# Free for All









THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

















#### A great start to Christmas in the Venta group of churches

We had such fun on 8th and 15th December with our Christmas All Invited at the hall, with loads of great activities, a Christmas story, and yummy food for everyone, then our first 2 carol services at Stoke and Arminghall the week after, with superb reading and singing from the Stoke school singers in the morning, and our Venta group choir in the evening. Special thanks to C. from the primary school choir who even came and sang on her birthday. Look out on our Facebook for lots more pictures of other great Christmas things that haven't quite happened before our print deadline!













# R.B. COPPING FUNERAL SERVICE

Independent Family Funerals Directors Since 1935

For Personal Attention with Dignity and Respect

Private Chapels of Rest

Memorials & floral tributes supplied

Pre-paid funeral plans available



www.coppingfunerals.co.uk







125 The Street, Poringland, Norwich NR14 7RP 01508 494434

56 Langley Road, Chedgrave, nr Loddon NR14 6HE 01508 521159

FREE tiles from our tile range with every full installation

# COOPERS

Bathroom and Wetrooms Ltd.

- Fn-suites
- Shower Rooms
- Bathrooms to Suit Your Needs
- Level Access Walk in Shower Rooms
- Crown Kitchens
- Supply Only or Full Installation
- Tiling, Plastering, Electrics, Plumbing
- Small Building Work
- All Work Guaranteed
- Grant Work Undetaken
- Less Abled Wet Room

01603 400134

OPEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9AM-3PM & SATURDAY 10AM-3PM OPEN SUNDAY BY APPOINTMENT ONLY



Visit our Showroom 1 Taverham Nursery Centre, Fir Covert Road, Taverham, Norwich NR8 6HT www.coopersbathroomsandwetrooms.co.uk





get a bit confused at this time of year. I am writing this before Christmas, but you are reading it after Christmas, so I have to remember to talk about Christmas as if it has already happened. Also, you are probably reading it in January, so I have to remember to say Happy New Year and not Happy Christmas, even though most of our Christmas things in the churches, let alone Christmas Day, haven't even happened yet. It's probably a bit easier from your perspective, a few weeks down the line, when Christmas has definitely been and the New Year is just beginning.

All this trying to remember whether it has been Christmas or not has got me thinking about the fact that, of course, Christmas has come. It doesn't change from one year to the next, whether it is December, or January, or even June. As I was saying to a friend recently, we can't be sure when Jesus was born – Christmas is more like his "official birthday"

but we do know that he was. It happened, once and for all, and whatever we say every year about waiting for Christmas, or even looking forward to Jesus's birth, actually we are talking about something that has happened already. I'm writing this in the middle of December, but that's still after Christmas.

When I was preaching a couple of weeks ago, I was thinking out loud about how all the build-up to Christmas – which makes it difficult for different people for various reasons – can also cause us to lose sight of how suddenly Christmas appeared. Lots of people had expected it for a long time, but it was still such a surprise. You spot it in the appearance of the angels to the shepherds: "Suddenly" they are there. God had done this extraordinary thing, and it was up to everyone who saw and heard it to decide what to do about it.

And that's still where you and I all are today. We are suddenly confronted with the truth of what God has done, and we have to decide what to do about it. Often what happens is that God is already at work in people's lives, perhaps almost without being noticed, and then a moment comes where everything happens very suddenly. Like the new birth of Jesus to Mary and Joseph, people experience new birth into faith in Jesus by the Holy Spirit. A story that was once just for Christmastime becomes the thing that we live for, and by, every single day. The same Jesus who was born into the chaos of a busy Middle Eastern home comes to live in our hearts.

It's a moment in someone's life which changes everything, forever, and replaces any confusion about whether or not Christmas has happened yet with the glorious certainty that God has come near, and that everything has changed. It's an invitation which God makes constantly, from Christmas to New Year and at every time in between, as he shows us what Jesus has done for us, and invites us to believe.

