

# REACHING OUT

## from the Cockfield Benefice



### **Parish Churches serving the villages of:**

Bradfield St Clare, Bradfield St George w Lt  
Whelnetham, Bradfield Combust, Cockfield,  
Felsham, Gedding,  
Gt Whelnetham & Stanningfield

**August/  
September 2026  
Issue 137**

### **From the Rector's desk:**

I have just returned from an overnight retreat at Clare Priory. We were very lucky with the weather, and it was a beautiful place to be - with God and with each other. I was with a group of people (four other clergy and one lay person) on a non-guided retreat. We have been meeting as a group for six years now online every week to say Compline together (Night Prayer as it's called in the Church of England).

We first gathered during the 2020 lockdown every night in Holy Week to pray together, as we were unable to do so together in our various parish churches. We have lost some members of the group over the last six years, and gained some, but our core purpose remains the same, to pray together and support each other in our various ministries. It was good to get away together to pray and reflect on all we do, and to be refreshed.

Prayer is what keeps me going every day of my life as a Christian, and not just as an ordained minister. Rowan Williams says that we all need to 'grow' in prayer. He also says, 'growing in prayer is growing in Christian humanity'  
*Rowan Williams: Being Christian p. 61.*

So why do we need to pray? We need to pray because we need to have a conversation with God or Jesus. It doesn't matter whether it's God or Jesus

you pray to as they are one and the same. You would never consider having a relationship with someone unless you spoke to them (if you didn't that would be a very odd relationship). It's the same with our Lord. Jesus taught the disciples to pray, he even told them how to do it, by starting with 'Our Father....'. And so, we have the most famous prayer, the Lord's Prayer, that we use every Sunday in our church services, and I'm sure that many of you use it every day of the week. There are no right or wrongs in prayer. You can pray anywhere and at any time. You don't have to be at a church service, or even in a church building. You can pray a quick prayer (often called 'arrow prayers') or you can spend a longer time in prayer. We also hear what we call 'intercessions' in our church services; this means that someone is praying on behalf of the Church community at that service.

Bishop Joanne has asked us all to pray - but also to listen. Listening to God is often the hard part in prayer. We all know what we want to ask, or to say before God. We don't always hear - or listen for - the answer. Our Bishop would like us to pray, both as individuals and together, and to listen to what God is saying to us about refreshing our vision as a diocese. Everyone is invited to take part. There are also surveys that can be filled in by anyone - they are addressed to different groups of people, clergy, PCCs, congregation members and any member of the public who wants to contribute. If you'd like to access a survey, go to :<https://www.cofesuffolk.org/exploring-faith/our-bishops/together-we-are-listening/> (you must register on insight before doing this online). Or you can ask me for a paper copy of the appropriate survey, and I will return it to the diocese. We are hoping for responses to be in by 28 August. The responses will then be analyzed by groups gathered from around Suffolk and the key themes that emerge will be publicized and used to inform the next stage of our Growing in God strategy.

I think this is a very exciting phase of our life as a diocese, and I can't wait to hear the results of the surveys and the listening. I have included a guide to listening prayer in this month's Reaching Out to help us all as we try to listen to what God is telling us. I hope you find it useful.

The next issue of Reaching Out will come out at the end of September, but in the meantime, may you enjoy the summer - and keep praying!

**Sharon**

revsharon2@gmail.com, 01284 828599 or 07825 086063

Rector: Cockfield Benefice

## GUIDE TO LISTENING PRAYER

Listening Prayer is not complicated. It is simply making space to be attentive to God, to Scripture and to one another.

The following can be used alone or in groups:

### 1. Prepare (1-2 minutes)

- sit comfortably
- breathe slowly
- ask God to make you attentive
- pray the breath prayer: 'Living God, open our hearts to your voice'

### 2. Read (1 minute)

- Choose a short passage of Scripture. Read it slowly, aloud if possible (Examples: Luke 11:9-10, Psalm 46:10, Deut. 31:8)
- Let one word or phrase catch your attention

### 3. Reflect (2-3 minutes)

Sit with the word or phrase. Ask gently:

- Why this?
- What might God be drawing my attention to?
- What does this stir in me, hope, challenge, comfort, curiosity?
- No forcing. No pressure. Just noticing.

