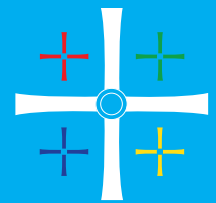


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THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

JANUARY 2022



# 2022

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the LORD make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.

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## Happy New Year!

It takes some writing this year, doesn't it?

Today (mid-December!) I am very conscious of not knowing what January will bring. Among the few things I do know is that I haven't ever known anyone say "omicron" with the level of desperation we're hearing at the moment – or at least not since our tutor at vicar training college attempted to teach us the Greek alphabet.

It is a pretty punishing thing to be facing this uncertainty again. There's such a range of emotions at the moment. I've spoken to people in the community here who are medically vulnerable and very worried about being out and about, and others who have lost

a loved one this year, and plan to meet up with other grieving family members at Christmas whether they are allowed to or not. And you can sympathise with all of them, can't you?

Another thing I know for sure, is that this January in our churches we will be talking a lot about prayer again. It's been my New Year's resolution for quite a while now that we would start the year off with this most important thing of all, and this year it feels more important than ever.

Over the last month or so since I returned from my sabbatical I have seen some amazing things bubbling up in the churches which are real answers to prayer, and they are deeply encouraging. But at the same time I am aware that there are so many things that you and I might have prayed for recently – perhaps most of all that God would just drive Covid 19 away once and for all – where we struggle to make sense of them not happening as we'd hoped.

At times like this my head is often full of the sort of things that Jesus said that make me think it shouldn't be like this – things like "If you believe you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

For me, like for you I suppose, sometimes it feels that things are happening as Jesus intended, and sometimes not so much. And so I wonder whether I should just believe a lot harder, and then I will make it happen, or whether I should believe it has happened already, in spite of evidence to the contrary, or... it gets a bit confusing, doesn't it?

And while I can't find a brilliant answer to these questions, I take comfort from noticing Jesus wrestling with these same things – Jesus not seeing all his prayers answered. It helps me to remember that Jesus prayed that his Father would take the cup away from him: that means that God would spare him the cross. And despite that not happening as Jesus asked, he didn't lose faith that God would hear his prayer – and of course God went beyond everything he asked, raising him from death and restoring him to his presence forever. That helps me to trust that in the end, God will do more for me than anything I can ask or imagine as well, even if it might not make sense to me at the moment.

But what about you? What answers work for you? Can you cope better than me with the uncertainty of it all? Do get in touch and let me know – I'd be really interested to hear!

Rob

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### IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

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### FROM THE REGISTERS

#### FUNERAL

Burial of

#### JONATHAN WELLS

13<sup>th</sup> December at Arminghall

We continue to pray for all those who have  
lost loved ones recently, or are remembering  
someone particularly at this time of year.

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

The 10th of the month will be the  
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magazine for the time being.

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# Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club

**Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club for the over 55's meets at St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke Holy Cross**

We had a wonderful time at our Christmas celebration on our Club Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> December when we were wonderfully entertained by the lovely Julie Dawn who played and sang for us. And then we enjoyed a Christmas celebration tea together. These are some photos of our time together.



We are a cheerful bunch and would love to welcome new members. So if you would like to meet some new friendly locals please do give Carol a ring on 01508 492132 for more details of what we get up to with a view to maybe joining our Thursday Club for 2022. Or you can simply drop in and say hello at any of our get togethers.

Only **January** meeting this month - **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 - Bingo** and eyes down at 1.30pm (Raffle Prize appreciated)

Monthly Club meeting the first Thursday each month: **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February** at 1.30pm (Raffle prize appreciated)

Bingo for February will be on **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> February** - eyes down at 1.30pm (Raffle prize appreciated)

Carpet Bowls for February will be on **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February** at 1.30pm

**Your support of the Thursday Club throughout 2021 was very much appreciated. Thank you.**

## Under Pressure

At our Crazy Quiz at Embers in November, one of the rounds was on music lyrics, lyrics from songs in the current top 20. The young people were getting frustrated, that they couldn't work out the songs from the lyrics and the cry went up from one of them, if you gave us lyrics from a Queen song I would know them. (I think we'll have to test that out at a future quiz!) However, it got me thinking, about Queen songs. Bohemian Rhapsody is very popular, as are Radio Ga-Ga, We are the champions, We will rock you or Crazy Little Thing called Love. But at this time of the year, are you feeling Under Pressure?

