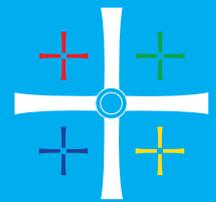


# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

MARCH 2026



## Come and see us in March!

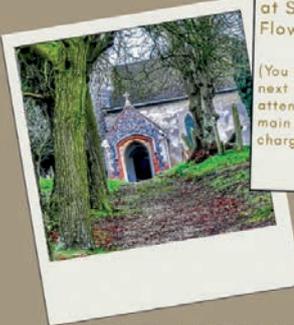


There are lots of ways you can join in with our churches week in, week out, but we'd especially like to invite you to join us for our Wednesday Lent sessions, held jointly with the churches in Poringland, and to our services on Mothering Sunday or Mother's Day or whatever your name for it might be, which is Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March....



Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March  
9.30am Holy Communion  
at Caistor St Edmund  
10.30am Worship for all ages  
at Stoke Holy Cross  
Flowers for all the ladies!

(You don't have to pay for parking next to Caistor Church when attending a service. Parking in the main Roman town car park is still chargeable.)



### JOIN US

### FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY

Everyone's welcome to celebrate with us, whatever it means to you.

Lent 2026



Lent Reflections at 12pm, with lunch from 12.30  
25<sup>th</sup> Feb at Poringland Parish Church  
4<sup>th</sup> March at Poringland Catholic Church  
11<sup>th</sup> March at St George's Hall  
18<sup>th</sup> March at Fram Earl Methodist Church  
25<sup>th</sup> March at St George's Hall

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## Hello everyone

At the beginning of February, Cathryn and I started telling people around the churches and the wider community that we will be moving in the summer, because I have been appointed to a new post in two churches in and around Swaffham.

I expect there will be a chance to say a bit more about this in a future Free for All, and certainly an opportunity, for anyone who wants to, to say goodbye once July comes, but for now I thought I would write about something I have found myself doing as part of the process. You see, for their magazine (because all churches seem to have a magazine!) I have been writing a little paragraph about myself and the rest of

the family so they can get a sense of who we are, ahead of us arriving.

I wrote about 200 words, and it could have been much more. This is the sort of thing you might have done yourself, of course, on a job or university application, or written about a friend in a reference that they needed for themselves. You might have found yourself asking what to write. Of all the things you could say, what is relevant to this situation? What is an honest reflection of the person? How do I sum up all of that appropriately in just a paragraph? Big questions.

Over the last few years I have spent a lot of time reading over a chunk of the beginning of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, even trying to memorise all of it, only partly successfully! It's a bit longer than the biography paragraph I've been writing, but about the same as these articles which I write every month. In this passage he writes something like a biography of the people he is writing to, but rather than concentrate on where they all come from or what they have all done, he focuses on who they are because of what Jesus has done for them.

I often describe reading these verses as like a mountaintop experience – and not just because I am distracted by the Winter Olympics. Paul reminds the Ephesians that they are holy, faithful, blessed, chosen, blameless, adopted, given grace, redeemed, forgiven, included, sealed, guaranteed an inheritance – and on it goes. If you are anything like me, you will find it completely overwhelming that anyone else, and especially God himself, would look at you in that way. Maybe you think that you can't possibly be considered holy or blameless because of all the mistakes you make every day. Maybe you have been hurt by rejection, in a relationship, or at work, or back in childhood, and couldn't imagine that anyone would choose or include you. Maybe you like the idea of this mountaintop experience, but in all honesty you feel like you're stuck at the bottom and can't possibly imagine getting up there.

Well if that's you, there is good news, because in the next chapter Paul goes on to say that all of us who believe in Jesus are up there already. He has put us there by dying and rising for us. No mountaineering or chairlift or cable car required – we're sitting up there with him. And that same invitation is open to everyone who doesn't believe in Jesus yet. Through him, we can experience all of that wonderful list of truths I mentioned before, not just now but forever. Next time someone asks us for a paragraph about ourselves, we can write something like that. Maybe that's what I should have done in the first place!

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

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

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[www.venta-group.org](http://www.venta-group.org)  @venta\_group

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Arminghall  
Rob (492305)

Caistor St Edmund  
Jani (07557 774520) & Lia

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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>

*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, 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](mailto:ventafree4all@outlook.com)

## FOR ALL COPY PLEASE

send by email to Rob to  
[admin@venta-group.org](mailto:admin@venta-group.org)

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

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# All Invited in 2026: everyone's welcome

Sundays from 3.30-5pm

11th Jan, 8th Feb, 22nd March at the Church Hall

25th Jan, 22nd Feb 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, or stay and eat together



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

## St. George's Dementia Group



**H**ere we are in February and Christmas seems a bit of a distant memory. We did have a great Christmas party in December with music by Julie Dawn practically everyone getting up to dance and joining in the singing. A great activity for the people we cater for. We hope to have more music sessions during the year.

We warmly welcome people with dementia and their carers to our regular café sessions in St. Georges Hall, Upper Stoke, Holy Cross held 10 am to 12 midday on the second and fourth Monday mornings of each month (except bank holidays). There are always fun activities and entertainment to enjoy along with good conversation, helpful support and information plus refreshments. We also run occasional subsidised outings. There are no joining fees, just a small charge for refreshments no referral is required. We also welcome anyone interested in becoming a volunteer.

9<sup>th</sup> March Cafe session + (talk on Safety in the Home) 23<sup>rd</sup> March (Cafe + Committee Meeting)

For further information call, 01508 494742, 01508 495580 or 01508 493661. Website is [www.st.georges-dementia-support-group.uk](http://www.st.georges-dementia-support-group.uk)

## STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

WELCOME TO 2026

A belated but sincere wish that 2026 will bring all that you hope and dream for. Have you made any New Year Resolutions? If one of those resolutions is not to feel lonely or bored, we all feel like that sometimes so you are not alone. Do you wish meet new like minded people then look no further.

