



ST JOHN THE DIVINE

ELMSWELL, SUFFOLK

www.stjohnselmswell.org.uk



St Edmundsbury & Ipswich
erving Suffolk communities

Parish Profile

2015





Welcome to St John the Divine, Elmswell

Name of Parish	St John the Divine, Elmswell, Suffolk
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Deanery	Lavenham
Address	Church Hill, Elmswell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP30 9DZ
Patrons	Martyrs Memorial and Church of England Trust
Church Website	www.stjohnselmswell.org.uk



Our Goal is to know Christ and make him known

Our Mission Statement is to seek to:

- **Demonstrate God's love to the world**
- **Declare the good news of Jesus Christ**
- **Depend on God as part of His family.**



The Incumbent



Revd Peter Goodridge

Address: The Rectory, Church Road, Elmswell, Suffolk IP30 9DY
Telephone: 01359 240512
Email address: elmswellrector@gmail.com
Year ordained: 2009
Joined parish: Ministry commenced Sept 2013

Career Before ordination:

Sema Group Ltd (1987-1990) IT Analyst and Programmer
Texaco Ltd / Chevron Ltd (1990-2007) IT Analyst, Programmer, Team Leader, Project Leader
Includes career break - Cornhill Training Course (1996/1997)

Posts Before ordination:

Curate at Parish of St Peter and St Paul, Tonbridge (2009-2013)

I am married to Lisa with 2 children, Dylan (age 15) and Nicholas (age 11). I was converted in 1988 through a friend in London chatting to me and inviting me to a mission at St Helen's Bishopsgate and the follow-up Discovering Christianity course. I soon became involved in small Bible study groups and, in the early to mid nineties, began leading groups and joined a preaching team.

After we got married in 1996, Lisa and I supported a local church (Christ Church, Sidcup) and became involved in many area of ministry, including leading the CYFA youth group for 8 years.

My primary desire is to see people come to know Christ personally, to grow up in the knowledge of him and to make his love known through serving others. I believe that to know God and to be known by him is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian and that the Holy Spirit particularly enables this to happen as the Bible is faithfully taught through preaching and small group Bible study. The fruit of the Spirit should then be seen in how those in the church community love one another and show the love of God to the local community and beyond.

The following is from the 2013 Parish Profile and describes what was sought for in a new incumbent:

- A person who is pastorally sensitive, with a heart for evangelism, who enjoys meeting people and has the ability and concern to nurture a diverse congregation.
- A minister who has a clear and deeply rooted biblically based faith, secure and confident in their spiritual and personal life.
- Someone who will undertake and encourage outreach to the young through contact with the schools and youth groups.
- A person who is strong in their support for marriage and family life.
- Someone who is wholly aligned with the church's evangelical outlook, who enjoys a variety of worship - traditional and modern, formal and informal.
- We are seeking someone with a good sense of humour who has skill and passion for engaging the local community, both by meeting those from the community and by taking our mission out into the parish. We would welcome outreach through Christianity Explored as this has had past success.
- We need someone with leadership, organisational and IT skills, willing to delegate and to encourage people to become actively involved in the life of the church and its activities in the parish, thereby utilising all the various gifts which our church members have to offer



The Parish

The village of Elmswell is situated in Mid Suffolk, close to the A14, midway between historic Bury St Edmunds (10 miles away) and the market town of Stowmarket (7 miles away). The A14 provides good access to Cambridge and Ipswich. The village is served by buses and trains, with links to London and Norwich (where there is an airport) and Stansted Airport.



Elmswell is a very large, busy village (Population approx. 4,000), well served by shops, including Post Office/Newsagents, Co-op Supermarket and Mace General Stores. There is also a pharmacy, butchers, veterinary surgery, fish and chip Shop, Chinese takeaway, two hairdressers, travel agents, café and two pubs.



Housing is mixed, with older traditional properties, former council houses, flats, new developments, Eco housing development and affordable housing and two sheltered accommodation complexes. In the last 10 years approximately 260 dwellings have been built, with plans for a further 400+ in the near future.



There are Neighbourhood Watch, Speedwatch and First Responders groups in the village, also a Police Station and Fire Station on a shared site, the latter being manned by retained staff. There is a Parish Council and an Amenities Association; Elmswell is in Mid Suffolk District.

