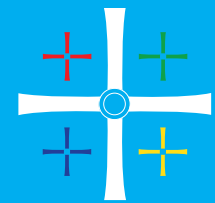


# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

JUNE 2020



"Are these political Peacocks captured by Brian sitting on the fence?"



"See inside for a Corona Virus Prayer Guide".

More wonderful wildlife photos from Liz Dack - more inside



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Thank you so much to everyone who sent us in pictures of them, their families, and neighbours, all having a splendid socially-distant time on VE Day. It was lovely to see your celebrations, and to hear from those of you whose memories go back that far. Some of you have also shared with me about how hard it was during wartime, and the way that it affected life, and your family, in an ongoing way. Perhaps that was part of other people's conversations as well.

I can't remember VE day, but I do go back 25 years to the 50th anniversary in 1995. Back then my grandparents were really well, and it was a privilege to be with them in their village celebrating, with the bunting everywhere and the 1940s music and the questionable pork products. All the same it was hard for me to imagine that they had

been through it, and that they had once looked like this instead of being nearly 80.

VE Day was such a significant day, but it was really one in a series of such days. We all know how important D-Day was, the summer before. Once the Allies had landed in France, a big part of the work was done. We also know that the war didn't end in May 1945: it went on right through the summer until VJ Day on 15th August. But even then, the consequences of years of conflict reached into many lives, and many years into the future.

As I think about the story of Jesus, and compare it with some of these huge events in the history of the modern world, I notice a few things.

First of all I wonder if D-Day is a little bit like Christmas. The Allies landed on the beaches, and they began to take ground decisively, moving across Europe. In one translation of John's gospel it describes how, in Jesus, God 'moved into the neighbourhood.' He had arrived, and as he grew in age and then in influence, God's kingdom advanced through him.

And then I wonder if VE Day is more like Easter. The end of the war in Europe was a decisive moment. It was a time of great celebration, because freedom had been won. But it was won at a price. There is a lot of disagreement about the number of military and civilian deaths worldwide during the war, but it might be as many as 85 million. You might not find this a helpful comparison, but as I write Johns Hopkins University estimates the total number of worldwide deaths from Covid-19 to be 372,000. That gives us some sense of the enormity of it. There is a tremendous cost in the Easter story too, but here it is different. The weight of suffering for human evil, sin and mortality is borne on the shoulders of Jesus alone. The death toll is 1. It was an awful cost for Jesus, but for us there is freedom and life worth celebrating.

But the war didn't end in May 1945, the suffering didn't end there, and even afterwards there were consequences for people in the rest of the world, and for years to come for all those whose lives would never be the same again. Even now we live in a world where I am convinced Jesus has won us an amazing and eternal victory on the cross, but we suffer. In the midst of a global pandemic we don't need reminding of this. But just as VE Day gave people so much to look forward to, now through Jesus we really can look forward to the time described at the end of the bible, where there will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." For the moment, all the pictures of people around the world rejoicing on that day are the stuff of my imagination – and hopefully yours – but I look forward to when they are as real as anything you've enjoyed looking at in this month's magazine.



Rob

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### FROM THE REGISTERS

#### FUNERAL

#### CLIVE TIBBLES

Thursday 7th May

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.

### 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)

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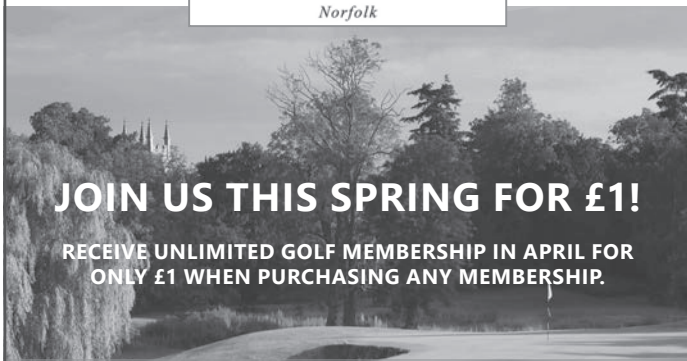
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# VE DAY Celebrations around the Villages

#VEDay75 75



Many people around our villages enjoyed getting together in their own gardens or with others in the road, keeping well apart of course, and dressing up too, to mark the 75th anniversary of the ending of the war in Europe.

