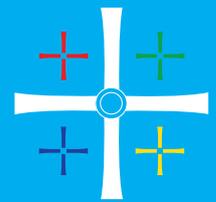


# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

DECEMBER 2017



#GOD with US

From all the churches in the **Venta Group**  
we want to wish all our readers a very

*Happy Christmas*

**MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU;  
THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE TO SHINE UPON  
YOU AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU;  
THE LORD TURN HIS FACE TOWARD YOU AND  
GIVE YOU PEACE.**

We would love to welcome you at one (or indeed all)  
of our special **Christmas Services** and you can find full  
details of each of these on pages 5 and 7 and also on the  
Venta Group website [www.venta-group.org](http://www.venta-group.org)

SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER

cafe church



### CAFÉ CHURCH CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Come along to our Christmas crafts  
extravaganza on Sunday 3rd December at  
10.30am at Stoke Church Hall! There will be  
plenty to make and do plus Christmas songs  
and festive food and drink for all ages.

This year we will be creating handmade  
decorations for your tree, plus painting  
"Baby Jesus rocks" to hide around the  
village. Why not take an hour or so to spend  
time as a family, or meet new friends, getting  
into the Christmas spirit and thinking about  
the nativity story?



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## He's with us

I expect that lots of you will have done a huge amount of planning for Christmas already. Others of you will be a little bit more last minute. Sometimes I frustrate people by being like this, but strangely they never tell me off for being last minute until right before something is supposed to happen.

Anyway, back to Christmas, and the planning. You might have been deciding what you are going to eat. Lots of us have turkey: maybe you prefer something else. If you do have a big turkey, chances are it will be turkey pie on Boxing Day, turkey curry, turkey soup, turkey sandwiches...

Sandwiches are important at Christmas, and they are important in the Christmas story too. Matthew's gospel is one of the story of Jesus's life, and contains some of our favourite Christmas things, like the story when Joseph had his unexpected visitor, we read some really famous words, which we have included in the Christmas card you received with this magazine: 'The virgin will conceive, and give birth to a son, and they

will call him Immanuel, which means "God with us". These are amazing and powerful words, and they are picked up again at the end of Matthew's gospel, when Jesus, ready to go to heaven to be with his Father, promises his disciples that 'I am with you always.' The idea that Jesus is with them, and us, is like the outside of a sandwich, holding together all the amazing stuff that we learn about Jesus in-between.

I remember sitting in church while I was growing up, and hearing the Vicar say very seriously 'The Lord be with you', and being supposed to reply 'And also with you.' But no-one ever explained to me that it connects with some really big ideas in the bible about how much God wants us to know that he is there, and he is with us, and he is for us. It was just something someone said, and something I said back. I couldn't honestly say that I had any real confidence in my heart that God was with me from day to day, like some people seemed to think, or even feel.

But the truth is that God is with us now, even when Jesus is in heaven with his Father, because he has sent his Holy Spirit, who lives in us, and all of God's people, when we believe. He is with us through all of life, and he is with us always: he promises that he will never leave us. We might leave him, it might seem difficult to believe he is there sometimes, but he promises to be with us. We just have to ask, and he will be with us as surely as he was in Bethlehem on that amazing night 2000 years ago. At the risk of offending someone by not picking yours, I'm going to give my favourite carol's last word the last word.

O holy Child of Bethlehem  
Descend to us we pray  
Cast out our sin and enter in  
Be born in us today  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell  
O come to us abide with us  
Our Lord Emmanuel

A very Happy Christmas to you all.

### VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston, Arminghall and Caistor St Edmund  
Rob Baker, The Vicarage, Mill Road, Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8PA  
rob@venta-group.org 01508 492305

### CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

For any admin inquiries please email [admin@venta-group.org](mailto:admin@venta-group.org)  
or call Rob on 01508 492305

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[www.venta-group.org](http://www.venta-group.org)

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### CHURCHWARDENS

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#### Arminghall

Pat (492622) & Annie (495580)

#### Caistor St Edmund

Jani (493572) & Graham (493430)

### ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Joyce Williams 492143

### STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Viv Carrington 493438

### STOKE HOLY CROSS PAVILION BOOKINGS:

Barbara Cattermole (Parish clerk)  
530739

### FROM THE REGISTERS

#### FUNERALS

Derek Clarke  
20th November  
Arminghall

Charles 'Chips' Baker  
28th November  
Waveney Crematorium

#### INTERMENT OF ASHES

Arthur Knights  
11th November  
Arminghall

We continue to pray for all those who have lost loved ones recently, or are remembering someone particularly at this time of year.

