



Leiston and Saxmundham United Church

TOGETHER

Quarterly Newsletter

November, December 2025 & January 2026

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## Minister's Letter

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### More Than Just a Friendly Hello

"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Romans 15:7



Churches are often very good at talking about being "welcoming." We print it on banners, put it on our websites, and say it from the front. And that's a good thing! A smile at the door, a warm handshake, someone to show you where the coffee is - all of that matters. First impressions shape how people feel, and hospitality is a deeply biblical virtue.

But welcome is one thing, inclusion goes a step further. Though they are related, they aren't quite the same thing. *Welcome* is the open door. *Inclusion* is having a real place at the table.

Think of it like hosting a dinner party. A guest who rings the bell is welcomed in: coat taken, drink offered, polite conversation made. But inclusion happens when they feel free to join the chatter around the table, help themselves to seconds, or even wash up at the end. It's when they stop being "the guest" and start being "part of the family."

Church can be like that too. We might welcome people in with smiles and tea and the news sheet. But inclusion happens when their voices are genuinely heard, their stories valued, their gifts shared. Inclusion isn't just "letting people in." It's recognising that they belong—not as visitors, but as co-creators of the church community.

Romans 15:7 reminds us to "welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you." And how has Christ welcomed us? Not as guests on probation, but as beloved children of God. Jesus didn't just let people follow him politely from the edge of the crowd; he sat with them, ate with them, trusted them with ministry, gave them a voice. That's inclusion.

True inclusion often happens in small, practical ways. It might mean giving someone a role, listening to their ideas, changing our language to make it easier for newcomers, or making sure leadership reflects the breadth of who we are. It's also about being willing to *change* as a community, not expecting others to simply fit in to how things have always been.

A church can be warm and friendly without being truly inclusive. But a church that is both welcoming and inclusive reflects something of God's kingdom: a place where

there are no outsiders, only fellow children of God, gathered around the same table. So perhaps the question for us isn't just, "Are we welcoming?" but, "Are we making room for people to belong?"

Blessings,

*Revd David Rees*

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## News

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### Leiston Hall Carpet

Following the rather dramatic flooding of the church hall earlier in the year, and with thanks to Marion for pursuing the insurance claim, we are pleased to say that the carpet in the hall has been replaced. The plywood under the old carpet was also saturated and warped so this too had to be replaced. We now have a much smarter, cleaner looking carpet with fewer problematic joins.



The ceiling is awaiting attention in the Spring but overall things are looking better. We have plans for further improvements in the coming months and years.

### Saxmundham Chapel 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Back in September (doesn't time fly) we celebrated 175 years since the opening of Saxmundham Chapel. The history of the church (its predecessors in Sweffling and Renham) in goes right back to 1650.



It was a joy and blessing to welcome folk to join in our celebration tea and open church on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September. There were various objects, documents and photographs on display, a self-guided tour, a timeline quiz, a sing-a-long of Sunday School hymns and, of course, plenty to eat.



A special celebration service was held on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Revd David led the service (which included some further fascinating facts). It was good to have the organ played by Revd Adam who also gave the address. More tea and cake followed.

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September we held an extra "Start The Week with A Cuppa" at which we were joined by members of the "Awake Suffolk Coastal" mission team. There was still plenty of cake to share.

### Autumn Concert

Following our pattern, we held our Autumn mini concert and afternoon tea at Saxmundham Chapel on 18<sup>th</sup> October. The concert was entitled "As Time Goes By – Flavours from History" which turned out to be musical memories from Revd Adam and Gillian Earle. We had a varied and lively programme which included organ, piano and voice. There were organ arrangements of some familiar orchestral pieces, music made famous by Glenn Miller, a performance of the short musical "Jonah-Man Jazz" and a Sound of Music sing-a-long.



Afterwards (and you may well detect a common theme here). We shared a tasty tea of sandwiches and cake. It was good to welcome over twenty folk and donations amounted to over £100 towards the work of the church. Thankyou to everyone who supported the event. The next concert will be in May so watch out for further details.

