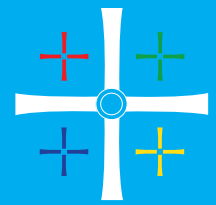


Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

NOVEMBER 2024



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OUR ALL INVITED GROUP ENJOYED AN OUTDOOR SESSION AT ARMINGHALL IN OCTOBER



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Even though there is a lot still to organise for December, we are getting ahead of ourselves a bit in the churches this year when it comes to Christmas. Not that all the events are organised by any means; cards have to be designed, and posters printed, and slots on rotas filled, and buildings decorated, and all the usual things that need doing at that time of year. Where we have been getting ahead of ourselves is that a month or so ago we felt we should start reading through one of the gospels again on Sunday mornings, and we settled on John. The opening includes some words which you might have heard at carol services before: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

There are some complicated ideas here, but if you basically assume that "Word" means Jesus here, you're on the right track. A very popular modern version of the bible – a less literal translation – uses the phrase "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood."

The world has changed a lot in 2000 years, but one thing there still is are neighbourhoods. You might feel really rooted in our village communities here, like lots of people do, or you might find your neighbourhood somewhere else. Maybe it is the school your children go to, or the place you work, or a big friendship group, or something else, but most of us have some kind of neighbourhood.

I wonder what it means to you that Jesus has moved into it? I'm always eager for everyone who belongs to our churches to be active in our community in all sorts of ways, because when we do that, we bring Jesus with us, and he is good news for everyone. But this is another place I am aware of not getting ahead of myself, and how I need to remember that Jesus so often goes before us too: the job of his followers is to follow him, to see what he is doing, and join in.

I am sitting in the house at the moment, and feeling that I am in the wrong place to be writing this; as I type I am picturing the streets and the houses in the villages and asking Jesus where in the neighbourhood he is at work. Where are people catching glimpses of him? Where are his grace and truth being revealed? Where amongst us is there a real sense of Jesus coming close to us, like a neighbour? Could that be what you have been noticing recently: the Word who became flesh and blood moving into the neighbourhood?

Rob

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Search Facebook and Youtube for "Venta group of churches"

www.venta-group.org

 [@venta_group](https://twitter.com/venta_group)

CHURCHWARDENS

Stoke Holy Cross & Dunston
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Rob (492305) or Lyn (493422)

Caistor St Edmund

Jani (493572) & Lia (494137)

ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Rob Baker (492305)

STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

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email: karenp1963@hotmail.co.uk

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IN A FUTURE MAGAZINE

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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.

FUNERAL

JAMES VISICK

Monday 7th October at Caistor

INTERMENT OF ASHES

BRIAN BAKER

Saturday 26th October at Caistor

BURIAL

CLIFFORD HAGG

Monday 28th October at Stoke

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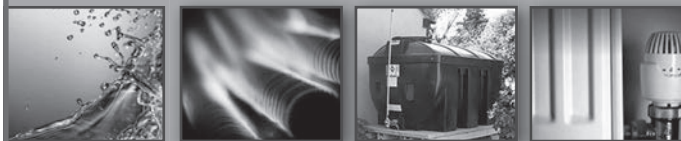
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Remembering

It's hard not to associate November with remembering in this country, with Remembrance Sunday still being a major national occasion. Remembering is not just a UK phenomenon as I found out early on in my sabbatical.

Gary and I spent 2 and a half weeks travelling around Ireland. For the first few days we were in Northern Ireland then for a week in the west coast near Galway and finally a week in south west Cork. On our first full day we visited Downpatrick where the St Patrick's Centre can be found. The Centre is trying to ensure people remember St Patrick and his faith and mission. (There weren't many people visiting when we were there but whilst we were in the café a group did come in – Michelle O'Neill, the first minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly surrounded by ministers/advisers!) The next day we toured Belfast on the Hop on-hop off bus which took us past various wall murals of people – an attempt to ensure residents remembered them and their mission. When we were travelling to our cottage in Dunmanway we passed a roadside memorial, to a massacre – which had fresh flowers on it – someone was still remembering. We visited a museum a few days later on the recommendation of the owners of our holiday cottage, the Skibbereen Heritage Centre, where we were silenced by the Great Irish Famine exhibition. What is the point in remembering that awful famine, the massacre, the people on the wall murals or St Patrick? All these form Irish history but they are not to be left to history but in order to learn from history we need to remember. I will remember my holiday in Ireland.