We are always happy to record the names of anyone from the villages whose funeral has been held recently, even if it wasn't taken by a member of our ministry team.

### NEXT EDITION

Items for the next month's magazine please send by email to Henry and Eostre Caswell by email to

[ventafree4all@outlook.com](mailto:ventafree4all@outlook.com)

**BY 4TH DECEMBER PLEASE.**



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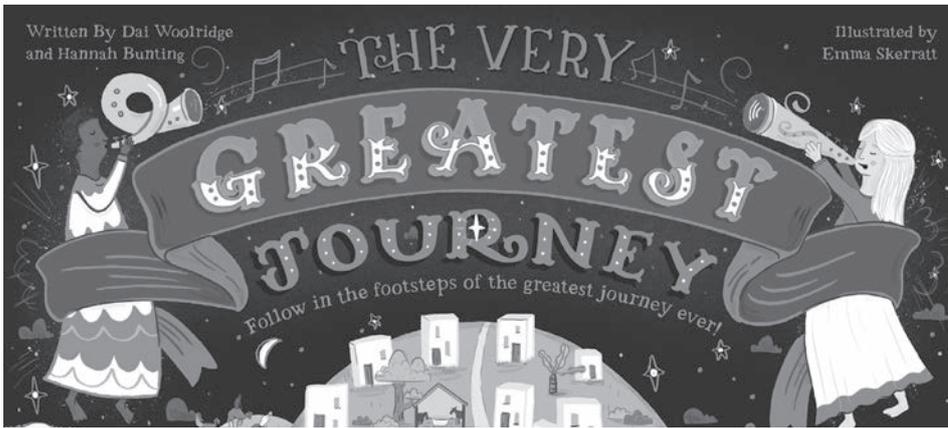
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## Where to find a Christmas Carol Service to suit you

### St Mary's Church Arminghall

The Candle-lit Carol Service will be at the usual time of **6.30pm** on **Sunday 10th December**. Please do stay on for Mulled Wine and Nibbles afterwards.

### St Edmund's Church Caistor

Our carol Service at Caistor will be on **Sunday 17th December** at **4pm**.

Come and join us for Festive Refreshments beforehand from 3pm and stay on for our traditional Service of readings and carols. You are invited to bring along a present for the young boys at Elizabeth House, Beccles. (see more details on page 7)

### Holy Cross Church Stoke Holy Cross

Our Carol Services at Stoke will start with

Family Carols on **Sunday 10th December** at **10:30am** with refreshments served afterwards.

**Carols round the Tree** this year will be on **Sunday 17th** at **6pm** at **Stoke Holy Cross** church hall. Ideal for all the family with mince pies, nibbles and mulled wine afterwards.

On the evening of **Tuesday 19th December** the **Tuesday Group** invite everyone to a traditional Carol Service at **Stoke Holy Cross church hall** at **7.30pm** with their usual wonderful refreshments too.

Then on **Christmas Eve** we will have the **Crib Service** in the church at **4pm** and this is a great one for young children who can come as a shepherd or angel (if they like) and be part of the service (pictured above).



### SERVICES FOR DECEMBER IN THE VENTA GROUP OF CHURCHES

<b>3rd Dec</b> <b>9.00 am</b>	<b>1st Sunday of Advent</b> Traditional Holy Communion <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
<b>10.30 am</b>	Christmas Café Church & Crafts <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall</i>
<b>5.00 pm</b>	Reflective (Taize) Service <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
<b>10th Dec</b> <b>9.30 am</b>	<b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b> Praise & Worship <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
<b>10.30 am</b>	Carol Service <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church</i>
<b>6.30 pm</b>	Carol Service <i>Arminghall Church</i>
<b>17th Dec</b> <b>4.00 pm</b>	<b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b> Carol Service <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
<b>6.00 pm</b>	Carols Around the Christmas Tree <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall</i>
<b>19th Dec</b> <b>7.30 pm</b>	<b>Tuesday</b> Tuesday Group Traditional Carol Service <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church</i>
<b>24th Dec</b> <b>4.00 pm</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b> Crib Service <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church</i>
<b>11.30 pm</b>	Carols, Readings and Communion for Christmas Night <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
<b>25th Dec</b> <b>9.00 am</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b> Christmas Morning Celebration Communion <i>Arminghall Church</i>
<b>10.30 am</b>	Christmas Morning Celebration Communion <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church</i>
<b>31st Dec</b> <b>10.30 am</b>	<b>1st Sunday of Christmas</b> Venta Group Morning Worship <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church</i>

