

Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

APRIL 2021



THE DELICATE MIRACLE

'He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.' (Job 5:9)

Miracles

It's not always the big miracles – the thunderous, pulsating, ground-shaking ones – but those that are small, delicate, unheralded:

*like when the sobs finally stop.
Or when the anxiety begins to fade.*

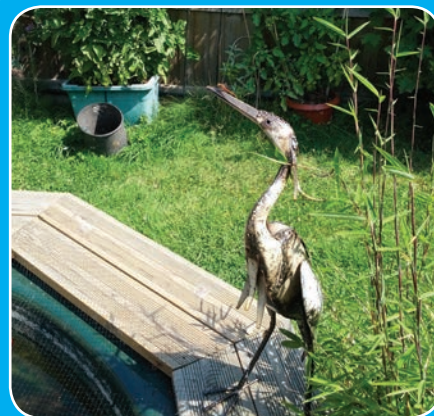
Or when the blackbird decides that there is enough light to begin praising the new day.

It's when your broken heart eventually accepts that it can begin to heal, or when the delicate stem pushes through the dirt to discover that air and light are real.

It may just be to open your eyes after a night at the end of your rope, to find that your lungs are way ahead of you and never stopped breathing in hope.

It's not the big miracles, not the ones that shout and shine, it's the small miracles that are sent to show us the loving hand of the divine.

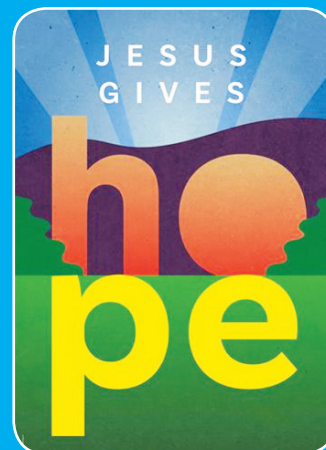
Gideon Heugh



SEE INSIDE FOR KATE'S ARTICLE ON PONDS



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Happy Easter, everyone!

We hope that this magazine finds its way to you in time for Easter weekend, and all the great things we have planned from Maundy Thursday through to Sunday morning. We hope most of all to create some opportunities to meet together in person for everyone who thinks that's appropriate for them, as we celebrate Easter together. (You can catch it all online as well.)

I've spent some time looking over my articles for the last few months, and I noticed that I began 2021 looking forward to the better year that we were all hoping for. I don't know if we quite feel that we are there yet, but the vaccine numbers

are increasing, and the balance is tipping a little.

Holding on to hope is so important. For Christmas I was given a little badge with just that word on it: "hope." I have been wearing it for some of our online Sunday services, and quite often at funerals too. It's a little something but it feels good to put it on, and create a little spark of light when things can seem dark.



Other people have noticed that it is an important time to hope as well. We have a lovely children's book, produced this year, called The Book of Hopes. Over 100 famous children's authors and illustrators have made contributions; the editor describes them in the introduction as "professional hunters of hope."

This Easter, none of us in the churches wants to make any claim that we know better than you the answers to a lot of the difficult questions we have all been asking this year. None of us knows better than you how we conjure up hope out of the really tricky and very raw material we have been working with. We don't look at ourselves, or each other; instead, we'd tell you that we think that Jesus brings hope.

The Bible is a Book of Hope, and among the dazzling reasons for hope it contains, one stands over all of them. Peter, Jesus's best friend and as close to the events of the first Easter as anyone was, writes that it is by rising from the dead that Jesus has given us living hope.

Hope in Jesus is living hope. It is hope, Peter goes on to say, that can never spoil, perish or fade. I bet there is not one of you reading this who hasn't seen hope fade this past year. Hasn't seen it spoil, or even perish. That was just 2020, wasn't it? But Jesus rose from the dead, and he is unfading, spotless, imperishable, and so hope in him is living hope that can never die.

Sad to say, I am not one of life's optimists. But actually, I don't need to be, because Jesus's hope is real and alive. It's not so much a badge I pin on, as the thing that I live in, and that lives in me. It does not spoil, or perish, or fade, and I don't need to go hunting for it. It has come to me, and to all of us, in Jesus, our living hope, who has risen from the dead.