These are some more of the photos people have sent us. Wasn't it a lovely day too in the sunshine and somehow the dreaded Corona virus seems to have encouraged us all to get together more as neighbours, to support each other and help us keep our spirits up.



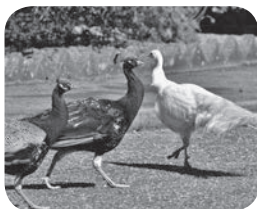
## My Garden Nature Reserve.

During this Lock Down, I have been enjoying my garden, probably like so many of you, If like me you are lucky enough to have one. As a volunteer for Norfolk Wildlife Trust. I am very passionate about all wildlife, flowers, bees, bugs, birds, butterflies and mammals.

Some of you will know I am up at the crack of dawn. I find this the best time of the day. The colours changing in the sky as the Sun rises is often very beautiful. The dawn chorus as the birds wake up and sing to mark their territory is music to my ears. Although my garden isn't a field, I am fortunate to have lots of wildlife visit it. I can count around sixteen different species. I did the RSPB bird count and was lucky to see that number on the day. They range from a little Wren to a large Crow. This time of the year several of the woodland birds visit as they have young to feed. Getting ready to write this article I heard a Buzzard calling, I didn't take much notice at first as often the Starling will imitate them. When I did look to the sky, there were three of them displaying. And I managed to catch 2 on my camera. A great sight when you are confined to barracks!!! I have a family of Bank Voles in my log pile. I love those cute little creatures. So interesting to watch as they chase each other scampering around in-between the logs. They are of course at the bottom of the food chain being the main diet for all the owls, kestrels and other birds of prey.

This time of the year the hedgehogs are regular visitors at night, A Wood Mouse often appears in my window bird feeder. I appreciate some people don't like rodents of any kind but we must remember they are all God's creatures and have a purpose and are part of the eco system.

Several different bees have been taking pollen and laying eggs in my bug house. The usual garden birds have been coming in collecting insects and seed to take back to their young. Then returning to bath and splash around in the bird baths. However, nothing surprised me more than when I moved round with the Sun to the front garden and was visited by the biggest bird I have ever had in my garden!! Not wild but beautifully handsome. Three Peacocks! I think someone reading this may be the owner of these lovely birds, which must live together as they were not social distancing!! I hope they found their way back home safely.



To encourage wild life into your garden regularly, they just need the same as us - Food, Shelter and Water. I hope you all are enjoying your gardens if you can.

Best wishes Liz

## Sparklers now on Zoom

Come and join us with your young children



For the last few weeks, we have been holding a virtual Sparklers session so our families can keep in touch while we can't get together as we normally would. It has been lovely to chat and attempt some craft projects alongside each other - go to Sparklers Stoke Holy Cross on Facebook to find out more if you would like to join in with your children. All under-5s are really welcome!

## Some more jokes from Chris Lawn that have somehow escaped lock down.

I travelled with a circus for five years. I didn't have an act but they kept me on as I was the only one who could get the tent back in the bag.

One time my watch stopped halfway through a minutes silence.....I stood there for hours

Went to see my doctor the other day. He asked me to provide a stool sample so I enrolled on a basic woodworking course. He looked concerned when I told him it would probably take two months to produce.

I lost my job as a zookeeper which I did not think was fair. There were signs everywhere saying 'Do not feed the animals'.....so I didn't

When I was in Spain I ordered octopus in a restaurant. The waiter said it would take four hours. I said that's a long time. The waiter said yes sir but we cook them alive and they keep turning the gas off.

