Freefor All +++



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

FEBRUARY 2020

As well as our regular Family, Traditional and Holy Communion Services below are just some of the things we love to do to serve our community.



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ere's a sort of trick that children have sometimes played on each other at school. They tell someone they have to answer some questions as quickly as possible, and then they hurry them, asking things like:

"What's one plus four?!"

"What's five plus two?!"

"What's seven take away three?!"

"Name a vegetable?!"

By doing this, of course, you can claim that you can read your friends' minds, make them say something. You can pretend to know what they are thinking.

But we don't always know what someone else is thinking, even when we think they might. We don't know what they are thinking in the moment, or what their habitual thoughts are. I don't know what you are thinking about now (apart from carrots*). It's a good question, actually. What are you thinking about?

For the last few weeks I have been encouraging people in our churches to remember these words of Paul in the Bible: "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." There are so many things I can think about which fall into one of these categories. So much is true, and noble, and right, and so on. But I find myself often magnetically drawn to things that are the opposite. I think and think about things that make me feel angry, or sad, or disillusioned, or disappointed. I am sure that there are so many lovely things to think about, but they can just seem outnumbered by the unlovely ones.

Back in about November, a retired vicar who has been doing some mentoring for me over the last year or two gave me these verses. He wisely thought that I would particularly benefit from them. Cathryn and I took them home and prayed over them. At the same time I did something which I had heard someone else mention, and took down from above my desk all sorts of lists of phone numbers and rotas and things, and put them in a drawer close at hand, so that I could fill the space on the board with stuff that helps me to think in this different way. As I tidied things away, I found underneath a whole load of other information exactly these words from the Bible! It seems that I had thought some time years ago that these verses might help me, but in the midst of life everything had got on top of them. I won't lose them again, because I have stuck them to a notebook where I can write down all sorts of lovely things I am thinking about, and Cathryn has kindly framed them for me to put up somewhere.

Of course, when I think about looking at something that is true, noble, right, and so on, then ultimately I think about Jesus. I look at him. He is the only thing, and the only person, who is all of these, all of the time. And so I resolve again to do everything I can to spend time looking at him. We can all do this by reading the Scriptures, reading other books about him, sitting in prayer, enjoying the company of people and other things that he has made. Which of course includes carrots.

*Nine times out of 10 people answer the last question with "Carrot".

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**

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CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston Viv (493438) & Roy (493595)

> 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

Nould you welcome a visit from one of our church team?

We will do our best to come and say hello to new people moving into the village where possible. We would be very happy to come and visit you.

Maybe you would like us to pray God's blessing over your new home, for example. Please do get in touch with Rob, Lyn or the churchwardens if you would welcome a visit. Also members of the church are always pleased to come and bring communion to you if you would like to get in touch.

> 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

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.



Free for All 🕂

Look Up



he Bible often reminds us to keep our eyes on God, remembering how strong, loving and unchangeable he is in the middle of whatever is happening in our lives.

Psalm 121 says:

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth" $% \left({{{\rm{A}}_{\rm{B}}}} \right) = {{\rm{A}}_{\rm{B}}} \right)$

At the start of this year, why not make a commitment to keep "lifting your eyes" towards God, asking him for help when things are hard, or for wisdom when you're not sure what to do?

Look at this picture of Mount Kilimanjaro, and imagine how it would be to live somewhere nearby... The mountain would always be there, wouldn't it? It would be a constant presence, bigger than anything else, just like God is always with us and is bigger and stronger than anything or anyone.



re firmly believe in the power of prayer and regularly seem to have our prayers answered.

Do you have things troubling you or your family and would welcome to know people are praying for you? Please feel free to pop a note to the vicarage or at one of our churches or send a short email to Lyn@ventagroup.org. Whatever you tell us will remain safe with us. A small number of senior church members will be asked to simply pray for our Lord Jesus to provide a solution without your



name being given out. Or you might just give your concerns direct to Jesus – just talk to him and ask for what you need. And don't forget you prayed about it when perhaps things do improve!

