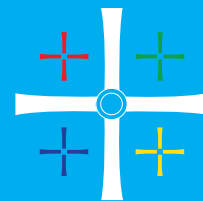


Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

MARCH 2018



allstars club

after school for 4-11s

**Games Crafts Snacks
Bible Stories, Videos & Songs**

All Foundation-Year 6 children are welcome to join us at our brand new after-school club, as well as any older helpers who would like to join in!

If you'd like to come along, or to find out more, contact us on admin@venta-group.org, or 01508 492305.

We really need to know in advance if you are coming to help us plan ahead, but please do just come along if you don't manage to get in touch for any reason. All children must be signed in and out by a responsible adult.

Thursdays 3.30-4.45 in the Church Hall
22nd March 26th April 24th May 28th June

The Venta group of churches

Allstars

We had a great time last month at our first ever allstars club! About 20 children from Stoke primary school came along and had a great time thinking about the Parable of the Lost Sheep, with songs and games and crafts and the compulsory drinks and snacks... there are some pictures here so you can see what we got up to! We are very grateful to our super team of helpers who made everything possible, and are so excited to see how this grows and develops in the months to come. We really welcome any child of primary school age to come and join the fun. It would help if you could let us know you are coming, but do just drop in if you don't get round to it. We are meeting every month until June, and then planning a summer holiday club for end of July/ beginning of August – watch this space!

EASTER SERVICES

Maundy Thursday 29th March

6 - 7 pm Reflective Evening with light supper at Old Hall Barn Caistor St Edmund. RSVP please to Brian and Lia 01508 494137

Good Friday 30th March

10 am Good Friday Service at Arminghall Church

12 noon Good Friday Service around the cross at Stoke Church Hall with light lunch and walk of witness to follow

2 - 4 pm Family fun activities at the Pavilion

Easter Sunday 1st April

9 am Easter Sunday Family Communion Service
Caistor St Edmund Church

10.30 am Easter Sunday Family Communion Service
Stoke Holy Cross Church

4 pm Easter Songs of Praise
Dunston Church

Easter Fun at the Park



Cakes and drinks
Easter crafts
Easter Egg Hunt

Family activities
in and around
Stoke Holy Cross
pavilion
Good Friday
March 30th 2018
2-4pm

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If your birthday is on 29th February, I hope that you had a nice one. Then again, I suppose that you didn't, this year, but at least there is 2020 to look forward to. In the meantime, you'll have had to put up with being another year older, but not having had a birthday. For someone like me, who likes having a birthday, but not getting older, this seems like the absolute worst-case scenario, so you have my sympathy! Funny how two opposite things can both be true at the same time, isn't it?

The other week at church we were thinking how this is not just the case with birthdays and getting older, but with God, too. Christians have always believed that Jesus is entirely God and entirely human, and that God is both three and one: good examples of this kind of idea.

The point of looking at these, as we will for the rest of the year, on and off, is that questions like this might challenge our faith, but ultimately, they help us to grow. They are good questions for a time of year like Lent, when people often think more about their relationship with God, and how it can continue to deepen and flourish. Let me give you an example.

Last month, once we had sorted out the birthdays and the leap years, we got on to a bigger question: how can God, who has everything he needs, ask us for anything? We see time and again through the bible examples of God asking an extraordinary amount of his followers, whether it be of

one person, like Abraham, who was asked to sacrifice his son, or a group of people, like Israel, who were called to walk out into the desert and trust God to provide for them. If God has everything that he could possibly need, why does he ask so much of us?

First of all, I think, it has something to do with the relationship being the most important thing. When we relate to God, who has given us so much, it is understandable that we begin to see God in terms of what he has done for us, rather than who he is, but this is not always helpful. This, I think, is part of why God asks us to give him everything. The best thing he can give us, you see, is himself.

Second, as we make sacrifices for him, (something people often think about in Lent) we are reminded of the extraordinary sacrifice that he made for us. John's gospel famously tells us that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, Jesus Christ, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but may have eternal life.' Paul describes how God 'did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all.'

