Free for All









THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

JULY 2021

WILD FLOWERS IN STOKE HOLY CROSS CHURCHYARD



As many of you will have noticed, Stoke Holy Cross churchyard has been undergoing some changes in the last year or so.

As the churchyard is in the midst of beautiful countryside, the decision was made to leave some areas around older graves unmown and actively promote wildflowers in these areas. Obviously it will take time for many species to return (or to be sown at the appropriate times of the year).

The churchyard is a peaceful haven – a place to sit and reflect on God's wonderful creation. If you have never visited, do take a walk there and use one of the many seats to take time out and enjoy the peace and tranquillity.

Some of these photos were taken in churchyard in the last few weeks.



WONDER ZONE HOLIDAY CLUB

is coming up too for primary school-aged children at the beginning of the summer holidays, from

Mon 26th to Weds 28th July at Stoke Holy Cross school.

We'll be exploring the amazing world around us with games, crafts, science experiments, quizzes, music and more! Forms will be available through the school, or you can contact us directly to get your child signed up.

All our contact details can be found on page 3.



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If I asked you to list a few ways you could tell that someone you were talking to was really interested in you, I wonder what you would say? It might be to do with how good they seemed to be at listening: are they looking you in the eye? Do they seem distracted – worst of all, are they fiddling with their phone?

But one way might be something that I have already done in this article: they ask questions. The other week I was talking to someone in the village and I was really struck by the thoughtful questions they asked about my family, my plans for my sabbatical next month, and so on. One of the things you might notice about Jesus, if you read through the gospels, is that he is constantly asking questions. One reason he does that is that it is a good way of responding to someone who is trying to catch him out, but just as often it is because he is really interested

in the person he is talking to. I've just been reading the amazing passage where Jesus asked someone, "What do you want me to do for you?" Now there is a question!

Over the last couple of days I have been reflecting on some slightly different questions. They are the sort of questions that you might ask one another as the pandemic eases, we begin to meet up a little more, and we have the chance to reflect on what has happened over the last year and more. I offer them as a chance to reflect for yourself, but most of all to take interest in someone else.

- 1. What has your experience been of the pandemic? (What are you grateful for? What have you struggled with?) At an online session I took part in yesterday they took a poll of everyone there (over 100 of us) and most people thought there had been a mixture of ups and downs. Some people have liked working from home. Others have been really cooped up with their family, or been very lonely.
- 2. What have you learnt through this experience? Have you done without some things that you have found you don't really need? Or just got much better at doing things online than you'd imagine?
- **3.** What has been your source of strength or hope through this time? Some people have built particular things into their routine, or connected with close friends or family in important ways. Someone I know has been reading through the Psalms every day and often shares with us how it has encouraged her.
- **4.** How do you want things to be different post pandemic? Of course there are things we want to be different from how they are now masks, distancing, sanitiser and all but a more interesting question is how they might be different from before. One of my friends wonders if we'll ever be able to blow out a birthday cake again, but you can probably think of a more meaningful example!
- **5.** Have you found yourself praying during this time? if you have, then that is not surprising, because apart from people who prayed sometimes already, about 5% of people had started to pray by last May when they didn't before. It isn't just us in our churches who are praying more: everyone is.

So there are 5 questions for you to take and ask each other as you reflect on the pandemic, to help you to take interest in. I'll be praying that as you do it, you hear the voice of Jesus asking what he can do for you as well.

CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston Viv (493438) & Andy (07485 151051)

> Arminghall Annie (495580)

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

ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Joyce Williams 492143

STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

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STOKE HOLY CROSS PAVILION BOOKINGS:

Anita Rose (Parish clerk) 491709

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IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

just get in touch and we will see what we can do! Email: ventafree4all@outlook.com

FROM THE REGISTERS FUNERALS

7th June

MAURICE ANTHONY 'TONY' THOMAS

Stoke Holy Cross

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.

VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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

@venta_group

NEXT EDITION

Items for the next month's magazine please send by email to Henry and Eostre Caswell by email to ventafree4all@outlook.com

By 10th of this month please.

The 10th of the month will be the deadline for all copy for the next magazine for the time being.

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Curate's Egg article from Lyn

Is it going to be the beginning or the end for you?

July for many young people will mark the end of an era. Leaving primary or secondary school or college or university. For final year university undergraduates July is the month results are announced. Equally for those working in education it can mean the end of a season – saying farewell to a cohort, or themselves or colleagues moving on.

Yet July also marks the start of the school summer holidays; long awaited days of freedom for young people but not necessarily for their carers/parents.

This July will see Euro 2021 ending and the Olympics beginning. Athletes beginning or ending races or their careers.

