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MAY 2025

Some Easter pictures from the Venta group of churches















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Venta Group of Churches: Stoke Holy Cross, Caistor and Arminghall rob@venta-group.org

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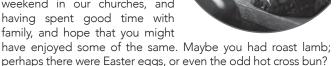
"Once again, J H Roofing Solutions did a great job, despite being hampered by the bad weather we've had recently. They visited the house in advance in order to make sure we were watertight and then completed the work as soon as the weather was dry enough.

I said in my previous review that I would have no hesitation in using J H Roofing again and that remains the case. Jamie and Charlie are professional and pleasant to deal with and do a great job."



How was your Factor?

I'm writing only just after a lovely weekend in our churches, and having spent good time with family, and hope that you might



Speaking of odd hot cross buns, I noticed this year that Marks and Spencer have pushed even the chocolate flavour ones to a whole new level. This one contains a dippy egg filling (it is apparently sweet and gooey chocolate rather than the sugary stuff inside those more famous eggs, presumably for legal reasons). It has a very yellow cross on the top, which looks a bit like it is made of marzipan, but probably isn't. The bun itself is "luxuriously soft and rich", partly thanks to the cocoa in it. Being M&S, we are assured that it is "not just a hot cross bun". I can't confirm this myself, because when I went in the Norwich shop on Easter Saturday looking for them, purely for article research purposes, I couldn't find any.

My attention was grabbed by a few different phrases in the advert. First, without denying anyone their right to a little treat at Easter, I got to wondering about how much you can associate the words luxurious, soft, rich, sweet or gooey with the cross. You don't have to know much about the crucifixion story to recognise it is much more the opposite: suffering rather than luxury; endurance rather than softness; poverty rather than riches; bitterness rather than sweetness; gore rather than goo. Now I don't pretend those would be easy buns to sell, but I think they are words worth you just pausing over for a moment, and reflecting again on what Jesus did for you.

Second, I noticed not just the famous "not just a hot cross bun" phrase in the text, but also in the big slogan at the bottom: "this is not just food." Putting aside the fact that it is obviously just food, I did end up reflecting on Jesus's words about himself, and especially that he was "the bread of life." Jesus said this as he was speaking about the miracle of the 5000, where he had provided bread enough for 5000 people (and fish besides). This bread, of course, was daily bread, to meet human needs after a long day following Jesus, but Jesus is explaining that he is the bread of life - eternal bread. He is not just food the way we think about it, whether that is something simple to keep us going, or a special treat which will end up digested the same way as everything else!

And finally, perhaps in a bid to inspire controversy as there somehow always seems to be with hot cross buns, there is the slogan: "Cross on top, magic in the middle." You'll know where I'm going by now (and thanks very much for still being with me) when I point out that the extraordinary thing about the cross, is that it is a victory. Everyone intended it to be a defeat, but on the cross Jesus won. And at the heart of the Easter story isn't magic, but a miracle, and the amazing truth that Jesus was raised from the dead because it was impossible for the grave to keep hold of him.

Please don't mistake me. Please eat whatever hot cross buns you like whenever you'd like to, and I hope you really enjoy them. But perhaps as you do, you will stop to think about the cross, and all that it means, and stop to thank Jesus, who really is so much more than just food. Rob

VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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



Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston Viv (493438) & Andy

Arminghall Rob (492305) or Lyn (493422)

Caistor St Edmund Jani (493572) & Lia (494137)

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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 JANET CHEESEMAN

Tuesday 8th April

at St Faith's Crematorium

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 Rob to

ventafree4all@outlook.com

By 10th of this month please.





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What's in a day?

ne day this month has been the focus of much publicity, VE Day 80 commemorations – 8 May. This is also World Red Cross day – an organization whose work is still needed today, helping people. But did you also know about these days: 5 May International Day of the Midwife, 14 May National Receptionists Day or 29 May International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers which this year also falls on Ascension Day. The day when churches celebrate Jesus' ascending into heaven.

I don't know if you will celebrate any of these days or whether this month will turn out to be a blur because of exams or work pressures or medical appointments or life experiences or celebrations. However, whatever happens in life Jesus offers us peace, a peace beyond understanding, a peace possible when life is tough, a peace possible when life is full on. After 50 days after Easter when Jesus rose from the dead, 50 days of hearing and experiencing appearances of Jesus, the disciples must have been settling down to the hope that things were returning to normal. They had peace of mind. However, God's ways were not their ways and are not our ways. Instead Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit and left earth to return to his Father. The disciples stared into the sky when Jesus ascended and were asked by some angels why they were doing that. The disciples then returned to Jerusalem and spent their time in constant prayer, along with the women who had followed Jesus and Mary, the mother of Jesus and Jesus' brothers. The church in 2025 will also spend several days in prayer (the theme being Thy Kingdom Come). Praying for the world, for those who do not yet know Jesus. Keep an eye open for opportunities locally when you can join with churches to pray Thy Kingdom Come.