### 4. Listen (3-5 minutes)

Hold silence together or alone. Pay attention to:

- a picture or image
- a nudge or prompting
- a sense of direction
- something God is already growing
- a person or place that comes to mind
- a question that surfaces

### 5. Respond (1-2 minutes)

Offer what you've noticed back to God:

- 'Is this consistent with Scripture and the love of God?'
- 'What could I/we do in light of this noticing?'
- 'How might this shape our Diocese?'

Keep it simple and honest.

### 6. Share (optional, in groups)

If praying with others, share briefly:

- what you have noticed
- what stood out
- what you sensed God highlighting

Listen to one another with reverence. No correcting. No analyzing. Just receiving.

## 7. Record (any time)

Write down what you sensed. Small impressions often become clearer over time.

We are beginning the **Start Course** in October, which is designed as a short introduction to the Christian faith. It uses video clips, lively discussion and interactive exercises to

- think about where people are going in their lives

- get to grips with questions about God, Jesus and faith

- begin to understand about Jesus and the Christian faith

- consider what people want to do next

We hope people will find it fun and enjoyable, down-to-earth and honest. You don't need any previous knowledge of anything Christian. The course puts participants under no obligation. If, at the end, people want to walk away that's fine, but if they want to know more we can point them in the right direction.

The Ministry Team has invites to give to people (or for you to give to people) you think might be interested. Please contact us if you think friends of family might want to know more.

As we think and pray about those, we might invite to the Start Course, let's continue praying the prayer for growth:

*God of mission, who alone brings growth to your Church.*

*Send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning. Wisdom to our actions. Joy to our worship. And power to our witness.*

*Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*



## Big Green Challenge for August



Temperatures in the Antarctic climbed above 15C in June, shattering the previous winter heat record for the usually frozen region and raising concerns about the speed of climate breakdown. In addition, the maximum daily temperature exceeded zero degrees for three consecutive weeks.

Scientists said the high of 15.4C broke the previous record set at the same station in 1998 by 2C. It is also about 20C above normal for this time of the year. That is a huge anomaly.

On King George Island, researchers said the landscape had changed from mostly white to brown, grey and green after temperatures hit 4.6C on 6 June. Scientists warn that some of the region's biggest glaciers, such as Thwaites and Pine Island, are approaching or may even have passed a tipping point that could push up global sea levels by four metres. Antarctic ice melt has also been found to slow global ocean circulation.

Raúl Cordero, an Ecuadorian climate professor at the University of Groningen, said a single winter of heatwaves, no matter how amazing, would not by itself make a huge difference to sea levels, but it signified more alarming long-term trends. "This heatwave happened because of extremely strong westerlies," he said. "This has been happening with increasing frequency since the 1980s, and that is known to be related to climate change."

We all need to be lobbying our MPs to reduce our use of fossil fuels more rapidly unless we want to see an increase in coastal flooding in the years to come

*Source: The Guardian*

### **Congratulations Corner**

There were no weddings or baptisms in July in the benefice, however, if you're thinking about getting married or having your baby or child christened, then do get in touch with us. Email myself, or Rev Richard or Rev Fiona for more details. Here are our contact details:

revsharon2@gmail.com, 01284 828599 or 07825 086063

richard.stainer14@gmail.com, 01284 388175

revdfionamalby@gmail.com, 07443 388399

## The 'Yellow/Purple Envelope' and giving

The gift aid envelopes enable us to claim 25% back from HMRC so that for every £1 that is given we receive 25p when we submit a claim. All our churches are very grateful for this scheme, but I'd like to make a few of points as follows:

1. You must be paying tax to enable us to claim the gift aid. If you do not pay tax, then please do not use an envelope and simply add your cash gift to the offertory plate. If you would prefer it, you can place it in an envelope but please *do not* fill the envelope in.
2. We can claim on the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) to receive up to £2,000 on up to £8,000 eligible small cash donations per church. Which means that any cash that is not in an envelope given at services can still count.
3. The best way to give to your local church is through the Parish Giving Scheme. This is where a direct debit can be set up for a monthly gift to go to the church of your choice, and if you are a taxpayer, the gift aid is claimed automatically and sent to the church monthly. If you'd like to explore this way of giving, then please do get in touch with us.