It could just be that the time we live in makes this all particularly difficult to grasp. I cannot possibly be the first to suggest that a culture where so much is so readily available does little to help us understand things like this, but I think we must try to if we are to grasp what it meant when Jesus told us to take up our cross, and follow him. I'll be praying these words again as I prepare for Easter this year: will they be your prayer too?

VICAR OF THE VENTA GROUP

Stoke Holy Cross with Dunston, Arminghall and Caistor St Edmund
Rob Baker, The Vicarage, Mill Road, Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8PA
rob@venta-group.org 01508 492305


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CURATE

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Lyn@venta-group.org 01508 493422

www.venta-group.org

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CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston
Viv (493438) & Roy (493595)

Arminghall

Pat (492622) & Annie (495580)

Caistor St Edmund

Jani (493572) & Graham (493430)

ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Joyce Williams 492143

STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

Viv Carrington 493438

STOKE HOLY CROSS PAVILION BOOKINGS:

Barbara Cattermole (Parish clerk)
530739

FROM THE REGISTERS

INTERMENT OF ASHES

Reginald & Elizabeth Lester

2nd February

Stoke Holy Cross

FUNERAL

Dorothy Martins

26th February

Caistor St Edmund

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.



POST OFFICE

Stoke Church Hall,
Mondays 9am-1pm,
Weds 1.15-4.15pm

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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Happy Easter!

Easter is upon us early this year, so we have noted the services and events for the whole Easter weekend, including Easter Sunday, on the front page, and we will be repeating them in our next magazine in the hope that it finds its way to you before the end of March. We will be delighted to see you at any of the special events we are having that weekend around the group of churches: all the details are on the separate images on this page, or in the bar on the right.

As I write I have been thinking, as I often do, about the way that Jesus turns the world upside down. In our school assemblies recently, and in our Lent course which is running through most of March, we have used the words of Jesus in the Beatitudes to think about how God's kingdom is the opposite of the way the world so often is: 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth', and so on. In school we have been using a favourite story of mine, Mr Topsy-Turvy, to remember how someone can arrive somewhere doing things in the opposite way to everyone else, and that this can stick with people for a long time. Elsewhere in the bible (in another bit we have been looking at recently) Paul talks about being a fool for Christ, exploring the idea that following Jesus means we sometimes do things which other people might feel are strange, or even stupid.

First among these, of course, is believing the idea that Jesus is risen from the dead.

As much as it might be tempting to try and imagine a version of Christianity where we don't really need to bother about these things, it is actually the one thing on which everything else stands. It is what I come back to, often, on the days that I struggle more than others to make sense of God, and the world. Is the stone rolled away? Is the tomb empty? Is Jesus risen from the dead?

It is more important than anything else, because it confirms the truth of some amazing words from Isaiah, which you will be seeing on some Easter posters we are putting around the villages, and on our website and social media: 'He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces.' If Jesus is alive, then death itself is defeated, and life forever with God is available to all of us through him.

And that is what we are celebrating this Easter, as we gather in different places in different ways. Lives changed now by Jesus, and the promise of life forever because of Jesus. So whether you join us on Good Friday, to reflect quietly at Arminghall or the Church Hall, or a bit more interactively with your family at the Pavilion, or you gather joyfully with us on Easter Day at Caistor, Stoke or Dunston, we invite you to delight with us in Jesus, who is alive, and has swallowed up death forever.



SERVICES FOR MARCH IN THE VENTA GROUP OF CHURCHES

4th March	3rd Sunday of Lent
9.00am	Traditional Holy Communion <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
10.30am	Informal Holy Communion <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church</i>
5pm	Reflective (Taizé) service, <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
7pm	The Gathering, <i>Mulbarton Church</i>
11th March	4th Sunday of Lent
	Mothering Sunday
9am	Holy Communion for Mothering Sunday, <i>Arminghall Church</i>
9.30am	Mothering Sunday Praise & Worship, <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
10.30am	Mothering Sunday Café Church, <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall</i>
18th March	5th Sunday of Lent
9.30am	Family Service, <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
11am	Traditional Holy Communion, <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church</i>
25th March	Palm Sunday
9.00am	Traditional Holy Communion <i>Caistor St Edmund Church</i>
10.30am	Sunday 4 Everyone <i>Stoke Holy Cross Church</i>
4.00pm	Evening Service <i>Arminghall Church</i>

