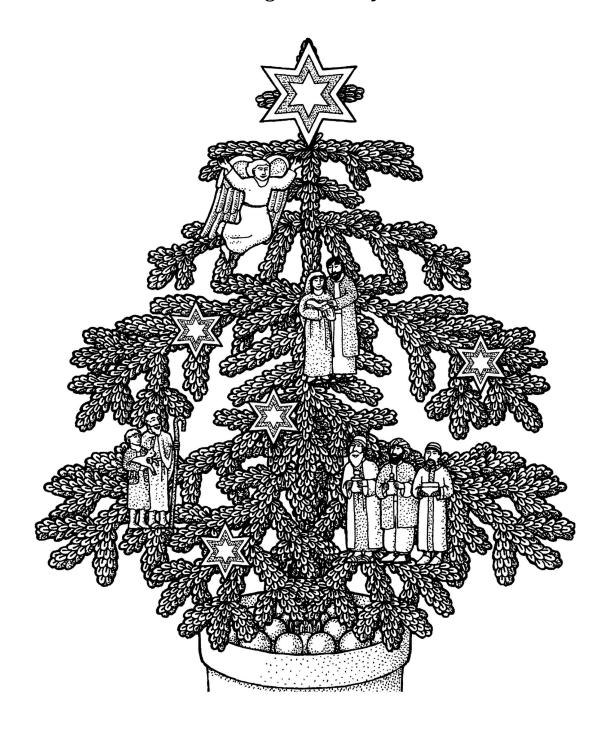
PARISH NEWS December 25 January 26

St Mary Wroxham, Hoveton St John, Hoveton St Peter St Peter Belaugh, St Mary Tunstead



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
From all the churches of the Wroxham Benefice

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For enquires regarding Baptisms, Wedding and Funerals please contact the Rector. Liz's rest day is Monday

If you would like to receive this news letter or our weekly sheet by email, please let Liz know.

From the Rector.....

It feels a bit strange to be writing before Advent has begun, looking forward to not only December but January of a whole new year. But I think we often find ourselves out of step as a church. The shops have been doing Christmas for months, while we are just starting to hear the call to 'prepare the way of the Lord'. We will start the Christmas season on Christmas Day - or Midnight Mass if you stayed up late - just when everyone else is thinking of taking the trees down. And when we are looking at the end of the Christmas season at Candlemas, and just turning towards the first look at Lent, the world will already be ankle deep in Easter eggs.

It can be hard to be out of step with those around, and there is always a temptation to rush forwards. That's true of life in general, I find. We live in world that moves us always on to the next thing. Whatever we are doing, we feel there is something else that should be getting the time and focus we are spending on the current task. Maybe that's not so bad when it's a task we don't like, but I find that even when I'm doing something I want to do, and have looked forward to, there is often a part of me that is hurrying on in my mind to the next thing I need to do, or focusing on the things that I'm not doing because I'm doing this current thing.

Perhaps we need to sometimes take a deep breath and focus on what we are doing, right now. Live within that space and hold it. Jesus was good at being totally in the moment with those he met, giving them his full attention, not looking onwards to the next activity. I suspect that being able to give himself wholly to each person or event came in part from his wisdom in stepping away from business at times to pray. And I'm sure that's why it is set in Canon Law that vicars need to say (or cause to be said!) Morning and Evening prayer each day.

How we balance our lives matters. For ourselves and for others. Our lives will get busy, and none of us are perfect, but if we can make it a habit to pause, to draw breath, to refocus on what we are doing now, not in ten minutes or an hour or a week's time, we will live more fully.

There are lots of ways of doing this, and the current wave of mindfulness has many suggestions. But as Christians, why not try using the Jesus Prayer?

It's a short sentence. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner. It slows us down, focuses us on God, and reminds us of the reason for all that we do. And when we work from a place of calm, we are more present, more able to live the lives that God is calling us to live, more able to grow into the people God has called us to be.

The Priest-Poet RS Thomas spoke into this idea when he wrote that 'Life is not hurrying on to a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past.' He says that in turning aside from that busyness we see the brightness that is God's eternity, so easily missed when we rush past.

So - to use a Norfolk phrase - slow you down. Take the time each day to live, really live, with the God who loves you and has created eternity for you which means, when you think about it, that we have all the time in the world.

