**ENews 15 October 2025**

**Christmas resources**

The Church of England’s Advent and Christmas theme for 2025 revolves round a single word: Joy! Our churches and parishes will - as always - be seeking to make the most of the opportunity December brings to share *The Joy of Christmas* with their communities.

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 on offer this year are all designed to help all ages to be drawn into the joy of the first Christmas.

**You can find the resources online here:** [Advent and Christmas theme: The Joy of Christmas | The Church of England](https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/advent-and-christmas-theme-joy-christmas)

**Or if you need any help accessing resources, please contact the Diocese of Norwich Communications team at** [**news@dioceseofnorwich.org**](mailto:news@dioceseofnorwich.org)

**News across Norfolk and Waveney**

**New Bishop’s Advisor for Self Supporting Ministry**

The Revd Ian Fifield, Vicar of Thorpe End, near Norwich, has been appointed Bishop of Norwich’s Advisor for Self-Supporting Ministry.

Revd Ian said: “I am honoured to take on this role supporting those called to serve as self-supporting ministers. SSMs have a unique vocation in connecting the church with daily life and I look forward to encouraging and strengthening this important ministry.”

The Bishop of Norwich said he was delighted to appoint Revd Ian who would bring experience and expertise to the role.

Revd Ian was ordained after a career in local government finance and auditing. He trained part-time while still working, and served as a curate and assistant priest as a self-supporting minister.

Alongside his duties as Vicar of Thorpe End, he will champion self-supporting ministry across the diocese.

Bishop Graham said self-supporting clergy make a significant contribution to the life of the Church and community. Revd Ian will advise him, and other senior staff responsible for the development and pastoral care of self-supporting ministers, and help ensure existing and potential SSMs have what they need to flourish in their work.

Revd Ian was licensed as Vicar of St David’s, Thorpe End, in July.

**City Centre Hotspot reaps benefits of weekly warm welcome**

Regardless of whether the sun is shining or snow is falling, every Thursday throughout the year St Giles-on-the-Hill church invites anyone keen to enjoy some food, drink and conversation into a warm, friendly space.

The city centre church began its Hot Spot initiative in January and it became an instant success.

Around 80 people attended during the first few weeks of the project, while in the warmer months between 20 and 30 regulars have still been stopping by. Grant funding, including from the council, has supported the scheme in its inaugural year.

Thankfully, St Giles is not alone in providing this kind of vital community outreach. The Church of England reported at the beginning of 2025 that 485 of its churches had signed up to the [Warm Welcome Spaces](https://www.warmwelcome.uk/) campaign, while almost 400 were part of the [Places of Welcome](https://cuf.org.uk/places-of-welcome) network, coordinated by Church Urban Fund.

Revd Melissa Snell, Assistant Curate with the St Giles benefice, helps deliver the Hot Spot sessions alongside Fr Alaric Lewis, Revd Annie Blyth and several generous volunteers.

Reflecting on the project’s first year, Melissa said:

*“It’s the highlight of my week and we have such a great mix of people. It’s grown organically; you just put out the food and drink and offer a space to chat and they come.*

*“It’s become such a lovely close-knit group that half a dozen people from the Hot Spot came to my priesting at Norwich Cathedral which was great.*

*“What’s formed is a community. It’s not ‘the church’ putting something on. We all get involved and people have taken ownership of it. If a member of the team is away, there’s always someone here to help.”*

Hot Spot has also been incredibly rewarding for those who volunteer as part of the weekly scheme. Lesley Worne, one of the church’s team of dedicated volunteers, explained:

*“I love this church. On Thursdays it’s nice to chat to other people who have different lifestyles and experiences to you, which don’t always get to do after a service. I really get to know people better at the Hot Spot.”*

People have come to the initiative from a wide range of backgrounds and with lots of expertise to offer. Jonathan Kemp, for example, visited the church when Hot Spot first began after hearing about the scheme in his local library. He is now lending his culinary experience to the project, with over a decade of work and volunteering in kitchens.

Welcoming new faces to church has been a joy for members of St Giles on-the-Hill, such as Janet Hopkins who believes Hot Spot has added greatly to the life of the church:

*“It’s about opening up to other people and lifestyles. We’re showing we do care for our community in practical way as well. After all, this is their church, it’s available to them. There are various acts of kindness going on all the time.*

*“People here are so grateful for Father Alaric, Revd Melissa and Revd Annie – the whole team. They’re so committed and will do anything for anyone.”* Hot Spot opens its doors every Thursday between 10.30am and 1pm at St Giles-on-the-Hill Church, Upper St Giles Street, Norwich, NR2 1AB.

**The next Archbishop of Canterbury announced**

The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE to become 106th Archbishop of Canterbury.

As a member of the Crown Nomination Commission, the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham Usher welcomed the news saying, “I am delighted that Bishop Sarah has been called to be the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. This historic decision recognises Bishop Sarah’s many pastoral gifts as a shepherd of Christ’s flock. It was a personal privilege to serve on the Crown Nomination Commission and meet some outstanding potential candidates, and then to discern prayerfully who we believed God was calling to serve his Church as Archbishop at this time. It was an experience of the Holy Spirit. Please join with me in praying for Bishop Sarah and her family.”

**Three new Canons for Norwich Cathedral**

An expert on Julian of Norwich, the diocese director of mission and ministry, and a rector and rural dean are to become canons of Norwich Cathedral.

They will be welcomed at Evensong at 5.30pm on Tuesday October 14.

**Dr Claire Gilbert** will be installed as a lay canon of the cathedral. She is a theologian, author and retreat leader and writes and speaks about medical and environmental ethics and spirituality in politics and public life. Her writing about Julian of Norwich includes the book I, Julian which reconstructs the life of the first woman to write a book in the English language.

