Free for All + +









MARCH 2024

THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

There's something for everyone in our churches this Easter Come and remember and celebrate with us

All invited to our Easter Fun afternoon!

Good Friday 29th March, 2-4pm at the Church Hall Join us for Easter crafts, egg hunt, cakes and drinks, come rain or shine!











Celebration Service for all ages | 10.30am at Stoke Holy Cross

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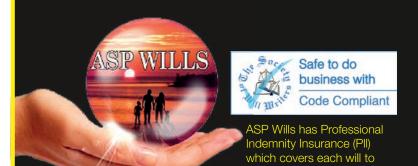
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LASTING POWER OF ATTORNEY



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Easter's coming early

It can't just be the vicars who have noticed that Easter is coming early this year. A quick online search shows that between 2015 and 2030, Easter Sunday is only falling in March on three occasions. So the diary definitely agrees: early it is.

But is Easter really that early?

The Bible has two ways of looking at it. First of all, it would seem the opposite is true. There are centuries of longing through the Old Testament that the Messiah will come. Over and over comes the haunting question, "How long?" Here's one of them: "We are given no signs from God; no prophets are left, and none of us knows how long this will be."

Perhaps you have known times of great longing, or are in one now. You might long for something, or someone. No sign of it happening, no-one seems any the wiser, you don't know how long it might be. But I wonder if you are aware of longing for God, and for Faster?

Lots of those people in the Old Testament didn't have a very clear idea that their longing would end up at Easter, but we get some hints. Isaiah writes about the Lamb who was slain, bearing the sin of many, and about the idea of death being swallowed up forever. The two great promises of Easter, Jesus's death and resurrection, were glimpsed even then. One day, longing would be fulfilled.

Of course, there's another way of thinking about it. Looking back at Easter, instead of forward, Paul has a different perspective: "at just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." So we have the same idea, in some ways – longing feels like powerlessness, doesn't it? – but at the same time something different and extraordinary. The time has come. The object of the deepest of human longing has arrived, and arrived for the powerless, and the ungodly. Jesus does not look for our strength, or our goodness: only our longing.

Except not only our longing. When you look at the times in the bible that someone asks, "How long", you notice something unexpected. Time and again, it's God's voice, not ours. His longing for a wandering and wayward people to come back to a Father who loves them beyond understanding. A God who has searched for us since way before we searched for him; who looks at us and asks, "How long?"

For God too, it was time. Time for his longing and the longing of all his people to meet at the first Easter, when Jesus died and rose again for all of us at just the right time.

Next year, Easter will be three weeks later. But that won't mean we will have even more time to long for its coming than this year. It will already have come, already be done; for us, by Jesus, at just the right time.

Happy Easter everyone



VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

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CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston Viv (493438) & Andy (07777 675193)

Arminghall

Rob (492305) or Lyn (493422)

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

ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Rob Baker (492305)

STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Karen (07761 076954) email: karenp1963@hotmail.co.uk

STOKE HOLY CROSS PAVILION BOOKINGS:

Dan Ward (Parish clerk) 07563 044849

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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.

FUNERALS

JOSEPHINE WAKEFIELD

5th February at **Earlham**

SYLVIA BALDERSTONE

9th February at **Stoke Holy Cross**

BRIAN CROPLEY

15th February at Arminghall

RONALD "RONNIE" WIGBY

22nd February at **St Faith's**

VERA HAGG

27th February (burial at **Stoke**)

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Easter Eggs

ill you be buying any? If so – how do you choose? Does the size matter? Is it the anticipated taste of the egg that informs your decision? Will you be buying some for others and not yourself? We have such an array of choice in the shops. I think over the years I've become increasingly fond of the smaller ones – the Crème or Caramel egg size. Last year I loved the small Reese's eggs inside the larger Reese's egg, so strong and very sweet, the right size to fulfil me.

Many of you will know that the empty Easter eggs are to remind us of the fact that the grave, where Jesus was laid after he died on the cross, became empty because he came back to life. But thinking about Easter eggs, has reminded me that we have choices like those at that first Easter. The disciples chose to run away, to deny they knew Jesus, to betray Jesus. Mary Jesus' mother (and other women) chose to stand by the cross. Joseph of Arimathea chose to come forward (putting his head above the parapet so to speak to the authorities) and ask for Jesus' body and put it in a new tomb (Joseph's own). The ultimate choice was the one Jesus made, to die for us. Without his death there would be no Easter and no Easter eggs.