The Bright Field

I have seen the sun break through to illuminate a small field for a while, and gone my way and forgotten it. But that was the pearl of great price, the one field that had treasure in it. I realise now that I must give all that I have to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past. It is the turning aside like Moses to the miracle of the lit bush, to a brightness that seemed as transitory as your youth once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

by R.S. Thomas

Christmas Calendar across the Benefice

30th November

10am First Sunday of Advent Hoveton St Peter

2nd December

10.00 Advent Course Session Two Hoveton St John

9th December

10.00 Advent Course Session Three Hoveton St John

6pm Nativity, Christingle and Carols Tunstead

A village evening with all welcome from all churches. School nativity, Christingle, Carols with Wroxham Praise, and sheep from Damien. It's a bit mad, but great fun, and ends with mulled wine. Do wrap up warm!

12th December

6pm Carols around the Christmas Tree at Hoveton Hall

This is a ticketed event, see details in this newsletter

15th December

5.30pm Scouts Christingle Wroxham

We welcome the whole of 1st Hoveton and Wroxham to this, plus family and friends.

16th December

10.00 Advent Course Session Four Hoveton St John

5pm Carols at Roys Roys Cafe

Do come and join with the Churches of the area, Rev'd Liz, and Wroxham Praise for the annual Roys Carols.

19th December

7.30pm Candlelit Nine Lessons and Carols Wroxham

A more formal carol service, with organ, carols and readings telling the Christmas story. It's all by candlelight and all are welcome.

20th December

7pm Longest Night/Blue Christmas Hoveton St Peter

This is a quieter service, focused on darkness and the coming of light, both physically - the longest night - and in our own lives. It's suitable for all - for those who are finding life difficult and want a quieter safer space away from the jollity of the carol services, and for those who want a pause in the business of Christmas preparation, and a way to mark the turning of the year to light and the coming of Christ. Think candlelight, gentle music, reflection and space. More Silent Night than Deck the Halls.

21st December

10am Benefice Carol Service Hoveton St John

A chance to sing carols together as we prepare for Christmas

3pm Carols and Christingle Belaugh

A family friendly village carol service. All welcome.

24th December

4pm Crib and Christingle Wroxham

A fairly large service, and sometimes a bit noisy, but loved by all! Come and hear the Christmas story in a child friendly way, help build the crib and get your Christingle.

11.30pm Midnight Mass Wroxham

Candlelit, and magical. The first Communion of Christmas.

25th December

10am Christmas Family Communion Hoveton St John

A family friendly service for all.

28th December

10am Communion with Carols Hoveton St Peter

Our post Christmas Benefice service, with Carols!

Sunday Services for December							
7th	10am 10am 5pm	Informal Worship Holy Communion Celtic Communion	St John, Hoveton St Mary, Tunstead St Peter, Hoveton				
14th	10am	Holy Communion	St Mary, Wroxham				
21st	8.30am 10am	Holy Communion Benefice Carol Service	St John, Hoveton St John, Hoveton				
28th	10am	Holy Communion	St Peter, Hoveton				

	Sunday Services for January						
4th	10am 10am 5pm	Informal Worship Holy Communion Celtic Communion	St John, Hoveton St Mary, Tunstead St Peter, Hoveton				
11th	10am	Holy Communion	St Mary, Wroxham				
18th	10am	Holy Communion	St John, Hoveton				
25th	10am	Holy Communion	St Mary, Wroxham				

Can't get to church?

If you aren't able to join us in church, either temporarily or as a long term thing, you are welcome to receive communion at home - just get in touch with Liz, and we will organise that for you.



Events Across our Churches

Carols at Hoveton Hall

6.00pm Friday 12th December By kind invitation of the Buxton Family

Come and join us for Carols around the Christmas Tree, to the accompaniment of the piano. Readings and poems tell the Christmas story - and the stories of other Christmases across the years.

You are all welcome.

Tickets are £8, which can be collected from Sandy 01603 782282

St Mary's Wroxham

Come and Sing!

Family friendly Carols with East Norfolk Operatic Society

5pm 6th December
Tickets £6 adult £2 child
With mince pie included in the price!

