CHURCHES VISITED AND REVISITED (17/12/16 TO DATE) – BOOK 8

THURSDAY 16th MARCH 2017

St. Michael's, Beccles

The townscape is dominated by the detached sixteenth-century bell tower (known as the Beccles bell tower) of St Michael's church. Like the main body of the church, the tower is Perpendicular Gothic in style and is 97 ft tall. The interior of the church was badly damaged by fire in 1586. It has a 13th-century font. The tower is not attached to the church and at the wrong end of the church as the correct end would be too close to a large cliff. It was at this church in 1749 that the mother of Horatio Nelson, Catherine Suckling, married the Reverend Edmund Nelson (a former curate of Beccles). The Suffolk poet George Crabbe married Sarah Elmy at Beccles church in the 18th century.

Baptist, Station Road, Beccles


St EDMUND'S
SOUTHWOLD
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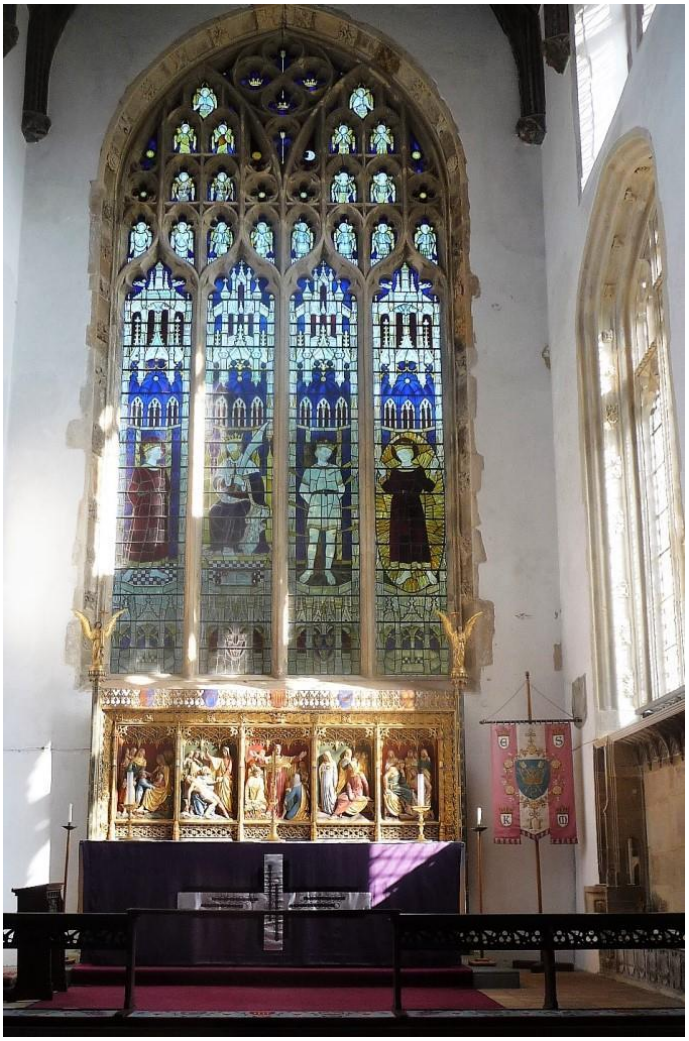


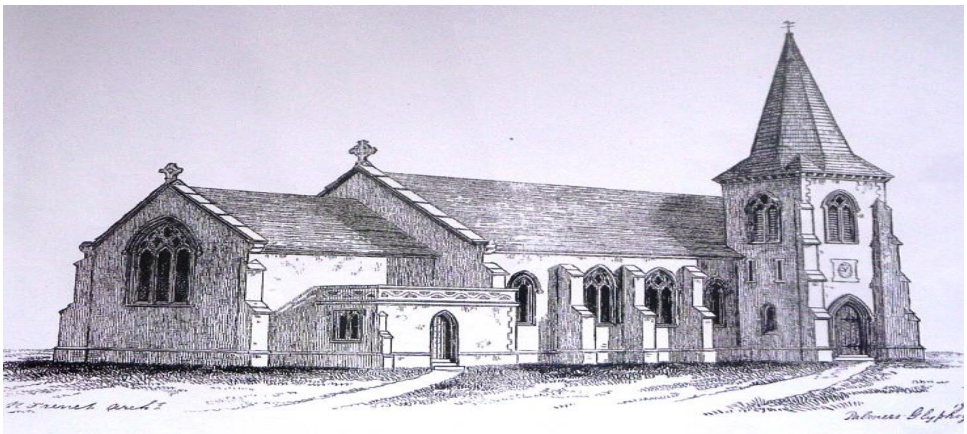
St Edmund King and Martyr, Southwold

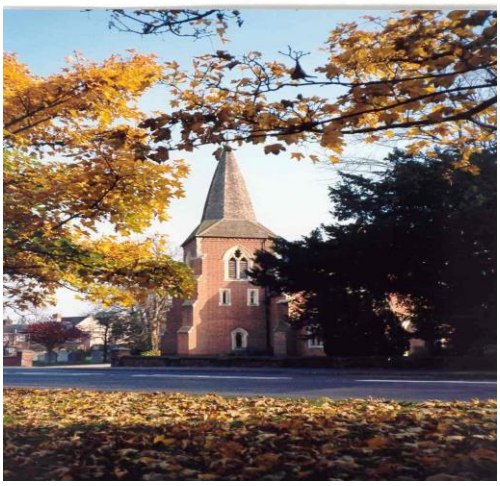
Until 1200 there was no church in Southwold, which was no more than an island in the mouth of the River Blyth. Then it was in 1202 John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, decreed on instructions from Rome that Southwold should have a chapel for the daily observance of the church. As at this date the Abbots and monks of the great Benedictine Abbey at Bury were the lords of the manor; they were to provide the land upon which the new chapel of ease was to stand. In return, it was to be placed under the spiritual patronage of St Edmund, the Martyred king of East Anglia whose bones lay buried within their house. The direct ecclesiastical patronage was, however, given to the Cluniac Prior and monks of Thetford and Wangford. These already held St Margaret's, the mother church, and it is only proper that they should build and serve the new chapel.

