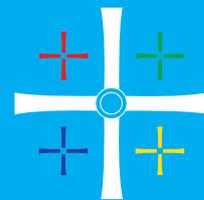


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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

JANUARY 2026

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NEW YEAR

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Happy New Year!

Some of you will have houses like mine, where the whole festive season has been heavily populated with people singing songs to get ready for Oliver! the musical at Framingham Earl at the end of February. Even if you are in a different (I didn't say fortunate) category, you might very well know the show, or the original 1960s film. Many of the songs are of course very famous, like "Food glorious food" or "Consider yourself".

Another one you might know is "I'd do anything": in fact, this was the name that the BBC also gave to the reality show where they were looking for new people to play Nancy and Oliver in the West End. In the song, the Artful Dodger and Oliver tell Nancy and Bet all the things that they would do to win their love, from painting their faces bright blue

(this was some time before Braveheart or the Smurfs or Avatar) to fighting with terrifying Bill Sikes, and many more things in between. At the end they sum it all up with "I'd do anything, anything for you!"

Recently I've been reflecting on a line from a modern song that we have sung a bit in church, and I have bumped into in other places as well: "Blessed are those... whose joy it is to give it all for Jesus, and for Him only." For a long time I have agreed in my head with the idea of giving it all for Jesus, and I have tried my best to do that in my life and ministry, but this song has reminded me of something I think I might have lost track of: to give it all for Jesus.

I think people try and give their all for lots of things. You might do it for family, or in your work, or for a cause bigger than yourself, and there is a lot of good in all of that. But in thinking about giving it all for Jesus, I've noticed the other things I can give it all for which look a bit like Jesus, but are actually something a little different. Maybe I think I want to give it all for Jesus, but in truth I want to look good, or at least feel good about myself. Maybe I want the bishop to think I am one of the successful vicars. Maybe I want as many people as possible to like me. Do you begin to see how I can make all of those look a bit like giving it all for Jesus?

In the end I need to give it all for Jesus not because there is blessing in doing that, which I believe there is, and certainly not because I have to do it to make him love me more, or even at all, because I don't. I need to do it because Jesus is worth it, and only Jesus; it is "for him only". There are lots of ways to start a New Year, and lots of resolutions we might struggle a little bit to keep. One of the simplest, but most life-changing, is to begin saying to Jesus "I'd do anything, anything for you."

Rob

VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches"
www.venta-group.org  @venta_group

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Rob (492305)

Caistor St Edmund

Jani (07557 774520) & Lia

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STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Karen (07761 076954)
email: karenp1963@hotmail.co.uk

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Would 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!

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

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Talking Rubbish

Did you make a new year's resolution this year? And if so, have you managed to keep it so far? I don't know about you, but I know I am not very good at keeping resolutions that I make. I may manage a few days if I am lucky before reverting back to my old ways. According to google the most common resolutions individuals make are linked with health and fitness, finance, learning, time with family, mental well-being, home improvements, personal appearance and health check-ups. Many of which are made after us examining our lives at the end of a year and wanting to change or improve certain aspects of it in a positive way.

As I have said generally I am not very good at keeping new year resolutions but one year about 8 years ago I made the resolution to reduce the amount of plastic I was using by half and reduce the amount of rubbish which was going to landfill by half, something which I managed to achieve and have kept up. I made this resolution as I was conscious of the impact plastic pollution and our overflowing landfill sites were making across the world.

However, thinking about it, I am not sure why I needed to wait until the new year to begin to do this as I could have started it whenever I first thought that I needed to do something about the single use plastic I was using and what I was throwing in the bin. And its this thought which made me think about how we often treat our spiritual lives the same way as we treat new years resolutions.

Over the last few weeks at church, we have been remembering Jesus' birth and in a few months' time at Easter we will be remembering Jesus' death and resurrection. And through his actions on the cross Jesus has paid the price for all our sins enabling us to receive his forgiveness if we turn to him, repent and turn from our old lives and begin a new life in him.

We do not need to wait for a special time or day to turn to him, but we can come to him any time and in any condition with whatever needs changing in our lives. Just as I didn't need to wait until January 1st to start reducing my plastic use, we don't need to wait for a special day to seek his help, his forgiveness, and his strength. Jesus is always ready, always present, always willing to walk with us—no resolutions or special timing needed.

With love and prayers for the new year

Kirsty

Years 5-11



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Church Hall

JANUARY
15th: Club Night
22nd: New Year, New Dreams
29th: Share-a-Skill

FEBRUARY
5th: Club Night and Quiz
12th: Throwback (Nostalgia Night)
19th: HALF TERM
26th: Club Night plus Tom

For more details contact:
Gary Watson on
gwatson@norwichyfc.co.uk

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Venta Group of Churches

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Launching the 2025 Christmas festivities

Christmas got off to a lovely festive start at the Caistor Church concert on Dec 10th with the Acappella singers delighting us all with a wonderful mix of traditional seasonal songs and carols, finishing with more humorous songs like Rudolph the Red Nosed reindeer.



The church was bursting at the seams with an extremely appreciative audience. Thank you to Acappella for your

lovely singing and thank you to everyone who helped make and serve refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies.

The raffle raised £253 for the Big C and tickets sales of £870 will be divided between the Big C and church funds.

Thank you everyone for your generous support.