# Happy New Year, everyone.



#### 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, 8 Mill Green, Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8PB Lyn@venta-group.org 01508 493422

#### **CURATE**

Kirsty Long, 1 Ponsonby Way, Poringland, NR14 7FJ kirstylong204@gmail.com 07878 047289, 01508 830368

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

#### **CHURCHWARDENS**

**Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston** Viv (493438) & Andy (07777 675193)

#### Arminghall

Rob (492305) or Lyn (493422)

**Caistor St Edmund** Jani (493572) & 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 PAVILION BOOKINGS:

Dan Ward (Parish clerk) 07563 044849

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

#### 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**

#### **CECIL SIMPER**

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December

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

ventafree4all@outlook.com

By 10<sup>th</sup> of this month please.



Louise Cartwright (M.Ost),
Professional Osteopath

Registered with The General Osteopathic Council, Insured with the Institute of Osteopathy and Federation of Holistic Therapists.

For the treatment of Neck, Back and Joint pain, Sports injuries and Rehabilitation

Rookery Park Golf Club, Beccles Rd, Carlton Colville, NR33 8HJ. Wednesday and Friday

Please book online at amyholmesosteopath.co.uk

07876255168 | louisec214@msn.com



#### ANCHORAGE SWIMMING POOL AND TENNIS COURT

Indoor Swimming Pool and Tennis Court
In Upper Stoke Holy Cross
For your health, fitness and leisure

The indoor pool is lovely and warm at a constant 31 degrees
With fully private half hour slots
Available everyday from 6am until 10pm

The Tennis Court is available to book by the hour.

Call 07519 507435

For Details and To Book Email: info@anchorage-pool.co.uk

www.anchorage-pool.com



S & C Window Repairs

Free estimates, no call out charge Local independent business

Repairs to double glazed windows, doors and conservatories

Steamed up windows, broken handles, hinges, gasket, plus cat flaps, door panels and more...

01603 520136 | 0800 1601932

sandcwindows@gmail.com

www.sandcwindows.co.uk



www.mrchimney4u.co.uk

**GUILD OF MASTER CHIMNEY SWEEPS MEMBER** 

I OFFER A PROFESSIONAL, CLEAN AND FRIENDLY SERVICE/ADVICE

Wood burners • Multi-fuel stoves • Open fires Inset stoves • Inglenook Fires • Aga/Rayburn Gas/Oil • Biomass • Certificates issued



info@mrchimney4u.co.uk

01508 493219 or 07835 757528





## Professional Website Design

Plus Computer Support, Help and Training Services
PSLWeb.co.uk 01508 491622

PC ASSIST @ HOME QUALITY COMPUTER REPAIR SERVICE www.pcassistonline.co.uk 01508 471459

# A hopeful New Year

"We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year" we may have heard sung or even sung it ourselves recently. However, this year I seem to be more aware than most that it won't be a happy New Year for some of our residents. As we enter 2025, some of you may have health concerns – for yourself or loved ones; some of you may have financial worries – again that maybe you or a member of your wider family or neighbours; some may not be looking forward to returning to work because of the uncertainties and stress it brings to you and some of you may have had a different Christmas from previous happier ones and am finding it hard to think of 2025 as being a year you're looking forward to, never mind being happy in. Thinking about my circumstances can bring me down but what I am learning helps me in challenging times, is to be hopeful.

I have hope that although there are many things I can't do Jesus can and is with me. The Magi, wise men, who travelled from the east to visit Jesus must have wondered as they travelled along, "how much longer have we got". "That star is it going to stop"? What will we find when it does? A palace, fit for a king? The Magi first went to the capital city of the Jewish people, they were after all looking for the king of the Jews. Herod then directed them after consulting with the Jewish religious leaders, to another place, Bethlehem. The Magi kept going because they were hoping to find the King of the Jews. They must have been quite disappointed when he wasn't in a palace but a house where animals lived too. I wonder how they felt leaving expensive gifts to a family who were very poor. Were they hoping they had got it right? This child would be King of the Jews. This family's circumstances would change. The Jewish nation would be freer.

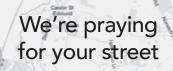
The circumstances I'm currently in may not give me much hope but just as the Magi found the strength and still carried on their journey from the first palace and found Jesus, so can I. Like the Magi I/we need to keep looking up, praying to God, to hold onto the hope, he can be found and he'll get us through it, and it won't last forever. Alternatively, the circumstances may look hopeful, like the Magi thought in entering King Herod's residence, but actually it didn't turn out to be the right place. This year may look promising but actually be a disappointment and not happy. I can still be hopeful however because Jesus was found in the middle of the mess of life. In a poor family. Not in a palace but a home shared with animals. The words of the carol O little town of Bethlehem still apply: where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in. I believe Jesus is my living hope and he can be yours too whether this year is looking or will be happy or not for you.