Many people commute to the nearby towns for employment, with others making the daily journey to London, Ipswich and further afield. In the village there are small factories on two separate sites, haulage contractors, farms, builders, food producers, car repairers and other small businesses.



Sports facilities include excellent sports fields on two separate sites with cricket and football teams, a particularly large and enthusiastic group of youngsters enjoy coaching sessions each week. There is a newly built Bowls Pavilion and Green; Carpet Bowls can be played in the Wesley Community Hall. Exercise and dance classes are held at the Blackbourne Centre, which has just been extended by the addition of a large sports hall.



There is Scouting and Guiding in the village. Other leisure activities include an Art Club, a Photography Club, two Women's Institutes, Over 55s Club, History Group, Luncheon Club, Cycling Club, Gardening Club and ElmsWild, who have a wildlife conservation area close by the Rectory. There is also a Library.



Education

Elmswell has its own Community Primary School which has approximately 250 children currently on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years. Clergy from St John's have been school governors in the past.

Little Elms pre-school, situated next door recently re-opened in brand new, purpose built premises and enjoys close links with the Primary School. Street Farm Day Nursery in the village centre provides private day-care for children from the age of 3 months. There is also a Toddler group for parents and carers with very young children, which meets twice a week.

Secondary schools are located either in Thurston or Stowupland. Middle schools have recently been phased out in this part of Suffolk.

West Suffolk College in Bury St Edmunds is a member of University Campus Suffolk and offers full-time, part-time and adult education, as well as degree courses and apprenticeships.



The Area

There are other amenities in the surrounding area, including cinemas, theatres, leisure centres with swimming pools. Tennis courts in Woolpit, under two miles away, and golf courses nearby. Also in Woolpit is the Health Centre which serves Elmswell, a pharmacy, chiropodist, physiotherapist and dentist. The nearest NHS hospital is in Bury St Edmunds.

Bury St Edmunds has an abundance of places to eat and shop, with many historic buildings including The Cathedral Church of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, St Mary's Parish Church, the Abbey Gardens, Moyses' Hall Museum and the Angel Hotel, setting for Dickens' Pickwick Papers. There are also two theatres & two cinemas.

Stowmarket also has numerous shops; the Museum of East Anglian Life is situated in the town as well as the newly opened John Peel Arts Centre.

Elmswell is only about 30 miles from the sea at Felixstowe and further up the east coast are the famous towns of Aldeburgh (Snape Concert Hall and Benjamin Britten Centre) and Southwold.



The Church Building



The Church

St John the Divine is a medieval church situated on a prominence to the west of the main village, standing like a beacon looking out on to the busy A14. The interior of the church was greatly altered in Victorian times coinciding with a gradual change from High Anglican worship to evangelical/ low worship.

The chancel was built between 1300-1350, the nave between 1350-1500 and the tower in the 1450's. There are two side aisles. The tower is said to have the finest flint work in Suffolk, with many flush work panels.

The Church Building



In 1992-3 a major re-ordering took place at the west end of the church and there is now a boiler room, kitchen and toilet, two meeting rooms on the ground floor and a gallery with another small meeting room above. The church seats 300+ people.



More recently a glazed timber door has been fitted to the porch, which has been redecorated, the sound system has been upgraded and a raised staging area at the front installed (see above). Plans to improve parking and heating are now underway.

There are five ancient bells in the church tower on a medieval timber frame, but these are in poor condition and have not been rung in living history. The 2 manual Henry Jones organ was installed in 1901 and has recently been cleaned and rebuilt. The Churchyard was closed for burials in 1900; there is a village cemetery and green burial ground – both administered by the Parish Council - a short distance from the Church.



The Church Family

St John's is a single parish benefice, which has a mix of ages in its congregation; the younger families are attracted because of the children's work. Many of the non-residents who attend are families with children. The electoral roll is about 108 including a number who live outside the parish and travel some distance to attend services and meetings.

There are 14 Members of the PCC which meets bi-monthly. We have two Churchwardens and three Deanery Synod representatives; there are five people who are certified by the Bishop to assist with the Chalice at Communion.