# CORONAVIRUS

It can be difficult to know where to start when praying for a crisis as la  
We'll be using the acronym PRAY (praise, reflect, ask, yield) to bring before God both

## PRAISE

Listen to or sing a song of worship to help you focus on God and become aware of his presence with you. If you don't have one in mind, here are some suggestions:

Cornerstone by Hillsong Worship Great is Thy Faithfulness by Chisholm and Runyan The Blessing by Kari Jobe & Cody Carnes



## REFLECT

To help build our faith, we reflect on the nature of the one to whom we pray. We give thanks that God is enthroned in the heavens and yet is close to the poor and brokenhearted.

*'The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.'* (Psalm 103:19)

*'The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.'* (Psalm 34:18)

We give thanks that God is good and he loves all that he has made.

*'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.'* (Psalm 136:1)

*'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'* (John 3:16)

We give thanks that God hears and responds to our prayers

*'The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.'* (Psalm 145:18) *'If you, then, though you are evil, know how to*



*give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!'* (Matthew 7:11)

## FAMILIES

It's hard to think of those we love suffering in any way. Many of us are concerned about elderly relatives or people with health conditions that make them vulnerable to coronavirus. Some people in our communities will not have a family and may be feeling particularly alone at this time. For many families in poorer countries, being in lockdown means no longer being able to earn enough that day to feed your children. In places where malnutrition is already a problem, even more people are going hungry and face the risk of starvation.

*Pray: Bring to mind your family and those you love, and thank God for them. Pray for their protection from coronavirus, especially those who may be particularly vulnerable. Pray for God to comfort those around the world who are grieving the loss of loved ones, and for those who may be feeling isolated or lonely by being in lockdown. Pray for Tearfund and other aid organisations to be able get food, financial aid and emotional support to people whose already fragile circumstances have become desperate because of the pandemic.*

## HEALTHCARE

We are thankful to God that in the UK we have access to worldclass healthcare, and can build new mega-hospitals in a matter of weeks. The NHS is facing unprecedented pressure and we want to lift our healthcare workers up before God. Millions around the world who may get very ill from coronavirus will have no access to the healthcare they need. People in rural villages might have miles to walk just to get to the nearest clinic. Equipment like ventilators is scarce, even in the larger hospitals (in South Sudan, for example, there are only four ventilators for a population of 11 million people). Prevention is critical, but many people in poorer countries do not have access to soap and clean water to properly wash their hands.

*Pray: Pray for all NHS workers to be kept healthy and well, for availability of necessary protective equipment, and for courage to replace fear as they care for infected people. Ask God to have mercy and to protect countries where there is a lack of basic healthcare, or where there is already devastation because of conflict and natural disasters. Pray for strength, wisdom and protection for the healthcare workers in these places. Pray for Tearfund partners*



# PRAYER GUIDE



large as coronavirus. That's why we've created this simple prayer guide.  
the situations we are facing close to home, and those faced by our global neighbours.

who are setting up hand-washing stations, distributing soap, providing hygiene training and raising awareness about coronavirus prevention. Continue to pray for them as you wash your hands throughout the day.

## ASK

### GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

Governments around the world are having to make very difficult decisions about coronavirus, weighing up the need to protect lives and healthcare systems, while also trying to protect jobs and the economy. Many governments in developing nations are not able to provide people with the extra financial support and protections we are receiving in the UK. In places where up to 80 per cent of the population may rely on daily wages to survive, lockdown decisions can be even harder to make. There are also places in the world where lockdown and social distancing is impractical or even impossible, such as for the millions living in refugee camps.

*Pray:* Pray for wisdom for Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the Cabinet and senior civil servants as they decide how best to halt the spread of coronavirus in the UK while also protecting jobs. Pray for wisdom and support for governments of developing nations who are not able to provide safety nets to their people because of lack of resources and fragile infrastructures. Ask God to protect people living in refugee camps from coronavirus, such as the half a million Rohingya people in the world's biggest refugee camp in Bangladesh. Pray for wisdom for leaders of these camps as they prepare to respond.

### THE CHURCH

Many UK churches are grappling with how to continue worship and support their congregations pastorally during lockdown. Yet amidst the challenges, Christians are being presented with new opportunities to care for our vulnerable neighbours. At Tearfund we are mobilising our church partners to support the coronavirus response in some of the world's poorest communities, where those already in great need now have a pandemic to contend with.