Rob

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Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches"

www.venta-group.org

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CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston
Viv (493438) & Andy (07485 151051)

Arminghall
Annie (495580)

Caistor St Edmund
Jani (493572) & Lia (494137)

ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Joyce Williams 492143

STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Viv Carrington 493438

STOKE HOLY CROSS PAVILION BOOKINGS:

Anita Rose (Parish clerk) 491709

We would love to feature your village organisation
IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE
just get in touch and we will see what we can do!

Email: ventafree4all@outlook.com

FROM THE REGISTERS FUNERALS

2nd March
ELSIE GARDNER
Stoke Holy Cross Church

4th March
SOPHIE HALE
Waveney Crematorium

23rd March
PAULINE DARBY
Stoke Holy Cross Church

29th March
DAVID HUNT
Stoke Holy Cross Church

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

By 10th of this month please.

The 10th of the month will be the deadline for all copy for the next magazine for the time being.

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Judith King

Judith was the second of three children born to Douglas and Dorothy Walker. Her older sister was Lettie, and her younger brother was Geoff. Judith was born in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada on the 29th November 1928 and named Judith Springfield Walker.

When 9 months old, Judith, Lettie and their expectant mother moved back to England where Geoff was born. They lived with their grandmother in Harpenden and went to Walton House school. In 1939 at the start of the war, her father who was still farming in Diamond Valley in Canada said they must return to Canada for safety. By this time Lettie had signed up in the Wrens and stayed in England, so Judith and Geoff and their mother travelled back to Canada on the SS Pasteur. Back in Canada they lived at various places. Judith enjoyed riding, skating and sledging.

After the war Judith and her mother came back from Canada. They left Geoff working with his father on the farm and she would not see him again for 45 years. Judith was now about 17 and they stayed with Aunt Bessie Daplin at Church Farm Hindringham in North Norfolk. They moved to Hilary Avenue on Plumstead Road in Norwich. Judith had two interests at the time, Domestic Science and Nursing. She decided on nursing and trained at The Norfolk and Norwich Hospital from 1948-1951.

While she was training she also used to go to dances and this is where she met Robert one evening when members of the local rugby club were invited along. They married in January 1952 at St Stephen's church Norwich and celebrated after at The Arlington Hotel. They had three children Christopher, Frinny and Adrian.

She worked for some time, a day or two a week at All Hallows Cottage Hospital and she cared for many friends and family over the years, including of course Robert with his MRSA in later life. Judith worked with the Samaritans for some time too.

Judith did go to Canada but generally she didn't have the need to travel far, loving the farm at Blackford Hall, and she certainly fulfilled her role as a farmer's wife and mother...she was always there to help in any way, often seen carting bottles of tea to the men working in the fields and checking when they wanted the next meal. She loved the sheep, and they were a big part of her life for many years, developing an amazing flock of Shetland sheep. She helped bring many newborn lambs into the world, bottle feeding the weak and nurturing them, wrapping them in newspaper and warming them in the bottom of the aga. She spun and knitted numerous jumpers, cardigans and hats from their wool.

Judith and Robert always shared what they had. It might be flowers from the garden, or a cake or eggs if you visited. Judith could produce a fabulous meal at any time of the day for any number of people! Her freezer had an iced cake for every visitor and pies and crumbles itching to be eaten! They also shared their house and life with many people including three lads who each spent a year with them and worked on a Youth for Christ project.

Robert and Judith also offered hospitality to a home group for many years through which their own and others' faith in Jesus were deepened. Judith was a great prayer warrior, praying daily for many people, particularly for people to come to know Jesus. For many years Judith was the first person on the intercessor prayer chain in Stoke Holy Cross church, you knew she could be relied upon to pray and keep on praying.

In recent years Judith moved from Stoke Holy Cross into Cromwell House in Norwich. She settled in very quickly. She loved her little room and took a keen interest in the staff and their lives and interests. She grew to love them and they her.

There is so much family and friends could write about Judith, of the hospitality through family farm fayres, Sunday School visits where children were invited for fun at the farm, church outings to the wooden bungalow at Eccles, the hosting of weddings of David and Viv Carrington's children.

Judith cared, loved her family, in fact her life centred around family and friends, the farm and faith in Jesus. She is now at peace with Jesus but leaves us pondering how to live up to one of her favourite passages from the bible: Philippians 4:4-8

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

St George's Dementia Support Group

In line with the rest of the country The Dementia Support Group Cafe has been in lockdown since March 2020 but we are delighted that we hope to reopen later in the year. The Hall is set up to meet Government guidelines which will be published prior to any opening.