Under pressure because of your work – too much for some, as a result of the pandemic if you're in many jobs, such as the health or teaching professions. Or because it's the end of the year and you have accounts to finalise, tax returns to submit. Or worried about finances because of the expense of Christmas or because you were on a festive contract that has finished and the credit card bill that will arrive this month. Under pressure because you have too little or no work. Or under pressure because of the expectations of employers, or family, or life events planned (or unplanned) for this coming year. Whatever it is, we can feel under pressure. Pushing down on me, pushing down on you, as the song says. It was number 1 for several weeks 40 years ago but still the words speak to us today. Yet towards the end of the song Freddie Mercury pleads for love to triumph. Why can't we give love that one more chance? Why can't we give love? And the response is Cause love's such an old fashioned word and love dares you to care for.

Did you see the verse in our church Christmas card? It was: This is how God showed his love among us: he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9) When we feel under pressure who do we turn to? Do we turn to our loved ones – family and friends? Wonderful. Even more wonderful, and available 24/7, we can turn to God who loved us before we loved him. Who loved us before our family and friends loved us. And who we can know and rely on the love he has for us (1 John 4:16). I pray that if you feel under pressure, you find someone to share it with but also that you come to know the love God has for you and has shown through his Son Jesus, who came to be with us and moved into the neighbourhood. Will you give his love one more chance this year? Love might be an old fashioned word but the world, we, you and I, still needs love. A New Year but God still offers the same love to you. A love you can know and rely on.

*Happy New Year - Lyn*



## DISTURB US, LORD

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well  
pleased with ourselves,  
When our dreams have come true  
Because we have dreamed too little,  
When we arrived safely  
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when  
With the abundance of things we possess  
We have lost our thirst  
For the waters of life;  
Having fallen in love with life,  
We have ceased to dream of eternity  
And in our efforts to build a new earth,  
We have allowed our vision  
Of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,  
To venture on wider seas  
Where storms will show Your mastery;  
Where losing sight of land,  
We shall find the stars.  
We ask You to push back  
The horizons of our hopes;  
And to push into the future  
In strength, courage, hope, and love.

(attributed to Sir Francis Drake -1577)

## ST GEORGE'S DEMENTIA SUPPORT CAFE



Our last Café in November was a Christmas craft session, some very nice Christmas cards and table decorations were made. Some members played scrabble and great enjoyment was had by the triminos team with great shouts of joy when a game was won. A very happy morning for everyone. We are all looking forward to a lunch together and a Christmas party in December. On the 2nd and 4th Monday each month this is a great place to relax for those with dementia and for their carers. Come along and join us for fun activities and refreshments. There is always room for people living with dementia and their partners or carers to join us, whether on our subsidised outings or at our regular Café sessions from 10am to 12 noon in St. George's Hall, Upper Stoke Holy Cross. Referral not necessary.

Our dates for January are:  
10th January and 24th January.

For more information ring 01508493661,  
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Our website is [www.st.George's-dementia-support-group.org](http://www.st.George's-dementia-support-group.org)

# Prayer update - Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro Tanzania



In the Babati District of Tanzania, communities are harnessing locally available resources to overcome their most pressing issues using the Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP). Here, a group gathers to take part in one of the regular CCMP sessions which is helping them plan ways to bring about a change which lasts. Source: Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro/Tearfund

In Tanzania, it is estimated that around one third of the population are living in poverty. Ensuring access to basics, like food, can be tough, especially in rural areas. Here, most people depend on agriculture to provide the food and income they need, but the weather can play a big part in a farmer's success. A failed harvest can mean less food and less money, and with little or nothing to fall back on at times of shock or stress, life becomes harder. Families, without anything to fall back on are pushed further into poverty.

But thanks to your support, Tearfund's partner, the Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro, is helping to break cycles like these in the communities they serve. They are equipping local churches with the tools to help people overcome their day-to-day challenges and bring about lasting transformation.

Since the Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro started running the Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP) in Babati District more than four years ago to help communities bring about the changes they wanted to see, a huge amount has happened. In the communities of Dirma, Dareda, Pongay, Kiru and Wahari, five local churches led Bible studies and training sessions on subjects like resource mobilisation. This inspired a whole range of ideas and activities within the communities. People started self-help groups, which gave them a way to save money together and cover the cost of basic essentials or grow their livelihoods. It also gave them safe spaces to come to when they needed support or encouragement.

Then in 2019, the Diocese was able to scale up the work they were doing, to offer seven more communities a chance to take part in the process, including Kirusix, Maji ya moto, Erri, Kokomay, Singu, Qwam and Imbilili.