*For all Easter services,
please see front cover*

*We always do our best to come
and say hello to new people
moving into the villages where
possible, and are happy to come
and visit if you would like us to
pray God's blessing over your new
home, for example.
Please be in touch with Rob or the
churchwardens if you would like us
to come and see you...*

You are invited to a Maundy Thursday Supper

29TH MARCH

6 pm - 7 pm

Old Hall Barn, Caistor St Edmund

A simple supper taken together with a
reading and a quiet time.

RSVP please to
Brian or Lia on
01508 494137
or Brian's mobile
07979 902121

Help required please

We need some more help with the first stage of the 'Free For All' distribution when we deliver batches of the magazines to various houses in the parishes. Specifically at the moment we need someone to drive round to deliver batches to about 13 houses in Caistor and Upper Stoke- this will take about an hour each month. Ideally we would like more than one person to offer then this will give us cover when others are away at crucial times.

For more details or to offer help please contact Jani Wymer on 01508 493572 or email janiwymer@gmail.com.

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SPARKLERS

Sparklers welcomes all babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers with their parents and carers. Tuesdays 10-11.30 during school term. Stoke Church Hall.

Contact Cathryn via sparklers@venta-group.org, or see our Facebook page [f Sparklers Stoke Holy Cross](#). Just turn up and join in!

STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 1st March 2018. This will be our AGM. We will meet at the hall for 12pm as we will all enjoy a buffet before the meeting and being entertained by Julie Dawn. We are a small friendly club who meet once a month of the first Thursday of the month and are always looking for new members to join us. If you can spare an afternoon once a month then why not come along and join us. We hold outings during the year, two meals out, and of course our yearly November Fayre. Why not come along and join us for a small subscription each March and September you will be made very welcome. For any details ring myself Liz Smith 01508493245 or Susie Curson who is our chairperson 01508493990.

Our dates for **Bingo** in March are - 14th and 28th - eyes down 4.45pm

Our dates for **Carpet Bowls** are - 7th and 21st - 1.30pm - cost for this is £2

ROYAL WEDDING STREET PARTY

Calling all residents of Caistor St Edmund! The Parish Council and Caistor St Edmund Church invite you to a Royal Wedding Street Party, on the afternoon of Sunday 20th May. A separate invitation will follow with venue and timings, but save the date, and prepare to get involved: we will need lots of tables and chairs, decorations, gazebos, children's activities, music, sandwiches and cakes, cups and plates and more. Don't miss out!

Caistor St Edmund Church

The Praise and Worship service on 11th March at 9-30am will have a Mothering Sunday theme. Flowers will be given to the ladies and there will be refreshments after the service.

Monday 19th March at 7-30pm in the church we have the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, for the election of Churchwardens and Offices and presentation of the various reports and accounts. This meeting is open to all.

Sunday 1st April is Easter Sunday and there is a service of Holy Communion at Caistor Church at 9-am.

REMEMBER British Summer time begins on Saturday night 25th March, clocks go forward one hour.

St Mary's Church Arminghall



next month's issue. For further details of the Lent Breakfasts in March please see the article below.

The Arminghall Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place in the Village Hall at 7.30pm on Tuesday March 6th. Please do come along if you can and this is your chance to comment on what the church does and for you to make suggestions for the future. There will be refreshments as always. If you would like to know more please feel free to contact Pat Howlett 6 Church Close Arminghall Norwich, NR14 8SE 01508-492622

Our church services in March are the traditional Holy Communion Service on Sunday 11th at 9am and on Palm Sunday 25th we have our Evening Service at 4pm. Everyone is very welcome.

For details of the services on Easter Sunday please see the front page.