As we buy (or look at) Easter eggs. Think about your choice. To choose to get to know Jesus and his story, to savour the real taste of Easter that lasts longer than any egg. It doesn't matter what size of faith you have – Jesus can satisfy. But unlike Easter eggs we can buy for others, you have to choose to get to know Jesus for yourself. I have found him to be strong (particularly when I am weak), to be sweet (when I am not) and to be fulfilling (when I know not). May you find him to be the same for you.



Verse 1

You chose the cross with ev'ry breath; the perfect life, the perfect death. You chose the cross.

A crown of thorns You wore for us, and crowned us with eternal life; You chose the cross.

And though Your soul was overwhelmed with pain, obedient to death, You overcame.

Chorus

I'm lost in wonder, I'm lost in love, I'm lost in praise forevermore. Because of Jesus' unfailing love, I am forgiven, I am restored.

Verse 2

You loosed the cords of sinfulness, and broke the chains of my disgrace; You chose the cross.
Up from the grave victorious, You rose again so glorious; You chose the cross.
The sorrow that surrounded You was mine.
Yet, "Not My will, but Yours be done," You said.

Martyn Layzell

Stoke Holy Cross Thursday Club

We are a friendly local group of over 55's meeting at St. Georges Hall Upper Stoke Holy Cross the first Thursday in the month normally at 1.30pm and run Bowls and Bingo alternate weeks again normally commencing at 1.30pm

Our AGM will commence at Noon on Thursday 7th March with a Buffet Lunch and later Julie will provide the music

Bowls commence at 1.30pm on Thursday 14th and 28th ((£2.00)

Easter Bingo at 1.00pm on Thursday 21st March (Please bring a prize with an Easter connection) Eyes down at 1.30pm

St George's Hall Dementia Support Cafe



We warmly welcome people living with dementia and their carers to our regular Café sessions in St George's hall, Upper Stoke Holy Cross on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month (except bank holidays) at 10am to 12 midday.

There are fun activities also entertainment to enjoy along with good conversation, helpful support and information we also have two subsidised outings a year.

There are no joining fees, just a small charge for refreshments and no referral is necessary. We are pleased to to welcome anyone wishing to become a volunteer, a very rewarding thing to do, and a place to meet new friends.

Our dates for March 2024 are:

March 11th when we shall have Mavin with some keep fit chair exercises

March 25th which will be Easter crafts with Pattie

For information call, 01508 493661, 01508 494742, or 01508 495580.

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

Stoke Holy Cross Community Hall

toke Holy Cross Parish Council marked the start of construction of the new community hall in the village with the first Spade in the Ground' ceremony held on 30th January. The event was attended by Councillor Lisa Overton-Neal and Managing Director Trevor Holden, both from South Norfolk Council There were also representatives from Stoke Holy Cross Parish Council, and from Chaplin Farrant architects and builders Draper & Nicholls.

The million-pound new hall will be centrally sited on the Parish playing fields. It will replace the existing pavilion, which is now too small to cater for the increased number of people who live in Stoke Holy Cross. The new hall will be a multi-purpose community building with a large sub-dividable main hall, a meeting room, a kitchen, and toilets. It will also provide greatly improved accommodation for the Stoke Holy Cross preschool, which used the old pavilion.

Feasibility work on a new hall for the village started in 2014. Many hours have since been spent by the Parish Council's New Pavilion Working Group working on its design, its uses, and identifying potential sources of funding.

Sandy Collins, the Chair of the Parish Council, stated that: 'We are delighted to see work on the new hall finally commence. It has been an extremely long and complex process to get this project off the ground. We are extremely grateful to South Norfolk Council for providing matched funding from its Community Infrastructure Fund, to finally enable this project to proceed'.



The 'Spade in the Ground' ceremony was exciting for both the Parish Council and South Norfolk Council who have made the whole project happen. The footprint of the new hall is very clear now and its size compared to the old Pavilion shows how much more space there will be both for the Pre School and the many other activities and events which will be possible in Stoke Holy Cross. If you wish to enquire about using the new hall in any way please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council Dan Wickham on 01603 339139.

Many of you will see every day the changes on the site. The work on the new hall will be very evident by March. Some columns will have been erected and sub structure masonary will be in place with work on drainage and others services, having been started. Also the blockwork will begin and scaffolding will be needed as the height of the building grows.