There are no Lay Readers or Elders at St John's but there are around 20 people who read lessons and 9 who lead intercessions and take part in the services in other ways.

Our worship is mixed with both traditional and contemporary music. Although we have a wide range of ages in the congregation, we are actively seeking to keep growing younger (in terms of average age). There is a Junior Choir called SlamJam, which performs contemporary worship songs and is great for outreach. We also have a music group which plays at the All Age Service and a second music group which plays at other Sunday services (except the BCP). We have a robed Choir numbering around 18 members, two organists and several pianists; we also have a group of Handbell Ringers.

Coffee and tea is served after each main service which gives us an opportunity to welcome newcomers and to share fellowship with each other. Church and brass cleaning, flower arranging and churchyard maintenance is carried out by a team of volunteers.



Living Well and Passion for Life

You're Worth It

An evening of pampering

Thursday 18th March - 7:45pm

At The Wesley Hall

Guest speaker: Carlee Leftley

Within the Church family we have Sunday activities for the children, Home Groups and The Friends of St John's Church, whose prime aim is to raise funds for the fabric of the Church. There is also a Ladies' Lunch Group and a Men's Breakfast Group. We occasionally run evangelistic courses (e.g. Christianity Explored & Discovering Christianity).

In 2012 our Curate organised a series of events in the Deanery to mark the 400 years of the King James' Bible. In the last six years we have held a week of mission called 'Take Five' with students from Ridley Hall and in 2011 we were closely involved in the 'Passion for Life' mission organised by local evangelical churches.

Worship at St John's



We have a pattern of services which includes a monthly Family Service and a monthly Book of Common Prayer service – figures exclude ‘special services’ - see chart below:-

Services	Time	BCP/CW	Average Attendance 2012
1st Sunday All Age Service	9.30am	CW	25 adults 14 under 16's
1st Sunday (alternating) Holy Communion & Morning Prayer followed by short Communion	11.00am	BCP HC BCP MP	28 adults 26 adults
2nd & 4th Sundays Holy Communion	8.00am	BCP	4 adults
2nd Sunday Parish Praise	10.30am	CW	66 adults 18 under 16's
3rd Sunday Holy Communion	10.30am	CW	55 adults 14 under 16's
4th Sunday Morning Prayer	10.30am	CW	56 adults 14 under 16's
5th Sunday Morning Prayer or Holy Communion	10.30am	CW	54 adults 13 under 16's

The attendances at ‘special services’ are usually greater than those shown above.

We use The Source and Mission Praise Hymn Books with Ancient and Modern being used at the 11am BCP service. However, since installing a new projector and screen and 3 television screens, all the words of songs are now also projected onto our screens. This enables us to use a wider range of new worship songs. The New International Version of the Bible is used at all services. Our aim is to declare the good news of Jesus Christ not just in Elmswell, but by supporting CMS (SAMS), Crosslinks, MECO and CPAS around the world, through our prayer and financial help.

Baptisms are usually held during either the Parish Praise Service, the All Age Service or during Morning Prayer. Recently 6 church members were confirmed and one of our congregation is at present engaged in local training for full time ordained ministry.

Neither resolutions A or B have been passed by the PCC. The Rector does not permit marriage in church in cases where there has been a previous marriage dissolved, but the Rector is happy to hold a marriage blessing at his discretion.





Youth Work at St John's

Young people aged under 18 are very important in our church family and we are lucky to offer age-specific regular Sunday groups: Bubbles (ages 4 and under), Explorers (ages 5 to 8), Pathfinders (ages 9 to 13) and CYFA (ages 13 to 18). These groups meet in their own areas of the church building on Sunday mornings (apart from CYFA who meet elsewhere on a Sunday evening) and enjoy age appropriate Bible teaching and activities. Over 18 adult volunteers, who are all CRB checked, help in this teaching work, sharing the duties on a rota basis.



We also have a Junior Choir, with approximately 12 members, recently re-named SLAMJAM (**S**erving God, **L**oving others **A**nd **M**aking a joyful noise with Jesus **A**nd **M**e).

We encourage children and young people to be involved in the life of the church – from presenting a Nativity or drama to helping at a Light party (our alternative to Halloween) or summer fun day.



