

# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

NOVEMBER 2020



Some pictures of Stoke Church  
taken by Tonya



LOCAL AUTHOR  
PUBLISHES  
DEBUT NOVEL



RUNNING ON EMPTY

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This week I have given a surprising amount of thought to a Youtube video I saw of a Japanese game show called Slippery Stairs. As far as I can make out (and I don't know any Japanese) it is a pretty simple idea, but an outrageously difficult challenge. Six or seven contestants in different coloured bodysuits have to climb to the top of a set of stairs made of ice, down which water is being poured constantly from two enormous taps. It looks almost impossible.

But hard as it is, they still take it on. Again and again they come, our plucky band of hapless Power Rangers, climbing and slipping and sliding and climbing and slipping and sliding. The video I watched was a 9-minute rollercoaster of emotion as time after time you thought one of them was about to get to the top, only for them to slip on the last step, or one of the others to grab them and pull them

back to the bottom. And throughout an audience cheers them on, places bets, and laughs at their misfortunes. It is very, very odd.

So what was it that attracted my attention – apart from the jumpsuits? Well actually it was the strange and brilliant way the video illustrated everything that the Christian faith isn't. Let me explain.

There's an idea about following Jesus that it is about climbing to the top of such a slippery set of steps. The odds are stacked against us from the beginning, and we will fall down over and over, with only the slightest chance of getting to the top. We will exhaust ourselves thinking that if we could only just outdo the people around us, only somehow get there first, we will win the prize. But chances are, we'll just fall down to the bottom again. And there will be people there to laugh themselves silly at our every mistake. God will be watching on, from the top, impassive, even absent.

As much, and as often as it might seem that way, it is not like that at all. Faith in Jesus isn't about getting everything right, and slipping back to the bottom if we get it wrong. It isn't about scrabbling to the top to get close to the prize. It isn't about competing with someone else, because maybe there isn't enough grace to go around. Instead, it's recognising someone who is not absent, but who comes to meet us in our sin and mess and brokenness; someone who will pick us up every time we fall, whose love and generosity are more than enough for anyone who ever asks for them. God is not impassive because the word itself is connected with not feeling suffering. But we know that God knows what suffering is like, because Jesus stumbled and fell for us, Jesus endured people's scorn and shame for us. Without Jesus, faith would ultimately be as difficult as this strangest of games, but we can hold on to the promise that with him, God makes all of this possible for people like you and me.

Rob

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### IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

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## FROM THE REGISTERS WEDDINGS

**CHAD PIEROZYNSKI AND  
SOPHIE BAYLEY**

Saturday 24th October  
AT STOKE HOLY CROSS

**RORY ST QUINTIN AND  
LYDIA HOLLOWAY**

Saturday 31st October  
AT CAISTOR ST EDMUND

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.

## VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston, Arminghall and Caistor St Edmund  
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## 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 10th of this month please.

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deadline for all copy for the next  
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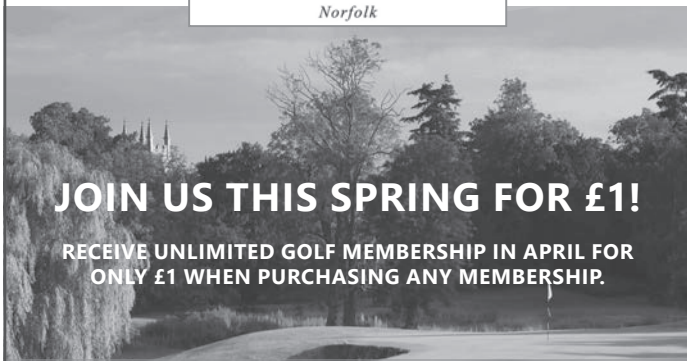
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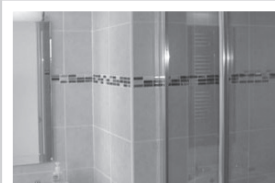
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# We Were Going To Have A Party!

**W**e were going to have a party in October, you see we moved into our house No. 51 Norwich Road, Stoke Holy Cross, now called BEECH COTTAGE, in October 1970, so we have now been living in this lovely village for 50 years.

We moved in with two little girls, Claire, who had just started school, and Julia. They were joined by Mark in 1972.