Find out more about the Christian faith

pilgrim

A COURSE FOR THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

Join us for Lent this year as we reflect on the amazing words of Jesus in Beatitudes—teaching that really turns the way we look at things upside down, and introduces us to God's big vision for his kingdom coming in the world. We will be using the Pilgrim material that was so popular last year to explore the themes of

Openness to God
Peacemaking

Thirsting for what is right
Being citizens of God's kingdom

Living transparently
Foundations

Once again we will be having a series of breakfasts around the villages where we can spend more time together creating community and deepening discipleship through food, and some listening, talking, and prayer. We would love people from across the group to join us at each of these. You can sign up on a Sunday, or email lent@venta-group.org. 8.30-10am every week.

3rd March, Stoke Church Hall
17th March, Caistor St Edmund

10th March, Stoke Church Hall
24th March, Caistor St Edmund

Adam's Gardening tips for March

Assuming the weather is favourable, March will be one of the main sowing months. Most of the hardy crops, leeks, peas, spinach, parsnips and brassicas can be planted directly outside. Hopefully your soil will have weathered well over the winter so that the minimum amount of raking/cultivation is required to produce a suitably fine seedbed. Applying a balanced fertiliser before this is a good idea so it can be worked into the ground. (Containing Nitrogen, Phosphate and Potash- NPK.) The more tender crops if planted soon will need to be planted under shelter of some kind: cloches, cold frames or greenhouse.

Most seed packets do have useful information about sowing depths and spacing which varies from crop to crop. If possible when planting out seeds use a board on which to stand so as not to compress the ground underfoot. April finds planting brassica seeds and other crops in modules, and keeping them in the greenhouse to establish before planting out into their final positions, is a useful way of not disturbing their root systems too much when they are transplanted.

In February's notes you were advised to chit your potatoes. The earlies should now be ready by mid-March for planting, with well-formed strong dark green shoots. Place in a small trench (a drill) about six inches deep and about twelve inches apart and then cover. Main crop potatoes will be planted a little later and further apart than this as they need more room to mature. Keep an eye out for late frosts and protect the emerging shoots by either putting straw over the top or pulling soil up to cover them and forming ridges.

Adam will now be planting his cold stored

strawberry runners, keeping the rows about three feet apart. As he is using small plants this may look a great distance but he needs to think about the space the final crop will require. He will inter crop with small salad plants in the first year to use the space effectively.

If you are fortunate to have enough space why not dedicate an area as a cutting garden to produce flowers for your house? Plant Sweet Pea seeds in situ now (these will need sticks or canes for support), and buy some Dahlia tubers. Plant them in a well fertilised bed and watch the beautiful blooms develop. Another perennial beauty is a Peony. There are some stunning varieties available these days.

Potatoes Dauphinoise Serves 4.

Why not try this for potatoes if you are using the oven anyway. It may seem a small amount of potatoes for 4 people but the dish is very rich and delicious cooked slowly and goes well with roast lamb. You could cook more and freeze any left over.

0.5 kg red potatoes, 40g butter, 150ml double cream, 150ml milk, a crushed garlic clove, salt and pepper.

Pre heat the oven to 150C and butter a shallow dish. Peel the potatoes and slice very finely. You can use a mandolin but watch out for your fingers. Rinse the slices quickly and dry on a clean tea towel. Arrange the slices in the dish sprinkling a little salt, pepper and crushed garlic between the layers. Mix the cream and milk and pour over the potatoes. Dot the top with butter and bake for about an hour to an hour and a half. You might get away with doing it at 180C for rather less time.

STOKE HOLY CROSS TUESDAY GROUP

Our March meeting will take place on March 20th, at 7 30 pm in the Church Hall, and you are warmly invited to join us. The title of the talk is 'Blood Bikers', and the people who run this most amazing charity provide a much-needed service by delivering supplies of blood and other urgent medical supplies between hospitals across the country. They give a service which is far faster than sending these things by post or the ubiquitous white van, and in our technological age, it's good to think that lives can be saved, not by the intervention of someone working at a computer keyboard, but by human compassion, as a rider arrives at a hospital with something that will keep a patient alive.