Finally, there is the opportunity to engage with children through taking assemblies in the local primary School and by visiting the Christian Union in the nearby secondary school in Thurston.

Mission



St John's has a long tradition of supporting mission groups and other charities. We have an International and Home Mission Committee, which arranges services with speakers from some of the missions we support, for example Tim Curtis and Bishop Henry Scriven of CMS (SAMS) have both visited St John's in the past two years.



In 2011/12 the following groups were supported financially and with prayer: Bury St Edmunds Town Pastors, Children's Society, CPAS, DEC, British Red Cross – East Africa Appeal and the New Zealand and Japan Appeals. SAMS, MECO, Crosslinks, Tearfund, Shelter, Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, Kagera Diocese, Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, National Churches Trust, Church of England Pensions Board and the Church Housing Trust. Since late last year we have started an ongoing link with the Stowmarket foodbank.

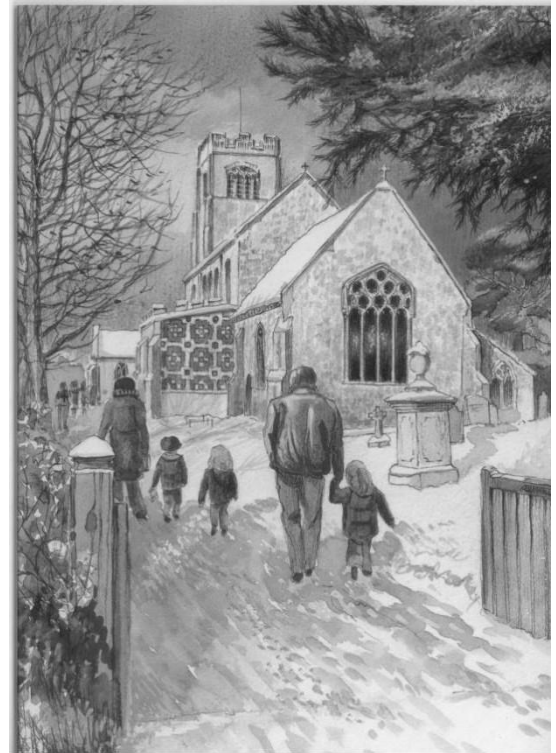




Special Occasions

Christmas

Sometimes Christmas has started with a weekend event – a Crib Festival and a Festival of Christmas. More recently a Children's Christmas Eve service has proved very successful. Christingle services also draw in a good number of local families. Little Elms Nursery hold their Nativity play in the Church each year.



Our young people have recently given a Christmas Nativity Presentation on the Second Sunday of Advent; the third Sunday of Advent is when the Nine Lessons and Carols service is held in the evening.

On Christmas Eve there is an 11.30pm Holy Communion Service, with an 8am BCP Communion service followed by an all-age Morning Service on Christmas Day.



Special Occasions



Healing Services

We have recently introduced Healing Services, which take place about twice a year on a Sunday evening. These provide the opportunity for specific prayer ministry with the option of the laying on of hands and anointing of oil.

Time to Remember

Close to All Saints Day, we have also introduced a popular Time to Remember service as part of our post-funeral ministry. This gives the opportunity to minister to the bereaved as they remember their loved ones.

Lent and Easter

We have an evening Ash Wednesday Service and a Maundy Thursday evening service, then on Good Friday Christians Together In Elmswell organises a Morning Service in one of the Churches in the village. On Easter Sunday there is a Communion Service; an Ascension Day service is also held.

Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday is another special Sunday, when the Guides and Brownies sometimes attend; posies are given to Mothers and any other ladies present at the service! SlamJam have enjoyed taking part in this service.

Harvest Festival

The Harvest Festival service is always well attended and the Church is beautifully decorated; the Brownies always decorate the font and the flowers and produce are distributed around the village to people who are housebound or on their own. The school holds their own Harvest Festival service in the Church on the following Monday bringing their Harvest gifts. Any surplus produce is donated to the Food Bank in Bury St Edmunds.



Remembrance Sunday

On Remembrance Sunday the Church is always full – the Scouts and Guides attend and as the village war memorial is in the church there is a wreath laying ceremony during the service. In November 2014, a very successful Poppy festival was run.



