Free for All









JULY 2024

THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP





EMBERS ENJOYED A BATTY EVENING AT DUNSTON. See page 6



MORE FUN AND GAMES
AT ALL INVITED
See page 7



DUNSTON WILD MEADOW CHURCHYARD SHOWS OFF SOME WILD FLOWERS

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ike all parents of teenagers, I am a consistent source of weary amusement in our house, but recently I have been particularly laughable because of my attempts to make some sourdough bread. Before I get into this too much, I'd like to offer in my defence that I'm fairly sure Cathryn was the one who suggested first that we give this a try.

The main thing you are confronted with is that it takes ages. If you make the starter (which is what you use instead of yeast to make it rise) it takes days at least, but I was anxiously tending to mine for weeks before it seemed to grow in any significant way. Once there is enough yeast from the air in the jar to get it going, you have to remove some of the mixture and feed the rest regularly with more flour and water to keep it active. If you aren't using the stuff you discard to

make bread, you could give it to your friend as a present (this is genuinely Jamie Oliver's suggestion), or I have found it makes nice pancakes.



Only after this can you start to make bread. This takes about 18 hours, from the point that you mix a load of your starter with more bread and water, to when you add the rest of the flour, leave it overnight in the fridge to prove, and then bake it in the morning. I have got to the stage where my family will happily eat it, but I do recognise that there are people in the village and in our church community who bake it for a living, and need to be clear that the stuff I have made definitely isn't anywhere near as nice as the ones in the shops.

Am I just writing a baking column this month, you ask? Well, possibly. But the many hours I have spent not so much fiddling with this bread, as worrying about whether it will turn out ok, have given me some space to think about the process. I have got thinking about what Jesus says about how the kingdom of God is like yeast that a woman kneads into about sixty pounds (!) of dough. Now apart from what that says about her impressive kneading muscles, for the first time I have thought about how she wouldn't have had superfast supermarket yeast, but something perhaps a bit more like sourdough, which needed time to work slowly and grow through the whole of the bread. It says to me that being transformed by God, so that you become more and more like Jesus, and can do more and more of the things Jesus does, will take time.

This is an important lesson if you are like me, and you feel that you would prefer to do something you see the impact of tomorrow, or not bother. And when I look around our churches, I see things happening now which look like the result of a very long process of kneading with (in my case) very feeble muscles over a long period of time. So if you are just at the point of making a first decision to follow Jesus, please celebrate if you feel you are growing really quickly, but equally please persevere if it feels like working a little yeast through a very big batch of dough. The growth and the change will happen, and the results will be amazing.

VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston, Arminghall and Caistor St Edmund.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER

Lyn Marsh - Lyn is on sabbatical leave until the end of September, so please contact Rob or Kirsty with any inquiries for the time being

CURATE

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CHURCHWARDENS

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Arminghall

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

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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

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

INTERMENT OF ASHES

JOSEPHINE WAKEFIELD

Thursday 6th June at **Stoke Holy Cross**

FUNERAL

BERYL HODGKINSON

Thursday 13th June at **Arminghall**

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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Henry and Eostre Caswell to
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By 10th of this month please.



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Independent

keep getting those leaflets through my door advocating retirement places offering independent living. What does it mean independent living and is there such a thing?

My childhood in Costessey was different from today's childhood in so many ways. One of the things I loved to do was say to my mum, I'm going on a bike ride and just get on my bicycle and roam the Norfolk countryside – that bike gave me some independence. However, more independence came a few years later. For July is the month I recall when I passed my driving test that gave me further independence and unlike some newly qualified drivers, I loved driving on my own without someone next to me. Passing my test meant I didn't have to catch a bus and instead allowed me to split the driving to work with a colleague. But independence didn't always go smoothly. One day travelling to work on the A1065 (I still remember the spot) her windscreen shattered and we had to stop – knocking out the remaining bits of glass. We were pretty shook up. On another occasion I drove down the road, it was on a hill, to find when I pressed my foot on the brakes they didn't work. I got to a junction and the car just kept going – fortunately no traffic was coming and it came to a stop.

I like doing things for myself. Deciding where to go and when to do it. Feeding myself. Choosing my own clothes. But there comes a point in life, like when you're driving, when that doesn't happen. Or you get an unexpected and unwanted event in life that means you have to adjust your living. What can I learn from others, how to successfully navigate this season?