Our members have really missed meeting as you can imagine, although contact has been maintained, we are keen to re-open. For everyone's safety because of the close contact necessary for what we do the possible date for re-opening may be 12th July 2021. This will of course be in line with the Government guidelines at the time. Possibly with just coffee, cake and a catch up.

We are very happy to welcome any people living with dementia and their partners or carers who will stay with them. We offer a friendly Cafe atmosphere, coffee, refreshments, activities, entertainment, speakers on relevant subjects, subsidised outings and optional counselling. Users of our service do not have to have a referral you can just turn up.

Our Cafe times will be: 2nd and 4th Monday of every month except Bank Holidays from 10am until 12 noon.

Venue is St. George's Hall, Long Lane, Upper Stoke Holy Cross NR14 8ND

Website: <http://stgeorges-dementia-support-group.back.co.uk/>

For more information please ring 01508 492938 or 01508 493661.

I must stress again that the date above is only if the government rules allow and what will be safe for our group.

Dementia Group Committee



GOOD FRIDAY



Come and join us on Good Friday at Caistor Church at 12 noon for a short outdoor service of readings and prayers to mark the day of Crucifixion.

For all our churches this will be the first occasion of getting together in person since the end of December so we think it is wisest to stay outdoors and socially distanced. We hope you will join us for this special day.

Prior to the service a small group of people will walk a cross through Stoke from the Church towards Caistor.

STOKE HOLY CROSS TUESDAY GROUP

Since the last Tuesday Group notes were written, it seems as though, slowly but surely, a corner has been turned, and that we might, at last, see a light at the end of what has been, at times, a very dark tunnel. Currently, the seeming inexorable 'Covid lists' are showing a far more heartening picture, and we rejoice in the slow but sure advent of spring. But it has been a harrowing time, and the Group mourns the loss of Judith King, of Blackford Hall, who was a member for decades. She became a victim of Covid 19 in a Norwich care home. For the more elderly ladies of the Tuesday Group, the very special memory of Judith will be as one of the ladies who worked on the 'Big Kneeler', for church of the Holy Cross. Every Tuesday morning we met at Stoke Vicarage, to work on the many sections of the kneeler, welcomed by the late vicar, Rev'd George Wilkinson. It took us many months, and was a very special time, companionable and sometimes hilarious. Judith was present at its dedication in September 1977, with so many other ladies and gentlemen of Stoke and beyond. Hers was a quiet, loving Christian presence, and we shall miss her – particularly we remember her children, Christopher, Katharine and Adrian and their families, holding them in our hearts.

Youth Ministry

We are really excited with our plans to move ahead with youth ministry in the village, and we're really pleased that Gary Watson, who lives in the villages and already works with Norwich Youth for Christ in the Poringland and Bramerton areas, is going to be doing some stuff with us as well. If you have heard Gary's name before it might well be because he is another one of our residents who takes brilliant photographs, and has been delighting us on the village Facebook page with pictures like the ones below.



He likes making videos too, so we're going to start off with a few assemblies for the primary school, and then he's going to be helping us with our holiday club in the summer.

If you are at primary school now, we'd love you to join us for Wonder Zone from 26th-28th July – save the date!



The work with young people is going to start in the autumn, and in the meantime a load of us from the church are going to start meeting to answer some great questions about purpose, strategy, building a team, policies and procedures and much more. But we'd love your help...

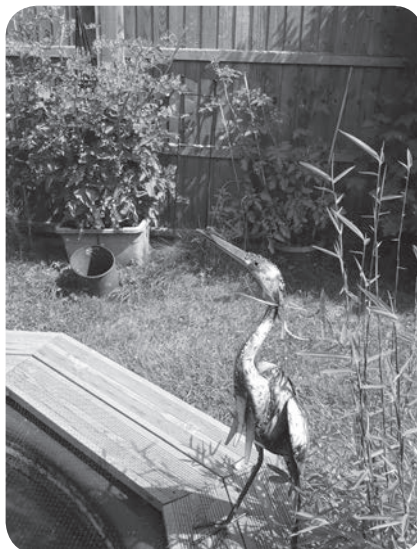
So if you are a young person yourself, aged about 10-18, or if you have a young person in your household, could you spare some time to fill in a little survey for us to help us understand what you think would best serve young people in our villages?