Methodist, Southwold

This is a Christian congregation serving the Southwold community and seeking, engaging, and encouraging others through a life-changing Christian journey. **Southwold Methodist Church** at Southwold, Suffolk seeks to be a loving, friendly community that worships God, and serves others. They place a high priority on teaching from the Bible and following the example of Jesus. Their vision is to impact and renew Southwold, Suffolk and beyond with the transforming message of Jesus Christ through words and actions. Everyone is welcome. Come as you are - we'd love to get to know you.

SUNDAY 19th MARCH 2017





All Saints' Church, Shrub End Road, Colchester

The church was designed in the decorate style by D R French, and the red brick church has a tower with a slated spire. It is situated on the very busy road junction, with the staggered crossroads, where heading from town, Shrub End Road crosses Gosbecks Road off to the left, and Straight Road to the right, with the Shrub End Social Centre opposite on one side and the Leather Bottle public house on the other side. From what I have heard in the past, the original All Saints was situated in the grounds of the Colchester Zoo and this was backed up by an article on the Zoo's website. It said that the ruins of All Saints (the former parish church of Great Stanway) stand in the grounds of the Colchester Zoo. An excavation was made by an Archaeological Solutions in January 2005 that revealed that fourteen strips, CAT excavated thirty-four medieval inhumation graves on the site of the proposed new orang-utan enclosure.

The graves are probably late medieval, and the absence of coffins indicates a low status. Other features include two ditches, which may sometime in the past have been graveyard boundary ditches. The human remains are to be reburied on site. From information from the Colchester Business Forum it tells us about our current All Saints Church – it was by George Russell French 1844-45 to serve a new parish for the growing population of Stanway and Lexden. It was of hard red brick with Caen stone dressings. The nave, chancel and lower tower with splay-foot spire over the North porch. In the North end there was organ chamber which was added in 1883 and to the south end, a choir vestry in 1958 with the nave extended in the West in 1982. It had a plain exterior enlivened only by the carved label stops along the North side; those at the North West end are portraits of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.

Its fittings included reredos of marble and gold mosaic by John Hardman and Co. There are memorials to Edward Coope Fulcher who died in 1880, a stained glass window on the South side of the nave by Cox & Sons, 1878 a memorial to John Smith Dolby the first incumbent and another by James Powell & Sons memorial to Sunday School teacher, Edith M M Scarman who died in 1930. There was a wall monument to Thomas Joseph Turner of Little Olivers in Stanway who died in 1866 by L J Watts of Colchester. It was a significant church by a well-known architect who also had Essex connections, with addresses in Wanstead and Leytonstone.

In the local history report, it included a piece of the house building within Colchester and it mentioned this area - Although the majority of houses built in Colchester in the early 20th century were private the council did build some houses in the 1920s. In the 1950s the council built estates at Shrub End and Monkwick. In the 1950s the army built the Montgomery estate. In the 1960s the council built Greenstead estate. Private houses were built on the St Johns estate in the 1960s. In the 1980s private houses were built at High Woods, North of the town.

Over the years there have been several memorable events in the church, there was in the Flower Festival in 2004, but an earlier one had been held in 1976. A year later a resident of the area, Len Woodrow, became the town mayor, and a dedication service was held for him there. Also that year the choir were pictured outside the church door, where a figure head of the Queen and Prince Philip were fixed either side of the door in honour of their Silver Jubilee.

THURSDAY 23rd MARCH 2017

The Lifehouse, King Harold Road, Colchester

The Lifehouse is part of the Partners in Harvest network, and they are lovers of the river of revival which has been pouring out since 1994. In their Father's love they are truly alive … being built together to be a safe place, where his presence can rest … where the thirsty can be refreshed … where the lost can find life…They love to laugh yet also to care for those who need a hug.

On Sundays they meet at 10.30am. They worship in a contemporary style and someone will share from the Bible for about 20 to 25 minutes. They often have a time of prayer for the nation or specific other needs, and they'll also sometimes have an activity that all can join in with. They love to pray for one another and will quite often have prayer for healing. The morning service is followed by refreshments. On the first and third Sundays they have a group for the younger children during the sermon. The last Sunday of the month is a little different. Their Worship morning is just that: a morning of worship- no message. They try to give room for the prophets to speak and enjoy the freedom of using various drums and flags to demonstrate our love to our Heavenly Father. Children are encouraged to be part of this and made room for.

On the second Sunday each month at 6pm they have "Oasis". This is a longer meeting, with some extended worship, teaching from the Bible, and opportunity for ministry. A chance to spend some time very close to God. They often have special guests for this.

In midweek they pray in various ways, run a soaking room, have small groups twice a month, and have two daytime groups called 'The Word' and 'Faith with Friends'. They run a Fire values course when there is demand. The key objective is to see their members walking in the Father's Love and giving it away in their daily life.

They've recently completed four months of building work which has transformed their building. To be honest it was a bit beaten up and somewhat cramped. They now have space, light, and great acoustics, making it a great venue for worship, for prayer and for soaking. When they have the money they have planning permission to add another meeting room and new toilets.

Prettygate Road Baptist, Prettygate Road, Colchester

Whether you are just looking into Christianity or are already a follower of Jesus Christ, you'll be welcome there. Prettygate Baptist Church is a place where ordinary people, of all ages, can discover and experience the love of a very real God. Together they are in the process of finding God's purpose for their lives and learning to live the sort of lives that Jesus described in the New Testament.

They aim to make sure their church is a place where people of all backgrounds and experiences can come with their questions and doubts and explore what Christianity is all about. They're working hard to be a church with clear and relevant teaching from the Bible, authentic worship and sincere friendships.

They put a high priority on being a place where they can hear the living message of God's Word, where prayer and genuine care are important, as is reaching out into the local community and beyond.

URC, Plume Avenue, Colchester

Plume Avenue Church is included as part of the United Reformed Church family of churches. The United Reformed Church combines its commitment to the Reformed tradition with a passionate belief that all God's people should be one. In keeping with this, Plume Avenue Church works in partnership with the other local churches in Prettygate and Colchester.

