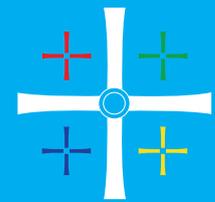


# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

MARCH 2022

## The New Zealand Version of The Lord's Prayer

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father of us all,

Loving God, who is in heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we cause one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.

*Amen*

YEARS 5-11  
**embers**  
youth club

Thursdays  
7.30 - 9 pm  
Stoke Holy Cross  
Church Hall

**MARCH**

3rd: Nerf Wars  
10th: Club Night + Crafts  
17th: Sticky Games  
24th: Club Night + TRACKS  
31st: Identity Theft

For more details contact:  
Gary Watson on  
[gwatson@norwichyfc.co.uk](mailto:gwatson@norwichyfc.co.uk)



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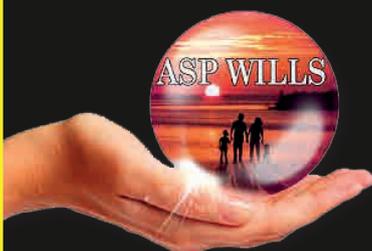
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## You led me to the Cross

It's not easy for most of us, is it, to think of a favourite song? There are so many that have spoken to us at different times. I always wonder how long the people on Desert Island Discs take even to come up with just eight.

And we might be the same about pictures, too, whether it's paintings by our favourite artist, ones our children or grandchildren have done for us, any

image that is meaningful to us. It's hard to choose a favourite.



For me, the same goes for passages in the bible. You can't just pin it down to one. As followers of Jesus we try not to – we recognise that God can speak through any of it at any time, most of all bits that aren't our favourite.

*And I saw your face of mercy in that place of love*

This morning, though, I found myself coming back to one that has always helped me see Jesus, and what it means to follow him. Not surprisingly, because people haven't changed quite as much as we'd like to think in 2000 years, his friend Peter doesn't like the sound of the hard times ahead of Jesus. He can't see what Jesus is talking about.

*You opened up my eyes*

*To believe Your sweet salvation*

*Where I'd been so blind*

It doesn't surprise me, because I don't always see it either. As much as I try to follow Jesus, I find myself going in all sorts of odd directions. With all I have, I resist denying myself, taking up my cross, and following Jesus as he heads towards a much more important Cross of his own. It's why the little cross you can see here in the picture is so precious to me. The triangle is the shape of the chapel at a lovely retreat place I know, but most important is the road up to the cross. It's not straight and obedient, but wandering and wiggly, so that you wonder if you'll ever find your way there. But you do, and in the end it is so worth it.

*Now that I'm living in Your all forgiving love*

*My every road leads to the Cross*

As I wrote that last bit, I worried to myself that I was making it sound like it was all about me. Me finding my way to the Cross, me walking in the right direction. And so I was grateful for the chorus's invitation to pray that Jesus would keep me heading the right way:

*Jesus keep me near the Cross*

*I won't forget the love You've shown*

*Saviour teach me of the Cross*

*I won't forget the love*

*I won't forget the love You've shown*

So as we head towards Easter, may you walk in the way of the Cross, and find mercy and salvation, forgiveness and love. May your every road lead to the Cross.

*Rob*

### VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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*For all administrative enquiries please contact admin@venta-group.org*

**Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches"**

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### IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

*just get in touch and we will see  
what we can do!*  
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### FROM THE REGISTERS

#### FUNERAL

**BRENDA WHITING**

14<sup>th</sup> February

Earlham Crematorium

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.

### FOR ALL COPY PLEASE

send by email to  
Henry and Eostre Caswell to  
[ventafree4all@outlook.com](mailto: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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# Norfolk Churches Trust Bike Ride

Dear Bike Ride Supporters,

This is a brief update on the 2021 Bike Ride. It turned out to be another amazing success. The latest total is an extraordinary **£129,925**. Tantalisingly close to the £130K milestone, so if anybody has some sponsor money tucked away that they have been meaning to put in the post, please do send it in. We will be processing the cheques to send out to over 300 churches who have raised sponsorship money in the first couple of weeks of February.



We are enormously proud of the fact that this year the Bike Ride surpassed the **£4 million** mark raised since it started. This is an astonishing amount of money which has helped support our historic Norfolk Churches. We therefore like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in the Bike Ride over the years. We have some supporters who have been taking part since it first started in 1983!