Come and join the Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club. Our club day meets at St. Georges Hall, Upper Stoke at 1.30pm on the first Thursday of every month. Join us for a cuppa and biscuits, perhaps have a game of cards etc or just a chat to catch up with new friends.

On the other Thursdays of the month we play bingo and have games afternoon on alternative Thursdays. We are just waiting to say hello and welcome you with open arms as we are an extremely friendly club and would love to meet you.

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:** CLUB DAY - March 5<sup>th</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup> BINGO - March 12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>

If you have any questions or want to know a little more about the club please do not hesitate contact us. Carol 01508 494544 or Liz 01508 493245.

We will be very happy to answer all your queries and put your mind at ease.



From the beginning of March the Post Office at the Church Hall will be moving from Thursday to Friday mornings.

It will only be open for 1 hour: please check the sign at the hall for the exact time.



**A huge thank you to Kirsty** for all that she has brought to the life of our churches, and to the churches in the Poringland benefice next door, during the years that she has been with us.

It is easy to see from the pictures that she has thrown herself into everything, and given more than we could have asked, always seeing a job through until it is finished.

I know that many of you from around the villages have experienced her kindness as she has spent time listening and talking and praying, and sharing some of her own remarkable journey of faith in Jesus.

Kirsty is heading off to be the Rector of the churches in the villages around Mattishall - if you get this in time, you are welcome to come and say goodbye to her at Poringland at 10am on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March, or to join in her welcome service at Mattishall at 5pm on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

*Rob*



## PORINGLAND COMMUNITY CINEMA

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It comes every month (next calling on 25<sup>th</sup> March) at the following times and places:

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Stoke Pre-school 10.20 - 10.35am

Pettingales 4.10 - 4.25pm | Mill Green 4.30 - 4.50pm

Harrold Place 4.55 - 5.20pm

## Café at Stoke Holy Cross Community Hall

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday every month  
12pm 'til 4pm  
Everyone welcome



If you would like to volunteer, please come and talk to us at the café.

Stoke Holy Cross Community Café




# BINGO NIGHT

**SATURDAY 14 MARCH 7PM**  
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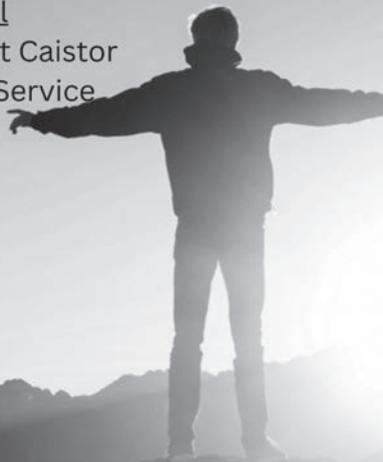
Book your space on the community hall website or by sending a text to Carlo on 07879844166



JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF EXCITING BINGO, PRIZES AND FUN

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Maundy Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April  
Communion Service at the Church Hall at 10am  
Good Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April  
Reflective service at Arminghall at 10am  
Easter Fun from 2-4pm  
Easter Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April  
Morning Prayer (venue tbc) at 10am  
Easter Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April  
6am Sunrise Service at Caistor  
10.30am Celebration Service at Stoke



Join us for Easter 2026

# 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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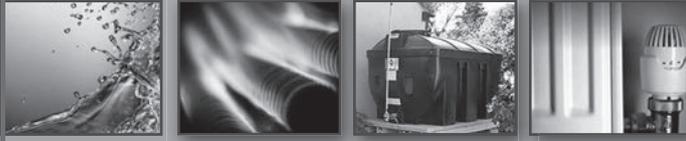
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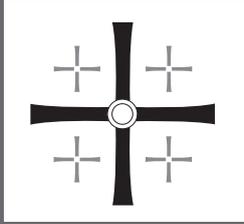
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# MARCH 2026

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

## Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March Special Service

10am at Poringland Church—Joint Service with farewell for Kirsty

## Morning Worship at Caistor St Edmund at 9.30am

15<sup>th</sup> March Holy Communion for Mothering Sunday

## Morning Worship at Stoke Holy Cross at 10.30am

8<sup>th</sup> March Morning Worship with Holy Communion and children's group  
 15<sup>th</sup> March Mothering Sunday service for all ages  
 22<sup>nd</sup> March More formal communion service  
 29<sup>th</sup> March Palm Sunday service for all ages

## Sunday afternoons in February

8<sup>th</sup> March Kirsty's licensing service at Mattishall at 5pm—  
 please contact Rob if you are planning to go  
 22<sup>nd</sup> March All invited at the Church Hall from 3.30-5pm—  
 Food, fun and faith for all ages

## Midweek gatherings in March

Every Wednesday in term-time at 8.30am Morning Prayer at the Vicarage  
 Every Wednesday at 12/12.30pm Lent Meeting (see separate posters for more details)

4 <sup>th</sup> March	7pm online	Prayer meeting
5 <sup>th</sup> March	10am at the Church Hall	Holy Communion
	Followed at 10.30am by	Coffee and Chat
19 <sup>th</sup> March	10.30am at the Church Hall	Coffee and Chat

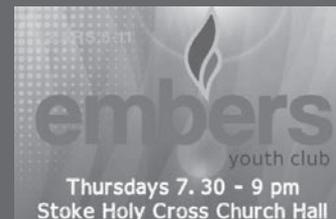
*Caistor church building is open about 10-4 daily - space to reflect, and to pray*



Join us for Communion, coffee or Vintage Church on Thursday mornings — see above for all the times and dates

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