Revive Worship, held at St Cedd's Church, Iceni Way, Colchester

The message on their blog goes - They I like to start with the question, "what is the Kingdom of God?" For those of you who know the scriptures, you already probably said it out in your mind. But let me share it for those who are not sure. The Bible says in Romans 14:17 - "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

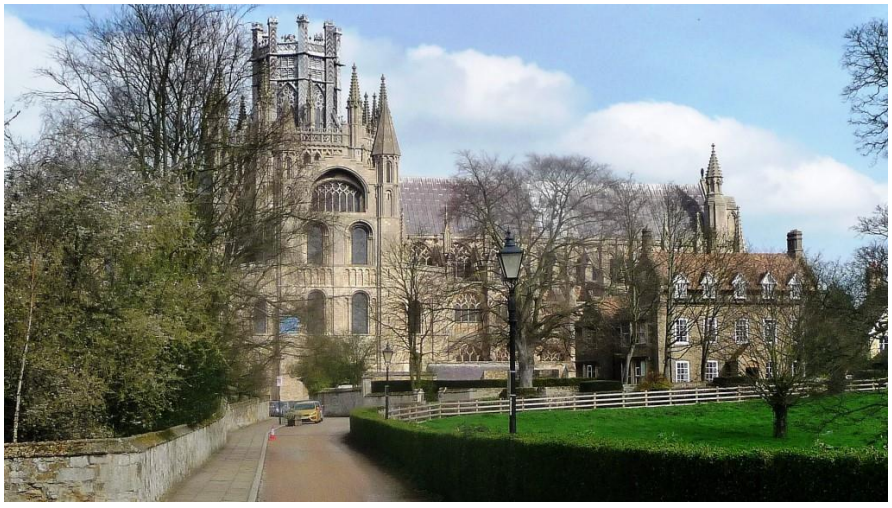
That’s the short answer! Let me share my thoughts with you.

1. Righteousness - starts inside of you. you need to get your heart right with God by accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. It starts inside and works out of you. You don't start by doing the right stuff as that might just amount to works.
2. Peace - how we need the peace of God today in the midst of all that is happening around us. Peace needs to filter through our mind, emotions, and our will. The peace of God that passes ALL understanding. Get His peace!

3. Joy - joy is the outward expression of what's inside. This is not a superficial joy, but a joy or revelation of the King who has your life in His hands. And that is what gives you strength to go through life.

If I can explain it another way; we are divided into the Body, the soul, and the spirit. Righteousness starts in your spirit man. Peace is what we need in our soul, and joy in our body (meaning it can be seen by others who our confidence is to be in) Stay blessed kingdom people !

FRIDAY 24th MARCH 2017



Cathedral, Ely

The cathedral has its origins in AD 672 when St Etheldreda built an abbey church. The present building dates back to 1083, and cathedral status was granted it in 1109. Until the reformation it was the Church of St Etheldreda and St Peter, at which point it was refounded as the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Ely, continuing as the principal church of the Diocese of Ely, in Cambridgeshire, England. It is the seat of the Bishop of Ely and a suffragan bishop, the Bishop of Huntingdon. Architecturally it is outstanding both for its scale and stylistic details. Having been built in a monumental Romanesque style, the galilee porch, lady chapel and choir were rebuilt in an exuberant Decorated Gothic. Its most famous feature however is the central octagonal tower, with lantern above, which provides a spectacular internal space and, along with the West Tower, gives a unique exterior landmark that dominates the surrounding landscape. Ely Cathedral is a major tourist destination, receiving around 250,000 visitors per year, and sustains a daily pattern of morning and evening services.

Ely Abbey was founded in 672, by Æthelthryth (St Etheldreda), daughter of the East Anglian King Anna. It was a mixed community of men and women. Later accounts suggest her three successor abbesses were also members of the East Anglian Royal family. In later centuries the depredations of Viking raids may have resulted in its destruction, or at least the loss of all records. It is possible that some monks provided a continuity through to its refoundation in 970, under a Benedictine rule. The precise siting of Æthelthryth's original monastery is not known. The presence of her relics, bolstered by the growing body of literature on her life and miracles, was a major driving force in the success of the refounded abbey. The church building of 970 was within or near the nave of the present building, and was progressively demolished from 1102 alongside the construction of the Norman church. Ermenilda of Ely was an Abbess here, as well, after her husband Wulfhere of Mercia died in 675.

The cathedral is built from stone quarried from Barnack in Northamptonshire (bought from Peterborough Abbey, whose lands included the quarries, for 8000 eels a year), with decorative elements carved from Purbeck Marble and local clunch. The plan of the building is cruciform (cross-shaped), with an additional transept at the western end. The total length is 537 feet (164 m), and the nave at over 75 m (246 ft) long remains one of the longest in Britain. The west tower is 66 m (217 ft) high. The unique Octagon 'Lantern Tower' is 23 m (75 ft) wide and is 52 m (171 ft) high. Internally, from the floor to the central roof boss the lantern is 43 m (141 ft) high. It is known locally as "the ship of the Fens", because of its prominent position above the surrounding flat landscape.

Norman abbey church

Having a pre-Norman history spanning 400 years and a re-foundation in 970, Ely over the course of the next hundred years had become one of England's most successful Benedictine abbeys, with lands exceeded only by Glastonbury, a famous saint, treasures, library and book production of the highest order. However the imposition of Norman rule was particularly problematic at Ely. Newly arrived Normans such as Picot of Cambridge were taking possession of abbey lands, there was appropriation of daughter monasteries such as Eynesbury by French monks, and interference by the Bishop of Lincoln was undermining its status. All this was exacerbated when, in 1071, Ely became a focus of English resistance, through such people as Hereward the Wake, culminating in the Siege of Ely, for which the abbey suffered substantial fines.

Under the Normans almost every English cathedral and major abbey was rebuilt from the 1070s onwards. If Ely was to maintain its status then it had to initiate its own building work, and the task fell to Abbot Simeon. He was the brother of Walkelin, the then Bishop of Winchester, and had himself been Prior at Winchester Cathedral when the rebuilding began there in 1079. In 1083, a year after Simeon's appointment as abbot of Ely, and when he was 90 years old, building work began. The years since the conquest had been turbulent for the Abbey, but the unlikely person of an aged Norman outsider effectively took the parts of the Ely monks, reversed the decline in the abbey's fortunes, and found the resources, administrative capacity, identity and purpose to begin a mighty new building.