There is still time to send us any photographs of the day. [editorial@knifebox.co.uk](mailto:editorial@knifebox.co.uk) We love to see pictures of favourite churches, wonderful architecture, hidden treasures and people enjoying themselves taking part. These pictures are very useful for our social media and on the website to help spread the word about the event and the beautiful churches we have in Norfolk. We will be choosing our favourite ones in the second week of February for a £50 prize.

At the same time that we send out the cheques, we will announce the winner of the Prince of Wales certificate. The winner of the most improved church, which will receive a cheque for £1,000, will also be announced. On the website **Wall of Fame** we will be putting the names of the martyrs to blisters and aching limbs who have visited the most churches by bicycle or on foot.

Please do put this year's date in the diary which will be the 10<sup>th</sup> of September.

Charles Inglis Committee Chairman

---

## Community Choir – We would love you to join us!

Thanks so much to those of you who sang with us in the Christmas services. And those who came along to support us!

We received so much encouragement to continue with the choir.

After a period reflecting on - how to do so - when to meet - and what to sing....

We're now pressing ahead and would welcome new members.

You don't have to be a choral grandmaster! Just an enthusiastic singer who can hold a tune.

As well as some contemporary Christian songs, we will be working on vocal arrangements of pop classics such as "summertime", "it's a wonderful world", "you raise me up" and more.

To give everybody the maximum chance of participation, we are going to meet from 7.30 - 9PM on the last Friday and first Monday of every month, starting immediately. You are welcome to join on Mondays or Fridays or both.

These are the first few dates:

**Fri 25<sup>th</sup> Feb, Mon 7<sup>th</sup> Mar, Fri 25<sup>th</sup> Mar, Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Apr, Fri 29<sup>th</sup> Apr**

The first Monday in May will be a public holiday & we will relook at dates before then.

Hope you can join us! Thanks

Andy Harding 01603 782667, 07485 151051 or [andy@thehardings.uk](mailto:andy@thehardings.uk)

### Things Kids Say

3-year-old Reese:  
 "Our Father, Who does art in heaven,  
 Harold is His name.  
 Amen"



A little boy was overheard praying:  
 "Lord, if you can't make me a better boy,  
 don't worry about it.  
 I'm having a real good time like I am."



One particular four-year-old prayed,  
 "And forgive us our trash baskets  
 as we forgive those who put trash in our  
 baskets."



A mother was preparing pancakes for her  
 sons, Kevin 5, and Ryan 3.  
 The boys began to argue over who  
 would get the first pancake.  
 Their mother saw the opportunity for a  
 moral lesson.  
 "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say,  
 'Let my brother have the first pancake,  
 I can wait.'  
 Kevin turned to his younger brother and  
 said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"



A father was at the beach with his  
 children when the four-year-old son ran  
 up to him, grabbed his hand, and led  
 him to the shore where a seagull lay  
 dead in the sand.  
 "Daddy, what happened to him?"  
 the son asked.  
 "He died and went to Heaven,"  
 the Dad replied.  
 The boy thought a moment and then  
 said, "Did God throw him back down?"



A wife invited some people to dinner.  
 At the table, she turned to their six-year-  
 old daughter and said,  
 "Would you like to say the blessing?"  
 "I wouldn't know what to say,"  
 the girl replied.  
 "Just say what you hear Mommy say,"  
 the wife answered.  
 The daughter bowed her head and said,  
 "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these  
 people to dinner?"

# LONG Curate's Egg piece from Lyn

Two years. It seems a long time. Two years ago this month I was working on the UEA campus 4 days a week and then it changed, overnight. I began working from home. Since then I haven't been with all my work colleagues at any one time. Even at a get together last summer, outdoors, on campus, near the Broad, for those who know it, we weren't all together. Some colleagues had left, some didn't feel comfortable meeting all together and one had moved to the other end of the country, but was able to carry on doing her job remotely, thanks to technology. I'm beginning to think, it's never going to be the same again.

Then there's health. I've recently experienced a lot of pain in one of my legs. I kept thinking how long. How long is it going to be like this? When's it going to end? Thank goodness I am not alone. It's a cry that's been spoken, loudly and softly by others but also sometimes, people haven't said it out loud, but have thought it. How long is it going to be? How long am I going to be in this situation? How long are they going to be suffering? How long will it be....?