## GIVING

WHY I DO NOT CONTRIBUTE



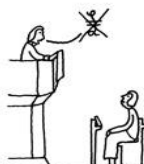
THE CHURCH HAS PLENTY OF MONEY



WE CAN'T AFFORD IT



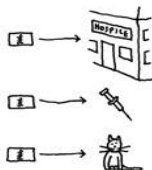
I GIVE MY TIME AND TALENTS INSTEAD



CHURCH ISN'T THE PLACE TO TALK ABOUT MONEY



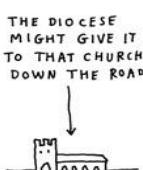
DOESN'T THE GOVERNMENT PAY FOR IT?



I GIVE TO OTHER CHARITIES



WHAT I COULD GIVE WOULDN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE



THE DIOCESE MIGHT GIVE IT TO THAT CHURCH DOWN THE ROAD  
THE MONEY WON'T BE WELL-SPENT



OUR VICAR DOESN'T DESERVE TO BE PAID



SOMEBODY UPSET ME ONCE

# Love Suffolk Churches? Get on your Bike on Sept 12th!



**Your local bike ride organiser is (tel no)**

Norman Kelly  
Northside IP30 0HA  
[n.kelly494@gmail.com](mailto:n.kelly494@gmail.com)  
07817242294

Norman Kelly says:

'I will be participating again and hope to repeat last year's tally of 40 rural churches and ~80 miles. I have offered my effort to anyone who wants to use that to raise sponsorship money as 50% goes to the SHCT and 50% to the church raising the money.

## ***FUNDRAISING CONCERT AT BRADFIELD ST GEORGE***

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the Arcadian Recorder Consort at BSG recently, either by attending or by donating.

We made a wonderful profit of **£800** which will go towards the upkeep of our little church.

Thank you very much

**Christine Stainer**  
Church Warden



### **A poem for the season by Johanna Caton OSB**

September steals in on tiptoe—  
a shy child, clutches August's hand,  
conceals her face. Her lustre's up  
before sunrise, though—silken breeze,  
glossy darkness, full moon. By day

she grows bold, and throws down  
sky-fulls of rubies, topaz, gold-leaf.  
Pines lean and bristle dark whiskers,  
pop vaulting cones that skitter and roll,  
tumble somersaults, scramble off.

Sillies, pine for June, if you must,  
but I love that late September  
sling of trees, scuttle-sound and scrape  
of leaves on pavements, and those shot  
seeds scattering resurrection.

**Johanna Caton, O.S.B.**, is a Benedictine nun. She was born in the United States and lived there until adulthood, when her monastic vocation took her

to England, where she now resides. Her poems have appeared in *The Christian Century*, *The Windhover*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, *The Catholic Poetry Room*, and other venues, both online and print.

If you'd like to share a favourite poem with readers of yours in Reaching Out, please send it to Canon Sharon at [revsharon2@gmail.com](mailto:revsharon2@gmail.com), or she is happy to have a hard copy. Or write one of your own!

### **Personal Alarm**

Crash!  
Bang!  
Wallop!  
Splat!  
On my back,  
On concrete.  
Excruciating.  
Alone.  
No.  
A voice.  
From my alarm.  
Reassurance.  
Rescued.

My personal alarm was invaluable and although I was in France it worked like magic. If you have a personal alarm, always wear it. Mine looks like a watch and you never know when you might need help. If you are alone or vulnerable and you haven't got one - please do get one.

Happy to help if needed.

Take Care.

Sue Jell - 01284 828892

### **Village Friends September 2026 - our benefice over 65's friendship group**

We take a break from Village Friends in August, but will be back on Thursday 17 September, 2-4pm at Felsham Village Hall with a Michaelmas quiz and our usual tea, sandwiches and cake. All are welcome, no entry fee but we hold a monthly raffle to raise funds (all donations to the raffle are welcome).