Jesus tells us "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

St George's Hall Dementia Support Café

n the 2nd and 4th Monday morning of each month this is a great place to relax for those with dementia and for their carers. Come along and join us for fun activities and refreshments. There's always room for more people living with dementia and their partners or carers to join us, whether on our subsidised outings or at our regular cafe sessions from 10am till 12 noon in St George's Hall, Upper Stoke.

For more information please ring 01508 493661 or 492938, visit our website at http://stgeorges-dementiasupport-group.btck.co.uk/

If you would like to come along but have transport problems in reaching the cafe one solution might be to contact the voluntary organisation 5+ Good Neighbours on 07934195724 or maybe one of a regular members can offer the occasional lift.

Our meeting dates for February are Monday 10th and Monday 24th.



SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY IN THE VENTA GROUP

2 nd Feb 9.00 am 10.30 am	Candlemass Breakfast and Communion Caistor St Edmund Church Informal Holy Communion
	Stoke Holy Cross Church
9 th Feb	3 rd Sunday before Lent
9.00 am	Traditional Holy Communion Arminghall Church
9.30 am	Praise & Worship Caistor St Edmund Church
10.30 am	Café Church Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall
16 th Feb	2 nd Sunday before Lent
9.30 am	Family Service Caistor St Edmund Church
11.00 am	Traditional Holy Communion Stoke Holy Cross Church
6.30 pm	The Gathering Stoke Holy Cross Church
23 rd Feb	Sunday next before Lent
9.00 am	Traditional Holy Communion Caistor St Edmund Church
10.30 am	Sunday 4 Everyone Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall



STOKE HOLY CROSS TUESDAY GROUP

Because the daylight is still short, our February meeting will take place on the afternoon of **February 18th, at 2 pm**, in the Church Hall. Everyone is welcome to come, to hear Dr. Mary Fewster, of Alpington, talk on the subject of 'Church Silver'.

Now, this may sound like a very academic subject, which would be of limited interest to the 'man or woman in the street', but despite being the subject of her Doctoral thesis, in Mary's hands it becomes a living, glorious part of English history, in which we see the tiny chalices of the pre-Reformation church, where only the priests took the wine of the Mass, to the opulent gold flagons of Oxnead's Communion plate, financed by the wealthy Paston family, who lived locally. It is about not only the silver, but the folk who used it in the Norfolk of their day, some of them seeing the Church torn apart by the huge schism of the Reformation. It is fascinating stuff, handled in a masterly fashion.

Visitors are more than welcome, and the charge is only £2, to include tea or coffee.

It is the first such meeting of 2020, and there are many more delights in store!

COMMUNITY HUB CAFÉ STOKE HOLY CROSS CHURCH HALL

Our vision is for the church hall to become a thriving community meeting place for Stoke Holy Cross and beyond

WEDNESDAYS



(In school term time) 9.30 – 11 AM Please come and join us.

ALL ages are welcome!

Tea, coffee and cake served with a smile. Voluntary donations welcome but not necessary.

NEW MUMS

There will also be a dedicated area for infant feeding with information and breastfeeding peer support will be available, plus also advice from qualified healthcare professionals.

For more information:

admin@venta-group.org 01508 492305 www.venta-group. org Facebook:

Infant Feeding Café-Stoke Holy Cross

Mount Kilimanjaro

A t Stoke Holy Cross church, you may already be aware, we are working with TEARFUND to support some rural communities in Tanzania. Maybe you would like to help too? Most of the people who live in the diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro have a very different life to most of us who live in Norfolk. If you look at the figures below, you can see that extreme poverty is the reality for most families, and just providing the basics of life is often a real struggle.



70%	151	80%	40%
Of the population live on less than £1.45 a day - the UN measure of extreme poverty	Is Tanzania's position in the development index (out of 180 countries)	Of people in rural areas live in poverty	Of children are chronically malnourished

All through the Bible we see how much God cares for the poorest, most vulnerable people. Over and over, Jesus goes out of his way to help the poorest widow, or the disabled person who has had to beg for money to survive. When the earliest churches are beginning 2000 years ago, they all agreed that they must "remember the poor" (Galatians 2:10).