The design had many similarities to Winchester, a cruciform plan with central crossing tower, aisled transepts, a three storey elevation and a semi-circular apse at the east end. It was one of the largest buildings under construction north of the Alps at the time. The first phase of construction took in the eastern arm of the church, and the north and south transepts. However, a significant break in the way the masonry is laid indicates that, with the transepts still unfinished, there was an unplanned halt to construction that lasted several years. It would appear that when Abbott Simeon died in 1093, an extended interregnum caused all work to cease. The administration of Ranulf Flambard may have been to blame. He illegally kept various posts unfilled, including that of Abbot of Ely, so he could appropriate the income. In 1099 he got himself appointed Bishop of Durham, in 1100 Abbot Richard was appointed to Ely and building work resumed. It is Abbot Richard who asserted Ely's independence from the Diocese of Lincoln, and pressed for it to be made a diocese in its own right, with the Abbey Church as its Cathedral.

Although Abbot Richard died in 1107, his successor Hervey le Breton was able to achieve this and become the first Bishop of Ely in 1109. This period at the start of the 12th century was when Ely re-affirmed its link with its Anglo-Saxon past. The struggle for independence coincided with the period when resumption of building work required the removal of the shrines from the old building and the translation of the relics into the new church. This appears to have allowed, in the midst of a Norman-French hierarchy, an unexpectedly enthusiastic development of the cult of these pre-Norman saints and benefactors.

The Norman east end and the whole of the central area of the crossing are now entirely gone, but the architecture of the transepts survives in a virtually complete state, to give a good impression of how it would have looked. Massive walls pierced by Romanesque arches would have formed aisles running around all sides of the choir and transepts. Three tiers of archways rise from the arcaded aisles. Galleries with walkways could be used for liturgical processions, and above that is the Clerestory with a passage within the width of the wall.

Construction of the nave was underway from around 1115, and roof timbers dating to 1120 suggest that at least the eastern portion of the nave roof was in place by then. The great length of the nave required that it was tackled in phases and after completing four bays, sufficient to securely buttress the crossing tower and transepts, there was a planned pause in construction. By 1140 the nave had been completed together with the western transepts and west tower up to triforium level, in the fairly plain early Romanesque style of the earlier work. Another pause now occurred, for over 30 years, and when it resumed, the new mason found ways to integrate the earlier architectural elements with the new ideas and richer decorations of early Gothic.

The half-built west tower and upper parts of the two western transepts were completed under Bishop Geoffrey Ridel (1174–89), to create an exuberant west front, richly decorated with intersecting arches and complex mouldings. The new architectural details were used systematically to the higher storeys of the tower and transepts. Rows of trefoil heads and use of pointed instead of semicircular arches, results is a west front with a high level of orderly uniformity. Originally the west front had transepts running symmetrically either side of the west tower. Stonework details on the tower show that an octagonal tower was part of the original design, although the current western octagonal tower was installed in 1400. Numerous attempts were made, during all phases of its construction to correct problems from subsidence in areas of soft ground at the western end of the cathedral. In 1405-7, to cope with the extra weight from the octagonal tower, four new arches were added at the west crossing to strengthen the tower. The extra weight of these works may have added to the problem, as at the end of the fifteenth century the north-west transept collapsed. A great sloping mass of masonry was built to buttress the remaining walls, which remain in their broken-off state on the north side of the tower.

The Galilee Porch is now the principal entrance into the Cathedral for visitors. Its original liturgical functions are unclear,[26] but its location at the west end meant it may have been used as a chapel for penitents,[27] a place where liturgical processions could gather, or somewhere the monks could hold business meetings with women, who were not permitted into the abbey.

It also has a structural role in buttressing the west tower.[26] The walls stretch over two storeys, but the upper storey now has no roof, it having been removed early in the nineteenth century. Its construction dating is also uncertain. Records suggest it was initiated by Bishop Eustace (1197–1215), and it is a notable example of Early English Gothic style.[28] But there are doubts about just how early, especially as Eustace had taken refuge in France in 1208, and had no access to his funds for the next 3 years. George Gilbert Scott argued that details of its decoration, particularly the 'syncopated arches' and the use of Purbeck marble shafts, bear comparison with St Hugh's Choir, Lincoln Cathedral, and the west porch at St Albans, which both predate Eustace,[26] whereas the foliage carvings and other details offer a date after 1220, suggesting it could be a project taken up, or re-worked by Bishop Hugh of Northwold.

Presbytery and East end

The first major reworking of an element of the Norman building was undertaken by Hugh of Northwold (bishop 1229–54). The eastern arm had been only four bays, running from the choir (then located at the crossing itself) to the high altar and the shrine to Etheldreda. In 1234 Northwold began an eastward addition of six further bays, which were built over 17 years, in a richly ornamented style with extensive use of Purbeck marble pillars and foliage carvings. It was built using the same bay dimensions, wall thicknesses and elevations as the Norman parts of the nave, but with an Early English Gothic style that makes it 'the most refined and richly decorated English building of its period'. St Etheldreda’s remains were translated to a new shrine immediately east of the high altar within the new structure, and on completion of these works in 1252 the cathedral was reconsecrated in the presence of King Henry III and Prince Edward. As well as a greatly expanded presbytery, the new east end had the effect of inflating still further the significance of St Etheldreda's shrine.[29] Surviving fragments of the shrine pedestal suggest its decoration was similar to the interior walls of the Galilee porch. The relics of the saints Wihtburh, Seaxburh (sisters of St Etheldreda) and Eormenhild (daughter of Seaxburh) would also have been accommodated, and the new building provided much more space for pilgrims to visit the shrines, via a door in the North Transept. The presbytery has subsequently been used for the burials and memorials of over 100 individuals connected with the abbey and cathedral.

The Lady Chapel

In 1321, under the sacrist Alan of Walsingham work began on a large free-standing Lady Chapel, linked to the north aisle of the chancel by a covered walkway. The Chapel is 100 feet (30 m) long and 46 feet (14 m) wide, and was built in an exuberant 'Decorated' Gothic style over the course of the next 30 years.[31] Masons and finances were unexpectedly required for the main church from 1322, which must have slowed the progress of the Chapel. The north and south wall each have five bays, comprising large traceried windows separated by pillars each of which has eight substantial niches and canopies which once held statues. Below the window line, and running round three sides of the Chapel is an arcade of richly decorated 'nodding ogees', with Purbeck marble pillars, creating scooped out seating booths.

