



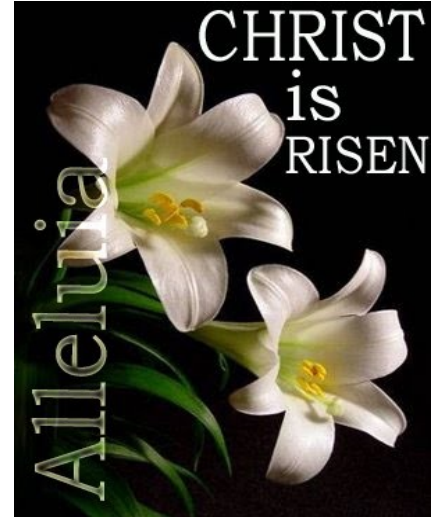
THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich**

## SUDBURY DEANERY

### Newsletter – Easter 2020

*Joining the congregations of Acton, Alpheton, Assington,  
Boxford, Boxted, Bures, Edwardstone, Glemsford, Great Cornard,  
Great Waldingfield, Groton, Hartest, Little Cornard, Little  
Waldingfield, Long Melford, Newton Green, Shimpling,  
Stanstead, Somerton and Sudbury*



#### **Dear Friends**

Welcome to the first of what we hope will become regular newsletters in which we share some of what is going on across our Deanery. The idea of a newsletter had its beginning last month at our first meeting of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee. I'm grateful to Stephen Perkins of Glemsford for getting us going and for producing this first edition in time for us to send to everyone for Easter.

Inevitably, the focus for us all this Easter is Covid-19, which has forced us to re-think how we 'do' church in the strange new world in which we now find ourselves. So this first newsletter is mainly to share some of experiences of this across the Deanery in the hope that we each might find some nugget of a good idea which we can unashamedly pinch and apply to good use in our own setting. Certainly my own feeble technical abilities are being stretched to the limit, so I'm looking for all the help I can get!

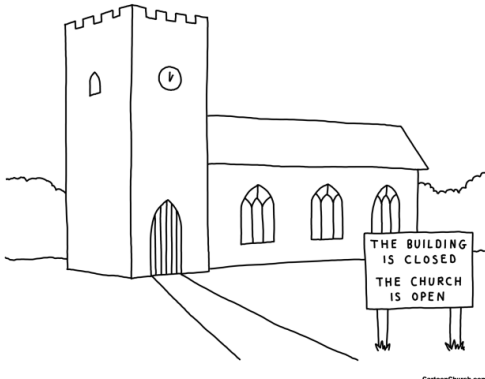
But despite it all, we know that these strange times will pass and the present pandemic will become a thing of the past. We remain Easter people and our faith rests on the fact that the resurrection follows the cross. We know how the story ends and that gives us hope.

With very best wishes

***Steve***

**Revd. Steve Morley, Rural Dean**

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us: so let us celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. *1 Corinthians 5.7b, 8*



Cartoon by Dave Walker CartoonChurch.com

**Bishop Martin**, speaking at the Commitment to Christian Ministry service on Maundy Thursday, spoke of the dedication and resourcefulness shown by the church in ministering to those in need during the current pandemic. For many, it was a call to follow our Lord into the unknown.

How have we shown and experienced this in our Deanery? What have we discovered on the way?



**Communication.** For many of us, restrictions on movements and ‘social distancing’ affected our Lent courses, though Acton and Gt. Waldingfield managed to keep theirs going by distributing copies of the talk and course booklet to all email contacts plus some extras. Contact lists in general suddenly became important as parishes sought to keep in touch with their congregations and approaches have varied. Some have sent mailings out on a weekly or more frequent basis (e.g. daily in Holy Week) from a central point. Material has included orders of service, letters of encouragement, details of links to services being streamed or shown on TV. A comprehensive ‘Spiritual Survival Pack’ was assembled in the Box River benefice and circulated to all on their contact list.

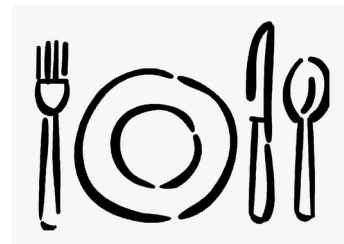
Communication by Facebook with Messy Church families (e.g. Bures, Glemsford) seems to have



**We have become ‘a different sort of church’ in ways we couldn’t have imagined several weeks ago. While worship in our churches is suspended, our joy in the resurrection is not to be silenced.**

been the preferred route; not surprising perhaps given the younger demographic.

Some benefices have managed to launch locally-streamed worship services and others have pre-recorded worship material. Those who haven’t local input have certainly had a wide selection to choose from, including the cathedral and the Bishops, of course.



### **Feeding**

**those in need.** It has been possible to set up a ‘frozen meals on wheels’ operation for the vulnerable in Glemsford and a few surrounding villages. With the help of local businesses and charities, meals are now being cooked and delivered for some grateful residents. In other villages use has been made of already-established ‘Good Neighbour’ schemes coupled with take-away services being offered by local businesses.

Many will have read that the local food banks are under pressure with increased demand, but fewer donations. In Boxford, the church’s north porch has been turned into a foodbank station, with a ‘take what you need, bring what you can’ principle. It has been well-received.

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us: so let us celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. *1 Corinthians 5.7b, 8*



**Social support.** In Sudbury congregations have been divided into groups with members of the ministry teams allocated responsibility for their support, including regular telephone contact. Indeed telephone contact seems to be one of the most greatly-appreciated services, judging by comments received. Often it can be more than just a cheery chat; life is ongoing and the telephone might be the only way of sharing sadness, loss and pain when meeting up is not possible.



**Prayer.** Its not hard to think of a long list of prayer topics at the moment, but you are invited to include:

- Those suffering from COVID-19, including the PM and those caring for them; the bereaved
- The Government that it make make wise and careful decisions
- NHS staff, other carers and key workers
- Those made redundant, laid off or put on furlough (inc. Diocesan staff)
- Our clergy and other ministers, that they may withstand the additional pressures being put on them
- The isolated and hungry
- Ourselves, that we may experience the compassion of Christ for us.

“Jesus comes close to us, and we need to come close to him, for his compassion, unlike ours, is infinite, and ours can be renewed in his, our compassion not just for the world, but for ourselves.” *Malcolm Guite*



**Money.** Many in our communities will be affected financially by the economic effect of the ‘lockdown’ on businesses. Others will be fearful about the future. Our churches too are facing a financial challenge, with no service collections at present and fund-raising events postponed. And yet we need to raise funds to pay our bills and to resource our mission and ministry in Suffolk and further afield.

So if you are in a more fortunate position financially and normally put your offering on the collection plate, would you consider donating your offering in a different way, such as through the Parish Giving Scheme, by Standing Order or by bank transfer? If so, please have a word in confidence with your Parish Treasurer, Local Giving Adviser or Gift Aid Secretary, who would be pleased to help. It may be the right time to review your giving anyway...

### *Any Other Business*

Fr. Rob (Boxford) is shaving his head to raise funds for West Suffolk Hospital's response to the Coronavirus. It will be live-streamed immediately after the 11am Easter Day Service. More information can be found here, please support if you can:



<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/robert-parker-mcgee1>

NB Photo is believed to be before the shave!

**Postscript - A locked church, by Alan Amos**  
*Ah my dear Lord, the church is locked  
 but let my heart be open to your presence;  
 there let us make, you and I,  
 your Easter garden;  
 plant it with flowers,  
 and let the heavy stone be rolled away.*

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us: so let us celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. *1 Corinthians 5.7b, 8*