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APRIL 2023

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What do you most want?

t's a dangerous question to ask. Let me be clear and say I'm not asking because I can guarantee to supply what it is you are asking for. It's getting near to Easter as you read this, and so I can offer you a bit of cake or a chocolate egg if you come along to our family event on the field on Good Friday, but I'm not sure how much further I can stretch than that.

There's another reason it's a dangerous question, though. You see, it might just be that asking what we want reveals what is most important to us. We might think it is what we – well, think – or even what we believe, but I reckon if you put your mind to it, you'd quite soon realise how important the things you want are to you. And when I say 'want', I don't mean the things we might feel like in the moment but not tomorrow – I mean some of our deeper longings. Often they are connected with what we really need, whether we realise it or not. It's the place where the two meanings of want - desire and lack - overlap.

As I've been preparing for Easter this year, I've spent some time asking myself what I most want, inspired by a phrase of St Paul's that begins "I want to know Christ." He doesn't just want it for himself, though: he prays for the churches he has planted that they would know Jesus better. It's what I've often thought of when I've prayed for the churches here, or for individual people who've asked me to pray for them: that they would know Jesus better.

Perhaps reading this, you feel it's not a question of knowing Jesus better, but of knowing him at all. What does it mean to know him?

Well, this is where Easter comes in. You see, that phrase of Paul's – "I want to know Christ" – is just the start. Knowing Jesus, Paul goes on to say, is about knowing the power of the resurrection, and about sharing in his sufferings: it's about becoming like him in his death so we can share in the resurrection. Knowing Jesus is a matter of life and death, a matter of his resurrection to eternal life on Easter Sunday following on from the death of the crucifixion just two days before. Knowing Jesus is believing that he died for us, so that in the end we might be raised with him.

So "What do you want?" really is an Easter question. And I know what I want: I want to know Christ. What about you?



VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston Viv (493438) & Andy (07777 675193)

Arminghall Rob (492305) or Lyn (493422)

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

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just get in touch and we will see what we can do!

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FROM THE REGISTERS

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

FUNERALS

COLIN MOORE

Tuesday 14th March

at Caistor St Edmund

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.

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send by email to Henry and Eostre Caswell to

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By 10th of this month please.



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From the Curate's Egg by Lyn

April 2023 – Holy Saturday

've been reading a book entitled Failure by Emma Ineson* – I managed to finish this book by her, unlike her previous one entitled Ambition! I am not one for not finishing a book, I will plough on through until the bitter end – although if it is a book I didn't enjoy/learn from it won't find its way onto my bookshelves. What does that say about me? Maybe nothing or maybe, I have little ambition but I make and encounter lots of failure in life which is why I finished the book? Certainly, I'm not one to enjoy failure but I do learn through it. I don't set out to find failure but it does seem failure has/is part of my life, it finds me. Everything doesn't go right.

Many people when Jesus was alive saw his life as a failure. He came from a back water, a place where nothing good came from. He claimed to be the Son of God, but he didn't meet people's ideas about who the Messiah, the Son of God, would be like. He didn't overthrow the Romans as some had hoped he would do. He died on a cross – an instrument of torture and for criminals. Take a moment to think about his disciples when they saw/heard he had died on that Friday. They had lost a friend. Their expectations hadn't been met. Were all those miracles for nothing? Was all his good teaching pointless? They would have been frightened as to whether they would be next – what would happen to them? These questions and more would have been occupying the disciples' minds on that first Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Emma writes:

"Holy Saturday has been described by Pete Greig as 'the no-man's land between the questions and answers, prayers uttered and miracles to come. It's where we wait, with a particular mixture of faith and despair – whenever God is silent or life doesn't make sense'".

Have you been there? Or maybe you're there now? Holy Saturday. All you see is failure around you. Expectations not met. No miracles. A good education hasn't led to where you hoped it would. You are frightened of what might come next. Prayers are not being answered. God is silent. Life doesn't make sense.

When Jesus' body had been put in the tomb, the women who had travelled with Jesus we are told went home and prepared spices and perfumes. And then we are told "they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment" (Luke 23:56). The Sabbath day was, and is still today, a day of rest for Jews. Six days of work and the seventh is a day of rest. A day of reconnecting. A day of refreshing. A day off work but a day focusing or refocusing on God. Their creator, sustainer, provider, Saviour. When we experience a Holy Saturday perhaps we should rest. Rest in him. Not just physically rest but re-focus on God. Try and get God's perspective on things. I think David did that because he wrote:

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone;

my hope comes from him.