Coffee Mornings - Wroxham

Monday 1st December in St Mary's Wroxham Church Hall 10-12 Christmas Coffee Morning

We also have cakes, marmalades, raffle, puzzles, books, bring & buy table and it's free, with donations for our village church very gratefully accepted. Everyone welcome.

AND

Monday 5th January in St Mary's Wroxham Church Hall 10-12 First Coffee Morning of the New Year

Cakes, marmalades, raffle, puzzles, books, bring & buy table and it's free, with donations for our village church very gratefully accepted. Everyone welcome.

Coffee Mornings Hoveton St John

The Christmas Coffee Morning for Hoveton St John Church will be held in the Church on Wednesday 14th December.

There will be a Christmas Bring and Buy Table,
a general sales table and a Raffle.
Do come & join in the Christmas spirit
and enjoy coffee a Christmas nibbles & a chat with friends old and new.
A warm welcome awaits you.

AND

Start the New Year with

Hoveton St John's Church Coffee Morning
which will be held in the Church on Wednesday 10th January.
A warm welcome awaits you while you enjoy coffee
& home made scones & cakes.
There will be a raffle & bring & bring & buy stall.
Hope to see you there.

Thank you to all those who work so hard to put on events across our Benefice. These are not only helpful for fundraising (yes we are struggling like everyone with bills and need all we can raise - more about that next time!) but - and actually more importantly - they are brilliant for ourselves and for the community to help us grow together and to do the work of God and the church - to reach out with his love to those around and draw them into the love we have found.

So - thank you all!

And if anyone would like to help with future events, all offers would be gratefully received!

Welcome to Year A....

December brings Advent and the start of a new liturgical year. We move back to the beginning of the story of salvation, as we prepare for the birth of Christ. Each year the readings for each Sunday are set out for us in the lectionary which we follow each week, and they follow a three year pattern, years A, B, and C, which focus on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke respectively. These are known as the Synoptic Gospels; which just means seen through the same eye; they have a common way of seeing. They all use shared sources as well as their own information. This year we are in Year A, so we move to Matthew's telling of the Gospel story. There are variations within each year - some stories of Jesus are only in one of the Gospels so that one is used, and John appears across all three years as his Gospel tells the story in a very different way.

There are differences in how each Gospel tells the story. Each was written at a slightly different time, and for a different audience, and this sometimes shows in the way the story of Jesus is explained.

Matthew's Gospel comes first in the New Testament because it most clearly connects the story of Jesus to the Old Testament, but it wasn't written until sometime after 70 CE, and Mark is thought to be the first Gospel written. Matthew's Gospel is the most clearly rooted in the culture and heritage of Israel and there are allusions in the Gospel that would be more recognisable to people acquainted with Jewish life and Scripture. For example, there is stress on the fulfilment of prophecy, and parallels drawn between Jesus and Moses - as a baby Jesus is saved from an evil and insecure king, and then teaches from a mountain, like Moses. It makes most sense to think of Matthew as a Gospel written by a Jewish man for a Jewish audience. Matthew's is the only Gospel to use the word 'church' (ekklesia). There is an emphasis on 'righteousness' and how to live the Christian life seriously. This Gospel also contains the great commission; Jesus' words to his disciples to as he left at the Ascension to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them...and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you....And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age

Advent Course

Our Advent course continues on Tuesdays at St John. We are using *Donkey Roads and Camel Treks, A Pilgrim's Guide for Advent* by Gemma Simmonds, which gives a reading and reflection each day.

'The lectionary readings for Advent speak of making a straight path towards God, but many of us find our own route decidedly winding. Biblical characters in the story of the incarnation are called to set out on the road to discipleship using any means of carriage they can. This book offers user-friendly encouragement (with the occasional spur onwards) to explore what helps and what hinders us in this journey to deeper encounter with the flesh and blood God whom we find in scripture, in our lived experience and in the least of his sisters and brothers.'

We begin each week with a short communion service, then coffee and time for discussion, ending with a short prayer activity.

You are welcome to come to the communion, the discussion, or both. If you would like a copy of the book, either to join the course or to use alongside us at home, Liz has copies available, or you can order your own in hardcopy or as an ebook. If you want one of my copies and would like to make a donation towards the cost that's great, but please don't let money be an issue - we are happy to give books to any who want one!