Our recent donations have been £81 from our Carol Service collection, given to the EACH 'nook appeal', and the £241 raised at our New Year's lunch, which will in time be given to our ongoing charity for 2018, the Dementia Café at St. George's Hall in Upper Stoke. Our thanks to all who supported us.



ST GEORGE'S HALL DEMENTIA SUPPORT CAFÉ

A comfortable, caring and supportive social setting for people living with dementia and their carers meeting on the 2nd and 4th Mondays each month from 10.0am till noon (except bank holidays) at St George's Hall, Upper Stoke Holy Cross.

Newcomers are always welcome to simply drop in to the Café (or ring one of these numbers before if you wish 01508-493661 or 492938). Check out our helpful website below. We are naturally delighted to welcome new volunteers even if you can't make it every time.

There is a café run by volunteers plus a separate carers' meeting place adjoining the main room to relax and useful for sharing ideas, practical support and advice.

Next meetings are:

Mon 12 March Café (TBC) Film Show
Mon 26 March Café (TBC) Easter Crafts
Chiropodist Attending

www.stgeorges-dementia-support-group.btck.co.uk

COME & CELEBRATE Mothering Sunday

11th March 2018

9.00am

Arminghall Church
Traditional Holy Communion

9.30am

Caistor St Edmund Church
Praise and Worship

10.30am

Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall
Café Church

www.venta-group.org

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Burns Night Celebrations

A great time was had by all at the Burns Night Celebrations held in Stoke Holy Cross Church Hall. The food was the traditional fayre, consisting of haggis (vegetarian as well), neeps and tatties. For the first time ever, Henry cooked cloutie dumplings, which proved to be very tasty indeed.

Many thanks to all who attended and took part in various quizzes, as well as the highlight of the evening (using tartan paper to create a costume for one member of their table). Just so many creative people around in the Venta Group!

A huge thank you to everybody who helped by baking potatoes, setting up beforehand and clearing up afterwards. And, of course, many thanks to all those who came and made the evening such a fun time together.



ST REMIGIUS CHURCH DUNSTON



On Easter Sunday afternoon at 4pm we will be having an Easter Songs of Praise in Dunston Church. Please do come along and join us. (Regulars will be pleased to know the church has been professionally cleaned of any sign of the bats).

PORINGLAND AND LODDON PARISH ART EXHIBITION 2018

All are invited to view and or participate in our annual Art Festival

at Our Lady of the Annunciation Church
21 Upgate, Poringland NR147SH

Thursday 15th March (11 am – 5 pm)

Friday 16th (11 am - 5pm)

Saturday 17th (11 am – 4 pm)

Entry by catalogue £1

Refreshments will be available too

TO EXHIBIT please contact
Anne Webster phone - 01508 494401

Stoke Holy Cross Churchyard

The Vicar Rob, the church wardens and members of the church family along with, no doubt, many other members of the local community, wish to express grateful thanks to Ray Dack for his many years of help towards the maintenance of the churchyard at Stoke Holy Cross.

Ray comes in a long line of people who have given their time to help to make our churchyard a haven of peace for many people, and for wildlife too, as you may have seen recently in Elizabeth Dack's article and photographs

We now need to look to the future and we wonder if you would be willing to be part of a rota for mowing and strimming for Stoke church yard for the coming season. As a volunteer, you would be covered by our Ecclesiastical Insurance Policy. Please contact our wardens Viv Carrington 493438 or Roy Harding 493595, if you think you can spare a bit of time to help.

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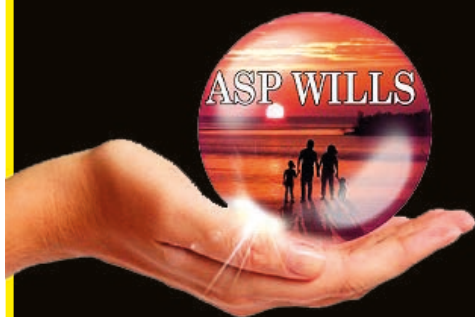
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