

STOURHEAD BENEFICE NEWS

Editor: Sue Davison - 01440 705829 - suzannedavison747@yahoo.co.uk

June & July 2026



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**



BARNARDISTON - GREAT BRADLEY - LITTLE BRADLEY - KEDINGTON
GREAT THURLOW - LITTLE THURLOW - GREAT WRATTING - LITTLE WRATTING

Rector : Fr Christopher Giles

Benefice email - stourheadbenefice@gmail.com - 01440 762901

Or use the QR code for more information on our Benefice



Ministry Team

Father Chris Giles	01440 762901
Jill Davis	01440 713137
Ruth Hopper	01440 783125
Peter Smith	01440 783278
Mary Upton	01440 706237
Benefice Safeguarding Officers	Ruth Hopper and Naomi Shelmerdine 07405 624132

Mission Statement: Stourhead Benefice, striving to be a welcoming community for you, whoever, wherever you are, journeying in the footsteps of Jesus.

Benefice email: stourheadbenefice@gmail.com

Father Chris's day off is Friday – in an emergency please contact a member of the Ministry Team.

Church Wardens

Barnardiston:

Les Jobson 01440 786568

Great Thurlow:

George Vestey 01440 783240

Little Bradley:

Mirjam Gault 01440 783756

Colin Clifton-Brown 01440 783261

Little Thurlow:

Robin Vestey 01440 783217

Edward Perrott 07775 731805

Great Bradley:

Sue Ireland 01440 783595

Keith Willington 01440 783607

Great Wrattling:

Simon Corbett 01440 783698

Ben Stanton 01440 783103

Kedington:

Jill Davis 01440 713137

Marion Farrant 07833 431184

Little Wrattling:

Naomi Shelmerdine 01440 705786

Editor: Sue Davison - 01440 705829 - suzannedavison747@yahoo.co.uk

Deadline for next issue (August/September) 15th July

The Stourhead Benefice is grateful to Barnardiston School for printing the Benefice News.

Father Chris writes

Dear Friends
Now in my seventh year as Rector and having been blessed with the care of eight wonderful parishes and their Church buildings, I continue to be deeply moved by the generosity of each of our communities. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone across our parishes for your continued support.

Whether through your time, your presence, your prayers, or your practical and financial help, you play a vital role in keeping our Churches alive and welcoming. Our ancient buildings are more than just structures - they are places where lives are marked and memories are made in worship, where families gather for baptisms, where couples begin their married life, and where we come together in farewell and thanksgiving for loved ones. Maintaining these sacred spaces, and the life of the Church within them, does of course come with ongoing financial costs. Unlike what is sometimes assumed, that the national Church props us up, each of our Churches depends

largely on the generosity of its own community to remain open and be able to minister to those who live there.

