

PARISH CHURCH NEWS

Ss. Peter & Paul, Clare
with St. Mary the Virgin, Poslingford

The Rev'd Mark Woodrow

Vicar and Rector of the Stour Valley Benefice

(Tel: 01787 277515 Email: rector@stourvalley.org.uk)

(Usual Rest Day: Monday)

The Rev'd Dr. Karen Smith

Assistant Curate

(Tel: 01440 594036 Email: drkarensmith@me.com)

(Usual Rest Day: Saturday)

The Rev'd Sarah Smith

Non-Stipendiary Assistant Curate (Deacon)

(Tel: 07795 530881 Email: revsarahsmith@outlook.com)

(Usual Rest Days: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday)

No. 461

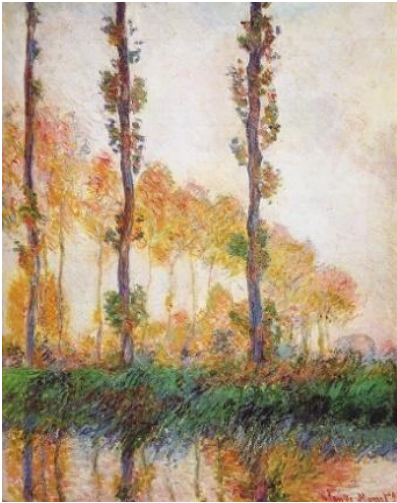
September 2026



St. Michael and All Angels
Feast Day: 29th September

Curate's Chronicles – August 2026

The 'New Curate's' Chronicles: September 2026 (Autumn leaves)



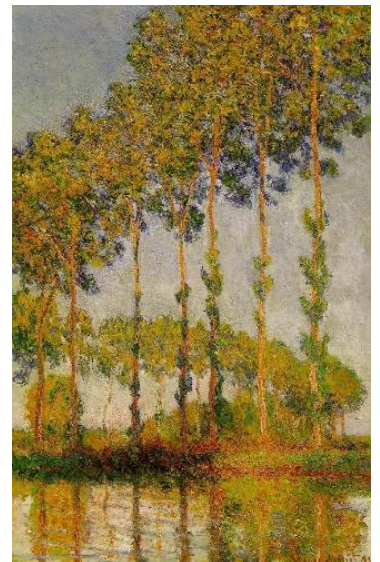
Claude Monet painted the famous Poplars series in 1891 and 1892. The series contains 24 paintings that depict a group of trees that lined the Epte River in France.

In this first painting (Poplars Autumn, 1891), the leaves are full of warm yellows, oranges, and reds. The sky is light and tinted with yellow. The greens along the shore are rich and dark and act as a point of contrast for the surrounding warm colours.

But, Monet was not satisfied with just one autumn painting. In this second artwork (Poplars, Row in Autumn 1891) he emphasizes the natural environment, showcasing the stunning seasonal change in a subtly different way.

Upon viewing this second painting, one is immediately struck by the vibrant hues of autumn. A row of tall poplar trees dominates the composition, their slender trunks rising majestically toward the sky. The leaves exhibit a splendid array of yellows, oranges, and greens, testifying to the changing seasons.

Beneath the poplars lies the mirror-like surface of a body of water, which serves to reflect the striking colours of the trees and the diffuse light of the autumn sky. In the background, the sky is painted in a subtle grey, allowing the colours of the trees to stand out prominently.



Autumn is a season marked by change, harvest, and preparation for the coming winter. It is a time of transformation in nature, where the beauty of the changing leaves and the gathering of the harvest serve as metaphors for spiritual growth, reflection, and the cycles of life. The Bible often uses the imagery of seasons, including autumn, to convey deeper spiritual truths about life, change, and God's provision. *"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens."* Ecclesiastes 3:1

This Old Testament verse reminds us that our lives are also full of seasons, each life with subtle individualities like the Monet paintings. Autumn, with its transition from the vibrancy of summer to the stillness of winter, symbolizes the natural cycles of change and transition, encouraging us to embrace every stage in our lives with faith and to accept that each season of life has its divine purpose, irrespective of our understanding.