**James (pictured, right) is just one of those who was able to take part in the process and became a self-help group member himself.**

Before he joined the group, James had been raising a cow at home that gave him milk for his family, and extra, which he was able to sell to make money. But when the cow died suddenly of an unknown disease, his family's income took a sudden hit. James explains: 'I joined [the] CCMP at the right time, I was very confused after I lost my cow, which was one of the main sources of income for my family. CCMP has educated me to identify other opportunities and resources that can increase the income of my family.' 'I have strengthened my relationship with other group members [and] also got time to study the bible together. This is so valuable in my life and my family'.

**Regina (pictured, right) took part in CCMP sessions at her local church and joined a self-help group too. She would always return home from meetings and share all they had discussed with her husband.**



As they spoke, Regina and her husband decided that they would start a venture of their own. They wanted to keep chickens, so they built a chicken coop, and Regina took a loan to buy their first 50 chickens. They hope that rearing chickens becomes the main way they raise income.

Regina shares: 'My family and I are much helped by the CCMP holistically. We are now able to sit and plan for our future and agree on what should be our priority in the family and how as a family we can mobilise resources to accomplish the planned activity. Also, we have started to attend church services and CCMP sessions regularly that makes us continue to grow spiritually'.

To date, the 26 self-help groups who have formed as a result of the work with the Diocese (which are each made up of around 15-20 people) have raised more than 141,372,500 Tanzanian Shillings together - that's about £46,000 - which they have been able to use to support one another and to make investments. It is money that many would not have been able to access at all if working alone. But encouraged by their training sessions and spurred on by local leaders and facilitators, it is helping people choose the path they would like to take into the future. This is seeing people opening small shops, keeping livestock, starting motorbike taxiing businesses, and expanding their agricultural businesses.

## Please pray

Since March 2020, when the World Health Organisation announced the coronavirus pandemic, the Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro has experienced many ups and downs in its work. It became difficult to implement the activities they had hoped to run in line with their plans. However, the situation in Tanzania is now returning to normal, with people taking care to follow measures that prevent the spread of Covid-19.

• **Please pray that the Church and Community Mobilisation Process continues to be of help to the communities the Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro serves.** Most of the communities involved in the work the Diocese is currently doing have learnt the basics of the process and how to identify and use resources and opportunities to help bring about the kind of transformation they would like to see. Pray for their ongoing work, and pray that more and more communities can apply the skills and information from the CCMP sessions to strengthen and grow their livelihoods.

• **Please pray for those leading, supporting and providing training sessions for all those involved in the Church and Community Mobilisation Process.** Pray for the local facilitators, the project's field officer, the program coordinator, the Diocesan Management team and their families as they try to organise and implement the activities they have planned to support communities. Pray they experience good health and ongoing peace and strength.

• **Pray for the nation.** Like many other countries, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected Tanzania economically, socially and spiritually. Pray that no other waves of this pandemic emerge both in Tanzania, and globally. And pray for the leaders of Tanzania as they work to ensure peace and unity across the country.

'Dear brethren your dedication, understanding and time all mean so much to us. We feel very lucky to be partnering with you in this program, we will cherish you all the time. Thank you!' Rev Elia, Diocesan CCMP coordinator

## Thank you

### Tearfund Thank You Message

Dear Friends

Thank you so much for your recent gift of £750 - your generosity is greatly appreciated. Your donation will support the work we are doing bringing life-changing help to people in poor communities.

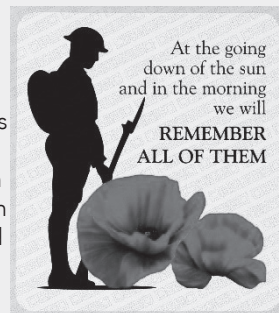
Your support is helping churches to bring lasting transformation to many lives and communities which have been destroyed by poverty. By enabling people to do things for themselves the stronghold of poverty is being broken down. God's kingdom is growing and people are being set free to fulfil their God-given potential. Your partnership with us is enabling this to happen.

Thank you for walking with us as we seek to strengthen the church across the world, and see an end to extreme poverty. We are grateful for you.

With every blessing,

### CAISTOR ST EDMUND POPPY APPEAL RESULT.

The total of the house to house collection was £349.53 this together with £525.16 which was collected in boxes on the premises of local



businesses and a donation for the poppy wreath placed on the war memorial, means that a total of £874.69 has been sent to the RBL Poppy Fund this year. Thank you to all who helped with collecting and to the local businesses. Your support is greatly appreciated Graham Ford. Local Honorary Organiser.

### WHEN I SAY I'M A CHRISTIAN

(Source unknown)

When I say 'I'm a Christian',  
I'm not shouting that 'I'm clean living'.  
I'm whispering 'I was lost,  
But now I'm found and forgiven'.