We'd love to know what you think. There's a link on our new page for young people at <http://venta-group.org/whatwedo/38>.

That page is a work in progress too, so keep checking back over the next few months to find out more!

Wonders of Ponds

So, another story: a wildlife pond. This was another lockdown creation. Pete had built a raised pond two years before from pieces of decking wood, with a pre-formed pond inside. A friend from Mens' Shed gave him a water feature. We splashed out(!) on two water lilies and irises and a marsh marigold, plus a few oxygenating plants. We soon had pond snails, some water boatmen and various diving beetles. We added four goldfish, which were soon spotted by a heron, so we added netting. Several darters laid eggs, the water lilies flowered, the others didn't (the irises still haven't, I don't know why, they just don't grow, the marsh marigold did flower but is still small, do the fish eat their roots?). A friend gave us some nice blue iris which flowered in a pot.



We struggled to get enough oxygenating plants to stop the water going green. I planted bits of rooting watercress (from a bag of salad), and my cousin gave us some Elodea, which you can't buy now. We soon had a lovely crop of blanket weed, but the fish seem to like eating it. We tried barley straw, but decided you just have to hoink it out, and allow the shrimps to wriggle back in.



Gradually last year the snails disappeared, even the big grandpa one, and so did the other beetles, but several darters emerged from their imagos. I had to keep checking they weren't trapped under the net. Several had wings which didn't open properly and they died.

As this wasn't ideal for all wildlife, we decided to dig another pond. It took ages to decide where – not too shady or too sunny, not where too many leaves would fall in. Pete dug up a surplus rhododendron (that was a big job), put pond liner down, and we edged it with bits of stone we found lying about in the garden. I planted some

ferns next to it, which were growing between the house wall and a garden box, and some rush seedlings, and sedgy grasses. There was already one big fern there, and a lot of hedge woundwort, and wood avens, and a nice rotting log. We put a bit of shingle in the shallow part. It was too late in the year to buy pond plants, but we got some 'marginal' ones: a yellow iris plant with a large seed pod, a water plantain and a water dropwort. In went some elodea and water cress, and there were soon beetles diving into the deep bit, and some flat brown larvae in the shallows. The finches liked to bathe in the summer (and the pigeons), and it attracts dragon flies and damselflies.

We hope it will attract newts and frogs, but we haven't seen a frog in our garden for a year or so now. They used to complain when I weeded round the shrubs. Apparently a fungus is killing them off. What kills diving beetles? In the summer I noticed the beetles were swimming round in circles at the surface, and slowly dying. They can fly, so why didn't they just move on if they didn't like it? I would love to know what caused this, and why all the snails died in the first pond. If you look on Google you only find ways to kill them!

Too much rotting organic material can be a problem, but you wouldn't think that would be the case in the new pond. I was belatedly clearing dead leaves out of it a few days ago, and they had tiny pond snails on them. So there are new beginnings ...

Kate Webb



CAISTOR ST EDMUND ANNUAL LITTER PICK

We're planning with the parish council for the annual litter pick at Caistor to be held on Wednesday 19th May, subject to this all being ok with the Covid restrictions. It's a good way off yet, but please do block out some time in your diary on that day. We have normally done this from about 5pm, but occasionally people do a slot a bit earlier if that suits them better.

There's no further information at this stage but if you are keen to be in touch with Jeanette Utting, the parish council chair, to express interest, you could do that by emailing jeanetteutting@aol.com. Thank you!

HAPPY EASTER!

From your Village Churches

This Easter, we'd love to show you the life and hope that Jesus brings
(1 Peter 1:3)

Take part in our Family Easter trail all weekend

You can gather with us in person -

Maundy Thursday 7.30pm

at **Stoke Church**

(contact us to join in)

Good Friday at 12 noon

in **Caistor Churchyard**

(no need to book)

Easter Sunday 10.30am

in **Stoke churchyard**

(no need to book)

- or join our services online.

See www.venta-group.org for full info.