Fellowship and Social Events



We currently have 5 home groups, which meet for Bible Study, fellowship and prayer. These include "Mum's the Word!" - a group mainly for Mums with youngsters. We have several social events during the year, including a Summer Fun Day at the Church, Summer BBQ usually held in the Rectory garden, an autumn concert, various walks and the Christmas Fair held in the Blackbourne Community Hall.



The Friends of St John's raises funds for the fabric of the church building, with concerts, Flower Festivals, an annual Sausage Supper and other events. The Ladies' Lunch Club also puts on events such as the Crib Festival.



The Choir and the Handbell Ringers have recently entertained the Over 55 Club.

During the last eight years we have had two parish weekends away at Sizewell Hall on the Suffolk Coast.



Links with Other Churches and Our Deanery



Links with Other Churches

Over forty years ago the three churches in Elmswell joined together to form the Elmswell Fellowship of Churches. Since the Methodist Church closed in 2013, we have renamed the group Christians Together In Elmswell and opened it up to all Christians who live in Elmswell, wherever they go to Church. We meet about three times a year for united services and also run an annual Children's Holiday Club for about 80 children, as well as organising the Good Friday service and Village Carol Service. There is also an ecumenical group which goes into the School with 'Open the Book'.



Lavenham Deanery

Elmswell is the largest parish and is on the northern boundary of the Lavenham Deanery which comprises 30 villages stretching south and south-east, skirting Bury St Edmunds. There are currently 8 full-time and one ½ -time stipendiaries (5 male, 3½ female).

In 2011 a Deanery Plan was agreed outlining clergy deployment within the benefices, and with each stipendiary clergyperson assuming joint responsibility for promoting and sharing good practice and expertise within the deanery in one of four key areas of mission and ministry: Adult Discipleship, Children's & Youth Work, Vocations and Mission.

The deanery functions well and all stipendiary clergy under Common Tenure are required to attend its monthly clergy Chapter meetings and Deanery Synod meetings (three p.a.). From time to time Greater Chapter meetings are held involving retired clergy and Readers. There is an annual Deanery Chapter Quiet Day and a post-Christmas meal for Greater Chapter members and spouses. In 2011 Elmswell made a generous gift to support another parish in the deanery struggling financially.

Elmswell has a history of fully participating in the life of the deanery, and it is expected a curate will play his/her full part in the deanery.



Going Forward

Our Goal is to know Christ and make him known

We need to maintain the growth of the church family achieved over the past 12 years. As well as caring for the older members of our congregation, we wish to build up our young people's work. We want to build on our strengths to make St John's a vibrant centre of Christian influence in Elmswell. We believe we are a welcoming church with 'something for everybody'. However, although we feel we have been strengthened in our aims to fulfil our mission statement, we still often feel that 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few'. (Luke 10.2)

St John's is engaged with the diocesan "Growing in God" initiative, which focuses on (i) growing in depth, (ii) growing in number, (iii) growing younger and (iv) growing in influence.

Our current strategy is known as the 4 streams. The first stream parallels the diocesan vision for us to grow deeper in our discipleship and this can be seen, for example, in our emphasis on preaching and belonging to a small group.

The second stream focuses on improving our worship space. Recently we have improved our audio-visual facilities and installed staging at the front of St John's. The aim is to provide the most flexible space for both our worship and our welcome to visitors and the community.

The third stream looks to evangelistic strategies built around hospitality. This stream is all about inviting friends to social and mission events (e.g. fun days, barbecues, concerts and Christianity Explored courses) and to services (e.g. our healing or Time to Remember services).

The fourth stream is about leaving our comfort zones and going out with the love of Jesus to where people are. We are already involved in providing a holiday club and assemblies, but there is much more we could do in this stream.

Financial

St John's has paid the Parish Share in full for the last six years (2009-2014).

The major proportion of our unrestricted income goes toward paying the Parish Share. Voluntary giving on a regular basis via Gift Aid is our main source of income.

The Treasurer produces a budget each year which is discussed by the PCC at its January meeting. A full and detailed update of the accounts is presented to the PCC at every meeting and the Treasurer is fully supported by his colleagues.

Support is given to a number of charities either through donations and collections at special services or by retiring collections.

The clergy are fully reimbursed for all reasonable day to day expenses incurred.