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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

AUGUST 2024



KIRSTY IS ORDAINED AT THE CATHEDRAL



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LOVELY DAY OUT AT SOUTHWOLD



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Oh well. Not for the first time, football hasn't come home. The original 30 years of hurt have extended to 58, which doesn't really fit the song so well, does it? In my case I remember back as far as Italia 90, which puts my personal years-of-hurt tally at 34. Some of you will go all the way back to 1966.*

Thinking the other Sunday about the amazing possibility that this time football might just come home got us thinking about ways that the Christian faith expresses the idea of coming home.

The most encouraging thing is that coming home is an absolute certainty. One day, football might just come home. Maybe, just maybe, this new

manager we are now looking for will do the job for us. (At this point a pessimist would point out that no English manager has even won the Premier League in its 32-year history going back to the summer of 1992, but I won't go there.)

But as followers of Jesus, we are coming home. One day, all of us will come home to a place where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away. One day, all of us will come to a place that has been prepared for us, a room amongst the countless rooms in the Father's house for everyone who has come home to Jesus.

Jesus tells the story of a man who leaves his Father's house, and goes out and wastes his inheritance. And one day, he decides he would be better off back where he came from. He realises that he should come home. Arriving at his Father's house, he is astonished that where he expected to meet anger and judgment, he encounters someone who is so delighted at his return that he runs from the door to greet him as soon as he sees him coming. He can't wait for him to get home.

But it isn't just about us coming home. He brings us home. Fans of Les Miserables will know that song as well, sung by Jean Valjean as he prays over his friend Marius. Rescue him, Lord: bring him home.

When I was thinking about this song the other day, for the first time I pictured a conversation between Jesus and his Father as he prepared to come at Christmas time. Of course it wouldn't have happened quite like this, but I imagine the Father looking down at the world with all its sin and mess and pain, looking down at you and me, and saying to Jesus, "Bring them home. Bring him home. Bring her home."

So yes, if we follow Jesus we are coming home, but only because Jesus, faithful to his Father to the point of death, has done just as he was asked. He has brought us home.

*I am very aware that for the purposes of this article I have ignored the brilliant Lionesses' win at Euro 2021. Three years of hurt doesn't make the point quite so well, does it?

Rob

VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston, Arminghall and Caistor St Edmund.

Rob Baker, The Vicarage, Mill Road, Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8PA rob@venta-group.org 01508 492305

ASSISTANT MINISTER

Lyn Marsh - Lyn is on sabbatical leave until the end of September, so please contact Rob or Kirsty with any inquiries for the time being


CURATE

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For all administrative enquiries please contact admin@venta-group.org

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Jani (493572) & Lia (494137)

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IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

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.

BAPTISMS

ZARA FROST

Sunday 21st July
at Stoke Holy Cross

&

BEAUDEN STUBBS

Sunday 21st July
at Stoke Holy Cross

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.

FOR ALL COPY PLEASE

send by email to

Henry and Eostre Caswell to
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By 10th of this month please.



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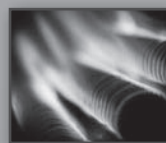
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My Journey by Kirsty Long, Curate.

Summertime often reminds me of long journeys my family used to take when I was a child. As soon as the school holidays began, we would set off to another part of the UK for a two-week camping holiday. The journey would nearly always begin about 4am and would often take several hours and would include a few comfort breaks. Most journeys especially if we were going to the south of the country would also involve being stuck in traffic generally caused by roadworks. At times it would feel like we were never going to get there, especially when we would go wrong but eventually, we would arrive at our destination tired but looking forward to the holiday ahead.

These journeys remind me very much of another journey I have been on over the last 17 years when it was first suggested to me that I should explore ordained ministry. A journey which I was very hesitant in starting and to a destination which I was unsure of wanting to reach. A journey which has been long and has required a great deal of discernment, prayer, learning and trust in God.

