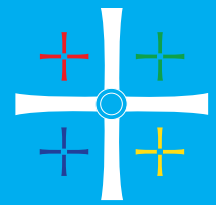


Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

AUGUST 2025

Caistor Cream Teas 2025



We will be serving Cream Teas at Caistor St Edmund Church
again this summer on

Sundays - August 17th, 24th & 31st 2025



Sept 7th 2025 - 2pm – 5pm

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There will be 'Songs and Praise' on Sept 7th at 5pm –
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Aaarrrrrrrr!

As I write, final preparations for Treasure Seekers Holiday Club are underway, hence the pirate greeting, and the somewhat unusual photo above. (I hate to disappoint, but this is for one month only – as much as I am enjoying the prospect of having hair for 3 days!)

As the name suggests, there is treasure to be found. I was very grateful to the person who first explained to me that that was what the cross on a treasure map meant, because I had always assumed that sign meant the treasure definitely wasn't there, but apparently it is the opposite.

It is a confusing symbol isn't it, the X? At the bottom of a card or note from a friend or family member, it's like a kiss - it means that they are sending us their love as they think of us, wish us a happy birthday, or whatever it might be.

Naturally I also assumed that was what it meant when I was at school, and my work would come back to me from my teacher often covered with these kisses, normally lots of big red ones all down one side. I was a little disappointed to learn that when you are at school, it means you have got something wrong, rather than that your teacher loves you. The fact that for a couple of years my Dad was my maths teacher didn't make this any easier for me.

Now that I knew this of course, I only got more confused with the treasure map. I had to learn that the cross is the place where the treasure is to be found. It's not the last place to look, but the first.

It was the same with going to vote the first time. I was at risk of doing the same thing as Baldrick in Blackadder, and putting a great big X next to my least favourite candidate, until somebody explained that the cross was a sign that that person was the one I was choosing to trust with my vote. The cross also marked the place on a contract where I could sign to say that I agreed to what was proposed.

I think by this point it is fairly obvious what I am getting at. The cross of Christ is God's amazing declaration of love for all of us; God says to each of us, "I love you." At the same time, like a good teacher, the cross is honest about our mistakes and our mess, and does something about them. The cross points towards the great treasures of love, forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus, and shows us where they are to be found. And the cross also challenges us – it asks us to choose Jesus, and commit to following him.

Next month my pirate photo will be gone, and my middle-aged hair will have returned, but the invitation will still be there, for the children we have welcomed at holiday club, and for all of you. The treasure will still be waiting to be found.

Until next month, me hearties

Rob

VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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

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Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches"

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Rob (492305) or Lyn (493422)

Caistor St Edmund

Jani (07557 774520) & Lia (494137)

ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Rob Baker (492305)

STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Karen (07761 076954)

email: karenp1963@hotmail.co.uk

STOKE HOLY CROSS COMMUNITY HALL BOOKINGS:

email: shc.communityhall@gmail.com

<https://www.shc-communityhall.com>

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

EILEEN LUSTED

30th June at Colney Wood

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.

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

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send by email to Rob to
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By 10th of this month please.

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What's new at Vintage Church?

Back in October we had the very first Vintage Church service in Stoke Holy Cross. Every month since we have met on the third Thursday of the month in the Church Hall for a couple of hours for an informal service aimed for the more advanced in years. We begin by singing a couple of traditional hymns before introducing a theme for the day and having a short bible reading. This is followed by a selection of activities which you can choose from linked with the theme often including a craft activity, quiz and a game. We then have a short reflection, time for prayer (often interactive) and final hymn before we all sit down together and enjoy tea, coffee and amazing cakes and savoury snacks made by Naomi.

Last month we had great fun with boats and water. We began by talking about our favourite and longest boat journeys, singing 'Eternal Father strong to save' and 'Tell me the stories of Jesus', and hearing Mark 6:45-56 from the bible. We then had fun making origami boats and seeing if they would float, answering quiz questions based on water, racing wind up cruise liners and seeing how many stones it took to sink a boat.

The bible reflection focused on Mark 6:50, 'Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid.' We talked about how Jesus didn't leave the disciples to struggle in their boat in the strong winds, but how he walked out to them by walking on water. And by doing this frightened them further because they did not recognise it was him. Amid their fear he said to them, 'take courage, it is I, do not be afraid' before joining them in the boat and the wind calming down. We then talked about how Jesus also steps out to us when we are frightened and facing difficult situations including ill health, financial difficulties, losing a loved one and relationship issues and will sit beside us as we go through these times bringing us inner peace. We concluded by asking whatever you are frightened of today, 'take courage and do not be afraid' and let Jesus walk out to you and join you in that place. Something which also applies to you today reading this.

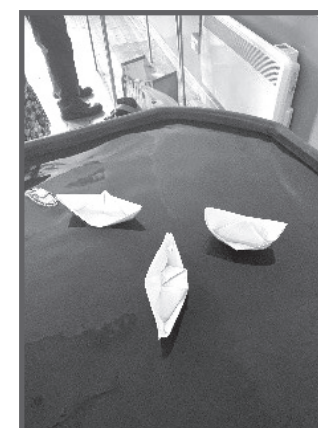
Our interactive prayers focussed on the second half of the reading (Mark 6:53-56) where Jesus healed many people who had been brought to him. We all had the opportunity to place a footprint in a bowl of water and ask God (in the quiet of our hearts) to wash his healing power over them. We concluded with our final hymn, 'Will your anchor hold' before enjoying tea, coffee and some beautiful vanilla and chocolate cupcakes, sausage rolls and cheese straws and a good old chat.