The cottage was known in the village as the Bottle Cottage because of the Victorian bottle ends in the flint stone walls. However in our deeds it was called Beech Cottage and so it has remained.

We found it mentioned on the village Tithe Map from the 1840s, and it was owned at the time by a Mr John Bond. He was listed in the White's Directory (the Yellow Pages of its day) variously as a brick layer and a brick maker. He also owned the much larger house next door now known as the Red House. His grave, and that of his daughter Sarah is in the churchyard under the big cedar tree and still clearly readable.

(Oddly enough, some of you will remember that the manager of Norwich City Football Club at the time of my research was also called John Bond.)

The flint stone in the construction more than likely came from the lime pit opposite. Working in a lime pit in Victorian times would have been a very hazardous occupation often ending up with lung disease and early death.

We have greatly valued being part of the village and our Christian family here. We have learned to "zoom", meeting each morning for ½ hour of prayer. We can now meet in church on a Sunday morning suitably distanced and masked.

So we will have a party we just don't know when.

*Viv and David Carrington*



## Norfolk Churches Trust September Bike Ride

**So far we have raised a total of £88,997!  
For the Norfolk Churches Trust itself and local churches**

You may recall from the October issue that Lia and Brian Day from Caistor St Edmund took part taking quite separate routes to visit a total of 34 different churches and were sponsored by various friends. We asked how they got on and were told - We would like to thank everyone who generously sponsored our bike rides for the Norfolk Churches Trust.

We raised £423 which will be distributed equally between the Trust and Caistor St Edmund Church.

*We had a great time and really appreciate everyone's support. Lia and Brian*



## Sunday Services at Caistor Again

On Sunday the 4th October there was a service of Praise and Worship at Caistor St. Edmund Church. It was the first Sunday service in the building since the lockdown.

At this time of harvest, we thanked God for all his good gifts to us.



We collected donations for the Norwich Food bank which will be used to help people in need.

There are boxes for food bank donations at Caistor St. Edmund church and at Stoke Holy Cross church. Gifts are always welcome.



## STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB - WHEN WE GET TOGETHER AGAIN

We made contact, by letter, with our members some 15 weeks after lockdown. Our last meeting was our AGM on 5th March with a fish and chip lunch and Julie joined us for a sing song. We had such an exciting year planned with outings, meals and Club meets as well as our usual bingo and carpet bowls on alternate Wednesday afternoons.

The second spike, as we feared, has happened in the country and our priority is of course to keep everyone safe so it looks like it will be next year before we can expect to have better news for get togethers. Things need to go in the right direction.

In the meantime set yourself little targets and put your thinking caps on so when we start back your committee can take on board your thoughts, requests and plans for the future. That is once we have done all the things on the 2020 agenda. We have to have a positive outlook and I know all of you have lived eventful lives and we have to look forward with optimism and hope.

*Take care and stay safe.*

## DID YOU KNOW THESE FACTS ABOUT EGGS?

Eggs are not only one of the best 'fast foods available, they are also a wonderful source of protein.

They are also packed full of all the essential amino acids required to build the brain's neurotransmitters. For instance, eggs contain tryptophan, which is required to make serotonin (this is the antidepressant mood enhancer than is the basis for many pharmaceutical products).

Whenever possible, it is best to buy organic, free-range eggs as these will not only have been laid by happier hens but did you also know that they contain lower cholesterol levels than those laid by battery hens? A win-win situation for the hens and humans alike

POST  
OFFICE

## POST OFFICE

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Mondays 9am-1pm,  
Weds 9:15am -  
12:15am

# The Illustrated Child

Local Stoke Holy Cross author Polly Crosby's debut novel, *The Illustrated Child*, was published at the end of October. Set in the Suffolk countryside, where Polly grew up, it's about a father who creates a series of picture



books starring his daughter. But fans of the books believe they contain clues to a treasure hunt. As the daughter grows older, she realises that the treasure is not all it seems: her ailing father has hidden a dark family secret in the pages, and it's up to her to crack the code to find out what it is.



Polly has lived in the area for sixteen years and is currently working on her second novel, a historical story about a family who live on a wild and mysterious island in the North Sea. Look out for exciting displays about *The Illustrated Child* in lots of Norwich bookshops soon!