## Why not try making your own star decorations



These 5 pointed Christmas Stars are really quite easy and fun to make as decorations for your tree. Use up some spare wrapping paper maybe. We found it best to use some quite stiff paper but not card. Watch the video or go by the pictorial instructions on the website below and see how you get on.

[www.homemade-gifts-made-easy.com/5-pointed-origami-star.html](http://www.homemade-gifts-made-easy.com/5-pointed-origami-star.html)



**STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB**

Our next meeting is on Thursday 7th December, 2017. This is our Christmas meeting and the last one this year. We will be having a buffet lunch and then entertainment. We would like members to be at the club for 12.15pm for the lunch. We will have the usual raffle and entertainment in the afternoon.

We have had another very successful year and welcomed a few new members which is always nice. I think if you ask any of them they will tell you they have enjoyed the time they have spent with us on club days and the outings which we have had during the year. Our Christmas lunch is on Friday the 8th December and the coach commences picking up in Trowse at 9.30am as we will be going to Lathams first. Why not come and give us a look in the new year and you could enjoy being a member of the Thursday Club. We meet on the first Thursday of each month in St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke Holy Cross 1.30pm for 2pm. We wont be having a meeting in January therefore our first meeting of 2018 will be Thursday 1st February, 2018.

**Bingo** - Our last bingo of the year will be on Wednesday 6th December which will be the Christmas one - 1.45pm start. We re-commence on Wednesday January 17th, 2018.

**Carpet Bowls** - There will be no carpet bowls in December, we will re-commence on Wednesday 24th January, 2018

May I take this opportunity on behalf of the Thursday Club to wish all you readers a very HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a prosperous New Year.



We are delighted that our churches, and local communities together have packed some 97 shoe boxes as part of the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child. These boxes, each filled with little gifts and small essentials, were all brought to our Sunday Shoebox service at Arminghall on 29th October so they could be collected to be sent off, with loads more all over the world to bring a bit happiness and hope at Christmas to many poor children in undeveloped countries. The pictures show some of the packing and at Shoe Box service.

**St Mary's church Arminghall**

The Candle-lit Carol Service will be at the usual time of 6.30pm on Sunday 10th December Please do stay on for Mulled Wine and Nibbles afterwards.

*We always do our best to come and say hello to new people moving into the villages where possible, and are happy to come and visit if you would like us to pray God's blessing over your new home, for example. Please be in touch with Rob or the churchwardens if you would like us to come and see you...*



**Jesus is coming!!**

From mid-December, have a look for the Baby Jesus stones hidden around Stoke Holy Cross. We will be making them at Café Church to remind everyone about the birth of Jesus, as you discover them in your comings and goings around the village. Keep your stone somewhere safe, and bring it along to the Crib Service at Stoke Holy Cross church at 4 pm on Christmas Eve!

# St George's Hall Dementia Support Cafe

A comfortable, caring and supportive social setting for people living with dementia and their carers meeting on 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month (not Bank Holidays) from 10am till 12 noon at St George's Hall, Long Lane, Upper Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8ND.



We run occasional subsidised excursions. Also included is a separate carers' meeting place providing an adjoining space to relax and useful for sharing of ideas, practical support and advice. The Café is run by a team of dedicated and caring volunteers, and funded entirely by donations, grants and fund-raising activities. The dementia support group cafe is continuing to be well supported. There will be just one meeting in December which is Monday the 11th which will be our Christmas party with Hayley Moyes singalong. There is a cafe on 4th Monday as it is Christmas Day. January dates will be 8th and 22nd (maybe make a resolution to come along!).

Newcomers are always very welcome to simply drop in to the Café (or ring one of the above numbers before to learn more if you wish). And we are naturally delighted to welcome any new volunteers, even if you can't come every time.