If you'd like to come but have no transport, please contact Canon Sharon on 01284 828599 or 07825 086063 and she will arrange for someone to pick you up.

The poster features a central title 'QUIZ NIGHT' in large, white, outlined letters. Above the title is a string of warm-toned lights. On either side of the title are stylized illustrations of hands holding up the string of lights. The background is a light, warm tone.

# QUIZ NIGHT

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AT GT WHELNETHAM  
COMMUNITY CENTRE

**FRIDAY  
18TH SEPTEMBER**

7pm for 7.30pm start  
£5 per person up to six per team  
bring your own bottle/snacks

To book contact:

Luke 07789 922395  
Margaret 01284 386340  
Rosemary 01284 834371

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Fundraising for Gt Whelnetham Church

## Cockfield Benefice Services & Events

### August/September 2026

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Saturday 1 August</b>               | 2-4pm 'Knit & Natter' at Bradfield St Clare Village Hall, refreshments and a space to craft/knit/crochet/sew. All welcome!                                            |
| <b>Sunday 2 August<br/>Trinity 9</b>   | 9.30am Morning Prayer at Stanningfield<br>10am Holy Communion at Bradfield St Clare<br>6pm Celtic-style Communion at Felsham                                          |
| <b>Sunday 9 August<br/>Trinity 10</b>  | 10am Morning Prayer at Cockfield<br>11am Holy Communion at Bradfield St George<br>6pm Praise & Worship at Gt Whelnetham                                               |
| <b>Tuesday 11 August</b>               | 11am Holy Communion at Felsham Church followed by soup and sandwiches. All welcome!                                                                                   |
| <b>Sunday 16 August<br/>Trinity 11</b> | 9.30am Holy Communion at Stanningfield<br>10am Café Church at Felsham Village Hall<br>10.30am Holy Communion at Cockfield<br>6pm Evening Prayer at Bradfield St Clare |
| <b>Sunday 23 August<br/>Trinity 12</b> | 9.30am Holy Communion at Gt Whelnetham<br>10.00am Worshipping Together at Bradfield St George                                                                         |
| <b>Sunday 30 August<br/>Trinity 13</b> | 8.00am Holy Communion at Cockfield<br>10.30am Morning Prayer at Lt Whelnetham (followed by a White Elephant Stall in the Churchyard)                                  |

|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Saturday 5 September</b>               | 2-4pm 'Knit & Natter' at Bradfield St Clare Village Hall, refreshments and a space to craft/knit/crochet/sew. All welcome!                                            |
| <b>Sunday 6 September<br/>Trinity 14</b>  | 9.30am Morning Prayer at Stanningfield<br>11am Holy Communion at Bradfield St Clare<br>6pm Celti-style Communion at Felsham                                           |
| <b>Tuesday 8 September</b>                | 11am Holy Communion followed by Soup and Sandwiches at Felsham Church                                                                                                 |
| <b>Sunday 13 September<br/>Trinity 15</b> | 10am Morning Prayer at Cockfield<br>11am Holy Communion at Bradfield St George<br>6pm Praise & Worship at Gt Whelnetham                                               |
| <b>Thursday 17 September</b>              | 2-4pm, Village Friends at Felsham & Gedding Village Hall. All welcome!                                                                                                |
| <b>Sunday 20 September<br/>Trinity 16</b> | 9.30am Holy Communion at Stanningfield<br>10am Café Church at Felsham Village Hall<br>10.30am Holy Communion at Cockfield<br>6pm Evening Prayer at Bradfield St Clare |
| <b>Sunday 27 September<br/>Trinity 17</b> | 9.30am Holy Communion at Gt Whelnetham<br>10.00am Worshipping Together at Bradfield St George                                                                         |

*There is normally a service of Morning Prayer at Cockfield every Tuesday at 9am and at Stanningfield every Thursday at 9am.*

*Please note these services may be subject to change – for up-to-date service times see the benefice website at [www.cockfieldbenefice.com](http://www.cockfieldbenefice.com)*

For more details on our services and events, contact Rev Canon Sharon Potter at revsharon2@gmail.com, tel: 01284 828599 or 07825 086063.