At times it felt like I was travelling at top speed, and all was straightforward like being on a motorway and the view ahead was clear. Whereas at others times it felt like I was travelling along a narrow windy country lane with many crossroads to navigate.

This journey also came to a sudden halt at times as different personal circumstances occurred. Although these times have been extremely difficult, my faith grew through them, and I developed into the person and minister that I am today. Through these holdups my calling to ordained ministry deepened giving me the encouragement to continue on with the journey

At times I have taken the wrong turning, generally when I have chosen to listen to myself and put my own desires first rather than listening to what God was saying to me and the ministry he was calling me to. And it sometimes took quite a while to get me back on the right road.

Throughout this long journey comfort breaks were a necessity as it was mentally and emotionally draining. Time away from it all to rest as well as being still and quiet to listen to God really refreshed me for the rest of the journey and were incredibly important.

This journey completed on 29th June this year as I was ordained within the church of England. The destination to which I had felt called to all those years ago. A journey which has had its many ups and downs and at times has been incredibly hard, but throughout all of this I have felt God's presence with me. He has guided when I felt lost and confused. He has encouraged me when I have doubted if I was travelling in the right direction. He has held me up when difficult circumstances grounded me to a halt. He has refreshed me when I was tired. But most of all he has loved me.

On that same day, another journey began as a new stage of my life started. A journey which I am very much looking forward to taking for the rest of my life. I'm sure it will not always easy, but I know that God will be with me throughout just as he was to get me to this place.

God will travel alongside all the journeys which we take in life, the easy and the difficult. All we need to do is ask him to accompany us and put our trust in him. I hope and pray that you will experience God's presence with you, just as I have as you travel through life.

God Bless

Kirsty

Stoke Holy Cross Community Hall

With work now mainly concentrated on the interior of the new building we are hoping to get a café running in the hall and also a bar on occasions. Hence the 2 posters below



THE SHX BAR GANG

We're looking for people to get involved and help organise regular social bar nights to bring the community together and make the most of the new hall.

If you're interested in making a difference and lending a hand please get in touch with Sandy Collins by emailing Sandy.01@me.com or calling 07949 607182



SHX CAFE COLLECTIVE

We're looking for people to get involved and help organise regular cafe mornings/afternoons to bring the community together and make the most of the new hall.

If you are interested in making a difference and lending a hand please comment below or contact Sandy Collins, email sandy.01@me.com or call 07949 607182

Weekend Celebration as our Curate, Kirsty is ordained

We had a great weekend at the end of June celebrating Kirsty's ordination at Norwich Cathedral and then serving her first communion at a shared service at All Saints' Church Poringland with our adjoining Poringland and Bixley Benefice with whom Kirsty shares her curacy.

Many of our church members were able to share in the service at Norwich cathedral on Saturday June 29th where Kirsty was ordained with 5 other curates from the Norwich Diocese. It was a delightful service conducted by Bishop Graham Usher in the packed cathedral where even the cathedral cat joined us.

We were then able to gather in the sunshine with family and friends in the cathedral cloisters. Kirsty was able to show off her beautiful new embroidered stole made specially for the occasion.

On Sunday morning we joined members of the Poringland and Bixley benefice in a very first joint service at All Saints' Church.

Kirsty lead the service and served her first communion.

- Our music group were able to provide the music for the hymns and songs including Kirsty's much loved favourite Graham Kendrick song "Shine Jesus Shine".
- Gary Watson from Norwich Youth for Christ gave the talk centring on the Mark's gospel account of woman who was miraculously healed after many years of suffering, simply because she reached out and touched Jesus' cloak. He went on to speak about how so many young people are struggling with some form of mental health and the need for Jesus' healing for them.
- After the service we were able to enjoy tea, coffee and a whole selection of homemade cakes as we continued to congratulate and celebrate with Kirsty and her family on her ordination: she will continue serving the two benefices for the next few years.



Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club

We are a friendly local group of over 55's meeting at St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke Holy Cross on the first Thursday in the month at 1.30pm and run Games and Bingo alternate weeks.