# The Curate's Egg by Lyn

November is a month to remember

My grandmother, my grandfather, and my father in law

The fallen from 2 World Wars.

Yet November is also a month of thanksgiving

For Americans the world over

But it can be for you too.

We can remember people  
family, friends, neighbours,  
with thanksgiving.

We can remember Jesus  
with thanksgiving who said  
Do this in remembrance of me.

Yes November is one of the times of the year I remember people who I no longer see – you might have particular times of the year too. My attitude is one of thanksgiving. I remember with thanks. My grandmother who encouraged me to sing songs I had sung at Sunday School and who patiently and attentively listened to me and who in the later years of her life in a care home I sang to and made her smile. My grandfather who was an example of hard work and who laboured in his beautiful garden. My father in law, who welcomed me into his family and without whose life I would not have had a husband.

When the church celebrates Holy Communion, the Eucharist, it gathers in thanksgiving and remembers Jesus' sacrifice of himself. In November let us remember with thanksgiving people but may we also remember Jesus. On the night he was betrayed, abandoned by his friends he had shared a meal with them (the Jews call that meal the Passover) and he encouraged them to continue remembering him when they shared the meal after his death.

COVID-19 has meant for many people they haven't been able to share meals with people they care about. Maybe there is a favourite meal you have shared with friends or family you cannot now be with in the same place. Why not make that meal this month and with thanksgiving eat it remembering them? And if you eat bread, remember these words Jesus said "I am the bread of life". He is the one who can sustain us in life, whatever happens to us. But if that's not your experience at the moment, maybe pray:

God, show me what does it mean that Jesus said I am the bread of life.

# Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2020

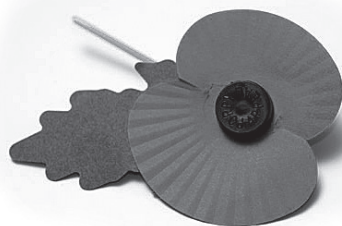
A message from your local Poppy Appeal Team:

Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted how we can deliver the Poppy Appeal this year, our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners and suppliers have been working hard to ensure that the 2020 Poppy Appeal is going ahead and the nation can take part in Remembrance activity.

Each year 40,000 volunteers from all across the UK make the Poppy Appeal happen. However, many of our volunteers, or someone they live with, now fall into vulnerable categories, so it is simply not safe for them to take part this year. As a result, we will unfortunately not be able to deliver boxes of poppies to every local business that has supported the Poppy Appeal in the past. However, we have developed a range of new and exciting fundraising and donation tools that the public can access via our website to enable companies and communities to support the appeal. These are available on the Legion website [www.rbl.org.uk/poppyappeal](http://www.rbl.org.uk/poppyappeal)

Poppies will also be available from 7,500 Sainsburys, Aldi, Morrison's and Tesco stores, and volunteers will run collection stands in other supermarkets and sites where possible. Many of our national and regional partners will also offer poppies via static boxes.

This Poppy Appeal, we are presented with huge challenges due to the impact the Covid-19 has had across our society. The pandemic has left some in the Armed Forces community, as in many others, in dire need of urgent help and support. We are asking our partners, volunteers, fundraisers, members and staff to come together and get behind the Appeal in a way not asked of them before.



## GET THE MESSAGE

Here is a QR code which we have in the magazine to enable you to see updates from Rob on your phone. If you simply scan it with your camera phone it takes you to a sign-up form to get our regular email updates – both any longer ones and the weekly reminders of service times etc. If you have a smart phone give it a try.