*Pray:* Pray for God's blessing on your own church in this season, that community will be strengthened despite the inability to gather, and for wisdom for leaders as they adapt. Pray for churches in your community and around the world to be the hands and feet of Jesus during this pandemic, in both prayer and action where possible.

Pray for protection, grace and courage for Tearfund's church partners as they seek to prevent the virus from spreading among poor communities, and respond to the increased needs people are experiencing. Pray that Tearfund's many other vital projects that are bringing hope and help to so many will be able to adapt and continue despite coronavirus.

Spend a few moments in quiet asking God how he would have you be the answer to your prayers. Pay attention to anything he may bring to mind. You may wish to pray: Lord, show me how you would have me show love to my local and global neighbours in this season, in both prayer and action. We close by praying this prayer written by John Wesley, asking God for the grace and courage to live out his truth in this time of increased pressure:

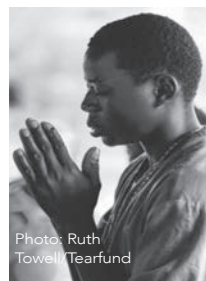
### YIELD

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### YIELD

*Heavenly Father,  
I am no longer my own but yours.  
Put me to what you will,  
rank me with whom you will;  
put me to doing, put me to suffering;  
let me be employed for you,  
or laid aside for you,  
exalted for you,  
or brought low for you;  
let me be full,  
let me be empty,  
let me have all things,  
let me have nothing:  
I freely and  
wholeheartedly yield  
all things to your  
pleasure and disposal.  
And now, glorious and  
blessed God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine  
and I am yours. So be it.  
And the covenant now made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven.*

Amen



Photos: Ruth Towell/Tearfund



## For the dark times in Life

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you never thought it  
would



Suddenly so much  
can change with  
so little that's  
understood

You ask so many questions, it seems  
without reply

Your heart is pained with so much  
doubt and unanswered questions –  
"why"

It's almost like we walk through life  
just feeling our way around  
We can't see the road ahead, nor  
our feet on the ground

Darkness is all about us; we struggle  
to see the light  
Just a glimmer now and then but  
then fades out of sight

We cry out to God again to show us  
where to go

He says "Just take another step to  
where peace freely flows"

And as we keep on taking steps,  
guided by the Lord  
We find, in time, we walk into the joy  
we knew before

It's in those times of darkness when  
we feel we've lost all hope  
God can do a work in us that brings  
a deeper growth

So when we face the dark times we  
should come before the Lord  
For good will come if we believe and  
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# JUNE

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

## **Monday-Saturday**

9am Mon-Fri

[zoom.us/j/385426921](https://zoom.us/j/385426921)

**Morning Prayer meeting**

10am Sat

Zoom Meeting ID: 385-426-921

**with Bible reading**

## **Every Sunday morning**

10:30am

[zoom.us/j/706580961](https://zoom.us/j/706580961)

**Family Service**

Zoom Meeting ID: 706-580-961

**with fortnightly Holy Communion**

*Also live on our Facebook page "Venta group of churches"*

## **Tuesday mornings**

10am

Zoom—see page 6 or email

[cathrynbaker@gmail.com](mailto:cathrynbaker@gmail.com)

**Sparklers group for pre-school**

**children, parents and carers**

## **Thursday mornings**

From 9am

Youtube or Facebook channel

**Online "school assembly"!**

## **Fortnightly on Wednesdays 3rd and 17th June, 1st July**

4.30pm

Zoom:

Email [cathrynbaker@gmail.com](mailto:cathrynbaker@gmail.com)

**LightHouse—stories, songs, fun and games for families**

There is a lot more than this going on, and things keep changing at the moment for us as well as everyone else, so please keep checking our website, Facebook, and Youtube. To be on a regular mailing list from the church, messaging out updates most weeks, just email [rob@venta-group.org](mailto:rob@venta-group.org) and let us know.

Most importantly, if our churches can be of any help to you in this difficult time for everyone, just get in touch with us using the contact details below.

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



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