Tearfund's work in Mount Kilimanjaro region helps people to break free from poverty through a process of Church and Community Transformation, by helping them to understand and make better use of the skills and resources they may already have. It enables them to support not just their own families but often their communities too. When they share resources and skills, and discover their potential they see amazing change. God takes the little that they have and multiplies it!

Projects include keeping goats and chickens, and growing maize, beans and sunflower seed. The savings groups that are starting up mean that people can borrow a small amount to set up a farming project, or maybe buy a bike so they can take their produce to market.



They also set up self-help groups called Pamoja, where people can save small amounts of money together, giving them protection and support in times when they are struggling. Tearfund is helping the church to do what Jesus asks of us—to bring light to dark places, and hope for the future.

At our Café Church in January we had a representative from Tearfund come and talk to us about the work they are doing in Tanzania, as well as many other poor parts of the world. The photo shows Becky from Tearfund on the right at the service.

When we invited people at Café Church to think about helping, many responded to the needs in Tanzania and over £100 was raised. Stoke Holy Cross church has adopted this area of Tanzania as our overseas charity and our aim is to raise £3,000 a year for 3 years for them.

We have previously given support to Okunguru Church in Uganda for three years. It was

hugely encouraging to hear how lives were being transformed by biblical teaching on the best way to use what resources they already had. Many people's lives were dramatically changed through the process.

If you feel you would like to help you can find a form in the resources section of our website www.venta-group.org or you could send your donation addressed to the treasurer via the vicarage address on page 3.



Shrove Tuesday

his year Shrove Tuesday takes place on Tuesday 25 February. Shrove Tuesday is also known in some countries as Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) and in Great Britain is usually called Pancake Day.

Shrove Tuesday is actually the day before Ash Wednesday, which is the beginning of Lent. Traditionally it used to be a very solemn day. 'Shrove' comes from an old word 'shriven' which means going to confession and saying sorry for the things you have done wrong.

Gradually over the years, however, Shrove Tuesday changed into a day of using food up, which wouldn't be eaten in Lent, and generally a day of celebration. So Mardi Gras developed in some countries as a time of carnival and generally having fun.



In Great Britain there are different traditions around

the country, including pancake races. But, of course, it is a great day for making pancakes at home. A breakfast or tea time treat maybe - Enjoy! See below for a simple recipe.

Ash Wednesday

A sh Wednesday is the beginning of Lent and always falls 40 days before Easter (Sundays are not included in the count). On Ash Wednesday many Christians go to church and often have a sign of the cross put on their foreheads by their minister, as an outward symbol as a sign of repentance.

Lent is a time when Christians traditionally prepare for Easter and is considered to be a time of moderation. Many people give things up for Lent (quite often chocolate!) However, other people choose to do something special each day for Lent, like helping others in some way. If you would like to do something like this, charities like Tearfund often have ideas for activities for the 40 days of Lent.

A Simple Pancake Recipe from the BBC

Ingredients: 100g plain flour, 2 large eggs, 300ml milk, 1 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil plus a little extra for frying, lemon wedges (optional) and caster

sugar (optional) Put 100g plain flour, 2 large eggs, 300ml milk, 1 tbsp sunflower

or vegetable oil and a pinch of salt into a bowl or large jug, then whisk to a smooth batter.

Set aside for 30 mins to rest if you have time, or start cooking straight away.

Set a medium frying pan or crêpe pan over a medium heat and carefully wipe it with some oiled kitchen paper.

When hot, cook your pancakes for 1 min on each side until golden, keeping them warm in a low oven as you go.

Serve with lemon wedges and caster sugar, or your favourite filling. (our grandchildren love to have Maple Syrup or Nutella (or equivalent). (Just for a treat of course)

You can prepare them in advance too- Once cold, you can layer the pancakes between baking parchment, then wrap in cling film and freeze for up to 2 months.