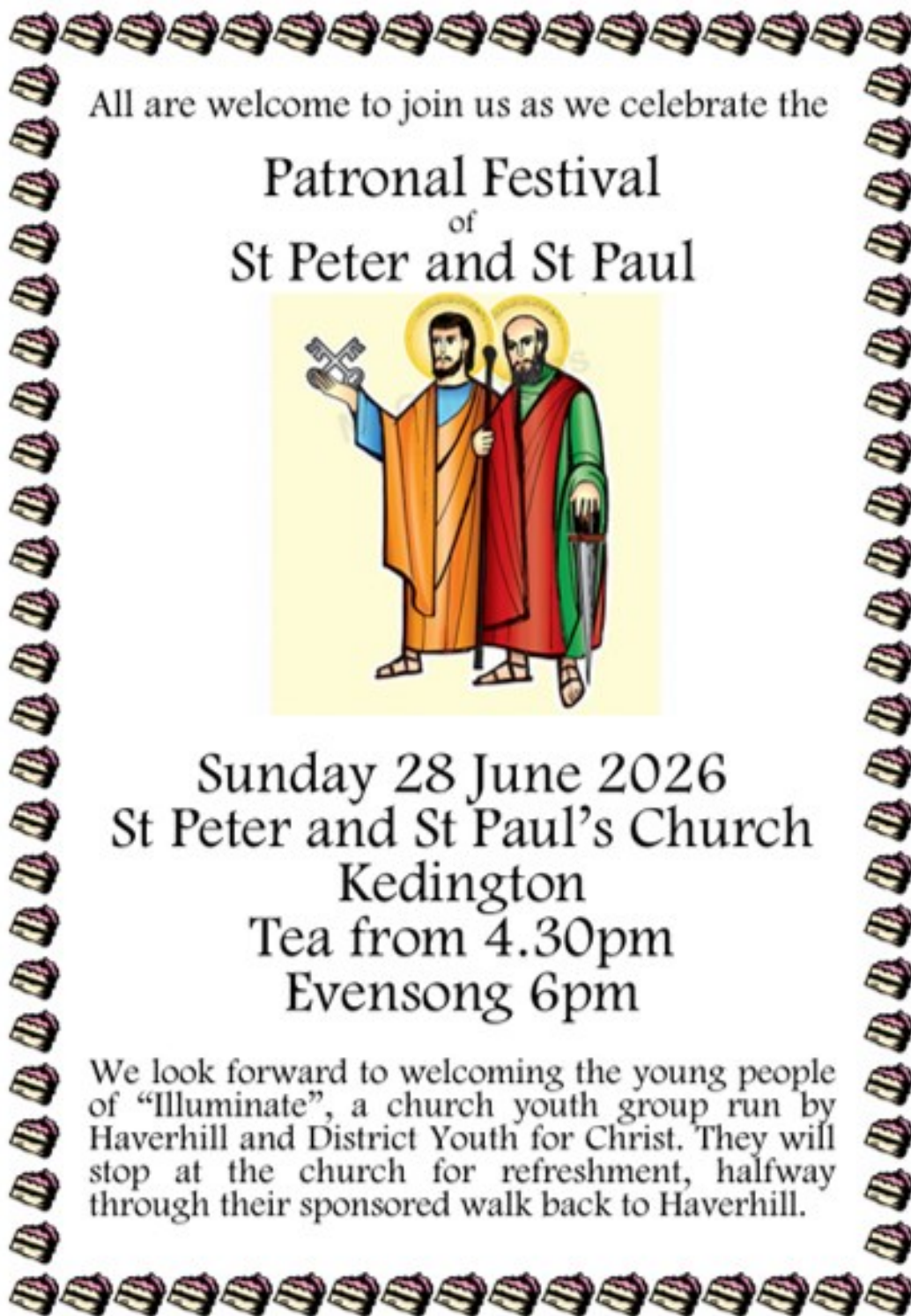
The Benefice share we must pay this year is over £68,000. Along with this there is insurance and other bills. Every gift - large or small - helps ensure that our Churches remain open to serve future generations and that they are not forced to close. Some people also choose to support the church in a lasting way by remembering them in their will. This is a deeply personal decision, but one that can make a profound and enduring difference.

If you are able to support your Church financially, either now or by considering a legacy gift, I warmly encourage you to do so. If you would like to make a contribution, or to have a confidential conversation about supporting the Church in this way, please feel free to contact to me, the Treasurer, or one of the Churchwardens at any of our Churches. All such conversations will be treated with the utmost discretion and care.

Thank you once again for your generosity, your faithfulness, and your commitment. With your support, we can ensure that our Churches continue to stand at the heart of our communities - serving, supporting,


and welcoming all, both now and for generations to come.

Every blessing
Fr Chris



All are welcome to join us as we celebrate the

Patronal Festival of St Peter and St Paul



Sunday 28 June 2026
St Peter and St Paul's Church
Kedington
Tea from 4.30pm
Evensong 6pm

We look forward to welcoming the young people of "Illuminate", a church youth group run by Haverhill and District Youth for Christ. They will stop at the church for refreshment, halfway through their sponsored walk back to Haverhill.

Pilgrimage

This is a word that arises frequently in our lives and speech and we have probably all got our own idea of what it means to us. I want to take a little time to examine its roots and relevance. Its foundations in English can be found in the Latin 'peregrinus' meaning travelling but the term can really be traced to the early existence of mankind. We have always been travellers searching for something new or deeper in our lives. All the major faiths in the world involve pilgrimage in some form or other, usually on foot.

A pilgrimage is a physical journey, often on foot, to a sacred or historically significant place undertaken for spiritual reflection, personal transformation or devotion. It is often undertaken by people searching to find out more about themselves and not necessarily having a firm belief in anything.

Hindu pilgrimage uses the term Tirtha to refer to their journeys. There are many sites in the Indian sub continent categorised by tradition and geography: The Char Dham Circuit - Badrinath, Dwarka, Puri and Rameswaram dedicated to the major gods.

The Sapta Puri – seven Holy Cities including Varanasi, Ayodhya, Kanchipuram. Lord Shiva's 12 Jyotirlingas – Temples representing the manifestations of Shiva's light .