## STOKE HOLY CROSS FUEL ALLOTMENT TRUST

The Trustees of the above charity invite anyone living in the Parish of Stoke Holy Cross who is suffering from "need, hardship, or distress" to apply to the charity for a fuel grant or other assistance. Application forms are available in 'Lower Stoke' from either the Post Office, Stoke Church Hall (opening hours Mondays 9am – 1pm) or Mrs Margaret Nudds, 77 Norwich Road, NR14 8NX and in 'Upper Stoke' from David Dobson, 25 Carol Close, NR14 8NN. Please note: applications must be received by Monday 30th November 2020

## Advent Wordsearch

N	N	G	Q	C	N	H	L	N	S	I	N	U	S	M
K	O	Z	N	S	O	K	O	P	F	O	O	B	T	G
I	Z	I	U	I	F	M	I	P	I	D	I	C	A	P
G	Q	S	T	J	T	R	I	T	E	T	T	H	A	E
D	E	O	K	A	I	S	A	N	N	A	A	R	H	R
J	E	M	R	T	P	R	A	E	G	S	T	I	Y	I
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V	Y	A	F	P	P	D	C	A	L	Z	E	T	H	D
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C	H	R	I	S	T	O	N	O	T	W	X	A	I	A
R	P	G	C	F	N	F	Y	T	G	N	E	S	S	D
T	R	A	D	I	T	I	O	N	A	L	A	L	S	N
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R	E	Y	A	R	P	R	E	A	D	Y	C	V	M	S
S	V	N	C	R	L	D	C	H	U	U	I	E	F	Q

ADVENT  
ANTICIPATION  
CHRIST  
CHRISTMAS  
COMING  
EMMANUEL

EXPECTATION  
FASTING  
GOD  
HOPE  
JESUS  
JOY

LOVE  
MESSIAH  
PERIOD  
PRAYER  
PREPARATION  
READY

REPENTANCE  
SEASON  
SPIRITUAL  
SUNDAY  
TRADITIONAL

## ADVENT SUNDAY

We often buy Advent calendars in the season leading up to Christmas but have you ever wondered what it's all about and why it is called Advent?

Advent is a season in many Christian churches. It is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the nativity of Jesus at Christmas. It is also a time of waiting for the return of Jesus (in the Bible it is explained as the second coming of Jesus).

Unlike Advent calendars, which we buy in shops, which start on 01 December, the Advent season in churches includes the four preceding Sundays to Christmas. So this year Advent Sunday is on Sunday 29 November.

This year will be very different for us all but we hope and pray that we are all able to experience the joy and expectancy of the Advent season.

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[kellie@angliaprint.co.uk](mailto:kellie@angliaprint.co.uk)



# NOVEMBER

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

## Monday-Saturday

9am Mon-Fri  
10am Sat

zoom.us/j/385426921  
Zoom Meeting ID: 385-426-921

Morning Prayer meeting  
with Bible reading

## Sunday 1st November

9.30 am

Caistor St Edmund

Praise and Worship

## Sunday 8th November

From 9am

Online only on Youtube:  
"Venta group of churches"

Informal Communion Service

10.45am

Caistor St Edmund (War Memorial)  
Also live on Facebook: "Venta group of churches"

Remembrance Service

4pm

Stoke Church Hall  
Stories, music and lots of activities for family groups—book a space for  
your household or support bubble on 01508 492305/cathryn.baker@gmail.com

Families Together session

## Sunday 15th November

9am

Caistor St Edmund

Holy Communion

Every Sunday morning except Remembrance Sunday 8th November above

10.30am

Stoke Holy Cross Church

Morning Worship

This service is streamed online every week. You are welcome to join us on Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/706580961> or use the Zoom number 706-580-961 in the app. If you do not have internet you can join the service by phone—please get in touch for help. Everything will also be available live or later on our Youtube channel "Venta group of churches".

*Caistor church is normally open from 10-4 on Wednesdays and Sundays. Things look like they might change fast again at the moment, so please keep checking our website, Facebook, and Youtube. Please get in touch if we can help you in any way.*

[www.venta-group.org](http://www.venta-group.org) | [www.facebook.com/ventachurches](https://www.facebook.com/ventachurches) | [rob@venta-group.org](mailto:rob@venta-group.org) | 01508 492305



## Stoke Holy Cross Parish Council

## Community Speedwatch Team

With regret the local Community Speedwatch Team has had to disband due to lack of support. And concerns continue to be raised about the speed of traffic in Lower and Upper Stoke.

Someone has expressed an interest in becoming a co-ordinator for The Speedwatch Team if more volunteers can be found.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer to help re-introduce this service and make our village safer please contact: -

Parish Clerk Anita Rose [stokeholycross.pc@gmail.com](mailto:stokeholycross.pc@gmail.com)

The more volunteers – the less you have to do!



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