July for me is the month I left college many years ago with no job secured but on popping into a recruitment agency I was sent to work in Norwich Union (now Aviva). That was the one place I didn't want to work but I took it as a stop-gap (which lasted five years and during which I met my future husband for which I am grateful). July was also the month I passed my driving test 30+ years ago – and I was so pleased for the freedom that gave me. July is also the month I gave birth to my daughter (eventually)!

July a month of beginnings and endings. A month of moving on or a month of moving into. At the time of writing this, it is not certain whether July 2021 will be a month of moving out of COVID restrictions into more freedom, some hope so, some may not. What I am certain of is July is a month I can look backwards or forwards. Looking backwards can make me thankful for what has occurred but it can also make me unhappy, discontent of where I am now. Looking forwards can make me worried, anxious and unappreciative of what has led me to this point. So what should I do?

The last chapter of the bible has this verse in it "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the Beginning and the End". The Alpha and the Omega is a name given to God, to Jesus. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega the last. By saying God is the Alpha and the Omega we are saying God is the beginning and the end, he was in the beginning, he created us, he is the end because he is the goal to which all will go. But he's also in the middle, he's in the centre of it all now, he's present with us, for a previous chapter says 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.' Whatever July turns out to be for you, a month of beginnings or endings or somewhere in the middle, may you feel God with you For out of him, the sustainer of everything, came everything, and now everything finds fulfilment in him.

Please get in touch with us if you are struggling in July, or leave a prayer in Caistor St Edmund church and we will pray for you.

Thomas was a disciple of Jesus, who wasn't afraid to express his concerns / doubts and in some churches on 3 July they remember and say this prayer:

Almighty and eternal God,
who, for the firmer foundation of our faith,
allowed your holy apostle Thomas to
doubt the resurrection of your Son
till word and sight convinced him:
grant to us, who have not seen, that we
also may believe
and so confess Christ as our Lord
and our God;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen



LightHouse Sparklers and Wonder Zone Summer Holiday Club

s restrictions have lifted, it has been exciting to start meeting again in different ways as church. One of our events has been a family session called LightHouse, and after Easter we spent one of these thinking about how Jesus "walks with us" through our lives, like he walked with his friends to a place called Emmaus in the Bible.

As you can see here we made bunting and banners to decorate the church and celebrate that Jesus is alive, just like he was then. We wrote and drew our prayers onto the flags.







We've also re-started our Sparklers group for 0-4s each Tuesday morning in term time, and new families are always really welcome. We have lots of toys, crafts, stories and songs for young children, from 10-11am at Stoke church hall. At the moment we are having to use a booking system as we are limited to 15 families per week,

but you can book in for free via our Facebook page, "Sparklers Stoke Holy Cross"

Wonder Zone Holiday Club is coming up too for primary school-aged children at the beginning of the summer holidays, from Mon 26th to Weds 28th July at Stoke Holy Cross school. We'll be exploring the amazing world around us with games, crafts, science experiments, quizzes, music and more! Forms will be available through the school, or you can contact us directly to get your child signed up.

If you'd like to find out more about any of the things we have going on for families and children, get in touch via the church office

or contact cathrynbaker@gmail.com



Stoke Holy Cross Primary School Years 5 and 6 Writing Competition

e are delighted to be able to publish two of the excellent letters that we sent from the school re the ongoing need for a crossing patrol at the school.

School Crossing Patrol Manager, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, Building 8, Jubilee House,

Falconers Chase, Wymondham,

NR18 OWW

19th April 2021

17tii Apiii 202

Dear Sir,

Stoke Holy Cross Primary School Long Lane Stoke Holy Cross Norwich NR14 8LY

My name is Charlotte and I am a year 5 student (age 9 years) at Stoke Holy Cross Primary School, which is near Norwich. Since being back at school after Lockdown number 2, I have learnt that a dangerous decision has been made regarding our school crossing patrol. I am writing to you to request that you seriously reconsider and grant us a new lollipop person, as I am confident that this will massively benefit children at the school and the local community.

Firstly, I truly believe that reintroducing a school crossing patrol in Stoke Holy Cross would be a good idea as it would make crossing the road safer. Someone as important as you should surely understand that school crossing patrols save lives. Since we have had no crossing patrol, crossing the road has been difficult for children at our school. There is also a pre-school very close by, attended by very vound children who have not learnt to cross the road safely, which is a further risk.

I understand that 210 students currently attend Stoke Holy Cross Primary School which means including parents there could potentially be in the region of 420 people crossing the road outside the school between 8.30 and 8.45 in the morning and 3 and 3.20 in the afternoon. The Long Lane is very busy at this time too, so this is a lot of young people's lives being risked within a very small space of time.

Furthermore, from a driver's point of view it would be devastating to be involved in an accident and knowing

that someone had been hurt or even worse... As a driver it would be difficult to see when and where people are crossing the road, with so many people now all along the path outside school. Cars also regularly park on the side of the road nearby making it difficult for the driver to see children attempting to cross. I remember witnessing someone nearly getting hit by a bus outside my school which made me feel frightened and is something I have not forgotten.