I wish you a hopeful New Year.

# Lyn

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1 verses 3-5



Did you know that whether you live in the Stoke, Dunston, Caistor or Arminghall, a group of people pray regularly for you and your street?

We also pray for other activities which take place during the week like Sparklers, Embers, the Dementia Support Group, and Thursday mornings

in the Church Hall; and for local organisations like the pre-school, school and parish councils, and other things close to home, as well as for global news and the wider church.

If you'd like us to pray for you, your family, or your village organisation, please get in touch. You're also really welcome to join us to pray on Zoom – contact Rob, Lyn or Kirsty (p3)

Tuesday to Friday at 9am & Saturdays at 10am (Celtic prayer)

We'll also be meeting in person to pray monthly in the Church Hall in the New Year, all at 7.30pm 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 5<sup>th</sup> March 2<sup>nd</sup> April

We're so encouraged by all the ways God has been answering our prayers over the 4 years we've been doing this.



# CAISTOR ST EDMUND Poppy Appeal 2024

Thank you to the two people, who did the house to house poppy collection in Caistor in 2024, your help again is greatly appreciated.

The total was £231.90.

The total amount for this area which has been sent to the RBL was £930.64 plus a donation for the wreath on the Caistor War Memorial.

Last year the total was £1,272.01. None of the above amounts include any money which has been donated using the QR reader, unfortunately there is no individual total for each collecting box. The RBL will inform me at a later date of the total from the QR code for the Caistor area, so this will increase the total amount donated.

Graham Ford Area Organiser

# St George's Hall Dementia Support Group

We have an 'open door' policy and are always pleased for anyone living with dementia and their carers to come and join us. There are no pre-requirements or fees, simply come to one of our twice-monthly sessions held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays (except public holidays) at St George's Hall in Upper Stoke from 10am until 12pm midday. Refreshments are available at low cost



We offer a variable range of different activities designed to stimulate, support and entertain, including games, puzzles, crafts, live music, reminiscence and more. Additionally, there are usually two subsidised coach outings and an annual Christmas lunch every year. During most sessions, we also run Carer's Meetings to offer some helpful support to carers, occasionally including specialist guest speakers, while our volunteers undertake separate supervision, care and entertainment of those living with dementia.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> November, the St George's Group was kindly presented with a generous donation of £500 by local District Councillor John Overton from the proceeds of social activities run at Poringland Community Centre.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, we held our Annual Christmas Lunch at the Old Feathers Restaurant in Framingham Pigot. The choice and quality of food, plus standards of service, were excellent as always. It was very well attended with over 50 folk and run exclusively for St George's Dementia Support Group. The hubbub of lively conversation and laughter confirmed an enjoyable event.







Our initial dates for 2025 are: January - Monday 13th and Monday 27th & February - Monday 10th and Monday 24th

A full list of 2025 diary dates is available. The programme of planned activities and events will be added as the year progresses.

If St George's Support Group is of interest to you, please feel free to walk in to one of our sessions to sample what goes on - we'll do the rest.

We also welcome new volunteers, both male and female, if you are interested in giving some of your time in support of this thoroughly worthwhile and enjoyable activity.

For further details, please call: 01508 493661, 01508 494742 or 01508 495580 Website: http://www.st-georges-dementia-support-group.uk

St George's Support Group held its End-of-Year Party as the customary final event for 2024 on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

The Hall rocked and reverberated, with plenty of dancing and singalong to the excellent live music provided as usual by local entertainer Stewart Hull. After which committee members and other helpers kindly served everyone with a great selection of tasty savouries, cakes and drink. Safe to say that a genuinely good time was had by all!





Our next dates are Mondays 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and we look forward to welcoming existing and new folk to our cafe sessions.



We wish you all a very Happy Christmas...





