

Day	Date	We pray especially for...
Friday	21st	...our Home Communion Assistants and all whom they visit; all in our communities who are especially vulnerable; all who provide pastoral support in our parishes, in many different ways.
Saturday	22nd	...all who derive enjoyment from visiting our churches and all involved in making them welcome.
Sunday	23rd	...all gathering at our services today at Brooke, Woodton and on Zoom.
Monday	24th	...all involved in church administration, including Frances, as our Administrator, who begins her final week of work with us before retirement, PCC Secretaries and PCC Treasurers.
Tuesday	25th	...all offering support to older people.
Wednesday	26th	...on National Dog Day, companion animals of all kinds and the welfare of those in rescue centres.
Thursday	27th	...all who give generously to the work of the church, financially or in other ways.
Friday	28th	...our church premises and all involved in looking after them; our Churchwardens and Designated Persons; our Fabric Officers and Building Administrators; our cleaners; those who tend our churchyards.
Saturday	29th	...everyone's enjoyment of the Bank Holiday weekend.
Sunday	30th	...our services of Holy Communion this morning at Kirstead and Morningthorpe.
Monday	31st	...all, everywhere, who need us to pray for them for whatever reason.

Throughout, we pray for those in special need at this time, remembering:

Martin, Ian, Michael, Ann
Bedingham/Woodton: Sheila, Hilary, Anne, Bruce,
Richard, Susan, Marco, David
Fritton/Morningthorpe: Jason, Carol
Hempnall: Lesley and family, Sophia
Shelton/Hardwick: Maureen
Topcroft: Candy, Penny
Long Term Care...
Bedingham/Woodton: Dennis, Shirley, Jacob, Sally
Hempnall: Colin, Denise
Mundham/Seething: Margaret, Nancy

(Compiled by and for the Brooke Benefice and the Hempnall Group of Parishes)

***The Brooke Benefice and
The Hempnall Group
Thoughts and Prayers
August 2026***



All may not be as it seems...



In our prayers in church – and no doubt privately – we often say ‘thank you’ to God for the beauty of rural Norfolk. And as we head into the ‘high summer’ of August it’s right to acknowledge the blessings of living here in gentle countryside, with its comparative tranquillity and space (which is literally ‘green’ most of the time, if not right now in the intense heat of recent weeks).

Yet most of us are aware, too, at some level, that we shouldn’t romanticise rural life. We know that there are ‘issues’ attaching to it: housing is expensive, energy costs are high (especially given the continuing reliance of many rural households on domestic heating oil), public transport is minimal and the outlay on travel, especially when fuel costs are volatile, is correspondingly greater.

These and other economic ‘facts of country life’ impact all of us but can tip some into real poverty. This is not always as ‘apparent’ as in towns and city both because the population is more scattered and because the nature of the deprivation may not be so evident to the onlooker: but rural poverty is real and amongst us.

And so, too, is an extreme form and manifestation of poverty, that of rough sleeping. Homelessness, however it’s occurred, is widely considered to be a particularly traumatic form of deprivation and rough sleeping, in turn, is ‘the most visible and harmful form’ of that.ⁱ Andy Burnham, our new Prime Minister, has pledged, on taking office in July, to eradicate it.

We might think of it as just a ‘city’ problem. But we would be wrong...because rough sleeping, like poverty, is not just an urban phenomenon. Analysis in 2023 by the Campaign to Protect Rural England confirmed that rates of rough sleeping in the countryside can be higher than in some urban areas.ⁱⁱ In the government’s latest ‘snapshot’ data (gathered nationally for a particular night in autumn 2025) the estimated number of people sleeping rough in the Breckland District Council area to our west was more than double the actual figure for Norwich.ⁱⁱⁱ



The reasons for rough sleeping are many and complex, an interplay between deep-seated structural factors and individual circumstances. There are already national and local government strategies to combat it and a plethora of policies and action plans in place across health services and specialist charities. But it remains an issue.

What can we do? A good guide for us as church members here, I’d suggest, is to remember the vision of our Diocese (which continues to underpin the emerging new STREAMS strategy that we’re learning more about). That vision urges us to be ‘Prayerful, Pastoral and Prophetic’. So

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we can pray; we can help by offering support to organisations working with those who are rough sleeping or vulnerable in that respect; and we can exercise our ‘citizen’s voices’ to speak out and join in campaigns to combat social injustice.