Without a school crossing patrol there is likely to be an accident so please could you reconsider and provide us with a replacement school crossing patrol.

Yours faithfully, Charlotte

School Crossing Patrol Manager, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, Building 8, Jubilee House, Falconer's Chase, Wymondham, NR18 OWW

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write with regards to the most urgent and pressing matter of the desperate need for Crossing patrol.

Currently, we do not have Crossing Patrol and this is

risky for pedestrians walking across Long Lane daily. We need a new School road patrol on Long Lane immediately.

The Lollipop Lady/Man help children across trafficked roads and help stop accidents from occurring on busy roads. They have also always been the eyes and ears of the school gate for many years as they are able to see and hear danger and in my experience have prevented many accidents. If we do not have someone to help stop accidents on our road, it could be severe. It is worse for primary schools like ours because sometimes the driver will not notice the child is crossing the road and may carry on driving. If we had someone standing there the driver would notice and stop to let the pedestrians walk across the road. Given the location of my school and the fact that the entrance gates are situated within close proximity to the main road, it is almost impossible to stop a young child from running onto the busy main road. It is also a fact that, drivers do not adhere to the speed limits outside the school, adding to the list of reasons why we desperately need crossing patrol.

I thank you for taking the time to read my letter and hope you consider my urgent request.

Yours sincerely, Tallulah



MORE JOKES FROM A CAISTOR CONTRIBUTOR

You can take a horse to water but a pencil must be lead.

What do you call two elephants chatting?

A heavy discussion.

How do trees access the internet?
They log on.

What do you call a factory that makes 'OK' products?

Satisfactory.

How do birds fly? They just wing it.

Exaggerations went up by 1 million percent last year.

VIVIAN'S GARDEN NURSERY

Please note there are plenty of lovely plants still for sale but no more pots are required.

Thank you.



Celtic Prayer Wordsearch

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UNDER MEEK BESIDE HEART SHIELD
CHRIST WITHIN ILLUMINE POWERFUL WITHOUT
MOUTH GUIDE LEFT LIGHT OVERSHADOW

EACH RIGHT SPEAK LOWLY

A Celtic Prayer

Christ, as a light,
illumine and guide me.
Christ as a shield,
overshadow me.
Christ under me;
Christ over me;
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.
Be in the heart of each to whom I speak;
In the mouth of each who speaks unto me.
This day be within and without me,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Christ as a light;
Christ as a shield,
Christ beside me
on my left and my right.





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Stoke Holy Cross Tuesday Club

fter the last Tuesday Group notes, published in the April copy of Free4All, it is with enormous sadness that we have to announce the death of Tony, another of our long-standing members.

Tony Thomas and his wife Barbara joined the Group shortly after moving to Stoke, and we realised with delight that they were the kind of people who liked to be given a job to do, rather than merely sitting at meetings or enjoying meals which had been placed before them.

Barbara has served as our Treasurer for a long period, and Tony took the job of Chairman over several years, as well as being a committee member, also being remembered for his stint at the Group's suppers as a wine waiter of distinction, always on hand to top up members' empty glasses.

Recently, he had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease, and we are very sad to announce that he died in hospital on May 11th.



He will be deeply missed by all our members, with gratitude for all that he did for us over the years. Our love and sympathy go to Barbara, to his children Elizabeth, Helen, Christopher and David, and all his grandchildren. Although he was originally from the hunting shires, Tony surely qualified to be known in his adopted Norfolk village as 'A good oul boy'....



JULY 2021

WORSHIP, PRAYER AND COMMUNITY
IN OUR VILLAGE CHURCHES

Stoke Holy Cross Services

with LightHouse family session

Every Sunday | 10.30am | in person & online

You are welcome to join us in person, on Zoom or on YouTube (online without family session.) We celebrate communion every other week.

Zoom meeting - ID: 706 580 961

If you can't access the service online, you can join by phone as well.

Please get in touch if you need help to do that.

Caistor Services

4th July | 9.30am | Praise and Worship in person 18th July | 9.00am | Holy Communion in person

Morning Prayer on Zoom

Monday - Friday | 9am & Saturday | 10am

Start your day by praying together with others for our lives, community and nation. Zoom Meeting - ID: 385 426 921

You can see we are hoping to gather a lot more in July, but please keep checking our website and Facebook for details. It's a little tricky to be certain at the moment as you know!

Caistor Church is open from 10-4 on Wed & Sun.

Please get in touch if we can help you in any way.

Scan me for regular updates!



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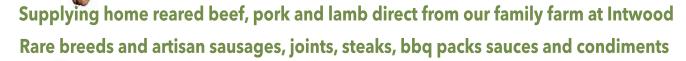
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