Advent Reflections with Bishop Jane

Ever sung the hymn O come, O come Emmanuel, and wondered at the 'Rod of Jesse', 'Key of David' etc? These titles are known as the Advent Antiphons and are sometimes used in worship in the last days of Advent. Bishop Jane is doing a series of reflections on Zoom based on these antiphons, beginning on Wednesday 17th December from 5pm to 5.30. You can hear her invitation and get the link here. https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/event/join-bishop-jane-for-

reflections-on-the-advent-antiphons/2025-12-17/

Praying through December and January

Prayer is the foundation of our Christian life - and one everyone struggles with at times! Each month we provide resources for prayer, whether you are able to get to church or not. Here you will find the Benefice Prayer Diary, the month's readings, and any prayer focus for the coming weeks.

Prayer Diary

For December and January we are using this diary to pray for all the residents of our parishes, please do pray for the events and activities that are going on around the benefice.

1st	Wroxham: Salhouse Rd, Skinners Lane, Staitheway Rd
2nd	Hoveton: Summer Drive, The Drive, The Rhond, Three Acre Close
3rd	Belaugh: Church Lane, Hill Piece, Top Road
4th	Tunstead: Shop Ln, Vicarage Ln, Watering Pit Ln, Weavers Loke
5th	Wroxham: Stevenson Rd, The Avenue, Trafford Walk, Beech Rd
6th	Hoveton: Tunstead Lane, Tunstead Rd, Two Saints Close
7th	Belaugh: Back Lane, The Street
8th	Tunstead: Anchor St, Belaugh Ln, Church Ln, Coltishall Ln
9th	Wroxham: Bircham Close, Bridge Broad Close, Bure Close, Castle St
10th	Hoveton: Waveney Close, Waveney Drive, Albion Way, Alderfen Way
11th	Belaugh: Church Lane, Hill Piece, Top Road
12th	Tunstead: Coltishall Ln, Crowgate Street, Culley's Pit Rd, Fletcher Cl
13th	Wroxham: Charles Close, Christopher Way, Church Ln, Grange Walk
14th	Hoveton: Barton Drive, Belaugh Drive, Belaugh Rd, Blackhorse Ct
15th	Belaugh: Back Lane, The Street
16th	Tunstead: Forge Estate, Granary Ln, Manor Close, Market Close
17th	Wroxham: Hartwell Rd, Keys Drive, Loynes Drive, Nobel Crescent

18th	Hoveton: Blofield Loke, Brimbelow Rd, Burnt Fen Way, Carrs Loke
19th	Belaugh: Church Lane, Hill Piece, Top Road
20th	Tunstead: Market Street, Mill Ln, Mill Road, Old Lane, Sco Ruston Rd
21st	Our GP surgery and all who work there
22nd	Our schools, St John's and Tunstead, and Broadland High
23rd	For Stay and Play, its leaders and those attending
24th	For the PCCs of our churches, with thanks for their work
25th	For the other churches in our area, St Helens RC, and the URC
26th	For the staff and residents of Heron Lodge and Overbury House
27th	For our coffee mornings, those who attend and those who run them
28th	For our Parish Councils, with thanks for their service to our villages
29th	Our funeral directors, with thanks for their love and care
30th	All those working in our local shops, cafes and restaurants
31st	The churches and congregations of our Benefice

Please also hold in your prayers the things happening in our churches, and each other.

You can also access the Diocesan prayer diary online at https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/news-and-events/prayer-diary/

There are lots of online prayer resources, why not try

https://sacredspace.com/

https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer You can listen to this service if you prefer!

If you have a smart phone, there is an App for Daily Prayer from the Church of England

Readings for the coming month

Each Sunday we follow the Lectionary for our readings in church. If you can't be with us, or would just like to look at them ahead of time, here are December and January's readings.

7th	D	ecem	her
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14th December

Advent 2

Isaiah 11:1-10

Romans 15:4-13

Matthew 3:1-12

Advent 3

Isaiah 35:1-10

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

21st December

28th December

Advent 4

Isaiah 7:10-16

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-end

Holy Innocents/Christmas 1

Jeremiah 31:15-17

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Matthew 2:13-18

4th January

Epiphany

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 1:1-12

11th January

Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 42:1-9

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-end

18th January

Epiphany 2

Isaiah 49:1-7

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42

25th January

Epiphany 3

Isaiah 9:1-4

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 4:12-23



Praying at home through December and January

Advent

Evergreens are a symbol of everlasting life and the circle represents God's eternity and unity. The first candle is lit on Advent Sunday and another candle on each of the following Sundays until the final 'Christ' candle in the centre of the wreath is lit on Christmas Day.