It takes readers through the loss of a father, husband and child as plague rages, and the visions which comfort her as she falls ill herself. As a 14th century woman, telling her story from an anchorage alongside St Julian’s church in Norwich, she risks condemnation as a heretic.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams called the book *“A brilliantly illuminating companion to one of the greatest works of spiritual writing in English.”*

Claire first came across Julian of Norwich when she studied her as part of a theology degree at Oxford University. *“She was a shining star in an otherwise dull degree and I’ve stayed in love with her ever since,”* said Claire.

She said she was honoured and delighted when asked to become a lay canon of Norwich Cathedral.

*“I first visited when I was touring cathedrals in my gap year; my father said cathedrals are one of the reasons the country holds together. Norwich was and remains one of my favourites.”*

As a lay canon she said she will be glad to help in any way, *“Especially drawing on my experience of running institutes in both Westminster Abbey and St Paul’s Cathedral.”*

*“Perhaps I will have the chance to talk more about Julian.”*

Claire was the founding director of the Westminster Abbey Institute, which aims to nurture and revitalise moral and spiritual values in public life and service. She was a national policy adviser to the Church of England on medical ethics and environmental ethics, and a lay canon of St Paul’s Cathedral where she co-founded St Paul’s Institute for ethics in finance and business.

Asked what she would love everyone to know about Julian she said: *“That she does not try to organise God. That her writings are beautiful and transformative. That she teaches us to be porous to God and to our world.”*

**The Revd Richard Lamey** who is director of mission and ministry for the Diocese of Norwich, will be installed as an honorary canon. He supports clergy and lay leaders across the diocese and encourages discipleship and vocations. He said:

*“I was really humbled to receive Bishop Graham’s invitation and honoured to accept. I have had the most amazing time ever since I came to work in the Diocese and moved to Norwich. I am relishing working with amazing people, getting out and about to see what is happening all across the Diocese and helping us all to listen to what God is calling us to be as disciples and pilgrims.”*

He fell in love with Norwich Cathedral when he moved to the diocese and said: *“I take midweek services in the Cathedral every month so I am looking I am looking forward to deepening my relationship with and my love for a building and community I find it very easy to pray in and which has made me so welcome.*

*“It is a particularly happy and friendly Cathedral. I will also be excited to be able to contribute as an Honorary Canon to the excellent relationship between the Diocese and our Mother Church, as a member of the Parish Support Team and as I travel round the Diocese Sunday by Sunday.”*

**The Revd Martin Greenland** has been Rector of Acle for 17 years and Rector of the Acle and Bure to Yare Benefice for the past decade. He is also Rural Dean of Blofield and will become an honorary canon of Norwich Cathedral.

Recognised for his diligence across a rural multi-parish benefice and deanery he said: *“I’m grateful for the recognition of the grassroots ministry in parishes and deanery I share with many others: seeking to serve God and neighbour in our local communities”*

He arrived in Acle having previously served in the dioceses of York and Sheffield and said: *“With a lifelong interest in nature, I imagined Norfolk would be a county I could enjoy living in – and so it has proved.”*

As a cathedral canon he hopes to represent the parishes to the cathedral and the cathedral to the parishes.

The Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham Usher, and the Dean of Norwich the Very Revd Dr Andrew Braddock, both said they were delighted to welcome the new canons.

Bishop Graham said: *“The two new honorary canons Revd Richard Lamey and Revd Martin Greenland, have made, and continue to make, a significant contribution to the life of the diocese. And Claire Gilbert, the new lay canon brings an impressive range of experience in policy and ethics and as well as her deep interest in Mother Julian.”*

Dean Andrew said: *“Martin and Richard strengthen the Cathedral’s links with ministry across the diocese, enhancing its role as mother church across Norfolk and Waveney. Claire not only brings a rich appreciation of Julian of Norwich, but also extensive experience of the role cathedrals can play in education and shaping public debate. I look forward to working with them all.”*

The 24 ordained honorary canons and 12 lay canons of Norwich Cathedral, together with the archdeacons and suffragan bishops, make up the College of Canons. It meets three times a year for members to worship together, receive reports from the Dean and Chapter and come up with ways in which the cathedral can contribute to the wider mission of the diocese and work with the diocese to serve the people of Norfolk and Waveney.

**Events coming up in the Diocese**

**Eco Chaplain Training**, Thursday 16 October 2-4pm, St Stephens Church Norwich. Find out more from Barbara Bryant [barbara.bryant@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:barbara.bryant@dioceseofnorwich.org)

**The Bishop’s Certificate of Christian Learning**, Module One: Thursday 16 October 7-9pm, via Zoom. Find out more from Richard Lamey [richard.lamey@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:richard.lamey@dioceseofnorwich.org)

**Shared Vocations Space**, Session Two: Being Us, the Church of England. Thursday 16 October 7-9pm, via Zoom. Find out more from Lucy Dallas [lucy.dallas@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:lucy.dallas@dioceseofnorwich.org)

**Church heating:** Your questions answered. Thursday 23 October 7.30-8.30pm, Zoom. Find out more via Ed Cotterill, [ed.cotterill@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:ed.cotterill@dioceseofnorwich.org)

**Black History Month thanksgiving service**. Sunday 26 October 5,30pm. Norwich Cathedral.

**Vacancies**

Current vacancies for clergy include: Priest in Charge of the Hunstanton and Saxon Shore Benefice, Rector for Redenhall with Scole, Rector of the Hopton, Corton and Gunton Benefice.

Current parish support team vacancies include: Religious Education and Christian Distinctiveness Manager.

**Prayer Diary**

To read the prayer diary online, go to:[Prayer Diary - Diocese of Norwich](https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/news-and-events/prayer-diary/)

If you need a hard copy, please contact [hello@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:hello@dioceseofnorwich.org)