God said to one of the leaders of the Israelites "How long will you refuse to obey my commands and my instructions" (Exodus 16:28). In another place in the bible, God said "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me?". God also said to another leader, How long are you going to grieve for that king? The people were asked by one of their spiritual leaders, a prophet, How long are you going to waver between two opinions? The writer of the Psalms, says very regularly, to God, How long God? So we see in the bible that the cry of How long went up from people but was also addressed to the people, by God.

To want to know how long something is going to take, is human. And it's a question we can ask God. The weeks leading up to Easter, we'll be looking at unanswered questions in the Venta Group of churches and maybe God is nudging you to come and join us, online, because you have questions you have asked/prayed, and they haven't been answered. However, maybe God is asking you, How long will it be before you join in, attend a church service again, and let me meet you? It would be great to see you again – but we won't ask you How long it's been, we'll just be glad to have you back, just as God will. He welcomes those who have wandered away, like I said last month. May March see you taking a leap of faith and turning to God, who longs for you to know him, for the first time, or once again, no matter how long it's been.

Lyn

---

## Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club

Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club for the over 55's meets at St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke Holy Cross the first Thursday each month (Usually 1.30pm)

### THURSDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2022

Fish and Chip lunch followed by our AGM (subscription of £5.00 due) 12.30pm start (please bring your own cutlery)

Bingo for March Thursdays 10th and 24th - eyes down at 1.30pm.  
 Please bring a raffle prize

Bowls for March Thursday 17th and 31st - 1.30pm (£2,00)

**Our first outing for the year is on Wednesday 27th April . A full day to Sutterton (St. Mary's Church) Flower Festival, Lincolnshire.**

A day coach trip with a light lunch provided. Afterwards we head for Baytree Garden Centre, Spalding to break the journey home.

If you would like to join us on this trip, and support our Club, you would be very welcome. £20.00. Details will be provided by ringing Carol on 01508 492132 or Liz on 01508 493245



# St George's Hall Dementia Support Café

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 March are: 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> March.

On 14<sup>th</sup> February on Valentine's Day we celebrated with our making some beautiful cards as shown on front page and we also enjoyed and some tasty homemade cake and biscuits with our coffee and tea.

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that our well respected and much loved Chairman Dave Gudgeon died on February 18<sup>th</sup>. He was very involved in the Pabulum Dementia Support Group in Wyndham. He was the ideal person to become our Chairman sharing his experience and contacts with us which resulted in the success of our Café. We send our heartfelt condolences to his family.

For more information, ring 01508 493661, 01508 495580 or 01508 495580  
Our website is: [www.st.George's-dementia-support-group.org](http://www.st.George's-dementia-support-group.org)

Advance notice for your diaries

## Stoke Holy Cross Open Gardens 2022

**June 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> from 12 noon – 5pm**

We would love to include more gardens of any style whether established or just getting started be it a flower garden, a veg patch or perhaps largely landscaping.

How about yours maybe?

This year we will be raising funds to share between a local charity together with our Church buildings fund.

Our gardens maybe somewhat dormant at the moment but waiting to burst forth as Spring arrives soon we hope.

So please, please do consider whether you would like to share your garden for a few hours to help raise some charity money and to help 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



### Save the date!

Stoke Jubilee fair  
Afternoon/evening of  
**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June**

We'd love any offers of help, however big or small, to [sandy.01@me.com](mailto:sandy.01@me.com)

### Why English is hard to learn

We'll begin with box; the plural is boxes,  
But the plural of ox is oxen not oxes.  
One fowl is a goose, and two are called  
geese,  
Yet the plural of moose is never called  
meese.

You may find a lone mouse or a house  
full of mice,  
But the plural of house is houses, not  
hice.  
The plural of man is always men,  
But the plural of pan is never pen.

If I speak of a foot, and you show me two  
feet,  
And I give you a book, would a pair be a  
beek?  
If one is a tooth and a whole set are  
teeth,  
Why shouldn't two booths be called  
beeth?

If the singular's this and the plural is  
these,  
Should the plural of kiss be ever called  
keese?

We speak of a brother and also of  
brethren,  
But though we say mother, we never say  
methren.  
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his  
and him;  
But imagine the feminine.....she, shis and  
shim!

*The writer of the above poem  
is not known.*

*We just hope it gave you pause for  
thought about our amazing language.*

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# Something Exciting is Igniting!

Stoke Parish Church first opened its hall for Youthwork on September 23rd last year. We started with a small group of five teenagers, playing pool, hanging out and making music on Norwich Youth for Christ's TRACKS van. In early November, we asked this group if they would like to meet weekly and partake in a more varied program. This resulted with a unanimous, 'YES!' After collecting some ideas about the sorts of activities they would like us to include, we launched our first Embers Youth Club night.