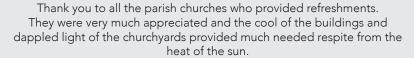


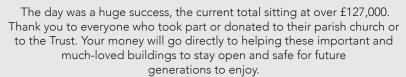


THE NORFOLK CHURCHES TRUST

The sun certainly shone for our 40th Anniversary Norfolk Churches Trust Bike Ride and Walk last year, perhaps for some too much. Despite the punishing heat our loyal bike riders, walkers and drivers were determined to raise money for Norfolk's churches and set off earlier than usual or adapted their journeys so that they could take part.

The feedback tells of another lovely day of discovery.







We thought you might like to see some photographs of participant's enjoying their day.

Any queries, please email info@norfolkchurchestrust.org.uk







Past, Present and Future

aistor Roman Town is one of ten sites managed by the Norfolk Archaeological Trust, and artefacts from Caistor are among the exhibits at the trust's centenary exhibition at the Norfolk Record Office, which is open Monday-Friday and free to visit until 31st May.

2024 is set to be another exciting year at Caistor church, as we plan for the future about how we and NAT can make best use of our fantastic building in the years to come.

A number of the items on display were recovered during an archaeological dig in the churchyard in 2009, and are pictured here.

Can you identify them from the images?

Coffin nail

Brooch

Iron key

Oyster shells

Clay pipe bowl

Metal book clasp

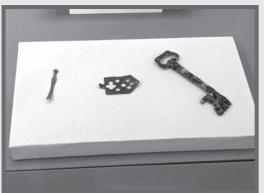
Part of a pestle and mortar

Worked animal bone

Nail cleaner







The printers of Free for All have become the highest ranked printer worldwide as a BCorp member.

Here is an article that was published about their achievement in Print Business magazine.

Anglia Print has become the highest scoring BCorp printer in the world following its 2022/23 impact report. The company was the first in the UK to achieve BCorp membership in 2020 and in its second impact report since then has achieved a rating of 139.3. This is made up of sustainability, community and social measures. Its score was boosted by involvement in community projects and in particular by installation of solar panels which have cut CO2 emissions by 40%. Anglia already works with Climate Partner and offsets 115% of any remaining unavoidable emissions. Electricity that is not generated on site comes entirely from renewable sources.

"We are a climate positive printing company," says director John Popely. "All our machines are powered by 100% renewable energy with no chemistry used in production that is harmful to the environment and with a zero waste to landfill record since 2005."

BCorp assesses companies on their contribution to the community as a business as well as on environmental impact. It encourages members to work with one another as having a shared ethos. Anglia is planning to shift its accounts to a BCorp accountancy firm and is investigating a shift in banking arrangements to a more ethical and progressive bank.



Corporation 139 Points

"Increasingly our turnover is derived via working with fellow BCorp businesses," he says. "It is about striking the balance between profitability and environmental action." Membership of the association is growing strongly with around 2,500 UK businesses now achieving the score of 80 that constitutes qualification. As with other schemes this is a starting point to be improved upon in subsequent years. UK print membership is behind the curve with Seacourt qualifying just

weeks after Anglia, Generation Press and most recently Eight

Days A Week joining.

As well as installation of the solar panels in 2022, the company took on guardianship of a half acre plot of land near the factory which is being planted and managed as a butterfly meadow. It is already has a wildlife garden, watered from harvested rainwater.





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MARCH 2024

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* LOOK AT OUR SEPARATE FLYERS AND POSTERS FOR EASTER SERVICES AND EVENTS FROM 28TH-31ST MARCH *

Tuesday to Saturday mornings

9am Mon-Fri Zoom—contact us to join **Prayer meeting**10am Sat **with Bible reading**

Midweek gatherings in March

6th March Arminghall church open for refreshments from 2pm, finishing with

Evening Prayer at about 3.30

7th March 10am at the Church Hall Holy Communion

Followed by **Coffee and Chat** at 10.30

21st March 10.30am at the Church Hall **Coffee and Chat**

Sunday mornings at 9.30am

3rd MarchCaistor St EdmundPraise & Worship17th MarchCaistor St EdmundHoly Communion

Sunday mornings at Stoke Holy Cross at 10.30am

3rd & 17th March Morning Worship with children's group

10th & 24th March Morning Worship with Holy Communion & children's group

Sunday afternoons and evenings in March

10th March All Invited — Food, Fun and Faith for all ages from 3.30pm-5pm

at the Church Hall

17th March Prayer and Praise at 6pm at Stoke.

or find us on Facebook

Join us to worship, pray and listen to God

Coffee and Chat

10.30 - 11.30 Church Hall, Stoke Holy Cross

7th Mar, 21st Mar

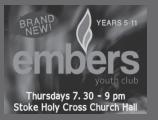
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