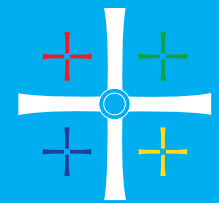


# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

JULY 2025

*Thank you to everyone who joined in  
with our Open Gardens this year!*



It was lovely to see so many of you visiting the hall and the gardens this year, enjoying tea and cake, and being part of All Invited on the Sunday afternoon. Thank you to everyone who helped organise the event, opened their gardens, helped out at the hall in any way, and much more. Thanks especially to Holly, aged 7, who drew this lovely picture of one of the Open Gardens, which helped raise a little bit more of the £1200 or so which people generously gave towards the church building fund and the St Martin's housing trust.

ARMINGHALL, CAISTOR ST EDMUND, STOKE HOLY CROSS with DUNSTON



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If you haven't given up watching the news yet, you might well have the feeling that things continue to get worse, rather than better. In June, as I write this, Iran has been attacked by Israel, and retaliated with numerous missile attacks, and any sign of the hostilities easing seems far away. The terrible situation in Gaza is ongoing, and where once America's influence would have been a calming one, the White House has become... a bit unpredictable.

When I was the same age my teenagers are now, there seemed to be a bit more optimism. Maybe it was just the song, but somehow we were convinced that "things can only get better." For my parents' or grandparents' generations, brought up with the experience of World War II, and the threat of the Cold War, I am sure things really were better for a long time.

Now, we're not so sure, are we? Since Covid, then the cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine and now the Middle East, with the fear about how far it might spread, things have combined to make it feel like the opposite. It raises lots of questions for me, not least as a parent, as Cathryn and I wonder what we would like our children to be reading on the internet, or how much we should talk about what is going on.

All of this can leave us feeling entirely despondent, and wondering whether there is any hope at all. But the good news of Jesus is that there is always hope, because Christian hope is rooted in something bigger than even the most significant global events of our lifetimes: it is rooted in God, and in eternity.

Christian hope gives us something to look forward to. It doesn't necessarily mean that some of the immediate things tomorrow will be better than today, but it does mean, looking further forward, that in the end, everything really will be well. Jesus really will return for his people, and make everything new, and "there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

At the time our oldest son was born, the beginnings of what would become the global financial crisis meant that it already seemed like things might have stopped getting better. Any hope at all would have been quite surprising. But at exactly that time, as we prepared to welcome him into the world, I was reading a book called *Surprised by Hope*. It explained again how, for all of us who follow Jesus, hope may be surprising, but it is eternal, and it is true.

In the midst of such uncertainty in the world around us, may all of you be surprised again by God's eternal hope.

Rob

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](mailto:ventafree4all@outlook.com)

**FOR ALL  
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send by email to Rob to  
[ventafree4all@outlook.com](mailto:ventafree4all@outlook.com)  
By 10<sup>th</sup> of this month please.

#### VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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For all administrative enquiries please contact [admin@venta-group.org](mailto:admin@venta-group.org)

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#### CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston  
Viv (493438)

#### Arminghall

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](mailto:karenp1963@hotmail.co.uk)

#### STOKE HOLY CROSS COMMUNITY HALL BOOKINGS:

email: [shc.communityhall@gmail.com](mailto: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.

#### FUNERALS

##### MARK PECK

10<sup>th</sup> June at Colney

##### JOHN PITCHFORD

11<sup>th</sup> June at Caistor St Edmund

##### EILEEN LUSTED

30<sup>th</sup> June at Colney

#### BURIAL

##### GILLIAN MARTIN

14<sup>th</sup> June at Stoke Holy Cross

#### BURIALS OF ASHES

##### JANET CHEESEMAN

27<sup>th</sup> May at Stoke Holy Cross

##### MARGARET FISCHER

12<sup>th</sup> June at Dunston

##### NEIL MOORE

17<sup>th</sup> June 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.

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## A few more pics from our Open Garden event...



All Invited in 2025:  
everyone's welcome

Sundays from 3.30-5pm

13<sup>th</sup> July at Stoke Church Hall  
and a special event on 10<sup>th</sup> August!