Within a few weeks we had 25 young people on our register! This has consisted of a mixture of upper Primary and High School students. Since then, numbers have fluctuated slightly but we have a core group of around 18 that come every week. The young people are very enthusiastic and a little noisy at times but engage very well with the activities on offer. These have included: Crazy Quizzes, Sports Tournaments, Film Nights and Christmas Bonfires to name a few. With Covid being an issue, we have had to be careful at times with social distancing and mask wearing – but this hasn't dampened spirits.

As we go on, my vision for Embers is that we turn from a random set of individuals to a fellowship that respects, supports and encourages one another. The name 'Embers' was partly inspired by something said about Jesus in the Bible: 'A smouldering wick He will not snuff out'. Although Jesus was the Son of God and immensely powerful, He was gentle and patient with those

hurting and in need. Jesus is in the business of re-igniting stuttering flames; of gently blowing on embers until they burst into flame again. I believe every young person has incredible possibilities within them. At Embers, we want to help those possibilities become realities.

To finish – here are some direct quotes some young people who attend Embers. Let them encourage you!

"Join Embers now. Chill with Y6s from Stoke Holy Cross Primary School. You won't regret it. Fun and games every week."

"The group Embers has helped me relieve stress and relax. I've made lots of new friends and seen lots of my friends from school."

"A fun, varied (if often noisy) group. Interesting sessions have happened, including Taskmaster, Music Quiz and Film Night. All with plenty of snacks and fizzy drinks."

"It's fun. There are great people and activities as well as great snacks. And sometimes you'll see movies! Overall, I would recommend it to you!"

Every Blessing

Gary Watson

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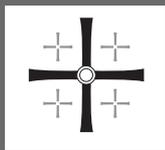
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 with Bible reading

*Ash Wednesday 2nd March*

Check our YouTube channel Venta group of churches for a special video in place of the normal prayer meeting, or contact us in advance for details of in-person services locally.

*2022 Lent sessions on Unanswered Prayer—2 options!*

10am Saturdays      Zoom meeting ID 870 7571 9096, Passcode 314541  
 7.30pm Tuesdays      in person at the Vicarage

*Caistor St Edmund services at 9.30am*

6th March      Praise & Worship  
 20th March      Holy Communion

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

*Sunday mornings at Stoke Holy Cross*

10.30am      Morning Worship with children's group  
 (with Holy Communion on 2nd and 4th Sundays)

*Every Sunday evening in March*

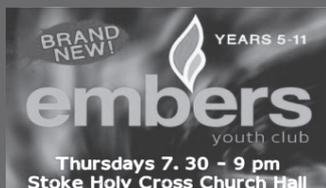
7.30pm      Zoom meeting ID: 820 0665 9178      Listening to God  
 Passcode: 724825      Time to worship, listen and pray

*Sparklers group for 0-4s and their families*

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

*Family gatherings*

We're busy organising great gatherings for families again, following on from our first one on 27th February.  
 Email cathryn.baker@gmail.com and we'll keep you in the loop!



Every week in school term



Saturday mornings from 5th March



Sign up for email updates here

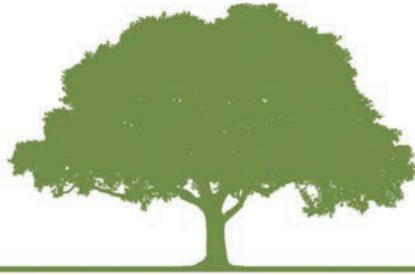
www.venta-group.org | Facebook/YouTube "Venta Group of Churches" | admin@venta-group.org | 01508 492305

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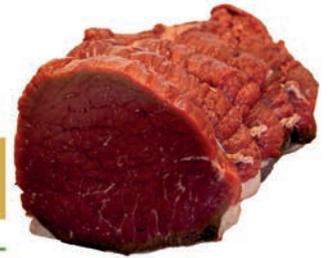
## Lent wordsearch

- |            |           |          |
|------------|-----------|----------|
| ASH        | HOPE      | FORTY    |
| LOVE       | PRAYERS   | TUESDAY  |
| JESUS      | SHROVE    | PANCAKES |
| TEMPTATION | DAYS      | FASTING  |
| WILDERNESS | WEDNESDAY |          |
| DESERT     | NIGHTS    |          |

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