After Jesus rose from the dead he met the disciples in Galilee. He took Peter aside and asked Peter three times if he loved him. On the third occasion Peter said "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you". Jesus said "Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go... Follow me" (John 21:17-19). In saying this Jesus was indicating how Peter would die but maybe it's useful for us to acknowledge there comes a time in life when we won't be able to come and go as we want. In fact, Jesus had asked Peter three years before to follow him. Peter was not supposed to be doing what he wanted, but what Jesus did. And Jesus only did what his Father did (John 5:19). He depended on the Father, he wasn't independent. Instead he humbled himself. Loving the unlovable, bringing good news, caring for the poor, bringing words of hope and peace to people even when he was on the cross.

I am moving into a new season of my life and to enable me to reflect on what it means to follow Jesus at this point in my life, leaving paid employment, I will be taking a three months sabbatical from church life. Maybe you'd like to join me in that time thinking, what does it mean to follow Jesus now, at this time in my life? If you're not sure of how Jesus' lived or what he said, have a look at Mark's gospel in a bible or come to Coffee and Chat and ask questions.



Transform us, O Christ, to be more prayerful – listening, open and responsive, yearning for God's kingdom come as you taught us; to be more pastoral – reaching out to those in need, shepherds like you, of the lost and the lonely; to be more prophetic – heeding the signs of the times, challenging injustice, mirroring your radical inclusivity.

Amen

Stoke Holy Cross Community Hall

The poor weather and near constant rain in May, has made conditions for building very difficult, and inevitably has slightly slowed down construction. However, good progress has been made, and the main shell of the building is now in



place, and the shape and dimensions of the new hall can be seen. By now (July) the roof should be finished with a covering of photo voltaic cells and the black cladding on the walls will have transformed the outer appearance of the new hall.

Most of the work from now on will be fitting out and transforming the inside of the hall, and the outside areas, into a wonderful space for the village to use after its completion and opening in the autumn. There have been quite a few enquiries into possible uses for the hall for both one time occasions and possible regular users. Please do contact the Clerk to the Parish Council, Dan Wickham on 01603 339139, or go to the new website www.shc-communityhall.com for more details.

STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

We are a friendly local group of over 55's meeting at St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke normally the first Thursday in the month with a Games Afternoon and Bingo alternate weeks.

Do come and join us.

Due to Election we held our Club Day on Thursday 27th June (a week earlier)

Bingo 11th and 25th July (Eyes down at 1.30pm) *Raffle prize please*

Games Afternoon with refreshments on Thursday 18th July, 1.00pm start - £1.00

Members have an outing to Bury St. Edmunds on Wednesday 17th July

Embers enjoyed a "Batty" evening at Dunston Church

wenty of our Embers youth group had a great time learning about bats that roost in St Remigus Church which is somewhat tucked away in Dunston.

We gathered at the church at 7:30 and heard a lot about bats from experienced Batman Phil Parker. We learnt that bats can have a wingspan of up to 6 feet. They have only one young a year but live for about 40 years. There are two species of bats that call the church their home and although there maybe only around 10 that roost in the church roof they can make a horrible mess as they leave their droppings. These local bats are the long eared bat and the small pipistrelle bat. Some bats can eat as much as a thousand mosquitos in one evening each hence all the nasty bat poo.

Thanks to a grant from Natural England and a lot of work by Phil Parker and his team our bats are now largely confined to a bat corridor of space

within the eaves of the church between the top of the walls and the wooden ceiling.

They can happily fly around in their space and get in and out to the open air via a route through the upper part of the church tower and the holes provided within the tower leaded light windows.

I think many of our young Embers members went away feeling much more friendly towards these little creatures which can sometimes seem a bit strange and scary even.









Henry

Dates for Caistor Cream Teas



We are planning to serve Cream Teas at Caistor St Edmund Church again this summer but a little later than in previous years - book these dates!

Sundays

August 18th & 25th 2024

O

September 1st & 8th 2024

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

Coffee and chat

10.30-11.30

Church Hall, Stoke Holy Cross on the following Thursdays

4th July

&

18th July

Are you wanting to meet others?

Why not come and join us and chat over a drink?

On the 4th July there is a short traditional communion service

at 10am



How time flies when you're having fun

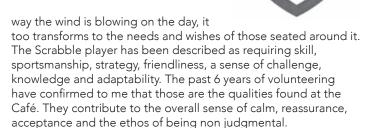
omewhat auspiciously, my first day of voluntary work at St George's Café & Support Group fell on Monday, 23rd April 2018. St George's Hall was bedecked with bunting and balloons to acknowledge the Saint's day. Within the hall there was the hum of reciprocal conversation, no single voice stood out. Special edition St George's biscuits and cakes had been baked and decorated to serve with beverages. That warm atmosphere and the welcome that I received reassured me that the morning was going to go swimmingly, and it did.

