



The Bishop of Norwich  
The Rt Revd Graham James

 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Norwich

## The Bishop of Norwich, The Rt Revd Graham James: a biography

Bishop Graham was born in 1951 and has a Cornish background. Many of his family worked in the tin mining industry between Camborne and Redruth. A move to Northampton when he was eleven meant his secondary education was at Northampton Grammar School. He read history at the University of Lancaster before training for ordination at Oxford.

+Graham was ordained in Peterborough in 1975 to be a curate on a large council estate. He moved to Welwyn Garden City in 1979 to be the priest in charge of a relatively new church on another council estate. Later he moved to Church House, Westminster where he was in charge of the selection procedures for candidates for ordination. Then in 1987 he was appointed as Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Robert Runcie). He preached at the former archbishop's funeral in 2000 in St Albans Abbey. +Graham was himself consecrated Bishop of St Germans in 1993, returning to his native Cornwall as a suffragan bishop. He was much involved in attempting to alleviate the serious poverty of the county (especially found in the former mining and china clay areas which he knows so well). He set up the Cornwall Poverty Forum which led to the establishment of the Cornwall Community Foundation which raises money to assist local charities. It provides a means whereby a county can help itself rather than looking to subsidies elsewhere.

In 1999 +Graham was appointed Bishop of Norwich and his enthronement took place in January 2000. The Norfolk Community Foundation (which has celebrated its tenth anniversary) was also founded by +Graham in 2005 to do similar work to that in Cornwall. It has proved an even greater success, and now has an endowment of £17.5m and distributes over £5m each year.

More widely Bishop +Graham has been a member of the House of Lords since 2004, and until recently he was on the Select Committee for Communications. He continues as the Church of England's spokesman on media issues and is a regular contributor to BBC Radio 4's *Thought for the Day*.

He is married to Julie, a nurse working in palliative care, and they have two adult children – Rebecca, a teacher in London and Dominic, who works as a merchandiser for a fashion company. His interests include amateur dramatics (he has appeared on the Theatre Royal stage and once with Stephen Fry), cricket, rugby union and the fortunes of Norwich City (he would be foolish not to be interested!).

The Bishop's personal staff are a small, dedicated team based at Bishop's House, Norwich close to Norwich Cathedral. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team are also based at Bishop's House.

## **The Diocese of Norwich: a brief overview**

The Diocese of Norwich is one of the oldest in England and includes all Norfolk parishes except some in the west of the county around Downham Market (which belong to Ely). The Diocese also covers North East Suffolk, including Lowestoft and going as far south as Kessingland. There are 577 parishes and 642 churches – the largest numbers in England apart from Oxford, but serving a much smaller population of less than a million people overall. There are around 300 licensed clergy, of whom more than two thirds are stipendiary and a roughly equal number of active retired clergy. There are 118 church schools, all but two of them primary schools. A quarter of Norfolk's primary pupils are in Church of England schools.

The Diocese is organised on an informal area system. The areas correspond with the three archdeaconries of Lynn, Norfolk (Thetford) and Norwich. The Suffragan Bishops of Lynn and Thetford look after their designated areas with their respective archdeacons. The Bishop of Norwich does the same in relation to the Archdeaconry of Norwich itself which covers the city. However, the Diocesan Bishop is keen to be bishop of the whole Diocese. History means that the Bishop of Norwich is seen as a figure for the whole county in secular as well as church contexts.

Many diocesan events take place at the Cathedral which cherishes its role in serving the Diocese. The Cathedral, as the seat of the Bishop, is at the centre of diocesan life, and not just geographically. Two new buildings (the Refectory and Hostry) have expanded the Cathedral's capacity to provide a venue for a widening range of activities which support the life of the Diocese and its parishes.