6 He alone is my rock and my salvation;

he is my fortress, I shall not be shaken.

7 My salvation and my honour depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

8 Trust in him at all times, you people;

pour out your hearts to him,

for God is our refuge.

May your Holy Saturdays turn into Easter Sundays for Jesus is alive and in the words of an Easter hymn may you meet him, risen from the tomb, for lovingly he greets you, may he scatter the fear and gloom.

Lyn

*Failure, Emma Ineson, 2022, SPCK (ISBN 978-0-281-08784-6)

STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

We are a friendly local group of over 55's meeting at St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke Holy Cross the first Thursday in the month.

We had our AGM yesterday with an afternoon tea and music with Julie which was very enjoyable and well attended.

We would welcome new members so why not come along a see what it is like?

Our regular April meeting will be Thursday 6th April 2023 at 1.30pm

and then our other regular events are Bowls Thursday 13th and 27th April at 1.30pm (£2.00)

> Bingo Thursday 20th April eyes down at 1.30pm

Raffle Prize donations for above would be much appreciated.

Ask not for justice to be done

If you will not seek it for yourself Ask not for a better world, If you will not help to build it. Ask not for an end to sorrow, If you will not offer comfort. Ask not for the succour of the lonely, If you will not show you care. Ask not for an end to war, If you will not work for peace. Ask not for greater fairness, If you will not first deal straight. Ask not for aid to the poor, If you will not go without. Ask not for no more darkness, If you will not shed some light. Ask not for the health of this planet, If you will not change your ways. Ask not for transformation, If you will not first be transformed. Lord, I hear your challenge, Not just to others but to me. Help me to listen and to act.

Amen

from a book by Nick Fawsett called "God of here there and everywhere"

St. George's Dementia Support Group

e warmly welcome people with dementia and their carers to our regular café sessions in St. Georges Hall, Upper Stoke, Holy Cross held 10 am to 12 midday on the second and fourth Monday mornings of each month (except bank holidays). There are always fun activities and entertainment to enjoy along with good conversation, helpful support and information plus refreshments. We also run occasional subsidised outings.

There are no joining fees, just a small charge for refreshments no referral is required.

And naturally we are always pleased to welcome anyone interested in becoming a volunteer.





It was lovely to have Angela with us once more on 27th February, as one of our regular contributors, leading us on one of her reminiscence sessions. This time the topic was "The Swinging 60s". She was able to get one of our number to gamely don a Beatles wig and sing a Beatles song! A very successful morning enjoyed by all. Below are a few photos of our great time with Angela. And we are delighted that Angela will be returning in October to talk about food and cookery in the 50s and 60s.

In April - Monday 10 April - NO CAFE (Easter Monday Holiday)

Monday 24 April – We will be trying some Coronation Crafts with Pattie and then afterwards we will have our Annual General meeting to which all are welcome.



Website is www.st.georges-dementiasupport-group.uk

Below are some advance dates for your diaries.

Monday 8 May - NO CAFE (Coronation Bank Holiday)

Monday 22 May -Bingo with the Bingo Man!

Monday 12 June - Cafe session

Monday 26 June - Coach Outing to Gorleston including Fish n' Chip Lunch

Coffee and Chat

10.30 - 11.30 Church Hall, Stoke Holy Cross

on the following Thursdays 6 April 20 April

Are you wanting to meet others?

Why not come and join us and chat over a drink?

On the first Thursday of the month there is a short traditional communion service at 10









EASTER WORDSEARCH

JESUS	Ε	Х	R	Ν	0	Ι	Х	I	F	I	С	U	R	С
CARRIE ALLELU	Ν	0	I	Т	С	Е	R	R	U	S	Е	R	R	L
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GETHSAM CURTAI	R	В	Μ	0	Т	S	Α	R	Ε	Т	S	Α	Ε	Ε
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ROLLEI STONI	S	R	R	Α	I	Ν	S	U	S	Ε	J	С	Α	R
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CROSS AWAY	R	D	R	S	I	Ν	0	В	В	Α	R	Y	I	Е
CRUCIFIX	Ε	R	R	Ν	Μ	С	R	С	Т	Ε	Ν	0	т	S
ANGE JOY	Y	Α	I	0	Υ	R	Α	G	L	Α	С	U	R	Е
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Great Progress at Dunston Church to overcome the Bat roosting issue

Whilst we are fully in favour of looking after our endangered bat species they do present quite a problem in rural churches like St Remigius at Dunston. They are protected species so to overcome the problem of them leaving their poo all over the church we have to find a way for them to co-exist alongside our use of the church building. Natural England have fortunately agreed to pay our latest bill for professional cleaning the inside of the church by Capricorn Cleaners, who did a very thorough job, but at a cost of over £600.