Following introductions and wearing my first name identity badge I was invited to join the Triominos table. A group of hard core enthusiasts of the game accommodated me and I sensed a hint of friendly competition; I later discovered that an end of year prize is presented to the individual with the greater number of wins. There was a steady flow of topic and gentle banter covering everything from gardening to the challenges faced by our helpyed NHS.

Over the course of time I spread myself to other tables, learning to put names to faces and building on new friendships. Pattie expertly organises the Craft tables which become hives of industry and creativity. Seasonal and noteworthy celebrations are recognised and appropriate material selected for the craft making of decorations, cards, table displays, jewellery . . you name it and the Crafts Crew will oblige. Opposite the creative corner is what I perceive as Mission Control, an area where dates, logistics, events etc can be discussed. Nevertheless, it stands not alone as an island but welcomes guests to pull up a chair and chat over a beverage or partake in a tabletop activity.

Next to Ground Control is what I would describe as an adaptatable; its many uses include jigsaws, magazines, photo albums. There have been many satisfying completions of big jigsaws on this table when guests and volunteers are determined to finish a 500-750 piece puzzle in 2 hours. There have been up to 7 individuals circling the table on the trickier jigsaws. Finally, we reach the sixth table and once again this is a versatile bench. It regularly hosts games of Scrabble. However, depending on which

By Mary Bardsley



I have outlined only what can be expected on a typical Monday morning at St George's Hall which are held on 2nd and 4th Mondays each month between 10am-12midday. We enjoy organised entertainment throughout the year from professionals offering music/song, exercises for health, reminiscence sessions, bingo, school choirs. We also enjoy two coach outings each year which are very popular.

Those of us who attend the Café are from villages other than Stoke Holy Cross/Upper Stoke/Poringland which may reflect the meagre numbers of such essential community hubs elsewhere. St George's Café was founded by local individuals who recognised the complex needs of those living with dementia and their carers. Many of us have been touched by the effects of dementia within our families, our friends, our neighbours. It is a community service led by local volunteers who strive to keep it vital and supportive. All are welcome.

Please feel free to call in when the Café is open if you are driving past or strolling by St George's Hall; we are a friendly bunch. Those who can spare 2 hours on the second and fourth Mondays of the month between 10am-12midday will be welcomed in to join our small team of volunteers. Meanwhile, enjoy your summer and we wish you good health.

In July our meetings are 8^{th} and 22^{nd} July and we may have some entertainment one week. For information call, 01508 493661, 01508 494742, or 01508 495580

Website is www.st.george's-dementia-support-group.uk

All Invited

We have had a lovely year at All Invited, welcoming many people who have come to have tea and cake with us, chat about faith, be part of our growing community, eat hot food in a warm space, and more.

Recently (as you can see in the pictures) we have been thinking especially about the gift of the Holy Spirit, thinking about how he is like wind or breath blowing through our lives (hence the bubbles), and then last time picturing him like water, wanting to come and fill us up where we are thirsty, so

that we overflow with his life for our family, friends, neighbours and community.





We'd love you to come and explore with us, starting with our session on Sunday 14th July at the Church Hall. There's always drinks and cake to start, loads to do, and then time to talk together and eat a hot dinner. This time we are also going to have extra time at the end after the food (about 5.30pm) to gather and worship, giving us time to sing together for a bit longer and hopefully including others from across our congregations. It would be great to see you there!





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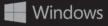
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6th July

JULY 2024

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Tuesday to Saturday mornings until 20th July

9am Mon-Fri Zoom—contact us to join **Prayer meeting**10am Sat (except Sat 6th July) **with Bible reading**

Midweek gatherings in July

3rd July Arminghall church open for refreshments from 2pm,

finishing with Evening Prayer at about 3.30pm

4th July 10am AT THE VICARAGE **Communion**

10.30am AT THE VICARAGE Coffee and Chat10am at Dunston Morning Prayer

18th July 10am at the Church Hall **Coffee and Chat**

Sunday mornings at 9.30am

7th July Caistor St Edmund Praise & Worship
21st July Caistor St Edmund Holy Communion

Sunday mornings at Stoke Holy Cross at 10.30am

7th July Morning Worship with children's group

14th July Morning Worship with Holy Communion & children's group

21st July Morning Worship for all ages with baptisms

28th July Worship and teaching from New Wine on the big screen

Sunday afternoons and evenings in July

7th July

Hymns and Pimm's and cake and things at Arminghall at 3pm

All Invited— Food, Fun and Faith for all at the Church Hall

3.30-5pm tea and cake, lots to do and talk about, hot food at the end 5/5.30pm everyone welcome to join us to eat and then sing together



Communion at 10am on first Thursdays







in and join us

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updates here

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