Shakta Pithas - 51 shrines scattered across South Asia dedicated to the goddess.

Buddhism also has sacred sites related to where the Buddha lived :

Lumbini in Nepal, where the Buddha was born.

Bodh Gaya in India, the most sacred site in the Buddhist world where he is said to have attained full enlightenment beneath the Bodi Tree.

Sarnath in India where he delivered his first sermon.

Kushinagar in India where he passed away in a forest grove and entered Nirvana.

As Buddhism spread, it led to many new places of pilgrimage and guided walks, several in the United Kingdom.

Islam, evolving from the teachings of Mohammad in Saudi Arabia also has many sacred sites but the primary site of pilgrimage is to his birthplace in Mecca. Every adult Muslim who is healthy and has the necessary financial means should make Hajj to Mecca once in their lifetime and if possible visit

Medina, where he is buried. The third major site of pilgrimage is the Al-aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the first direction of prayer for early Muslims.

Jewish pilgrimage centres historically on the concept of Aliyah l'Regel (ascending on foot), a biblical commandment for Jews to travel to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. While this ended physically with the destruction of the temple in A.D.70, the spiritual practice remains a vital part of Jewish life.

Christianity also seeks our faith's holy places and many yearn to visit the Holy Land to experience the actual sites mentioned in the Old and New Testament. Although much has changed politically and structurally, much is gained from being in the place where Jesus walked.

Throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East there are many places and ways leading to them which are followed by pilgrims - and have been for many centuries - Camino de Santiago and Lourdes to name but two. In the UK there are many tracks and pathways that have been followed for many centuries to places regarded as holy. Evidence exists for pilgrimages back to Saxon times. Canterbury was an obvious goal with routes from across England most notably recorded in the Canterbury Tales. In the north, St Cuthbert's Way, from Melrose Abbey to Lindisfarne and from Holy Island to Durham are well known routes. In Scotland, there are several routes leading to Iona.

Locally the pathways to Walsingham pass through our Benefice and St Edmund's Way leads to Bury St Edmunds. Bradwell has routes to St Peter's on the Wall and there are dedicated sites on the internet where you can find many other pilgrimage ways in our locality.

As a society, we seem to have a growing need to step back from the frantic pace of modern society and adopt a slower and perhaps deeper approach to life. A pilgrimage gives us the opportunity to do this whether as a group or alone.

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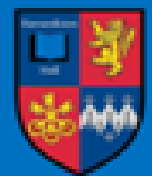


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Sunday 21 June 2026

We will join with Fr Chris Giles as he celebrates 10 years since his ordination on Sunday 21 June at 10am Eucharist at St Mary's Great Wratting. There will be refreshments after the service.

**Kedington 'Home-made and Home-grown' Show
(Formerly Kedington Horticultural Show)
Saturday 12 September 2026**

This year we are holding the Home-made and Home-grown show and church fete on different days. We look forward to seeing you and receiving lots of entries. The QR code gives details of the schedule. Please check carefully; there have been a few changes to the rules and the schedule. More information in the next issue of the Benefice News.



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Friday 31 July 4pm - 8pm

Saturday 1 August 10am - 8pm

Sunday 2 August 10am - 6pm

followed by a service of Evening Prayer

- Free entry
- Ample parking
- Jigsaw puzzles on display and for sale
- Refreshments throughout including hot drinks, cakes, real ale, wine and soft drinks
- Tombola, greetings cards, and pre-loved books also on sale

A warm welcome awaits you

All proceeds to Kedington Church

For more information call

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Great Wrattling Village Fete



Saturday June 6th 2026

1pm Hall Farm, Great Wrattling

Fun day for all the family!

Bouncy Castle

Kids play area

Pre-loved stall inc. books and bric-a-brac

Tea, coffee and cake

BBQ (veggie option available),
wine, beer and summer cocktails

Raffle

Traditional fete stalls

Entertainment by the


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St Marys Church

Great Wrattling

The Doomesday Book 1086



Admission £2.50 Children free
(sorry no dogs)

Sunlit from heaven

'Morning has Broken', often heard at our morning school assemblies, and sung with a kind of out-of-tune-gusto that is best described as 'Highly Spirited,' remains a favourite hymn to this day. It is one of the simplest, we all know the tune, even if the words get jumbled. Perhaps its greatest strength is that it does what it says on the tin - reminds us what an utter privilege it is to experience the beginning of a new day.