When I say 'I'm a Christian',  
I don't speak of this with pride.  
I'm confessing that I stumble  
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say 'I'm a Christian',  
I'm not trying to be strong.  
I'm professing that I'm weak  
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say 'I'm a Christian',  
I'm not bragging of success.  
I'm admitting I have failed  
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say 'I'm a Christian',  
I'm not claiming to be perfect.  
My flaws are far too visible  
But God believes that I'm worth it.

When I say 'I'm a Christian',  
I still feel the sting of pain  
I have my share of heartaches  
So I call upon His name.

When I say 'I'm a Christian',  
I'm not holier than thou  
I'm just a simple winner  
Who received God's good grace,  
somehow!

# New Beginnings Wordsearch

BEGINNINGS	JESUS
BELIEF	LIFE
CHANGE	NEW
CHOSEN	PROMISES
COMMITMENT	REBORN
CONVERSION	RENEWED
DIVINE	RESOLUTIONS
EPIPHANY	RESPECT
FAITH	SINCERITY
FRESH	START
GOD	TRUST
HOLY	UNDERTAKING
HONOUR	YEAR
HOPE	

R	K	G	C	K	L	N	E	R	U	F	D	C	B	Y
E	E	T	T	H	E	I	A	K	R	O	H	E	R	T
N	T	S	N	W	O	E	F	E	T	A	G	L	U	I
E	Z	S	O	E	Y	S	S	E	N	I	H	S	O	R
W	H	H	U	L	M	H	E	G	N	I	E	P	N	E
E	T	O	N	R	U	T	E	N	E	S	V	Q	O	C
D	I	L	D	H	T	T	I	R	I	C	K	I	H	N
P	A	Y	E	J	B	N	I	M	E	E	W	G	D	I
J	F	R	R	Q	G	P	O	O	M	S	W	N	I	S
E	B	C	T	S	F	R	L	N	N	O	P	T	P	K
S	L	U	A	G	P	T	R	A	T	S	C	E	R	G
U	Q	Y	K	N	O	I	S	R	E	V	N	O	C	X
S	E	P	I	P	H	A	N	Y	H	O	P	E	W	T
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D	R	E	G	U	H	T	R	K	N	F	J	M	C	J

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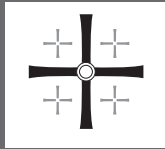
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# January 2022

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

*We're aware of the possibility of regulations changing in the weeks to come, so please do double check things on our website / Facebook to be sure of plans nearer the time*

## Tuesday - Saturday from 4<sup>th</sup> January

9am Tues-Fri zoom.us/j/385426921  
10am Sat Zoom Meeting ID: 385-426-921

Morning Prayer meeting  
with Bible reading

## Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January

10.30am Caistor St Edmund

Epiphany (Wise Men!) Sunday service  
with Holy Communion

## Sunday mornings at Stoke Holy Cross from 9<sup>th</sup> January

10.30am Morning Worship with children's group and  
fortnightly Holy Communion

## More things this month at Caistor St Edmund...

16<sup>th</sup> January, 9.30am

Holy Communion

*And don't forget the church building is open about 10 - 4 most days - space to reflect, or to pray*

## Sparklers group for 0-4s and their families from 11<sup>th</sup> January

Every Tuesday in school term, 10-11.30 in the Church Hall. Space for 20 families so we can normally fit everyone in!  
Check Facebook "Sparklers Stoke Holy Cross" or email [cathryn.baker@gmail.com](mailto:cathryn.baker@gmail.com)

## Family gatherings

We'd love to stay connected with families as we find good ways of meeting together in these slightly uncertain times.  
Email [cathryn.baker@gmail.com](mailto:cathryn.baker@gmail.com) and we'll keep you in the loop!



[www.venta-group.org](http://www.venta-group.org) | Facebook/YouTube "Venta Group of Churches" | [admin@venta-group.org](mailto:admin@venta-group.org) | 01508 492305

## ADVANCE NOTICE FOR YOUR DIARIES

### Stoke Holy Cross Open Gardens 2022

June 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> from 12 - 5

This year we will be raising money for the Church buildings fund and another local charity.

It would be good to have some new gardens for visitors to enjoy so however big or small your garden please consider whether you would like to share your garden for a few hours to help raise money to maintain our beautiful church buildings.

If anyone would like to help either by opening your garden, making cakes or helping on the day please get in touch either with me [anna@lipp.org.uk](mailto:anna@lipp.org.uk) or Viv Carrington.

More details nearer the time but put the date in your diaries now





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