### Leiston Food Bank

Marion and David have been running the independent Leiston Food Bank, at Leiston Church, for over a decade. It has been a welcome lifeline for many over the years. After careful consideration they have both decided to step down from the role. We want to say a huge thankyou for all they have done, the hard work, determination and commitment. We would wish them well as they continue to support the work and life of the church with a little extra space to do some of the things they love such as holidays in Scotland.



We are grateful to Toby and the Project40Seven team who have taken on the running of the foodbank, moving forward. Additional volunteers to help share the work would be greatly appreciated so please contact Toby if you are willing and able to help.

### Film Lunch

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November folk gathered at Saxmundham Chapel to enjoy the next in our series of Film Lunches. The film was the original “Dad’s Army” featuring the warmly pompous Arthur Lowe as Captain Mainwaring, the delightly understated John Le Mesurier as Sergeant Wilson, Clive Dunn



as the wonderful (Don’t Panic!) Lance Corporal Jones and Ian Lavender as “Stupid Boy” Private Pike.

Our lunch had a very WW2 theme with sausage meatloaf filled bread rolls to make the meat ration go further, bread-pudding to use up the stale crusts (we were fortunate to acquire some eggs from Private Godfrey who keeps chickens), a sponge cake, apples and a few other rare treats. We were thrilled to be able to share a bar of Ration Milk Chocolate and someone even managed to lay hands on an orange.

Our next film lunch will be in February so please keep an eye out for details.

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## Events

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### Forthcoming Worship

Please see and make sure you keep (for future reference) the separate sheet distributed with this newsletter. This gives full details of the service, including the venue and leaders, for November 2025 to January 2026.



### Celebrating Advent & Christmas

We have various events and opportunities (including worship) to mark the season and celebrate Advent and Christmas together.

**United Worship for Advent Sunday  
@ Knodishall Methodist Church**  
10:30 Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November

We begin the Advent journey with a joint service at Knodishall Methodist Church led by Revd Saul Tadzaushe. We will share Communion.



## LSUC Christmas Dinner

12:30 Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Folk have been signing up with enthusiasm for our Christmas Lunch. We only have space for thirty folk and these places are now all reserved but there may be the opportunity to join a waiting list in case any spaces become available.



## LSUC Carols & Cake

### Afternoon Worship @ LSUC Leiston Church

14:00 Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Come and enjoy a relaxed time of singing, celebrating, prayer and reflection. Our time will include traditional carols, some songs for listening to and sharing the Christmas Story. Led by Revd Adam.



## LSUC Christmas Carol Service

### @ LSUC Saxmundham Chapel

10:45 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2025

Our more traditional style Carol Service with Bible readings, favourite carols and prayers. Led by Revd David.



## Leiston Community Carols

### @ Post Office Square – Leiston

18:30 Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December

With carols led by the Royal British Legion Band, readings shared by members of the local churches, prayers and a short reflection led by Revd David, this is a joyful time for the community. Wrap up warm and come and join the celebration.



## Start the Week with a Cuppa @ Saxmundham Chapel

The forthcoming dates for Start the week are as follows:



**Mon 15<sup>th</sup> December**

(Christmas Theme)

**Mon 26<sup>th</sup> January** (New Year Theme)

**Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

Pop the dates in your diary and we look forward to seeing you. All are welcome. Why not invite a friend?

## Advent Song



During Advent, in all our pastorate churches we follow the tradition of lighting the candles of the Advent Wreath. These represent our prayers for the coming of Christ bringing Hope, Peace, Joy & Love.

This year we will be singing a song each week. The words are here. Why not make this a daily reflection to mark the days of Advent.

In midnight's hush,  
when hearts are trembling, torn,  
A rising star proclaims the sacred morn.  
God steps into our ashes, still and bright,  
And broken souls are lifted by the light.  
Hope blooms anew where  
shadows once held sway -  
For Christ has come,  
the life, the truth, the way.

The next edition of the "LSUC Together" Quarterly Newsletter will be available in February. The Pastorate "Connect" Magazine will be available in December.