With funding now from Natural England we had a scheme devised to allow the bats to roost in the roof voids above the timbered ceiling of the church while sealing up any gaps that allow access from there into the body of the church. We are also having special bat roosting boxes made and fitted in the upper room of the church tower allowing them to enter the tower by the removal of a small pane of glass. Cameras are also being fitted in the roof voids so the bat activity can be monitored for information on how they use the space.

It has taken a long time to get to this stage but we can now tell you the scaffolding will be going up inside the church in April to allow the blocking up of any tiny gaps that would continue to allow the bats to get in to the body of the church. The boxes will be fitted in the tower and then then cameras will be fitted once the scaffolding is down. All this has had to be agreed to by the diocese and Natural England with help from our architect Iain Walker and the bat expert Phil Parker to whom we are grateful.

And have you spotted the Barnacle Geese and Egyptian Geese

It seems geese also like to roost at Dunston Church although, fortunately, on the tower parapets outside the church. Attached is a photo of the of a Barnacle goose sat on top of the tower snapped by Phil Parker when he was at the church. He tells us that he has seen several Barnacles as well as Egyptian geese using the tower when he was there. So attached also is an Egyptian goose photo.

Raking party in Caistor Churchyard Thank you to all those who helped with cutting down and raking the 'wild' areas at Caistor C

Thank you to all those who helped with cutting down and raking the 'wild' areas at Caistor Churchyard. It was a cold morning, but we got warm quite quickly doing all the work. We had a lot of fun and cleared a big area. The resulting material was added to a big heap of branches and twigs at the back of the churchyard, which will be a good place for wildlife to shelter and breed. The cleared areas will now get much more light and this will hopefully encourage the early flowering plants to thrive.

Everyone enjoyed the coffee and cakes in the church afterwards.

Some of the area was covered in snowdrops, which is such a welcome sight at this time of the year!

We will have more raking and clearing events in the future. Please let us know if you would like to be involved. We are open to ideas and can certainly use more hands!













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EASTER / APRIL 2023

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

Tuesday-Saturday mornings

9am Tues-Fri 10am Sat	Zoom—contact us to join (except 6th-8th April below)	Prayer meeting with Bible reading									
Sunday 2 nd April (Palm Sunday)											
9.30am 10.30am	Caistor St Edmund Stoke Holy Cross	Praise & Worship Morning Worship with children's group									
Maundy Thursday 6 th April											
10am	Stoke Church Hall	Maundy Thursday Communion and Coffee									
Good Friday 7 th April											
10am	Caistor St Edmund	Morning Service with refreshments									
2-4pm	Stoke Pavilion	(Followed by carrying the cross to Stoke Pavilion) All Invited Easter Fun at the Park									
Easter Saturday 8 th April											
10am	Arminghall	Morning Prayer for Easter Saturday									
Easter Sunday 9 th . 10.30am	April Stoke Holy Cross	Easter Morning Worship and Commu	nion for all ages								
Sunday 16 th April 9.30am	Caistor St Edmund	Holy Communion									
10.30am	Stoke Holy Cross	Morning Worship									
7.30pm	Zoom—contact us to join	Listening to God									
Sunday 23 rd April											
10.30am 3.30pm	Stoke Holy Cross Stoke Church Hall	Church Family Meeting (Join us for br All Invited —come together over food									
3.30pm		faith together	, nave run, explore								
Monday 24 th April											
6-7pm	Arminghall	St George's Day bellringing & community gathering									
Sunday 30 th April											
10.30am Stoke Ho	oly Cross	Morning worship with Holy Communion and children's group									
Caistor church building is open about 10-4 daily and											

Caistor church building is open about 10–4 daily, and Arminghall most Saturdays – space to reflect, and to pray



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