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,  
or stay and eat together

Venta Group of Churches: Stoke Holy Cross,  
Caistor and Arminghall | [rob@venta-group.org](mailto:rob@venta-group.org)



Everyone is welcome to  
join us at All Invited:



Here are a few  
pictures from a  
recent Sunday  
afternoon.

"Maybe we'll  
see you next  
time!"



## STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

*Are you bored? Are you lonely? We have the solution for you. Come and join our over 55's club.*

We meet on the first Thursday of every month commencing on 3<sup>rd</sup> July at 1.00/1.30.

Meet like minded people from all walks of life who will be extremely interested in learning all about you.

Come and have a chat to put the world to rights over a nice cup of tea or coffee and of course biscuits.

We also meet on alternate Thursdays for Bingo, eyes down at 1.30 (10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July).

On the remaining Thursdays we have games e.g. cards, scrabble, dominoes etc. starting at 1.30 (17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July).

If you have a game that you like to play bring it with you as we do love to learn new things.

Everybody is extremely friendly and will welcome you with open arms so just take that first step through the door of St. Georges Hall, Upper Stoke and find a whole new group of friends.

*We really look forward to seeing you.*

## Dates for Caistor Cream Teas 2025



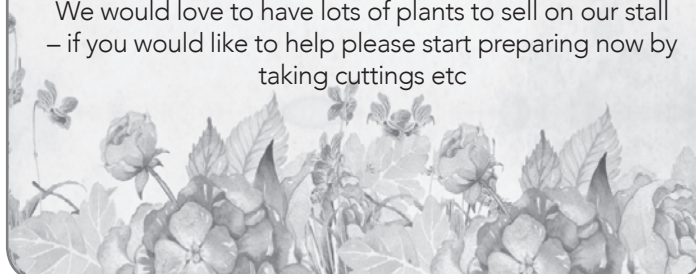
We are planning to serve Cream Teas at Caistor St Edmund Church again this summer - book these dates!