We of course forget how special that is, why? Because it happens every single-blooming-day-of-the-week! The magic is lost in the mundane. That's not a tragedy of course, again, that's part of its power. Who else has been awe-struck after opening their curtains to find a glorious morning scene awaiting them, a scene of such devastating beauty outside, and wondered if anyone else had ever viewed such a marvel. (Apart from Shelly and Keats that is?!) Who, may I ask, has not been lifted in spirits by the warm glow of the morning sun, has not sighed at sight of the snow-covered earth, not yet spoiled by human feet, (but dotted by tiny birds feet!) has not simply been humbled in the miracle that is the beginning of a new day. Well, you'd have to be made of stone if you hadn't.

They might not catch us dumb struck every morning, but the miracle has happened all the same. Each one a heaven-sent calling to us. A fresh start. A new day. Again and again. A chance to learn a new skill, be better, be kinder, make bath-tub-gin. And if we miss that chance many times over, we still get another one. It's incredible really!

Let us not forget what an utter privilege that is too. Mornings don't just happen around Spring when vicars start describing them in their sermons, oh no; mornings come even if we'd rather they didn't. Sometimes the last thing we want is the chippery song of a blackbird in our ear!

Mornings bring their fair share of heartache, and they often bring hope that is dashed by midday. Yet still they come, and we are the lucky ones really, aren't we? To see the sun rise must be one of the greatest blessings we on earth are given. Enjoy the summer ones in the coming weeks!

Spencer Mitchell

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Kedington Duck Race 2026

The Annual Duck Race in Kedington has been run for over 20 years. It is organised by the Kedington Church Restoration Fund Committee. All proceeds from the event are put towards the restoration of our beautiful and historic church building.

This year, the Environment Agency (EA) was pumping water down the river during April and the beginning of May, making the river flow deeper, faster and stronger than usual for this time of year. Following communication with the EA, some changes were made to the running of the race. Instead of wrangling the ducks by walking in the river, two people rode in canoes to keep the ducks moving. The finish line was moved down the river, further away from the weir. As usual, marshals kept the people watching the race from going too near the edge of the riverbank and kept them from lingering on the road at the Silver Street Bridge.

At 12.30pm on Monday 4 May, people began to gather at the Silver Street Park Bridge. Duck Mac-Duck-Face was there to rally his racing duck friends. There were a few duck numbers still available for sale, but they had all gone by 12.55pm. The race was started at 1pm by Fr Chris Giles and Paul Norman who opened the sacks of ducks and 700 of them tumbled into the river. The ducks set off at quite a fast pace. Those who were on the meadow, waiting to go to the finish line, were surprised to see the crowd of Duck Race Followers coming across the meadow only 5 minutes after 1pm. The ducks were racing faster than ever before!

The finishing line marshals got into position just in time to catch the winning duck after only 16 minutes and 22 seconds. The fastest time ever! More ducks swam over the weir and the second and third ducks were also caught. All the ducks continued to strive for the finish line where they were gathered together and taken to cool-off and dry-out before being tucked away in their nests until next year.

The bar and barbeque was open on the Great Meadow, near the finishing line. As the race was over in such a short time, the cooks and bar staff struggled to keep up with demand. However, the crowds waited patiently and eventually everyone got the burger or hot dog and beer, wine or soft drink they desired. All the food was sold!

The winning duck was No. 113 owned by Matthew and Xanthe.
Second place was No. 520 owned by Amy.
Third place was Ann and Kirk's Duck No.6.

Cash prizes were accompanied by specialty ducks for the prize winners to keep.

The proceeds from this event totalled £1079, which was another record. Thank you to everyone who played a part in the event: -

The Spar and the Butchers for selling tickets before the day.

The canoeists and the marshals.

The team who caught the ducks at the finish line.

The duck sellers.

Those who worked on the BBQ and the bar.

The Kedington Community Association for the loan of the fencing and for loaning and erecting the marquees and tables

Duck-Mac-Duckface who kept everyone buoyant.

Special thanks to all those who supported the race, especially those who queued patiently to buy food and drink.



Photos showing Fr Chris presenting Matthew and Xanthe their prize and with Duck- Mac-Duckface.

Buddy's Blog - May 2026

Hello Readers

It's me, Buddy, writing to you from the Rectory in Kedington. It occurred to me that some of you may not know who I am and who is in my dog-family. So I thought I would give you a little run-down of who we all are.