3rd Thursday of the month at 10.30 am At Stoke Holy Cross church Hall 16th Jan 20th Feb 20th March All welcome





# All Invited in 2025: everyone's Welcome

Sundays from 3.30-5pm

12th & 16th Jan, 9th & 23rd Feb, 9th & 23rd March
all at Stoke Church Hall

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, or stay and eat together

++

Venta Group of Churches: Stoke Holy Cross, Caistor and Arminghall

rob@venta-group.org





# RESKILL, RETRAIN, GAIN A QUALIFICATION



Looking to progress in your current role or seek a new career? Norfolk Adult Learning offer a wide range of opportunities including:-

Skills for Work | ESOL | English and Maths Personal Finance | Early Years | Apprenticeships Digital & IT | GCSE | Access to Higher Education Health & Social Care | Support with Wellbeing **Accounting | Teaching Assistant | Construction** 

Build confidence in your abilities and realise your potential!

Many of these courses are FREE with options to learn online or in a local venue.

Visit the website or scan the QR code to find out more

Find out more: www.norfolk.gov.uk/adultlearning 0344 800 8020 (option 5)







(ii) @norfolk\_adult\_learning



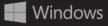
Bailiwick IT Ltd.

PC or Mac Running Slow? Got A Virus? Wi-Fi help?

For a friendly, professional & prompt IT service, please call Joe Richards on 01953 718421 & 07928 326008

Email: help@bailiwickit.com Website: www.bailiwickit.com













# Speciality Nights









Curry Night • Fish & Steak Night • From the Grill Night • Sunday Carvery Meals on wheels, Takeaway Service, Parties

Bungay Road, Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7NB







## **Surlingham Timeshare Swimming Pool**

NR14 7AL

Are you interested in having an indoor heated swimming pool exclusively for yourself, family and friends?

If so please contact

Tim Mack (01508) 538206

info@surlinghamtimesharepool.co.uk or go to

www.surlinghamtimesharepool.co.uk

3, 6 or 12 monthly bookings for weekly slots available, "also one offs"

Open seven days a week 6.30am-10.00pm We are 6 miles SE of Norwich between Surlingham and Rockland St. Mary

### **WAVENEY**

STOVES, FIREPLACES & RANGE COOKERS

Range Cookers; Oil, Electric, Gas & Woodfired. Multifuel, Woodburning & Electric Stoves, Electric Fires, Fireplace Surrounds

01508 518863

Opening Hours: Tues - Sat 9.30 - 4.30 123a Old Yarmouth Road, Ellingham, NR35 2PG

www.waveneystoves.co.uk





**Double Glazing Repairs** Replacement Sealed Units Window Hinges, Handles Door locks • Cat flaps

www cooper home services.co.uk 01508 480551



# **JANUARY 2025**

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

#### Tuesday to Saturday mornings from 7th January

9am Tue-Fri

Zoom—contact us to join

Prayer meeting

10am Sat

with Bible reading

#### Sunday mornings at Caistor St Edmund

5<sup>th</sup> January

9.30am

Praise & Worship

19<sup>th</sup> January

10.30am

All Age Communion Service with Hope into Action

#### Morning Worship at Stoke Holy Cross at 10.30am

5<sup>th</sup> January

Morning Worship with children's group

12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> Jan

Morning Worship with communion and children's group

#### Sunday afternoons in January

12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> Jan

All invited at the Church Hall from 3.30-5pm—

Food, fun and faith for all ages

#### Midweek gatherings in November

2<sup>nd</sup> January

10am at the Hall

Communion

followed at 10.30am by

**Coffee and Chat** 

8<sup>th</sup> January

7.30pm at the Hall

**Evening Prayer meeting—new for 2025!** 

9<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 16<sup>th</sup> January 10am at the Hall 10.30am at the Hall Coffee and Chat Vintage Church

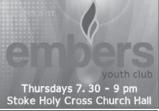
# Caistor church building is open about 10-4 daily - space to reflect, and to pray





Craft, fun, singing and friendship for 0-4s and their parents, grandparents and carers.

Email cathrynbaker@gmail.com or find us on Facebook



us Sign up for email

Every week in school term—just drop in and join us

www.venta-group.org | Facebook/YouTube "Venta Group of Churches" | admin@venta-group.org | 01508 492305









# For quality of life, get quality hearing advice







# Garden Landscape Services Limited

Fencing
Paving
Turfing
Hedge cutting

(01508) 807567
Decking

07749 130 872
Planting
enquiries@alsonline.co.uk



www.GLSOnline.co.uk