Thursday 1st August Club when Mavin will be leading a quiz and gentle exercise session.

Games afternoons commence at 1.00pm on 8th & 22nd

(Please bring your own games and share with your friends), Cost £1.00 and includes refreshments.

Bingo commences at 1.30pm sharp on 15th and 29th (Please bring a raffle prize).

Dates for Caistor Cream Teas



We are planning to serve Cream Teas at Caistor St Edmund Church again this summer but a little later than in previous years - book these dates!

Sundays

August 18th & 25th 2024



September 1st & 8th 2024

2pm - 5pm

With plants, garden produce and cake stall
We would love to have lots of plants to sell on our stall - if you would like to help please start preparing now by taking cuttings etc

Arminghall Church Pimms and Hymns Afternoon

We had a really great time at Arminghall on Sunday 7th July with our Hymns and Pimms and cake and things. People came from Arminghall and across the villages to celebrate with us, sharing with one another about which hymns have inspired them most as disciples of Jesus. It was a really special time to be together.

A very big thank you to everyone who joined in in any way, including those who got the churchyard and building ready for this special occasion.



St George's Hall Dementia Support Cafe



We warmly welcome people living with dementia and their carers to our regular Café sessions in St George's hall, Upper Stoke Holy Cross on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month (except bank holidays) at 10am to 12 midday. There are no joining fees, just a small charge for refreshments and no referral is necessary. There are fun activities and also entertainment to enjoy along with good conversation, helpful support and information we also have two subsidised outings a year.

We had a lovely trip to Southwold at the end of June this year and enjoyed great day out together with good company, some blue sky and the sea breeze. The photos show some of what we got up to there.

On the 8th of July we all enjoyed a quiz set by Chris one of our volunteers. The general knowledge had us scratching our heads a bit but with combined knowledge we did OK. Much debate and conversations were had with the picture quiz of everyday objects from different angles a helpful and fun exercise.

We are pleased to welcome anyone wishing to become a volunteer, a very rewarding thing to do, and a place to meet new friends. For information call, 01508 493661, 01508 494742, or 01508 495580 Website is www.st.george-s-dementia-support-group.uk

Dates for August Cafe session is 12th August but there is no Café on 26th as it is a Bank Holiday

Dementia Support Group Outing

These are a few pictures from our June trip to Southwold. We were had a really lovely day in the best of sunny summer weather...



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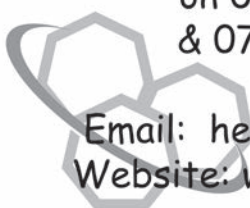


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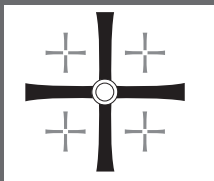


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AUGUST 2024

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

Midweek gatherings in August

1 st August	10am at the Church Hall followed at 10.30am by	Communion Coffee and Chat
7 th August	Arminghall church open for refreshments from 2pm, finishing with prayer at about 3.30	
15 th August	10am at the Church Hall	Coffee and Chat

Sunday mornings at 10.30am

4 th August	Caistor St Edmund	Morning Worship & Communion for all ages
11 th August	Arminghall	Morning Worship & Communion for all ages
25 th August	Stoke Holy Cross	Morning Worship & Communion for all ages

Sunday afternoons and evenings in August

18 th August	Caistor St Edmund The Vicarage	Cream Teas from 2-4pm All Invited to our Olympic/Paralympic special 3.30-5pm tea and cake and activities for all 5.30pm Vicarage BBQ—all welcome Please book in at tinyurl.com/ventabbq2024
25 th August	Caistor St Edmund	Cream Teas from 2-4pm

*Please note we are having a break from our morning prayer meetings,
and starting again on 3rd September*



Communion at 10am
on first Thursdays

Caistor Cream Teas



Sundays

August 18th & 25th 2024



September 1st & 8th 2024

2-5pm

With plants, garden produce
& cake stall

Embers and Sparklers will return in September—see you there!



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