The Greatest Man in History. (A comment found on You Tube)

He had no servants yet they called him Master. Had no degrees yet they called him Teacher. Had no medicines yet they called him Healer. Had no army yet Kings feared him. He won no military battles yet he conquered the world. He committed no crime yet they crucified him. He was buried in a tomb yet he lives today. His name is Jesus.

STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

Our next meeting will be held on

Thursday February 6th, 2020

at **1.30pm.** Why not come along and meet new friends in a very relaxed atmosphere. You will be made to feel very welcome.

If you would like any more information on what we do, please dont hesitate to contact our chairperson Carol Flugge on 01508 492132 or myself Liz Smith on 01508493245.

Our bingo dates for February are the **4th and 18th** - eyes down **1.30pm**

Carpet Bowls are the 11th and 25th - commence 1.30pm - cost for this is £2

allstars club

after school for 4-11s

Games Crafts Snacks Bible Stories, Videos & Songs

All Foundation-Year 6 children are welcome to join us at our after-school club, as well as any older helpers who would like to join in!

If you would like to come along or find out more, contact us on admin@venta-group.org, or 01508 492305

> Then Thursdays 3.30-4.45 at Stoke Church Hall 27th Feb 26th March 23rd April

SAVE THE DATE FOR SUMMER CLUB 2020! 27th - 29th July

The Venta group of churches www.venta-group.org

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Christmas Celebration at Dunston





wonderful evening was had by all in Dunston on Monday 23rd December as we gathered at the home of Bob and Sara Crawford for a great village get-together. There was lots of lovely food and drink provided by various residents, and we enjoyed some games and quizzes before joining in with some really hearty Christmas singing, and a mixture of readings – some based on the Christmas story, a funny Christmas poem, and extracts from Christmas diaries written by a WWII serviceman, then a blessing from Rob at the end. This was a lovely initiative and a great thing to repeat in some way next year. A big thank you to the Crawfords again, and to Gary Watson for getting it all started.



Quick Chocolate Brownies

As we approach the period of Lent, many people may give up sweets and chocolates. Having come across this recipe for really quick recipe for chocolate brownies in a fiction book, it seemed an appropriate time to share it, as a delicious treat before Lent. It works really well and is not too sweet either.

Ingredients

300g Nutella (or similar cheaper supermarket branded ones)

2 eggs (free range eggs work best for flavour)

60 g self raising flour

Method

- Put all the ingredients into a bowl and mix together until smooth.
- Spoon into 20 cm square greased baking tin.
- Bake in oven at 350 F (or 180 C) for 30 min or a bit less.
- Leave to cool on a wire rack; cut into squares when cold.
- Alternatively, you can use muffin/bun cases.
- If using muffin/bun cases, cook for around 10-15 min, until centres are baked through.
- Check to see if mixture is cooked by sticking a skewer in, which should come out clean.
- However, the buns also work well if they are slightly sticky in the middle.

Lent Wordsearch

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G	Т	D	L	Т	F	Ο	G	Μ	Ι	R	L	D	Н	В
N	Е	Ρ	Ο	С	Т	F	Ι	В	D	D	S	R	Ο	V
A	D	R	С	G	Н	L	V	Т	Е	Е	Ο	Н	S	А
E	Ν	Ι	Ο	L	Ο	G	Е	R	Ν	V	U	Н	Ι	L
S	D	Ρ	Н	Υ	Q	Μ	Ν	D	Е	Т	S	А	F	Ρ
E	L	А	С	Ρ	Ρ	Е	Е	S	S	В	R	Е	А	D
R	С	Ο	Υ	L	S	W	S	Ο	U	Т	В	Ρ	Т	Ρ
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ANGELS	FORGIVENESS	SERVICE
ASH	FORTY	SHROVE
BATTLE	GOD	STONES
BIBLE	JESUS	TEMPLE
BREAD	LENT	TEMPTATION
CHOCOLATE	LORD	TESTED
DAYS	NIGHTS	WEDNESDAY
DESERT	PANCAKES	WILDERNESS
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