The changes we experience will be deeply personal to each of us, but we all have the assurance of God's love for us. When you wake to a season that feels unfamiliar—whether

it's a new job, a shift in family life, or a time of waiting—remember that the same God who led you here will also lead you through.

My very best wishes to you all,

The Rev'd Sarah Smith
Curate



The Rev'd Sarah Smith was ordained Deacon at St. Edmundsbury Cathedral on Saturday, 27th June 2026. Sarah has lived in Suffolk for more than 30 years, and has now (mostly) retired from teaching. Sarah will be serving the Stour Valley Benefice as a non-stipendiary Deacon and will, God willing, be ordained a Priest in June 2027.

Our existing curate (The Revd Dr Karen Smith) has completed her Curacy but continues to serve the Stour Valley Benefice whilst she seeks her own permanent Benefice.

**PCC
MEETING**



Please note that the next meeting of the PCC is scheduled for Friday, 25 September. If there is any matter which you would like dealt with, please speak to the Secretary or any PCC member in advance of this date. However, some questions may already have been addressed, and answers can be provided without the need for a matter to be taken any further.



"I want my dinner – NOW!"
(St. Peter's, Great Walsingham)

The Retreat

Henry Vaughan (1621-1695)

Happy those early days when I
Shined in my angel infancy,
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my tongue to fancy aught
But a white celestial thought.
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first love
And looking back at that short space,
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing would when dwell an hour
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to would
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness,

O how I long to travel back
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence the enlightened spirit sees
That shady city of palm trees.
But ah, my soul with too much stay
Is drunk and staggers in the way.
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move,
And when this dust falls to the urn
In that state I came, return.

RIDE + STRIDES for Churches

Here it comes again, eagerly anticipated by all concerned!?! It's the Suffolk Churches Ride and Stride... taking place on 12th September 9.00 to 5.00. So, get out your walking boots, make sure your bike is safe, sharpen your pencil (not all three!) and prepare for this event.

As you probably know, the Suffolk Churches Ride and Stride is a fundraiser for the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, which helps churches with vital repairs and projects. Here in Clare, some of us, by participating and gaining sponsorship, have helped raise money, half of which goes to SHCT and half to our own church funds.

If you are able to help in any way – cycling or walking from church to church, 'church sitting' on the day (welcoming and signing forms for riders, striders and vintage car drivers), please do let me know. I shall be leaving out sponsor forms and a church sitting rota. And don't forget to sponsor someone if possible!

If you need further details, please see me.