I am Buddy. I am a ten-year-old labrador. I moved here with Mummy, Daddy, Logan and Jacob when the world had to close down because of the bad disease infecting lots of people. When we moved here I was the only dog in the family. Our walks were quiet then. We had Whiskey, the house cat, but he moved out with big brother Logan and lives with him now. We miss him.

Then came Opie. He arrived in the middle of the night, near Christmas. He was rescued from a bad place, a long way from here. Opie has long legs and big ears. He is brown and black and is quite nervous. When we are in the garden, he barks at everything. We chase the birds together and we go for walks together. I love Opie but he is exhausting!

Then came Millie. Millie is a long-haired dachshund. She has deep brown eyes and a pointed nose. She has very short legs and can't keep up with me and Opie so she has a walk without us. The garden has become her territory, so we leave her to deal with keeping the pigeons off Mummy's garden.

Last year, Millie had three puppies. Two of them, Pip and Willow, were not very well and they died but the third one, Merry, is growing into a fine little dog. He is like his Mum as he has short legs and long ears and likes to play a lot.

I am quite an old dog now so I cannot play like I used to. I leave Opie to play with Merry and they have a fine time together playing rough and tumble. Sometimes I wish they would just settle down and sleep so that we can all have a bit of peace.

Millie gets lots of peace and quiet. She is sometimes shut in the dining room, on her own and she goes out in the garden on her own. I wonder why we are

not allowed to see her then? I don't think she has been naughty and I am pretty sure we have not done anything wrong (but with Opie, who knows?). She does smell different at these times.

I'm not Merry's Dad, or Opie's, but as I am older than them, I feel some responsibility for them. I try to be patient and kind but at times it is hard.

Until next time, your friend

Buddy

*".. do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."
Ephesians 6 v 4*



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A Prayer (for the 80 year olds)

Today Dear Lord I am eighty and
there's much I haven't done,
I hope Dear Lord you let me live until
I'm eighty one?
But then, if I haven't finished all I
want to do,
Would you let me stay awhile until
I'm eighty two?
So many places I want to go, so much
to see
Do you think that you could manage
to make it eighty three?
The world is changing very fast, there
is so much in store
I'd like it very much to live until I'm
eighty four
And if by then I'm still alive, I'd like to
stay till eighty five.
More planes will be up in the air, so
I'd really like to stick

And see what happens to the world
when I'm eighty six.
I know Dear Lord it's a lot to ask, and
it must be nice in heaven
But I really would like to stay until I'm
eighty seven.
I know by then I won't be fast and
sometimes will be late.
But it would be so pleasant to be
around at eighty eight.
I will have seen so many things and
had a wonderful time
So, I'm sure that I'd be willing to
leave at eighty nine. Maybe?
Just one more thing I'd like to say,
Dear Lord,
And I thank you kindly.
But if it's okay with you, I'd love to
live past 90!

Anonymous
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You are invited to a



Midsummer Party

In the Churchyard, St Mary's Church, Great Bradley

Saturday 27th June 2026
6.00pm to 8.30pm

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Access to our churches in the Stourhead Benefice

- Great Bradley, Great Thurlow, Kedington, Little Wratting and Little Thurlow each have a ramp that is put in place when needed.
- Great Wratting does not have a ramp but the step into the church is quite shallow, however the slope to the church gate is steep. Arrangements could be made for wheelchair users to park in the Rectory and access the churchyard through the side gate but this is across grass.
- Little Bradley does not have a ramp. The step into the church is 4 inches deep.
- Barnardiston does not have a ramp and the entry into the church requires stepping over a raised threshold.

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Events Diary

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
Saturday 6th June	From 1pm	Great Wratting Church Fete
Saturday 13th June	From 1pm	Meadowlark, Great Meadow at Kedington. Walking Pageant starts at 1pm.
Friday 26th June	6 - 8pm	Little Thurlow Garden Party at The Grange. More details to follow.
Saturday 27th June	6 - 8.30pm	Midsummer Party with Jazz music in Churchyard at St Mary's Gt Bradley. Tickets £10 each children welcome. See poster in Benefice news for more information.
Sunday 28th June	2 - 4pm	Great Bradley Church Fete - see poster in Benefice News for more information.
Tuesdays	10 am -12 noon	'Dolce Gusto' Coffee morning at St Peter & St Paul's Kedington.
Thursdays	2 - 4 pm	Centre café at Kedington Community Centre.



Calling all pianists or keyboard players

Do you know someone who can play the piano or keyboard who might be interested in discovering more about the organs in the Benefice or even able to join the rota of regular organists?

