

SOCIAL NEWSLETTER

Jan 2025

Hello everyone, and welcome to the first issue of our Parish Social Newsletter for 2025. So, let's start by giving thanks: to our Lord for everything he blessed our community with last year, AND to all of you who helped to make it a successful year - whether you helped to organise, contributed, and/or attended any of the events.

Over several events – big and small – we got together to share food and friendship both within our parish and more widely in the Christian community. In the process, we managed to raise over £1800 which was donated to Alzheimer's Society, the Church in Need in the Holy Land , SVP work in South Sudan, and Ukranian orphans, as well as to our own church funds.

We hope that this coming year will continue to see us growing stronger as a community and joined together in love and friendship.

As always, do please let us know if you have any views or thoughts about our Parish Social Newsletters
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A RECAP ON WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE THE LAST SOCIAL NEWSLETTER

OLSE -120 Years and counting! - On 20 November we celebrated the Feast of St Edmund with a Mass at OLSE; AND afterwards, to recognise the anniversary of our church we had drinks and refreshments in the Garnett Room..... and a cake with Fr Peter doing the honours!



Parish Christmas Fair at OLSE – a good crowd turned up for our Christmas Fair at the end of November, including families and people from other parishes. All the bottles on the tombola, and most of the books and gifts were quickly snapped up, which together with the raffle and generous donations raised over £500 for children affected by the war in Ukraine.

The church in Ukraine linked to our Ukranian family here were able to prepare Christmas gifts including fresh fruit for 20 children from our donations!



If you would like to find out more, Nataliya has lots more photos of the children receiving their gifts and has also translated the thank you letter from the local Priest.

Pre-Christmas Afternoon Tea - The Parish Christmas Tea at the King William Pub in Sedgford was a joyous event of community, connection and Christmas Cheer.



The savoury & sweet spread gave a choice to all tastes, and an equal spread of folk from St Cecilia's and OLSE gave a real sense of one community. The low winter light was a background to an illuminated festive garden, a perfect backdrop to winter conversation.

THE LETTER - A Film to Make us Think....

The showing of the feature / documentary film "The Letter" – the title refers to the Laudato Si' encyclical which marks its 10th anniversary this year – was a great success. It was attended by 44 people, both from our parish and other churches in the area.

The Letter gives us an insight into the reality of climate change in different parts of the world: Pope Francis invited

climate activists from Senegal, India, Brazil and Australia, and through meeting with him, we learn of the threat not only to the land and livelihood of the community, but the threat to the life of one of the activists from the big business that is working in his country. The power of the film left some in tears, but at the same time it engendered hope and huge esteem for the people at the front line of the battle against the degradation of the Earth.

Conversation over the lunch of home-made soups and cakes afterwards centred on the message of the film, and generated rich thoughts, reflection and ideas.

The response to both the film and the get together was overwhelmingly positive:

"Such a good film; I learned so much. And it's made me think about what I can do in my own little way to be more careful in caring for our planet."

"I can't say I enjoyed the film exactly – it's such a sobering, worrying thing – but I really did enjoy the opportunity to open our church to our Christian sisters and brothers"

"It's so good to get together with people from other churches"

"We must do more things like this!"

If you haven't yet seen The Letter, it's still available to watch on youtube – see <https://www1.theletterfilm.org/watch/>

It's well worth watching: as the president of Laudato Si' says during the film **"Once you know, you cannot look away"**

What's coming up in 2025? We know that we asked a lot from you last year in terms of donations for several social events, and wanted to try to cut back on this a little this year. This will also give some individuals the chance to step back from events they have led for many years and have a well-deserved rest! So, you will note for example that the August summer BBQ will not take place this year – especially as this is always at the mercy of the weather!

We will have something in mid-September, but at the moment we cannot confirm if this will be an International lunch/picnic at OLSE, or the more formal sit down Harvest Lunch at St Cecilia's (which was sort of replaced with the simpler lunch after the film showing last year). **Let us know which you would prefer.**

Dates for your Diary:

Tuesday 4 March - Pancake evening at St Cecilia's beginning at 4:30pm

Saturday 14 June - Strawberry Fair at St Cecilia's – time to be confirmed

Saturday 13 September – Parish lunch (what this will be and where to be confirmed at later date)

Saturday 30 November

Or 7 December - Christmas Fair at OLSE

Thursday 11 December - Parish Pre-Christmas tea – venue to be confirmed

Ecumenical – we are also planning to continue to participate in ecumenical events with other Christian churches in the area. The Faith meals held last year will continue – **Please note the first of these is on Friday 31 January at The Way in Hunstanton.** The next one will take place on Friday 30 April and be hosted by our own parish together with the Anglican church of St Edmunds in Hunstanton. There will also be a series of Lenten lunches and other joint events during the year - look out for further details of these soon.