On 29th of May 2025 let us pray for Peacekeepers worldwide but let us also pray for peace in our own lives, maybe using the following words if you're not sure how to pray for yourself.

God draw near to me. May I not be anxious about anything, but instead in every situation I present my requests to you. And so may the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen

Lyn



Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club, St. George's Hall, Upper Stoke

Are you stuck indoors, bored, lonely and just want to socialise, come to our Club to meet some like minded people.

We meet on the first Thursday of every month at St. Georges Hall, Upper Stoke from 1pm onwards.

Join us for a cup of tea/coffee and biscuits.

Play cards, dominoes, scrabble etc or just chat and catch up on all the news.

On the other Thursdays of the month we either meet to play bingo or play games.

During the year we go out for meals locally or have an afternoon tea with entertainment.

We would love to see you and to learn about all your life experiences.

We bet you have many tales to tell and it would be great to hear all about them.

Don't be shy you will be warmly welcomed the moment you step through the door.

Put a note in your diary for our Club day on May 1st 1-1.30pm.

Bingo - May 15th and 29th, eyes down 1.30pm.

Games afternoon 8th and 22nd May, start 1-1.30pm.

If you require any more information please do not hesitate to call our treasurer on 01508 494544.

St George's Dementia Support Group

pril 2025 marked a very special moment for St George's Dementia Support Group since it was ten years ago that it was established and started operating in April 2015. Since when it has gradually grown to the point where nowadays every fortnightly session is a bustling hive of activities and a hubbub of lively conversation. Every table is usually well populated with folk doing crafts, playing games or just plain catching up with others - all refreshed and lubricated with plenty of hot drinks and biscuits, sometimes cakes too! Many of our sessions include special items like live music and sing-along, reminiscence, keep fit and seasonal crafts. It's a well proven mixture with something for everyone and we continue to look for other kinds of offerings to add to our programme.

We chose the 7th April as the best available date to celebrate our achievements over the past decade and hold an anniversary party for our volunteers, supporters and the special people we're here to try and help, along with their carers. A wonderful and plentiful supply of buffet food, including lovely celebration cakes with the number "10" on top, made by a local lady. It was a very successful event, catering for over 60 people with live music by the Squee Gees, a popular duo we've had a number of times, playing music from the 50's and 60's. Some of the more adventurous ventured onto the dance floor! The smiles on the faces in the accompanying photographs speak for themselves...



Our next dates are:

28 April Cafe (including Bingo with Johnny) 12 May Cafe (including The Cats Music Group with 50s/60s music) 26 May NO CAFE - SPRING BANK HOLIDAY 09 June Cafe (including "What Is It?" Quiz Game with Mary)





















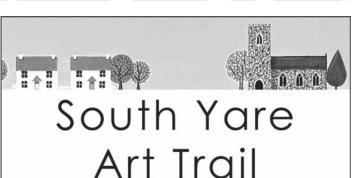






3rd Thursday of the month at 10.30 am
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17th April 15th May 19th June
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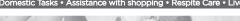
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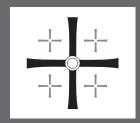






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MAY 2025

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

*Look out for more information about gathering to pray from 29th May—8th June

Sunday mornings at Caistor St Edmund

4th May, 9.30am Praise & Worship 18th May, 9.30am Holy Communion

Morning Worship at Stoke Holy Cross at 10.30am

4th, 18th May Morning Worship with children's group

11th, 25th May Morning Worship with communion and children's group

Sunday afternoons in May

11th, 25th May All invited at the Church Hall from 3.30-5pm—

Food, fun and faith for all ages

Midweek gatherings in May

1 st May	10am at the Hall followed at 10.30am by	Communion Coffee and Chat
7 th May	7.30pm at the Church Hall	Time to pray together
8 th May	7pm at Rockland Church	Deanery service with Bishop Graham
15 th May	10.30am at the Hall	Vintage Church
22 nd May	10.30am at the Hall	Coffee and Chat
29 th May	10am at Dunston	Ascension Day Service

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

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