If we encounter someone who is rough sleeping, the advice is to point them in the direction of the services that can help them. In our local authority area (South Norfolk) ‘Rough Sleeper Co-ordinators’ provide a front-line response:

However, the absolute top tip is the simplest yet often the hardest for us to fulfil: ‘be kind; smile,

Rough Sleeping – South Norfolk and Broadland ‘First Step’ Project

Mobile: 07766 446312 or 07721 716577 **Office:** 01508 533751 or 01603 430641

Out-of-hours service: 01603 412180 **Email:** <firststep@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk>

acknowledge the person is there’...

May we have a blessed month ahead, whether at home or on holiday – but may we remember, too, all those, whether visible to us or invisible, who will be spending it without a place to live and who might as a consequence be sleeping rough. They will, sadly, be out there

Liam Pilgrim

ⁱ Norwich City Council, ‘Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2026-2031’, < [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 \(Norwich City Council\)](#)7> [accessed 27.7.26], p.9.

ⁱⁱ CPRE, <<https://www.cpre.org.uk/news/rough-sleeping-in-countryside-higher-than-some-urban-areas-analysis-shows/>>[accessed 19.7.26].

ⁱⁱⁱ Ministries of Housing, Communities and Local Government, <[Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2025 - GOV.UK](#)> and associated links].; interactive dashboard at < [Microsoft Power BI](#)> [accessed 21.7.26].

^{iv} St Martins, <[How to help someone sleeping rough - St Martins](#)> [accessed 20.7.26].

Images:(1) Hempnall Group archives; (2) CPRE (reference as above).

Sunday readings (from the Lectionary)	
2 nd August – Trinity 9	<i>Psalm 145:8-9;15-end</i> <i>Isaiah 55:1-5</i> <i>Matthew 14:13-21</i>
9 th August – Trinity 10 <i>[nb - there will be different readings at our special Sunday service at Seething]</i>	<i>Psalm 85:8-13</i> <i>1 Kings 19:9-18</i> <i>Matthew 14:22-33</i>
16 th August – Trinity 11 <i>[nb - there will be different readings at our Sunday Patronal Festivals for St Mary at Shelton and Thwaite]</i>	<i>Psalm 67</i> <i>Isaiah 56:1,6-8</i> <i>Matthew 15: [10-20]; 21-28</i>
23 rd August – Trinity 12	<i>Psalm 138</i> <i>Isaiah 51:1-8</i> <i>Matthew 16: 13-20</i>
30 th August – Trinity 13	<i>Psalm 26 1-8</i> <i>Jeremiah 15:15-21</i> <i>Matthew 16 :21-28</i>

Day	Date	We pray especially for...
Saturday	1st	...our two benefices and all our constituent parishes as we continue to go forward together under the leadership of. Austin and Susanna as our new clergy team.
Sunday	2nd	...our worship in Holy Communion this morning in Brooke and Hempnall and the All Age Praise afternoon service at
Monday	3rd	...all affected by the aftermath of devastating wildfires; ongoing action, worldwide, to tackle climate change.
Tuesday	4th	...all who work in the local hospitality industry; all on holiday in the area.
Wednesday	5th	...all in our local communities going elsewhere on holiday, that they may enjoy a break from regular routines.
Thursday	6th	...all who have no place to live and all who seek to support them.
Friday	7th	...our Ministry Team, our intercessors, lesson readers and all who share in enabling our worship together.
Saturday	8th	...all who volunteer in offering communal and social activities in our villages and all who participate in them.
Sunday	9th	...peace, the theme of our combined service at Seething today.
Monday	10th	...politicians and all involved in public administration in this country, at all levels, that they may exercise sound judgement.
Tuesday	11th	...our organists, singers and musicians; our bell ringers; our flower arrangers; our ‘meeters and greeters’; our refreshment servers.
Wednesday	12th	...on International Youth Day, all our children, young people and families during the school holiday period this month.
Thursday	13th	...on the Church of England’s day of commemoration of Florence Nightingale and Octavia Hill, all involved in the provision of nursing care and social reform.
Friday	14th	...all involved in church governance, serving on church councils across our two benefices and acting as representatives in decision making and forward planning.
Saturday	15th	...our local sports teams and all who support them.
Sunday	16th	...our celebration of Patronal Festivals (St Mary) at Shelton and Thwaite (the Festival of the Blessed Virgin Mary being 15th)
Monday	17th	...all suffering as a result of ongoing wars.
Tuesday	18th	...all experiencing physical or mental ill health and their carers.
Wednesday	19th	...our families and friends, that they may be enjoying their summer.
Thursday	20th	...those who need the services of local foodbanks and those who make donations to them.