Mary Owen

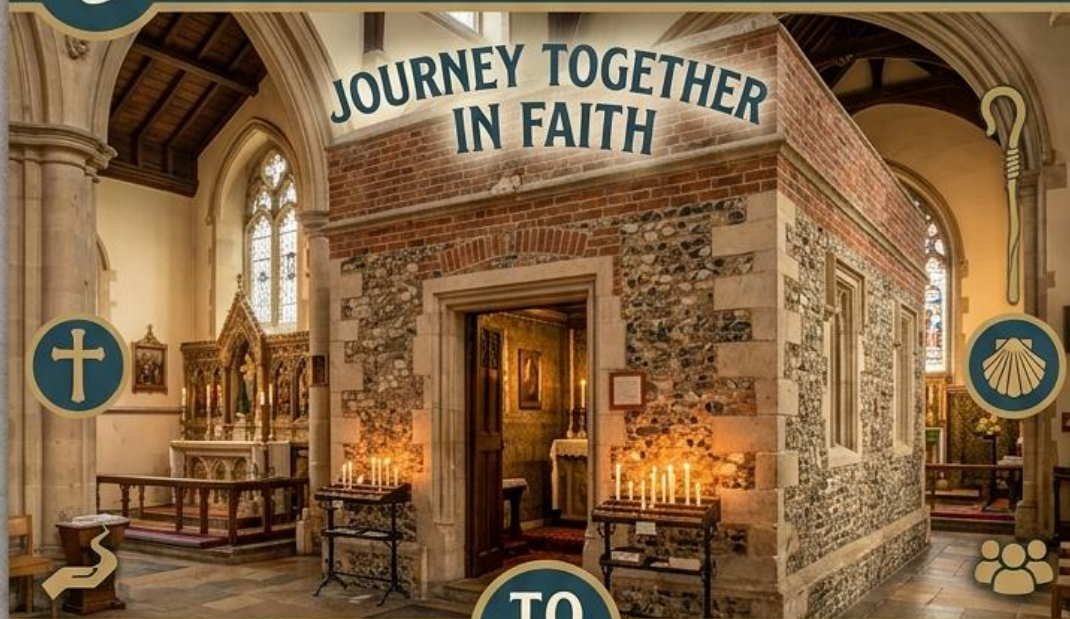


The Vicarage Garden Party

After a long hot summer, it was ironic that the weather decided to return to its normal Bank Holiday offering! However, despite rain overnight, the weather was dry for the Bank Holiday Monday afternoon, so it wasn't necessary to revert to "Plan B" and hold it in the church.

Thank you to the team who organised this wonderful annual event, to those who staffed the stalls, set up and cleared up afterwards, and especially to everyone who came along and helped raise £ 574.50, much needed with the ongoing challenges of raising our contribution to the Parish Share, Maintaining and Restoring the Church, as well as its ongoing ministry to the community.

BENEFICE RESIDENTIAL PILGRIMAGE



TO WALSINGHAM



21st September 2027
to 23rd September 2027



COST

£210 PER PERSON

Non-Refundable Deposit

Payable of

£40 PER PERSON

at time of booking

Additional details available
from Revd Mark or Revd Sarah

COFFEE CONCERTS

ST PETER & ST PAUL, CLARE

Coffee is served from 11.00; concerts start at 11.30 and run for approximately 45 minutes

Saturday, **19th September**: music for clarinet and piano played by husband and wife team, **KOREN WILMER** and **ANDREW PARNELL** from Ely



BONUS CONCERT

Saturday, **17th October**: **Stour Wind Decet**, and ensemble of 10 local wind musicians

*Admission is **free**, with a retiring collection. After expenses, remaining funds will support the work and fabric of St Peter and Paul Church, Clare.*

Stour Valley Benefice - Services for September 2026

Sunday, 6th September: Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Sarah Smith</i>
Clare:	11:00	Holy Communion & Baptism	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Sunday, 13th September: Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Hundon:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith</i>
Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Sarah Smith</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Wixoe:	13:00	Wedding – Lever & Pinto	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Clare:	16:00	Evensong	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

Saturday, 19th September:

Cavendish:	14:00	Wedding – Meekings & Russell	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
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Sunday, 20th September: Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Liz Paxton</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Harvest Festival	<i>Led by The Ven. Dr David Jenkins</i>
Clare:	11:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Liz Paxton</i>
Poslingford:	16:00	Evening Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Sarah Smith</i>

Thursday, 24th September:

Stoke by Clare:	19:00	Harvest Festival	<i>Led by The Revd Sarah Smith</i>
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Sunday, 27th September: Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Sarah Smith</i>
Wixoe:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Simon Hill</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Dr Simon Hill</i>
Clare:	11:00	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Sarah Smith</i>
Hundon:	18:00	Harvest Festival	<i>Led by The Revd Sarah Smith</i>

Saturday, 3rd October:

Wixoe:	18:30	Harvest Festival	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
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Sunday, 4th October: Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

Stoke by Clare:	09:00	Holy Communion	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Cavendish:	10:30	Morning Prayer	<i>Led by The Revd Sarah Smith</i>
Clare:	11:00	Holy Communion & Harvest Festival	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>
Cavendish:	14:00	Baptism	<i>Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow</i>

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Closing date for copy: 25th of each month for inclusion in following month's edition