**Sundays - August 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> 2025**



**Sept 7<sup>th</sup> 2025 - 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



## 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**

## 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

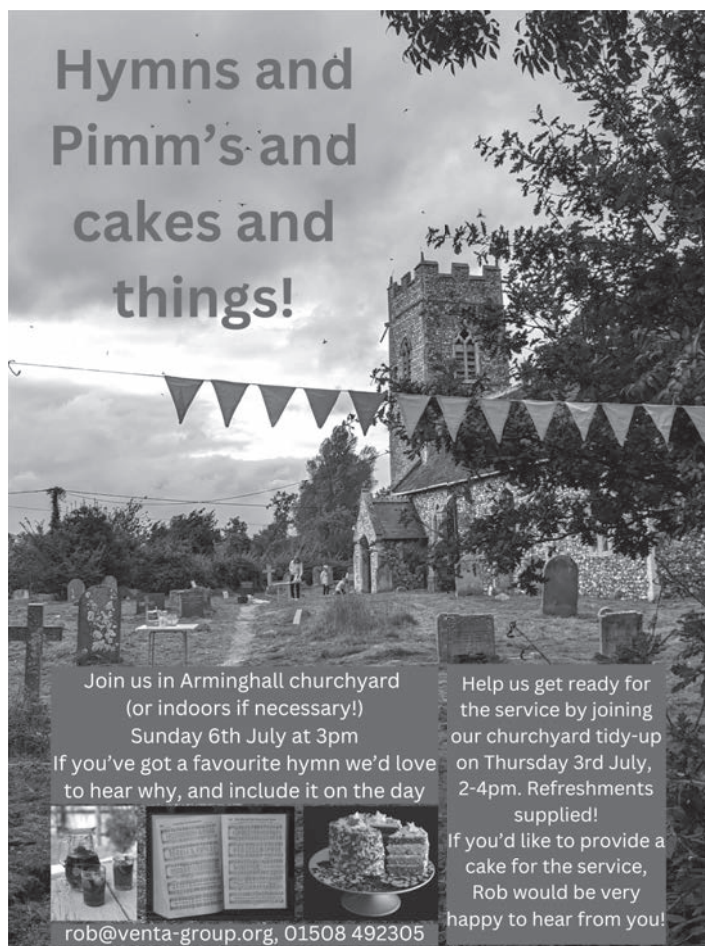
**Join us for Vintage Church:**

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





## Hymns and Pimm's and cakes and things!



Join us in Arminghall churchyard  
(or indoors if necessary!)  
Sunday 6th July at 3pm  
If you've got a favourite hymn we'd love  
to hear why, and include it on the day



rob@venta-group.org, 01508 492305

Help us get ready for  
the service by joining  
our churchyard tidy-up  
on Thursday 3rd July,  
2-4pm. Refreshments  
supplied!  
If you'd like to provide a  
cake for the service,  
Rob would be very  
happy to hear from you!

## Stoke Holy Cross Community Cafe

**OPEN**



The Community Cafe is open for tea, coffee, cold drinks and refreshments on Saturday 31st May and Saturday 5th July from 2pm to 4pm at Stoke Holy Cross Community Hall on Long Lane

Come along, bring friends and family, come rain or sunshine!

We look forward to meeting you.

Card and cash accepted.

## Sparklers

Toys, crafts, songs and new friends for  
0-4s and their parents, grandparents and  
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Every Tuesday morning in school term  
from 10-11am at Stoke Church Hall

Find out more at [www.venta-group.org](http://www.venta-group.org)



'Sparklers Stoke Holy Cross'

[cathryn baker@gmail.com](mailto:cathryn baker@gmail.com)

or call 01508 492305

YEARS 5-11

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**Thursdays 7.30 - 9 pm**  
**Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall**

5th: Theme Night: Kingdom Come

12th: Quiz and Chips

19th: Water Games @ The Park

26th: Club Night & TRACKS

July

3rd: Wide Game @ Dunston

10th: Theme Night: Fame

17th: Sports and Picnic @ The Park

For more details contact:

Gary Watson on [gwatson@norwichyfc.co.uk](mailto:gwatson@norwichyfc.co.uk)



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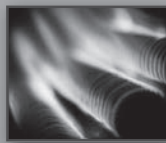
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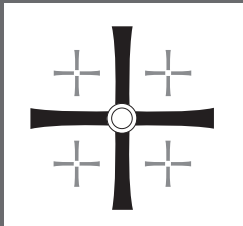


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# JULY 2025

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

*Join us to pray in person and online in July!*

**8.30am in person on Tuesdays (more formal morning prayer)**

1<sup>st</sup> July Church Hall      8<sup>th</sup> July Caistor      15<sup>th</sup> July St George's Hall      22<sup>nd</sup> July Arminghall

**6.30pm informal prayer online every Sunday in July** — contact us for connection details

## *Sunday mornings at Caistor St Edmund*

6<sup>th</sup> July, 9.30am      Praise & Worship  
20<sup>th</sup> July, 9.30am      Holy Communion

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

6<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> July      Morning Worship with children's group  
13<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> July      Morning Worship with communion and children's group

## *Sunday afternoons in July*

6<sup>th</sup> July      Hymns and Pimms at Arminghall, 3pm  
13<sup>th</sup> July      All invited at the Church Hall from 3.30-5pm—  
Food, fun and faith for all ages

## *Midweek gatherings in July*

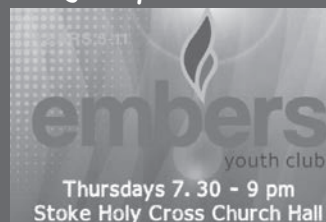
3 <sup>rd</sup> July	10am at the Hall followed at 10.30am by	Communion Coffee and Chat
9 <sup>th</sup> July	7.30pm at the Church Hall	Time to pray together
17 <sup>th</sup> July	10.30am at the Hall	Vintage Church
24 <sup>th</sup> July	10.30am at the Hall	Coffee and Chat

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



## Sparklers

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