[www.stgeorges-dementia-support-group.btck.co.uk](http://www.stgeorges-dementia-support-group.btck.co.uk)

## St Mary's Church Arminghall

The St Mary's Church Coffee Morning was held on 18th December. We were delighted that it was well attended with people pleased to enjoy Tea, Coffee and Cakes. There were various Jams and chutneys to buy as well as Books, Cakes and Bric-a-brac of all sorts. Nearly £200 was made for much needed church funds.

Our Candle-lit carol Service will be on 10th December at 6.30pm. Lenny Barratt from Mulbarton will be coming along to play the organ for us and we hope you will stay on for Mulled Wine and Nibbles afterwards.

## Looking for respite care at Christmas?



If you're a full-time carer, or spend a lot of time caring for someone, it's important to make time for yourself, too – both for the sake of your own health and wellbeing and to give you the energy to carry on caring. That's where respite care can help, particularly at times like Christmas.

Spending time in a caring and warm environment, with dedicated helpers on hand can be the answer, and a way to give a carer that break.

Age UK Norfolk can meet such demands with its 20-bed respite unit at the Grays Fair Court (GFC) centre in Norwich. Each comfortable apartment has en-suite facilities and its own 32 inch television.

The path to respite care can be taken in two ways. First, through the social services system via Norfolk County Council, and care packages taken this way will be funded if the patient meets the necessary criteria. Or there is a self-funding option.

Doris Baker, 85, of North Walsham, has been visiting the respite centre at Grays Fair Court in Costessey since it opened in 2008 after being referred by social services. Doris visits the respite centre regularly and spends most Christmas' with the team at Grays Fair Court. "I just love it; I would be on my own at Christmas if I didn't come here". Grays Fair Court runs a special programme over the holiday period, with entertainers coming in and special Christmas meals being served. Visitors are welcome. There are no restrictions over the Christmas and New Year period. The regular GFC facilities – such as hairdressing salon, foot care, computer with internet access and library – are all available.

To find out more about respite care at Christmas, or any other time, then contact Age UK Norfolk's Grays Fair Court on 01603 594747; or contact Norfolk County Council on 0344 800 8020

### CAISTOR CHURCH CHRISTMAS SERVICES

The Caistor Carol Service will be on **Sunday 17th December** at **4pm**. Before the service from 3pm to 3-45pm we shall be serving Festive Refreshments, so please come and join us and then stay for the Carol Service with all the familiar readings and carols.

As is our custom we invite you to bring a present please for the young boys from Elizabeth House (formerly Grange Road Children's Home) Beccles, some of whom will be at the service. There are six boys there at present, one 9 year old, one 10, one 11, two who are 12 years old, and a 13 year old.

Please note a request from the manager at Elizabeth House, can you avoid please any form of gun/weapon, DVD's that are for 12+ and aerosols, all for obvious reasons.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE

A service of Holy Communion, with all the traditional and favourite carols will take place on Christmas Eve at Caistor Church commencing at 11-30pm.

There is no service at Caistor on Sunday 31st December but a Group Service of Holy Communion will be held at Stoke Holy Cross at 10-30am.

#### RBL POPPY APPEAL

As we go to print the amount raise in Caistor has not yet been finalised so this will be announced in the January Free For All.

#### AND FINALLY

For every day this year Caistor Church has been open for visitors, from the Visitors Book we see that these visitors, who come from many parts of the world as well as locally and this country, appreciate very much that the church is open for them.

But this is only possible because of the volunteers who unlock and lock the church each day and the Vicar and Churchwardens wish to express their grateful thanks to those people who volunteer to do this.

We look forward to your help again please in 2018.



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**TUESDAY GROUP NOTES  
FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY**

We have two very happy occasions coming up over the festive season, and would be delighted to welcome you to either or both. The Group's traditional Carol Service will take place in Stoke Church on Tuesday, December 19th, at 7 30pm, followed by refreshments served in the church. Will your favourite carol be included? There is, of course, only one way to find out!

Then, on Wednesday January 17th 2018, we are holding a New Year's lunch in the church hall, (12 for 12 30) , at a cost of £12 per head. This will be a three-course meal with wine, and your place can be booked by phoning Barbara Thomas on 01508 493486. Any profits made will be given to our Charity for 2018, the Dementia Café at St. George's Hall, and if you're intrigued to know how we can make any profit when producing such lunches, you'll be very welcome to come on a fact-finding mission!