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Gospel Readings during June

7	1st Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 9: 9 - 13 and 18 - 26
14	2nd Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 9: 35 - 10: 8
21	3rd Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 10: 24 - 39
28	St Peter and St Paul	Matthew 10: 40 - 42

Gospel Readings during July

5	5th Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 11: 16 - 19 and 25 - 30
12	6th Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 13: 1 - 9 and 18 - 23
19	7th Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 13: 24 - 30 and 36 - 43
26	8th Sunday after Trinity	Mark 1: 14 - 20

Gospel Readings during August

2	9th Sunday after Trinity	Matthew 14: 13 - 21
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Evening Prayer on Mondays

Monday Evening Prayer is at Kedington Church at 5pm.

All are welcome to join this short intimate service as we pray for the world, the Church, our communities and ourselves.



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Churches in the Benefice open for Private Prayer:

St Mary the Virgin, Great Bradley is always open for private prayer.

St Peter's Little Thurlow is open daily usually at 9am and closes about 5 or 6pm.

St Peter and St Paul's, Kedington will be open daily between 9am and 4pm.

Home Communion – Pastoral Care

The Blessed Sacrament is perpetually reserved for the Communion of the housebound, the sick and dying. Please inform Fr Chris, or a member of the Ministry Team, of parishioners who are sick or in hospital, and of those who are in need of pastoral care. The Sacrament of Reconciliation by arrangement with the Rector.

Baptisms: We welcome into God's family Hugo Felton who was baptised at the Church of St Mary the Virgin Great Bradley on 18th April and Maksym Shearer who was baptised at All Saints Church Great Thurlow on 2nd May.

Confirmations at The Cathedral of Bury St Edmunds: We welcome Graeme Van de Zande, Ivy Jackson and Julia Brown who were confirmed on 3rd May.

Weddings: We congratulate Laurence Kendrick and Teia Yule who were married at St Peter and St Paul's Church Kedington on 23rd May. We also congratulate Jon Higgins and Abigail Mayzes who were married at All Saints Church Little Bradley on 29th May. We wish all them well at the start of their married life together.

Funerals: The funeral of the late Christopher Turner was held at St Peter and St Paul's Church Kedington on 13th April. The funeral of the late Keith Simpkin was also held at St Peter and St Paul's Church Kedington on 15th April. The funeral of the late Ken Young took place at West Suffolk Crematorium on 12th May.

'May they rest in peace and rise in glory'

Thinking of a christening or a wedding in church? Please take a look at our Benefice website where there is useful information about both baptisms and weddings.

Holy Communion

Sharing of the common cup is now permitted. However, if you do not want to receive from the Chalice, please say 'intinct' as the Priest approaches you and they will intinct the wafer in Consecrated wine from a separate Chalice. Good hygiene practises are maintained at Holy Communion. Gluten-free Communion wafers are available - please ask when you come up to the altar rail.

SERVICE ROTA

June 2026

Sun	7	10:00	Little Bradley	Sung Eucharist - 1st Sunday after Trinity
		10:00	Kedington	Family Service
Sun	14	8:00	Kedington	No service
		10:00	Great Thurlow	Sung Eucharist - 2nd Sunday after Trinity
		18:00	Meadowlark	Kedington Community Centre Praise
Sun	21	10:00	Great Wratting	Sung Eucharist - 3rd Sunday after Trinity
Sun	28	10:00	Little Thurlow	Sung Eucharist - 4th Sunday after Trinity
		18:00	Kedington	Evensong

July 2026

Sun	5	10:00	Kedington	Sung Eucharist - 5th Sunday after Trinity
Sun	12	8:00	Kedington	Said Eucharist - 6th Sunday after Trinity
		10:00	Great Thurlow	Sung Eucharist
Sun	19	10:00	Little Thurlow	Sung Eucharist - 7th Sunday after Trinity
		10:00	Great Wratting	Family Service
Sun	26	10:00	Great Bradley	Sung Eucharist - 8th Sunday after Trinity
		18:00	Kedington	Evensong

August 2026

Sun	2	10:00	Little Bradley	Sung Eucharist - 9th Sunday after Trinity
		18:00	Kedington	Evening Prayer (Jigsaw Festival)

Mid-week Said Eucharist at Kedington on Wednesdays at 10am

**I will be on study leave (sabbatical) from 20th July until 13th October. Please see our website for contact details in my absence.
Fr Chris**