There are three arches per bay plus a grander one for each main pillar, each with a projecting pointed arch covering a subdividing column topped by a statue of a bishop or king. Above each arch is a pair of spandrels containing carved scenes which create a cycle of 93 carved relief sculptures of the life and miracles of the Virgin Mary. The carvings and sculptures would all have been painted. The window glass would all have been brightly coloured with major schemes perhaps of biblical narratives, of which a few small sections have survived. At the reformation, the edict to remove images from the cathedral was carried out very thoroughly by Bishop Thomas Goodrich. The larger statues have gone. The relief scenes were built into the wall, so each face or statue was individually hacked off, but leaving many finely carved details, and numerous puzzles as to what the original scenes showed.[35] After the reformation it was redeployed as the Parish Church for the town, a situation which continued up to 1938.

Octagon

The ceiling of the nave and lantern, viewed from the Octagon looking west

The central octagonal tower, with its vast internal open space and its pinnacles and lantern above, forms the most distinctive and celebrated feature of the cathedral.[37] However, what Pevsner describes as Ely's 'greatest individual achievement of architectural genius c]ame about through a disaster at the centre of the Cathedral. On the night of 12–13 February 1322, possibly as a result of digging foundations for the Lady Chapel, the Norman central crossing tower collapsed. Work on the Lady Chapel was suspended as attention transferred to dealing with this disaster. Instead of being replaced by a new tower on the same ground plan, the crossing was enlarged to an octagon, removing all four of the original tower piers and absorbing the adjoining bays of the nave, chancel and transepts to define an open area far larger than the square base of the original tower. The construction of this unique and distinctive feature was overseen by Alan of Walsingham. The extent of his influence on the design continues to be a matter of debate, as are the reasons such a radical step was taken. Mistrust of the soft ground under the failed tower piers may have been a major factor in moving all the weight of the new tower further out.] The large stone octagonal tower, with its eight internal archways, leads up to spectacular timber fan-vaulting that appears to allow the large glazed timber lantern to balance on their slender struts.] The roof and lantern are actually held up by a complex timber structure above the vaulting which could not be built in this way today because there are no trees big enough. The central lantern, also octagonal in form, but with angles offset from the great Octagon, has panels showing pictures of musical angels, which can be opened, with access from the Octagon roof-space, so that real choristers can sing from on high. More wooden vaulting forms the lantern roof. At the centre is a wooden boss carved from a single piece of oak, showing Christ in Majestry. The elaborate joinery and timberwork was brought about by William Hurley, master carpenter in the royal service.

The choir

It is unclear what damage was caused to the Norman chancel by the fall of the tower, but the three remaining bays were reconstructed under Bishop John Hotham (1316-1337) in an ornate Decorated style with flowing tracery.

Structural evidence shows that this work was a remodelling rather than a total rebuilding. New choirstalls with carved misericords and canopy work were installed beneath the octagon, in a similar position to their predecessors. Work was resumed on the Lady Chapel, and the two westernmost bays of Northwold's presbytery were adapted by unroofing the triforia so as to enhance the lighting of Etheldreda's shrine. Starting at about the same time the remaining lancet windows of the aisles and triforia of the presbytery were gradually replaced by broad windows with flowing tracery. At the same period extensive work took place on the monastic buildings, including the construction of the elegant chapel of Prior Crauden.

Chantry Chapels

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries elaborate chantry chapels were inserted in the easternmost bays of the presbytery aisles, on the north for Bishop John Alcock (1486-1500) and on the south for Bishop Nicholas West (1515–33).

John Alcock was born in around 1430, the son of a Hull merchant, but achieved high office in both church and state. Amongst his many duties and posts he was given charge of Edward IV sons, who became known as the Princes in the Tower. That Alcock faithfully served Edward IV and his sons as well Henry VII adds to the mystery of how their fate was kept secret. Appointed bishop of Rochester and then Worcester by Edward IV, he was also declared 'Lord President of Wales' in 1476.On Henry VII's victory over Richard III in 1485, Alcock became interim Lord Chancellor and in 1486 was appointed Bishop of Ely. As early as 1476 he had endowed a chantry for his parents at Hull, but the resources Ely put at his disposal allowed him found Jesus College, Cambridge and build his own fabulous chantry chapel in an ornate style. The statue niches with their architectural canopies are crammed so chaotically together that some of the statues never got finished as they were so far out of sight. Others, although completed, were overlooked by the destructions of the reformation, and survived when all the others were destroyed. The extent that the chapel is squashed in, despite cutting back parts of the Norman walls, raises the possibility that the design, and perhaps even some of the stonework, was done with a more spacious bay at Worcester in mind. On his death in 1500 he was buried within his chapel.

Nicholas West had studied at Cambridge, Oxford and Bologna, had been a diplomat in the service of Henry VII and Henry VIII, and became Bishop of Ely in 1515. For the remaining 19 years of his life he 'lived in greater splendour than any other prelate of his time, having more than a hundred servants.'

He was able to build the magnificent Chantry chapel at the south-east corner of the presbytery, panelled with niches for statues (which were destroyed or disfigured just a few years later at the reformation), and with fan tracery forming the ceiling, and West's tomb on the south side.

In 1771 the chapel was also used to house the bones of seven Saxon 'benefactors of the church'. These had been translated from the old Saxon Abbey into the Norman building, and had been placed in a wall of the choir when it stood in the Octagon.

When the choir stalls were moved, their enclosing wall was demolished, and the bones of Wulfstan (died 1023), Osmund of Sweden, Athelstan of Elmham, Ælfwine of Elmham, Ælfgar of Elmham, Eadnoth of Dorchester and Byrhtnoth, eorldorman of Essex, were found, and relocated into West's chapel.

Also sharing Nicholas West's chapel, against the east wall, is the tomb memorial to the bishop Bowyer Sparke, who died in 1836.

Dissolution and Reformation
The rood screen viewed from the nave

On 18 November 1539 the royal commissioners took possession of the monastery and all its possessions, and for nearly two years its future hung in the balance as Henry VIII and his advisers considered what role, if any, Cathedrals might play in the emerging Protestant church. On 10 September 1541 a new charter was granted to Ely, at which point Robert Steward, the last Prior, was re-appointed as the first Dean, who, with eight prebendaries formed the Dean and Chapter, the new governing body of the cathedral. Under Bishop Thomas Goodrich's orders, first the shrines to the Anglo-Saxon saints were destroyed, and as iconoclasm increased, nearly all the stained glass and much of the sculpture in the Cathedral was destroyed or defaced during the 1540s. In the Lady Chapel the free-standing statues were destroyed and all 147 carved figures in the frieze of St Mary were decapitated, as were the numerous sculptures on West's chapel. The Cathedrals were spared on the basis of three useful functions: propagation of true worship of God, educational activity, and care of the poor. To this end, vicars choral, lay clerks and boy choristers were all appointed (many having previously been members of the monastic community), to assist in worship. A grammar school with 24 scholars was established in the monastic buildings, and in the 1550s plate and vestments were sold to buy books and establish a library. The passageway running to the Lady Chapel was turned into an almshouse for six bedemen. The Lady Chapel itself was handed over to the town as Holy Trinity Parish Church in 1566, replacing a very unsatisfactory lean-to structure that stood against the north wall of the nave. Many of the monastic buildings became the houses of the new Cathedral hierarchy, although others were demolished. Much of the Cathedral itself had little purpose. The whole East end was used simply as a place for burials and memorials.