From the Curate's Egg - Space by Lyn

"Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its continuing mission: to explore strange new worlds. To seek out new life and new civilizations. To boldly go where no one has gone before!". Some of you may recognise these as the opening lines of each episode of the original Star Trek series. And there's an echo in them of what we've experienced in the last 12 months. We've not been voyaging very far physically but some have travelled to places mentally, financially and socially they did not expect. It's been a strange new world. We've had to adapt to different ways of living and it's been an experience we've never had before – restrictions, government decisions needing quick responses from schools, employers and employees, television news telling us of the daily death toll and graphic pictures of those suffering in hospitals across this country and the world.

Enterprise has a captain at the helm, one who the crew rely on, is an example, takes them boldly into new territory and who is for them, when faced with an enemy. Just like God who I believe is in control, at the helm. God who can be relied upon and Jesus the example who takes us into new territory and is for me, not against me, when facing the challenges of life on this planet. But at Easter time we are particularly reminded of how Jesus, the servant king, was the one whose hands flung stars into space, to cruel nails surrendered.

Jesus surrendered himself to die a cruel death on the cross in order that we can have new life, be made new. Except there's a final frontier, that's us. Me. You. We have to be bold and let our barriers down, let the front come down. He invites us to. To go with him. Will you say yes? Yes to go into a new land?

When you look into the night sky, into space, remember his invitation to come, see Jesus, hands that flung stars into space. Boldly come, where others have gone before and join us as we celebrate Easter and every Sunday the new life we can have in Jesus. Happy Easter.

Verse 1

From heav'n You came, helpless Babe,
Entered our world, Your glory veiled;
Not to be served but to serve,
And give Your life that we might live.

Chorus

This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King.

Verse 2

There in the garden of tears,
My heavy load He chose to bear;
His heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but Yours,' He said.

Verse 3

Come see His hands and His feet,
The scars that speak of sacrifice;
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered.

Verse 4

So let us learn how to serve,
And in our lives enthrone Him;
Each other's needs to prefer,
For it is Christ we're serving.

Graham Kendrick

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DO YOU FEEL A CONNECTION WITH ONE OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES?

- Do you like to come to some of our local services?
- Or maybe a family member was Christened or Married here?
- Or perhaps you like to visit a grave in the churchyard?

Would you perhaps, consider making a lasting gift to help look after them?

These wonderful historic buildings and graveyards are always in need of repair and looking after. Sometimes grants are available for major restoration works but the general running and upkeep of these important village features falls upon the churches themselves with no outside help.

One great way to give something is to by way of a legacy.

No matter how large or small, every gift that is left to your local church will make a lasting difference. A major legacy in the past enabled one of our churches to build a wonderful new extension with kitchen and toilet facilities, but a gift of just 1% of your residuary estate can make an enormous difference to the ministry of the local church.

You can discuss giving gifts in wills in complete confidence with Reverend Rob Baker or Reverend Lyn Marsh.

If you would like more information, please do contact us. — see page 3 for details

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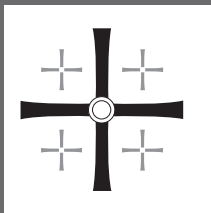
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April

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

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Monday-Saturday

9am Mon-Fri

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Zoom Meeting ID: 385-426-921

Morning Prayer meeting
with Bible reading

(not meeting on Good Friday or the week after Easter)

Sunday 11th April

10.30am

Venta group YouTube channel only

Morning Worship

Sunday 18th & 25th April

10.30am

Online only

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". This service includes communion every other week.

LightHouse family sessions

4pm in person on Sunday 18th April—email cathryn.baker@gmail.com to book in

9.30am on Sunday 25th April on our Youtube channel, or catch up later

We are travelling hopefully, and intending to open up more gatherings in person at least from May—please keep checking our website, Facebook and so on for details. It's a little tricky to be certain at the moment as you know!

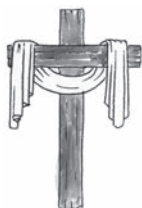
Caistor church is normally open from 10-4 on Wednesdays and Sundays. Please get in touch if we can help you in any way.



Sign up for email
updates here

www.venta-group.org | www.facebook.com/ventachurches | rob@venta-group.org | 01508 492305

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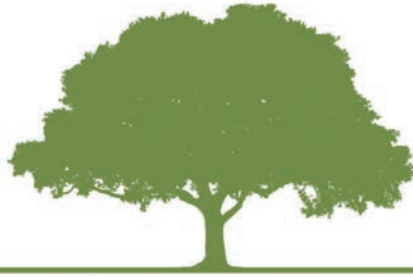


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