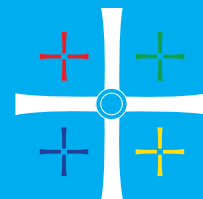


Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

AUGUST 2022



See article and more
photos inside of our
Open Gardens weekend



See other photos inside of more
local Jubilee Celebrations



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I spent some time this month wrestling with my various thoughts about the resignation of the Prime Minister, and the beginnings of the campaign to replace him, with many candidates eager to put their names forward. I wrote a whole article about how leadership is to do with character, and how when we recognise that, we can find reasons to hope.

And then it was one of those mornings where I was so captivated by a single sentence in a passage of the bible that I was reading, that I thought I should probably inflict something a little bit different on you!

As we pray online most mornings we have been reading through the beginning of Mark's gospel. It's not unusual that you read that Jesus goes off in the morning and finds himself somewhere to pray, and on almost all those occasions Jesus also gets disturbed in

some way as crowds follow him, or his disciples come and interrupt what he's doing. That's certainly what happened in our reading today.

But the thing that really struck me was what the disciples said to him: "Everyone is looking for you!"

Word has got around about Jesus, you see, and so people are going looking for this man who speaks beautiful truth about God, and through whom God's power is working in amazing ways.

Most of the people around Jesus would have been Jewish believers, and so very open to the reality and the presence of God. But I wonder whether it isn't pretty much true today, still. "Everyone is looking for you!"

Sometimes people tell me that they are looking for Jesus. They tell my friends as well. A vicar colleague of mine I met in the supermarket the other week had had a conversation just like that the same afternoon. It happens today, and it's amazing and exciting. The health warning here, by the way, is that people who are openly looking for Jesus to tend to get found!

More often, people are aware of looking for *something*. Now more than ever we can fill our lives with things, but those things can get quite hungry, and demand more and more of us. That's true even of things which are really good in themselves: maybe you've noticed that?

Other people aren't conscious of looking for anything. Perhaps you feel completely content with how things are. Or perhaps it's more that we live in a very different world to the one that Jesus's friends did, where God seemed such a present reality.

But I wonder. Hear those words again, written not about a something but a *someone*; about Jesus. "Everyone is looking for you." Do you think that's true? Do you think he's what you're looking for?

Rob

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IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

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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.

FUNERAL

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16th July at
STOKE HOLY CROSS

&

JOHN & BETTE PORDAGE
16th July at
DUNSTON

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deadline for all copy for the next
magazine for the time being.



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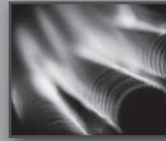
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Stoke Holy Cross Open Gardens Weekend

First of all, a huge big **THANK YOU** to all those who contributed in some many ways to make the Open Gardens weekend such a huge success. Behind the scenes, there was a committee, ably led by Anna Lipp and Viv Carrington; who coordinated all the arrangements which took a very large number of man hours before the event. There was also a team of volunteers who donated home-made cakes, served refreshments, sold tickets and generally helped wherever they could throughout the weekend.

Finally, and most importantly, there were the wonderful gardeners who so kindly opened their amazing gardens for this event. We managed to visit the majority of them and were really surprised by the tremendous variety and style of gardens which abound in Stoke Holy Cross and Upper Stoke. There were lovingly tended working gardens, with a huge variety of produce as well as a great array of flowers. There were gardens with rolling meadows hidden within them and, in total contrast, very formal gardens which had been painstakingly designed to stunning effect. There were gardens with beautiful statues in them, complementing the wonderful variety of plants within them. There were gardens with small ponds, gardens with bigger ponds and an amazing water garden (where we had to be careful not to step on the hundreds of baby frogs). We so enjoyed visiting each and every garden, learning so much about a huge variety of plants, shrubs and trees, from so many extremely knowledgeable gardeners.

Through the efforts of so many, a fantastic total over £1,500 was raised over the weekend. This has been put into Stoke Holy Cross Church building fund, with a percentage also going to the St George's Dementia Support Café to help towards their wonderful work within the community.

Here are some more photos which sadly in black and white don't do justice to the colourful gardens.



More Free for All articles please!

Many thanks to all those who regularly contribute to Free for All; we all appreciate the time and effort which you put into your articles.

We would also love to hear from others of you who receive this magazine regularly. Have you lived in one of the villages for a long time? Do you have memories of things that happened in the past? Or perhaps you can contribute in some other way.

If you are able to send in an article we would also appreciate a few photos with it, if at all possible. To make our lives easier (especially Henry's, as he does all the technical stuff), can you make sure that you don't accidentally send any video clips in with your photos. Please can you also edit your photos to include the ones which you think would work well for a wider audience. For obvious reasons, especially if we don't know the people involved, it is often very difficult for us to make choices which we think would appeal to all the readers. Finally, please send a maximum of 6 photos which you think are the most appropriate for the magazine.

We are really looking forward to hearing more from you! Henry and Eostre



Thank You

I recently retired as a postman delivering to the residents of Caistor St Edmunds and Arminghall. The villagers gave me money and gifts for my retirement and I just wanted to say thank you.

Dear All, Just a line to say a big thank you for the money and gifts you gave me for my retirement, it was very much appreciated. May I say what a pleasure it has been to deliver to such nice people.

You made me feel very special during my time on "your patch" especially during the pandemic which was a very testing time for us all, but you had a wonderful community spirit within the village and everyone pulled together. I really enjoyed the job as everyday was different, but you the villagers made it special and made me look forward to my days work. However as much as I enjoyed the job now is the right time to retire and look forward to all the good things in life. I hope our paths will cross in the months and years ahead as I have to keep up my daily exercise!

Wishing you all the very best for the future and thank you once again.

Best wishes from John,
your former Postman.