Difficult as the sixteenth century had been for the Cathedral, it was the period of the Commonwealth that came nearest to destroying both the institution and the buildings. Throughout the 1640s, with Oliver Cromwell's army occupying the Isle of Ely, a puritanical regime of worship was imposed. Bishop Matthew Wren was arrested in 1642 and spent the next 18 years in the Tower of London] That no significant destruction of images occurred during the Civil War and the Commonwealth would appear to be because it had been done so thoroughly 100 years before. In 1648 parliament encouraged the demolition of the buildings, so that the materials could be sold to pay for 'relief of sick and maimed soldiers, widows and children'. That this didn't happen, and that the building suffered nothing worse than neglect, may have been due to protection by Oliver Cromwell, although the uncertainty of the times, and apathy rather than hostility to the building may have been as big a factor.

Restoration

Peter Gunning Monument, Ely Cathedral

When Charles II was invited to return to Britain, alongside the political restoration there began a process of re-establishing the Church of England. Matthew Wren, whose high church views had kept him in prison throughout the period of the Commonwealth, was able to appoint a new Cathedral Chapter. The Dean, by contrast was appointed by the crown. The three big challenges for the new hierarchy were to begin repairs on the neglected buildings, to re-establish Cathedral services, and to recover its lands, rights and incomes. The search for lost deeds and records to establish their rights took over 20 years but most of the rights to the dispersed assets appear to have been regained.

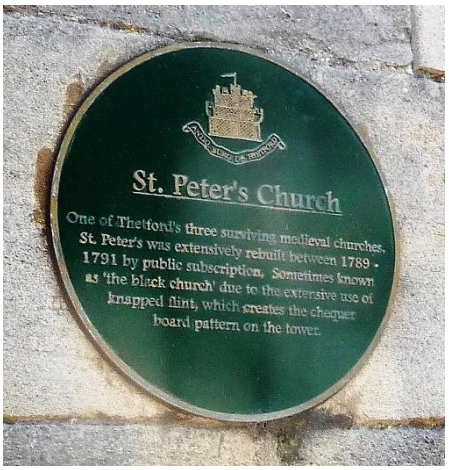
In the 1690s a number of very fine baroque furnishings were introduced, notably a marble font (now in Prickwillow church,) and an organ case mounted on the Romanesque pulpitum (the stone screen dividing the nave from the liturgical choir) with trumpeting angels and other embellishments. In 1699 the north-west corner of the north transept collapsed and had to be rebuilt. The works included the insertion of a fine classical doorway in the north face. Christopher Wren has sometimes been associated with this feature, and he may have been consulted by Robert Grumbold, the mason in charge of the project. Grumbold had worked with Wren on Trinity College Library in Cambridge a few years earlier, and Sir Christopher would have been familiar with the Cathedral through his uncle Matthew Wren, bishop from 1638 to 1667. He was certainly among the people with whom the Dean (John Lambe 1693-1708) discussed the proposed works during a visit to London. The damaged transept took from 1699 to 1702 to rebuild, and with the exception of the new doorway, the works faithfully re-instated the Romanesque walls, windows, and detailing. This was a landmark approach in the history of restoration.

St Mary's, Ely

The church of St Mary's was built in the early 13th century, though the tower was added during the 14th century. The church stands just a few hundred yards away from the cathedral, and in fact, St Mary is known to have been built by order of Bishop Eustace of Ely.

The design retains god examples of Norman work, particularly around the north door. Much of the stained glass is of modern vintage, as is the peal of 8 bells in the decorated period tower. The interior has low, pointed arches supported on simple, smooth, columns. In fact, most of the interior contains little decoration, and the effect is subdued. The former vicarage of the church is known as Oliver Cromwell House, a the Cromwell family lived there for 11 years beginning in 1636. Cromwell's youngest daughter was baptised in the church in 1638.

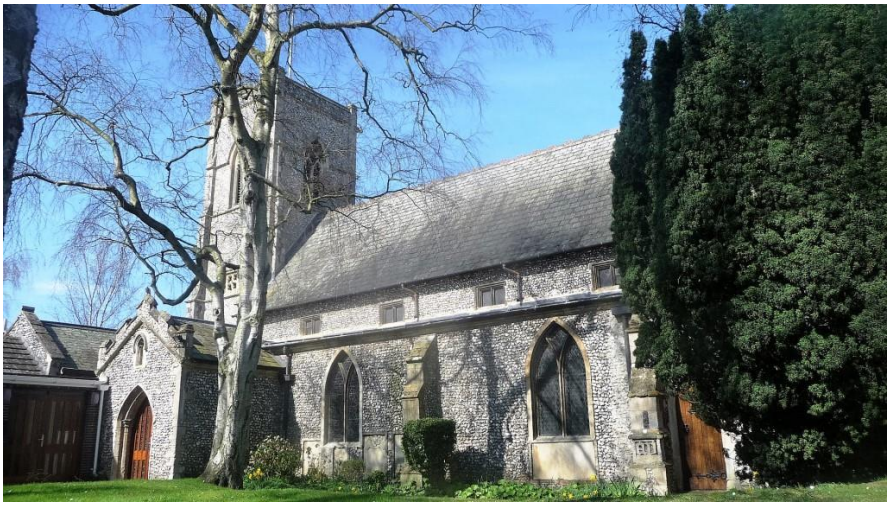
Latter Day Saints, Thetford



St Peter's, Thetford

Of the 21 medieval churches that once existed in Thetford only three are still standing. St Peter's is situated by the junction of King and Whitehart Street. It was extensively rebuilt between 1789 and 1791 by public subscription. It is sometimes known as the 'black church' due to the extensive use of knapped flint which makes its exterior walls appear black. The church was rarely used for worship and in 2007 local religioys leaders began the process of having it declared redundant. The building which has the town's only working clock tower, continued to be used as a community facility for a couple of years but has since been stripped of all furnishings Discussions to convert it into a new visitor centre, an art gallery, office space or for residential use appear to be ongoing.