The most common colour for the candles is to have three purple and one rose. Purple is the traditional colour for Advent. It is also the colour of royalty, as we await the coming of the Prince of Peace. Rose is used for the Third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday, from the Latin word for 'rejoice'. It anticipates the joy of Christmas so its colour is a mixture of Advent purple and Christmas white. The 'Christ' candle in the centre is always white.

A common pattern is for the candles to represent the Patriarchs, Prophets, John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary. There are several other variations and they sometimes represent Hope, Love, Joy and Peace - we use these at our Longest Night/Blue Christmas service.

The prayers here work for both of the sequences and provide a short introduction, reading and prayer for each Sunday.

Advent Sunday

We light our first Advent candle to remind us of Abraham, our father in faith, and the patriarchs of old who followed him in search of the Promised Land. (The first candle is lit.)

Reading Genesis 12:1-4a

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, you are God of the whole universe and we can call you 'Father'. You have revealed their hope of the Messiah to us in Jesus Christ: Son of God, son of David and son of Mary. Help us to prepare ourselves to celebrate his birth and to follow him faithfully every day of our lives until we each our home in heaven. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the hope for the world.

The Second Sunday of Advent

Our second Advent candle reminds us of the prophets who foretold the coming of the Saviour and his reign of righteousness and peace. (The first and second candles are lit.)

Reading Isaiah 9:6-7

God our Father, you spoke through the prophets to foretell the birth of the Prince of Peace and spread the news of the coming of his kingdom. Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, to share with all who we meet the good news of your love and power. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light for the world.

The Third Sunday of Advent

Our third Advent candle reminds us of John the Baptist who prepared the way of the Lord and heralded the coming of Jesus. (The first, second and third candles are lit.)

Reading Isaiah 11:1-5, 9b

God our Father, your servants Zechariah and Elizabeth rejoiced at the birth of their son, John. He prepared people for the way of the Lord and baptised them in the river Jordan to wash away their sins.

Help us, who have been baptised in Christ, to welcome him joyfully into our hearts and to grow strong in faith. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who brought joy to the world.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Our fourth Advent candle reminds us of Mary, mother of the Lord. (The four candles are lit.)

Reading Luke 1:26-33, 38

God our father, the angel Gabriel told your servant Mary that she was to be the mother of your Son. Though she was afraid, she responded 'Yes' to your call.

Help us, who you have called to be your disciples, to recognise your voice, trust you and willingly respond, 'Yes' to your will for us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and the Prince of Peace.

Christmas Day

All the candles are lit

Today a Saviour has been born for us. He is Christ the Lord!

God our Father, today we greet the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ with joy. Help us to live in his light and to share the good news of your love to the whole world.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Word made flesh, who lived among us.

New Year

New Year is a time when we take stock and look back on what has been and focus on what is to come. Here is a prayer for New Year from the Church of England.

Eternal Lord God,

we give you thanks for bringing us through the changes of time to the beginning of another year.

Forgive us the wrong we have done in the year that is past, and help us to spend the rest of our days to your honour and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

People and Feasts of December and January

6th December - St Nicholas, a much-loved saint

One account of how Father Christmas began tells of a man named Nicholas who was born in the third century in the Greek village of Patara, on what is today the southern coast of Turkey. His family were both devout and wealthy, and when his parents died in an epidemic, Nicholas decided to use his inheritance to help people. He gave to the needy, the sick, the suffering. He dedicated his whole life to God's service and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. As a bishop in later life, he joined other bishops and priests in prison under the emperor Diocletian's fierce persecution of Christians across the Roman Empire.

Finally released, Nicholas was all the more determined to shed abroad the news of God's love. He did so by giving. One story of his generosity explains why we hang Christmas stockings over our mantelpieces today. There was a poor family with three daughters who needed dowries if they were to marry, and not be sold into slavery. Nicholas heard of their plight and tossed three bags of gold into their home through an open window – thus saving the girls from a life of misery.