Vintage church will be meeting again on 21st August where we will be looking at the bible passage Jesus and the miraculous catch of fish (John 21:1-10). It would be lovely to see you there. All are welcome and particularly if you're struggling to hold on in the storms of life and you're wondering:

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, when the clouds unfold their wings of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

Because there is an anchor that keeps the soul steadfast.

Lyn & Kirsty



"We do like to be beside the seaside!"



On 23rd June, 38 members of our St George's Dementia Support Group embarked from Upper Stoke on our usual hired coach with special side lift for folk in wheelchairs, or indeed anyone who is less able to negotiate steps or stairs. Everyone looking forward to our daytrip to the popular and traditional seaside resort of Sheringham.

Just an hour or so later, we were in the main town car and coach park, immediately in front of the unique meeting point of Greater Anglia mainline train services and the heritage North Norfolk Railway. By this time, we were ready for some refreshment so everyone set out in small groups along the main street leading to the seafront, all accompanied by support volunteers and carers, in search of suitable cafes or coffee shops. On a bright sunny day, there were plenty of other sightseers wandering and browsing the many highly individual and attractive shops with their distinctive seaside flavour. The quest to quench our thirst found a number of us in the cafe area of the famous Sheringham Little Theatre, which has been offering various kinds of entertainment since around 1900 and is still going strong...

After refreshment and catching up with friends, there was still some time before the promised fish and chip lunch. It seemed a shame to come to Sheringham and not catch at least a glimpse of the sea? All agreed it was a good idea and pre-lunch exercise to wander down and peer over the wall separating the street from the beach. Despite the lovely sunny day, the bracing temperature and sea breeze meant extra layers of fleece, sweater or jacket were the order of the day. Luckily, most had seen the weather forecast and were well prepared and none of it reduced our positive mood.

The time was getting closer to the appointed one o'clock for lunch and we all soon returned up the main street to settle at the reserved tables of the Sheringham Trawler Restaurant. Everyone tucked into a plate of cod and chips, fried in traditional beef dripping, including a choice of sides, with those requiring gluten free also well catered for. To finish, a choice of tea or coffee. The friendly and efficient attention given by proprietor Andy May and his staff ensured everyone's enjoyment of their meal.

Afterwards there was just enough time for those who wanted to have a final look in some of the shops before boarding our coach for the comfortable trip home. A very pleasant daytrip indeed to one of the best seaside resorts on the East Coast...

(Grateful thanks to those who donated photographs for this item)

Future Diary Dates

28th July - Cafe Session

11th August - Cafe Session

25th August - NO CAFE (Summer Bank Holiday)

8th September - Coach Outing (destination to be advised)

Volunteers

We would welcome a few more volunteers to help us at St George's. What we offer is a really worthwhile and much valued support for folk living with dementia and their carers - along with a lot of smiles and laughter! The time commitment is normally just two Monday mornings per month. The only qualification is a desire to help others in return for a great deal of enjoyment and personal satisfaction. To find out more, either pop in on one of our cafe dates and see one of our committee members or phone 01508 494742 for an informal chat.



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Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Hymns and Pimm's at Arminghall on 6th July, and especially to the residents who joined in earlier in the week with tidying the churchyard, and getting the building ready. It was a lovely community occasion.

Our next big event at Arminghall is Harvest Sunday – 28th September in the afternoon.

Put the date in your diary now!



Coffee and chat

Want to meet others?

Come and join us and chat over a drink every Thursday morning except Vintage Church weeks (below)

10.30-11.30am at Stoke Church Hall

3rd & 24th July

7th & 28th August

4th & 25th September



Short communion service at 10am right before Coffee & Chat on 3rd July, 7th August, 4th September

Join us for Vintage Church:

17th July, 21st Aug, 18th Sept—see separate posters etc

www.venta-group.org | Facebook/YouTube "Venta Group of Churches" | lyn@venta-group.org | 01508 493422



Vintage Church



3rd Thursday of the month at 10.30 am
At Stoke Holy Cross church Hall
17th July 21st August 18th September
All welcome

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Summer Sundays in the Venta group of churches

Sunday 3rd August - 10.30am

Worship from New Wine on the big screen
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(come earlier for coffee)

Sunday 10th August

4pm Worship for all ages
in the Vicarage garden

5pm Annual Vicarage BBQ - all welcome,
book online at tinyurl.com/ventabbq2025
(at the Church Hall if really wet weather)

Sunday 17th August - 10.30am

Communion service for everyone
at Caistor St Edmund

Sunday 24th August - 4pm

Afternoon service for everyone at Dunston

Sunday 31st August - 10.30am

Communion service for everyone
at Arminghall

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Thursday mornings as usual – see our Coffee and Chat and Vintage Church posters on p7

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