Holy Days

When I was a teenager I joined our local parish church choir, I loved singing and my best friend encouraged me to join. I really enjoyed the singing and making and being with friends my age. It was a great season of my life. One thing that particularly struck me (previously coming from a church which didn't celebrate saints days) was the patronal festival, the day when we remembered who our church was named after, St Edmund, 20 November (always easy for me to remember as it's exactly five months after my birthday!). We would have a special service and it felt like a pre-Christmas celebration, a special day.

August is one of those months when I look at my diary there are numerous saints and people remembered by the church, including Oswald King of Northumbria (5th), Dominic (8th) Clare of Assisi (11th), Bartholomew (24th) and John Bunyan (30th). Days which are holy in the sense that we remember those followers of Jesus who have sought to live and die for him and point to him and Father God but days which also fall within school holidays.

Whether you are fortunate or not to go away on holiday, maybe to places like Northumbria or Assisi in Italy, or whether you will see August as an opportunity to read a book (whether it's a John Bunyan or not), wherever we are we can celebrate. Celebrate, be thankful, we have a hobby we enjoy or for friends and family. But we can also celebrate for what we have, life, given to us not because of anything we have done but because of others. Ultimately, let us be like Bartholomew, he followed Jesus and accepted Jesus as his friend. A holiday is not an opportunity to just have time off, to recharge our batteries, it is a holy day to remember family and friends and that our days are in the hands of God, our creator, our provider, our redeemer.

Happy holydays. Lyn

Embers Youth Club

Eleven months on we have not just survived, but grown in numbers, knowledge and friendships. Gary and I are privileged and pleased to provide a space for young people to meet together. We are supported by a small rota of adult helpers for which we could not safely operate Embers, thank you. We are particularly grateful though for the generosity of a couple in the church who behind the scenes, keep the cupboards stacked full of snacks and drinks for the young people. We also believe there is more. Not just more snacks! More God wants to do.

We are devising our Autumn programme, which will start in earnest on 8th September and comprise, as the young people themselves have requested, club nights on alternate weeks. However, before then we shall also on 18 August hold a club night and on 25 August a morning youth café (10-12) where we hope to provide a simple breakfast rather than the normal evening snacks.

What else does God want us to do? We think we should gather the parents of the young people together but also for all us at Embers to go deeper on our faith journeys, to provide a space for God to fan into flame a living, life-enriching faith. So watch this space for more details next month.

And What Embers means to us - Two regular members wrote:-

'It is amazing and very fun. It gives you freedom to have fun with your friends.' E.

'Embers is fun and a place to hang out with your mates. Embers is also a place where people talk to Gary about God. My friends and I love God. He gives us freedom.' L.

We hope to include more from the young people who attend Embers in future editions of the Free for All.

embers

Lyn

Stoke Holy Cross with Poringland Jubilee Weekend Celebrations

The lovely pictures on the front cover and also included here, all taken by our local wildlife photographer Liz Dack, show there was a great turnout and lots of activities to get involved

with as well as, of course, the enjoyment of eating picnic teas together with friends and neighbours to mark our Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The event was rounded off with some great fireworks.



St George's Dementia Support Group

On Monday 27th June, some 25 folk from our group went on a coach trip to Beales Roses in Attleborough. There are two acres of rose gardens to wander and enjoy at their peak of perfection this time of year - the huge profusion of colours and perfumes were wonderful! Some also took advantage of a little shopping for their own gardens and everyone had a good muddle and catch-up over coffee or lunch in the Rosarium restaurant. Arriving back mid-afternoon all agreed it had been a lovely day out. Our next coach outing is planned to be a Broads river trip on Monday 12th September.

We warmly welcome people living with dementia and their carers to our regular cafe sessions in St George's Hall, Upper Stoke, held 10:00-12:00 midday on the second and fourth Monday mornings of every month (except bank holidays.) There are always fun activities and entertainments 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. We also welcome anyone interested in becoming a volunteer helper. It's very satisfying and great fun!

Our July dates are 11th and 25th.

For further information call: 01508 493661,
01508 494742 or 01508 495580

Website is: www.st-georges-dementia-support-group.uk

Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club

for the over 55's meets at St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke
Holy Cross the first Thursday each month

Thursday 4th August 2022

at 1.30pm Chair fun and exercise with Mavin

Bingo Thursday 11th and 25th eyes down at 1.30pm
(Please bring a raffle prize)

Bowls Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 18th - 1.30pm - £2.00

JUMBLE SALE in St. Georges Hall on
Saturday 20th August 2022 1.00 - 3.00pm
All proceeds going to the Ukraine

ADVANCE NOTICE

Our September outing is to Southwold / Dunwich
for Fish and Chips Wednesday 14th September 2022

If you would like to join us on this trip, and support our Club,
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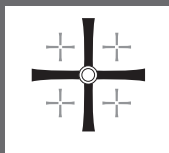
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10am Sat Zoom Meeting ID: 385-426-921 with Bible reading

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Tuesday 9th Arminghall Church (with coffee afterwards)
Thursday 11th Dunston Church
Saturday 13th Dunston Church

9.30am services in August

Sunday 7th Caistor St Edmund Praise & Worship

10.30am services in August

Sunday 7th Stoke Holy Cross All-Age service
Sunday 14th Stoke Holy Cross All-Age service with communion
Sunday 21st Caistor St Edmund All-Age service with communion
Sunday 28th Stoke Holy Cross All-Age service in churchyard— bring a picnic for afterwards

Caistor church building is open about 10-4 most days - space to reflect, and to pray

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Caistor St Edmund Church

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PRAISE	HALLELUJAH	COMPASSION
GRACE	PEACE	SAVIOUR
BLESSED	LOVE	THANKSGIVING
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