Recent Events - St George's Dementia Support Group



On the 1st December we held our now traditional Christmas Lunch at the Old Feathers in Framingham Pigot. Attended by a record number of just over sixty folk, everyone tucked in to a wonderful 2-course lunch, pre-chosen from a wonderful menu selection of customary roast turkey or a choice of other delicious meat, fish and vegetarian main courses. Rounded off by their individual prior selection of second course, inevitably including Christmas pudding plus several alternative options of mouth-watering desserts. Finally, some tea or coffee before everyone made their way home, after offering our thanks to the friendly, efficient and hard-working team at the Old Feathers which always makes our Annual Lunch so thoroughly memorable and enjoyable.

Just one week later, on Monday 8th December, we all came together in St George's Hall for our also now traditional end-of-year party, this time to mark our final session of 2025. Committee members, volunteers and other willing helpers had come together the night before to decorate the Hall and transform it into a colourful and festive space for our celebration. Next day, many of those same people worked hard to make the morning a success - providing, organising and serving a plentiful supply of sausage rolls, sandwiches, mince pies, cakes and more, including a varied selection of hot and cold drinks.

We were well entertained with a timeless selection of melodies played and sung by local performer Julie Dawn, which soon got many of her audience singing along and even having a dance on the limited floor space! In the quieter moments, there was time to mardle, share some reminiscences and funny tales, before helping everyone on their way with good wishes for a Happy Christmas while expressing the hope to meet again in January.

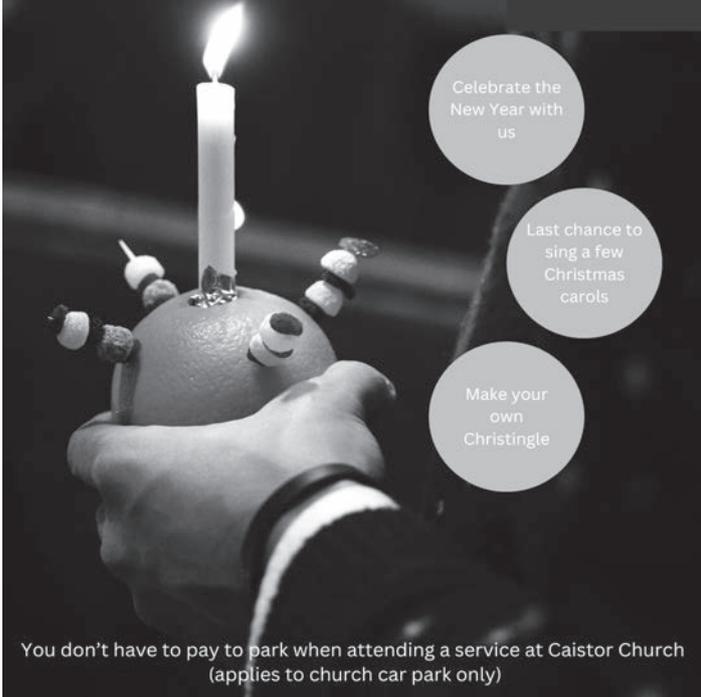
Let's do it all again in 2026!

(N.B. The next St George's Dementia Cafe dates for January 2026 are Mondays 12th and 26th)



CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

Sunday 4th January 2026
10:30am at Caistor St Edmund



Celebrate the New Year with us

Last chance to sing a few Christmas carols

Make your own Christingle

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Tickets £5 on the door (includes tea or coffee)

Doors open at 6.45pm
Film starts 7.30pm



All Invited in 2026: *everyone's welcome*

Sundays from 3.30 - 5pm

**11th Jan, 8th Feb, 8th March
at the Church Hall**

**25th Jan, 22nd Feb, 22nd March
at the Vicarage**

**Easter Special on
Good Friday 3rd April**

Activities, crafts and games for all ages
Space to reflect and time to chat

Community Pantry: help yourself or contribute

Pop in for cakes, drinks and chat,
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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

15th January (no Coffee and Chat or Communion on 1st Jan)

5th & 19th February

5th & 19th March



**Short communion service at 10am
right before Coffee & Chat
on 5th February & 5th March**

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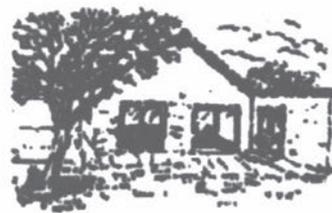
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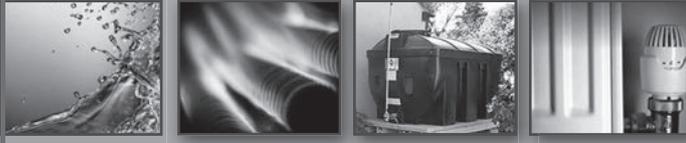
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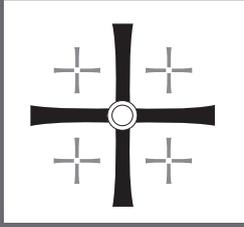
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JANUARY 2026

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

Sunday mornings at 10.30am

- 4th Jan **Christingle Service** at Caistor St Edmund
- 11th Jan **Morning Worship** with Communion & children's group at Stoke
- 18th Jan **Communion Service** with Hope into Action at Caistor
- 25th Jan **Traditional Communion** with the Bishop of Thetford at Stoke

Sunday afternoons in January

- 11th Jan **All Invited** at the Church Hall from 3.30-5pm — Food, fun and faith for all ages
- 25th Jan **All Invited** at the Vicarage

Midweek gatherings in January

No Communion or Coffee & Chat on New Year's Day

- 7th Jan 7.30pm at the Church Hall **Fish & Chips & Prayer**
(Please email Rob with your order by Monday 5th)
- 15th Jan 10.30am at the Hall **Coffee and Chat**

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