We wish you all the very best for a wonderful Christmas and a good New Year.



**OPEN SCHOOL**

Thursday 07 December: 3.15-6pm

We are having an open school evening on Thursday 07 December from 3.15-6pm. Everyone is welcome to come and look around and enjoy a mince pie with us. Teachers and Governors will be on hand to answer any questions

If you have a child who will be 4 years old before 01 September 2018 and your child is due to start school in September 2018 then this is a great chance for you to come and look around Stoke Holy Cross Primary School as part of your selection process.

If your child is already at the school, this provides another opportunity for you to come and look in your child's classroom and see what they have been getting up to this term..

We look forward to welcoming you to Stoke Holy Cross Primary School.

# Christmas Stained Glass Window Biscuits

*They take 25 minutes to make and 15-18 minutes to cook (plus cooling time)*

You can buy special cutters or just cut them freehand maybe as a circle or perhaps like a Christmas tree. You can make a small hole in them before they harden and then you can hang them as decorations on your Christmas tree.

**INGREDIENTS** 10 boiled sweets (colours of your choice, though obviously red and green are Christmassy). 115g softened butter. 55g caster sugar. 180g plain flour (plus extra for dusting). 1 tbs milk

**METHOD** Preheat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4.

1. Line 2 large baking trays with baking paper.
2. Separate the boiled sweets into one polythene bag for each colour; you can use a rolling pin to break the sweets into small (approx 1 cm) pebbles.
3. Beat the butter and sugar in a bowl, until pale and creamy. Sift the flour into the mixture. Next add the milk. Use your hands to mix everything together into a ball of dough.
4. Sprinkle a little flour over a work surface. Separate the dough into 2 pieces. Roll out one piece with a floured rolling pin until it is about 5 mm thick. Using biscuit cutters (about 8 cm x 4 cm) cut out Christmas shapes (or cut by hand). Either using a cutter or by eye cut circles out of the middle of each biscuit about the size of a £1 coin. Carefully move the cookies to the tray, using a slice.
5. Repeat with the remaining dough, then roll the trimmings to make more biscuits. There should be around 25 to 30.
6. Put a different coloured sweet pebble or pieces into the middle of each biscuit hole. The sweets melt while the biscuits bake to form the glass window effect so any little pieces should melt together.
7. Bake for 15-18 minutes until the biscuits are just golden. Make your hole quickly now while the biscuits are still soft if you want to hang them up. Leave on the trays until cool; check they are set hard before transferring to a wire rack. The biscuits will keep in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

## Nativity Wordsearch

Can you find these 33 words all relating to the birth of Jesus

F S T F I G S W J W D M Y M I	ADVENT	JESUS
R A L H O W T K O A E O A N A	ANGELS	JOSEPH
A M I L G F A A B R J P N G W	ASS	JOY
N T D G F I R A T T S K O S I	BABY	LIGHT
K S Q Q G U L N I S E H Z H S	BETHLEHEM	MAGI
I I G S D R E H P E H S I T Y	BIRTH	MANGER
N R J O X V M Y P E P P A P E	CELEBRATE	MARY
C H M E D D B E T Z J B B S K	CHRIST	MYRRH
E C A A S A R A H S L U I H N	CHRISTMAS	NATIVITY
N O N C B U R E H E L O R E O	CRIB	SHEEP
S S G S M B S R X J L E C E D	DONKEY	SHEPHERDS
E O E Y E C H R I S T H G P M	FRANKINCENSE	SON
Z N R L N A T I V I T Y T N I	GIFT	STABLE
O R E H T R I B M A R Y Z E A	GOD	STAR
H C A S S O H P E S O J U V B	GOLD	STRAW
	HOPE	WORSHIP
	INNKEEPER	

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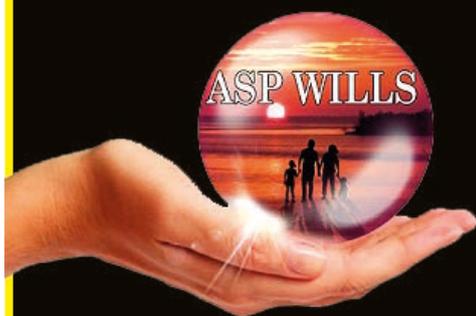
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