Baptist, King Street, Thetford



St Cuthbert's, Thetford

St Cuthbert's is a medieval church that was entirely rebuilt after its tower fell in 1851. On the right is the 1884 post office; its decorative detailing recalls the ancient East Anglian tradition of pargetting. Thetford enjoyed a high standing a millennium ago – in the 11th century it was the seat of the East Anglian bishopric.

However, unlike the more northerly Norfolk towns, it never grew into a major agricultural centre – the soils here are poor.

St John de Sepulchre, Finklegate, Norwich

The well-proportioned, ninety-foot high tower has a crisp silhouette with each 'stage' stepping back from the one below. The elegant *'flushwork' parapet* and corner *pinnacles* are from 1901. The clock face is eighteenth century. The weather-cock commemorates the Peace of Utrecht in 1713.

The entrance is on the north side. The two-storey *porch* has two friezes of shields over the doorway. The alternating letter "I" stands for Johannes (John). Above is an elaborate niche for a statue. The porch flintwork is '*knapped and squared*'. The corner *pinnacles* start below the roof line. The stair *turret* to the '*parvise*' (upper room) blocks the window jamb, as if it were an afterthought.

Continuing clockwise round the church, notice:

- the uniform *nave* windows in the fifteenth-century *Perpendicular* style with their strong vertical emphasis in the *tracery*.
- the rough flintwork of the west wall of the north *transept* and the
- evidence of a blocked opening, suggesting that it is part of an earlier structure. The door is nineteenth century.
- on the far side of the transept, the recently rebuilt turret that once housed the stair to the *rood loft*.
- the corner of the *chancel*, chopped back to allow for heavy market-day traffic.
- the flatter arches of the chancel windows indicating a later date than the nave.

On the south side:

- the blocked opening and rough flintwork on both side walls of the south transept, contrasting with the smooth 'knapped' flints of the end wall.
- the massive brick arch at the end of the nave, above the chancel roof, built to lessen the weight on the chancel arch inside.
- the south wall of the nave is identical to the north side.
- the way the tower stair turret pushes the *belfry* window off-centre.

In the porch**,** notice the fine *vaulted* ceiling and the carved medieval inner door before entering the nave. This is a light and lofty space. Mock arches frame the windows and connect the walls visually to the fine timber-framed roof overhead. The entrances to the tower and to the two transepts are marked by tall, narrow arches**.**

The narrow recess**,** south of the tower arch, was for storing the staves on which processional banners were carried through the streets. The maker of the *font* has had fun carving the lions. The wide, tall chancel arch appears to have been designed to relate to a higher chancel roof. Its sides have been cut out to accommodate the original medieval *screen*.

The chancel**,** hidden by a curtain, has a steeply pitched roof. It contains several interesting wall monuments and a medieval consecration cross on the south wall.

Sixteenth century - The Reformation brought great changes. Church wardens' accounts of the 1540s indicate how the church was decorated and furnished before and after the changes. Stained glass windows, including one of St Thomas Beckett, were replaced by clear glass. The richly coloured *rood screen*, with its pictures of the saints was sold along with communion vessels and other plate. Wall paintings were whitewashed over.

Nineteenth century - St John took on a new lease of life under the influence of the high church Oxford Movement. Back came medieval style *pews,* a painted rood screen, *choir stalls* in the chancel, a new organ, a stained glass window over the *altar* and an elaborate *reredos*(by John Aldrid Scott).

Late twentieth century - The historic fabric has been extensively repaired. Only minor alterations have been made to accommodate the Orthodox Congregation.

St John the Baptist, Catholic Cathedral, Norwich

The Cathedral of St John the Baptist is a fine example of the great Victorian Gothic Revival. Designed by George Gilbert Scott Junior, I was the generous gift to the Catholics of Norwich of Henry Fitzalan Howard as a thank-offering for his first marriage to Lady Flora Abney-Hastings, Duke Henry, following an approach by Canon Richard Duckett commissioned the building and took a keen interest in every aspect of its design from its initial conception in the early 1870's to its completion and dedication in 1910.

Until 1976 when it became the Cathedral of the new diocese of East Anglia, this great church was believed to be the largest parish church was to be the largest parish church in England. Now a Grade 1 listed building, the Cathedral of John the Baptist is one of Norwich's iconic building, rising above the city skyline. Its external grandeur and magnificent interior, especially the fine stonework and beautiful stained glass make it well worth a visit for those interested in architectural history.

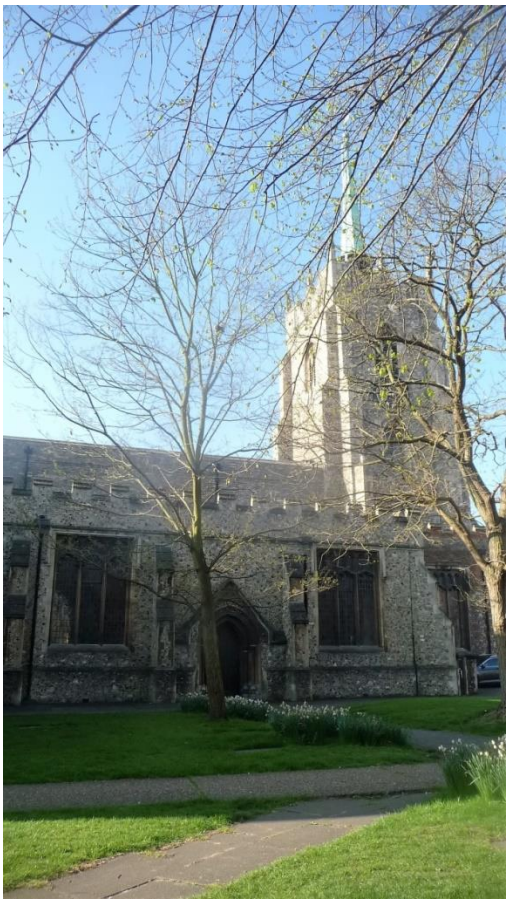
They will also find an inspiring and tranquil place of prayer. In addition to its role as the Mother Church of the Diocese of East Anglia (www.rcdea.org.uk), the Cathedral supports a large and vibrant parish, with some 1,20- regular worshippers and many thousands of visitors each year. The opening in 2010 of the new Narthex provided a wide range of community activities and many more opportunities for volunteering.