The bags of gold landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. Hence the custom of children hanging out stockings – in the hope of attracting presents of their own from St Nicholas – on Christmas Eve.

The example of St Nicholas has never been forgotten – in bygone years boys in Germany and Poland would dress up as bishops on 6th December, and beg alms for the poor. In the Netherlands and Belgium 'St Nicholas' would arrive on a steamship from Spain to ride a white horse on his gift-giving rounds. To this day, 6th December is still the main day for gift-giving and merry-making in much of Europe.

And there were shepherds...

Luke's story of the birth of Jesus is brilliantly told – the angel's visit to Mary to tell her she would be mother of the long-promised Messiah, the old priest in the Temple told by another angel that his wife would have a son to be called 'John', who would prepare the people of Israel for that event, and then Mary and Joseph making the 60 mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, as required by the Roman census. When they got there, no room at the inn, and they settled instead for a convenient stable, where Mary gave birth to a boy child.

Suddenly, Luke changes the tone. 'And there were shepherds ...' – that's what he actually wrote, just like that. 'And there were shepherds', doing exactly what shepherds do, looking after their flocks by night. But this night was different: yet another angelic message – a call to abandon their sheep and go into Bethlehem to see the baby Messiah. They were given directions and a 'sign' to identify Him. He would be lying in a feeding trough. Well, at least they would recognise that.

And why the shepherds, in this glorious story of our salvation? Because the event needed witnesses, and the chosen witnesses would be this bunch of scruffy, smelly shepherds straight from the sheep-pen. Nothing could speak more eloquently of God's purpose than that. This was not a Saviour for the strong, rich and powerful, but for everybody. The carpenter and his wife guarded the Saviour of the world, and the very first witnesses were not kings or priests but a handful of shabby shepherds.

6th January The Epiphany

The feast of the Epiphany recalls the visit of the Magi - Wise Men or Kings - to Jesus. In cribs you will sometimes see the Magi outside of the crib, on a church window sill maybe, rather than in the scene, and this is to show that they arrived later than the shepherds, maybe as long as two years after the events we recall at Christmas. In the bible, we hear that where the shepherds visited the baby in the manger, the Magi visited the child at the house. And while tradition has three of them, there is no number actually mentioned. The feast emphasises the coming of Jesus to the whole world, gentiles will now be included in God's salvation plan. And this is echoed in the fact that during Epiphanytide we pray for the worldwide mission of the church with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



Norwich Cathedral Services and Events

Exhibition: Edith Cavell in her own voice

Tues-Thurs until 23 Dec 2025 Location: Library

Edith Cavell in her own voice aims to tell the story of Norfolk nurse and First World War heroine Edith through her own words, paintings and possessions, rather than through the propaganda that followed her execution by the Germans on October 12 1915 for helping some 200 Allied soldiers escape occupied Belgium.

Art in the Close

Sept 2025 to Spring 2026 Location: Cathedral Close

Ancient architecture and contemporary sculpture combine in an exciting new exhibition of outdoor art at Norwich Cathedral.

Art in the Close will run from September 2025 to Spring 2026 and sees the Cathedral Close become the inspirational setting for a mix of works by artists Lynn Chadwick and John Maine.

The free open-air exhibition is planned to be the first in a new rolling programme of art at the Cathedral and it will give visitors the chance to enjoy discovering works in three different areas of the Close.

Candlelit Advent Procession

30 Nov 2025, 18:00

Join the Cathedral for Advent carols and readings in a candlelit procession as we begin our preparations for Christmas.

Evensong with the making of a Chorister Bishop

05 Dec 2025, 17:30

Reviving a custom from the Middle Ages, one of the Cathedral's choristers will be made the 'Chorister Bishop' during this special Evensong celebrating St Nicholas, the patron saint of children, concluding with the blessing of the outdoor crib outside the Hostry. We will be joined by the Bishop of Thetford for this special service.

Christmas Procession with Carols.

Tuesday 23 December at 7pm

Hear the story of Christmas told with carols and readings as the Cathedral Choir moves in procession through the whole Cathedral. This service will also take place on Sunday 21 December at 3.30pm and Wednesday 24 December at 3.30pm.

No booking is required, all Cathedral services are open to all and no tickets needed. Admission free.

You can find more information about these events and more by visiting the website at www.cathedral.org