ticket if you are already on the course, or a General Admission ticket if you are attending this session as a stand alone event. You only need to select one ticket.

Those who have a CMD allowance can use this to cover the cost of this session. Please email Lesley.Steed@cofesuffolk.org to arrange this.

To sign up and book onto Saturday 30 January 2021 10.00am to 12.30pm please do so here; www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mission-shaped-ministry-flexi-discipleship-in-recovery-saturday-2-tickets-117520682525

Or the repeated evening session on Monday 1 February 2021 7.30pm to 9.30pm www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mission-shaped-ministry-flexi-discipleship-in-recovery-repeated-tickets-131042069357

For further enquiries about this session please contact Nina.Seaman@cofesuffolk.org.

Crown Him with many Crowns

Saturday 23 January 2021, 7.00pm

If you ever needed an event to start the year which inspired you in your walk of faith, then 'Crown Him' is an evening to set aside to attend! Always an upbeat evening, it is a mix of contemporary worship, featuring local projects that seek to make a difference in the community. To join this service please visit networksuffolk.online.church

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. More details to follow when available.

Faraday Seminars

Please note all Faraday Seminars are available online for a full listing please visit: Seminars.Faraday.cam.ac.uk

Notices:

Apology from the finance team:

Earlier in the week an email and letter were automatically generated from our finance system and sent to all our Treasurers chasing payment for outstanding amounts relating to parish share for 2020. This should not have been sent, and we apologised and informed all Treasurers to disregard the contents and assured them that we would never knowingly send such a letter concerning parish share under any circumstances. We are taking action to ensure such a situation will not re-occur and while our follow up investigations are on-going, we have put in place procedures to ensure letters of this nature are not automatically sent out from our accounts system. Once again, please accept our apologies for this error.

Heritage Fund - Culture Recovery Grants Round Two - apply by 26 January

A second round of the Culture Recovery Fund will be open for applications from 7 January and will close on 26 January. The aim of this round is to support heritage organisations to resume business activity and welcome back visitors and customers. The funding will help recipients to build up their operations and begin a programme of heritage activity in April - June 2021. £36 million of this funding will be allocated to heritage organisations and businesses, administered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in partnership with Historic England. Please visit the National Lottery Heritage Fund's website for more detailed guidance [here](#).

As with all grant applications, to help ensure you make the most of your case, you are strongly advised to take advice when making your application - for example, from your faith group regional or central body. Additionally, there is a [webinar for potential applicants](#) run by those administering the scheme, on 13 and 14 January.

New Allchurches Trust fund - Hope Beyond

Hope Beyond offers grants of up to £50,000 to enable churches and Christian charities to meet changing needs within their communities as the longer term impact of Covid-19 becomes clearer. To find out more head to www.allchurches.co.uk/hopebeyond.

For up to date information on current fundraising opportunities please visit our website [here](#).

Vacancies:

[Pioneer Evangelist for Ipswich Centre of Mission](#) | Closing date: 14 January 2021
[Church Buildings Adviser \(DAC Secretary\)](#) | Closing date: 11 January 2021



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