Trinity URC, Unthank Road, Norwich

Immediately to the south of George Gilbert Scott's great Catholic Cathedral of St John the Baptist sits the most striking and memorable of all Norwich's post-war churches, Trinity United Reformed Church. It was built by Bernard Feilden, and opened for business in 1956. It is on the former site of Unthank Road Baptist Church, which had been demolished for this purpose the previous year. George Plunkett had taken an early colour photograph of it shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, coming back in May 1954 to photograph it again as it was prepared for demolition.

Other Norwich churches

SUNDAY 9th APRIL 2017



Back View of Cathedral, Chelmsford

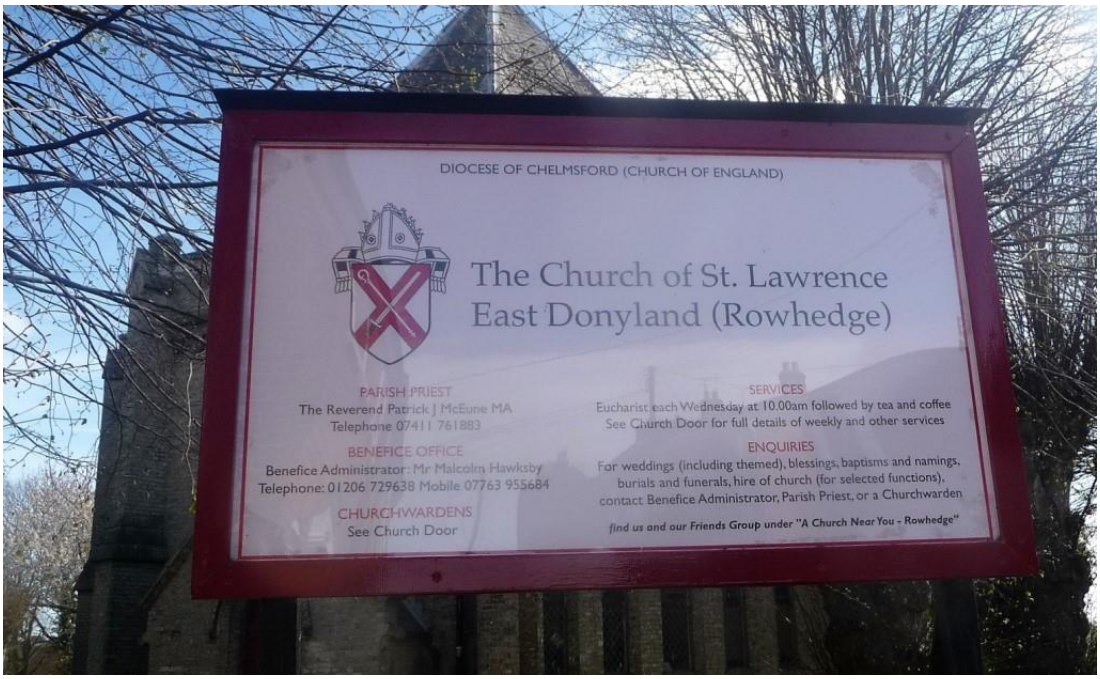
TUESDAY 11th APRIL 2017

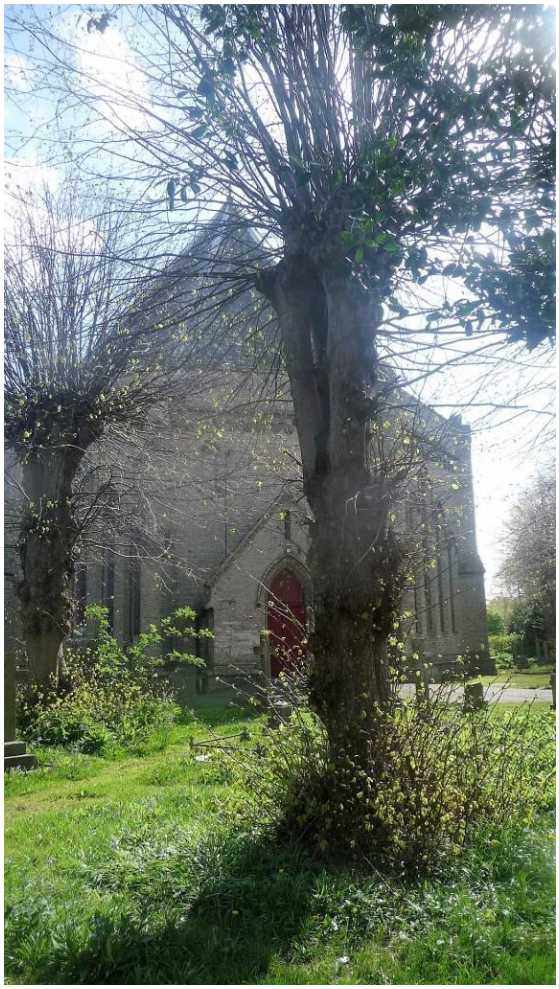
Methodist, Rectory Road, Rowhedge

A Primitive Methodist mission was sent to Rowhedge in 1910 and Rowhedge Primitive Methodist chapel, designed by S. Wilson Webb, opened in 1913.

Although at the time of Keith Guyler's photograph in 1988 and later in 1994 it was still open for worship, it has since been converted to a house.

The words over the central arch say, in capitals, Primitive Methodist Church: the organisation had moved on from being a Connexion.





St Lawrence, Rectory Road, Rowhedge

St Andrews, Fingringhoe

Welcome to the Parish of St Andrew's Fingringhoe this is fine Church in a lovely setting with C14 door fine Wall Paintings and Monuments

Now part of the Donyland Parishes comprising of St Andrew Fingringhoe with St Lawrence East Donyland or Rowhedge and St Andrew Abberton with Langenhoe in the Church of England Diocese of Chelmsford

Set in the heart of a vibrant community we welcome people of all ages, all church backgrounds or none, and especially those thinking about the Christian faith for the first time for prayer and quiet reflection and good liturgy.