You may not have visited Ireland so you can't share in my remembrance or can you? Maybe as you're reading this you're remembering a holiday or a similar place to those I've mentioned above. What are you going to do with that remembering? Maybe you could do what we will do when we gather on Remembrance Sunday read from the bible and pray to God that we may learn? Like this:

Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.
Psalm 62:8

Father of all, remember your holy promise, and look with love on all your people, living and departed. On this day we especially ask that you would hold forever all who have suffered during war, those who returned scarred by warfare, those who waited anxiously at home, and those who returned wounded, and disillusioned; those who mourned, and those communities that were diminished and suffered loss. Remember too those who acted with kindly compassion, those who bravely risked their own lives for their comrades, and those who in the aftermath of war, worked tirelessly for a more peaceful world. And as you remember them, remember us, O Lord; grant us peace in our time and a longing for the day when people of every language, race, and nation will be brought into the unity of Christ's kingdom. This we ask in the name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lyn

A LOCAL CELEBRITY and it's a moth!!

Moths rarely make headlines unless they've been eating the "wrong thing" but a tiny 'micro' moth caught in our Stoke Holy Cross garden recently attracted media attention including a Guardian article. The Norfolk Snout (*Nothris verbascella*) is a straw coloured moth measuring only 10mm with a brush on the front of its face and a pair of horns but what made it newsworthy was that this was the first sighting in Britain for over 50 years.



When we found the moth resting on an egg box from the trap we had no real idea what it was. When an identification app proposed a species that was "extinct" we assumed it was wrong but further research proved it to be spot on and we had a major rarity. Running a non-lethal moth light trap always gives the chance of attracting something unusual but, unlike the Scottish Grass-moth (*Catoptria permutatellus*) we attracted in 2017 (only the second English record), this wasn't the end of the story. Some moths make incredible journeys e.g. the Diamond-back Moth (*Plutella xylostella*) with a wingspan of no more than 17mm, can travel vast distances with several million estimated to have arrived in Norfolk in June 2016. However we had a hunch that this might not have been a long-distance traveller.

Although widespread on the continent, Norfolk Snout has only been recorded sporadically in Britain. First recorded in Britain "near Norwich" in 1853 with further 19th century Norfolk and Suffolk records, it was rediscovered breeding at a gravel pit near Snettisham in May 1967 where it was last recorded in 1971 and then considered extinct in Britain. The caterpillar food plant is recorded as Hoary Mullein which grows locally and checks at various sites including the Roman Town, High Ash Farm and Whittingham Marshes have now resulted in adults and apparent feeding signs suggesting the moth is back or had it possibly gone unobserved all this time?

And what happened to the star of the show - I'm pleased to say that we were able to release the original find unharmed to join more of its species. **Dave Jones**

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.

Thursday 7th November at 1.30pm
SATURDAY 9th NOVEMBER FAYRE AT
1.00 - 3.00pm

(Grand Draw/Tombola/Nearly New/
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BINGO 14th and 28th -
eyes down at 1.30pm
(Raffle prize please)

GAMES 21st at 1.00pm
(£2 with refreshments)

Christmas Community Choir



Do you like singing carols? Would you like to sing with a group of other people who do too? Last year we got together to form a Community Choir to sing for our carol services across the Venta Group of villages, and we'd like to do the same again this year. But we need you or rather we need your voice. So whether you came last year or you didn't, we would love to see you at the Church Hall on the following Friday nights 7.45-9pm

1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th November
6th and 13th December

If you are coming, or you can't make all the dates, please let me know by emailing lyn@venta-group.org or pop down and have a word at our Thursday Coffee and Chat mornings.



Howard Cresswell

We were sad to hear recently of the death of Howard Cresswell, vicar of Caistor St Edmund from 1975-82. His daughter Kitty writes:

Rev. Howard Rex Cresswell was born in Ipswich on October 1, 1931. His religious vocation began as a curate in Dovercourt in 1959. It was during his time in Essex that he met his wife, Maria. They moved to Norfolk in 1971 with their first child, and Howard started as vicar in the parish of Kenninghall before moving on to Trowse, Arminghall and Caistor St. Edmund in 1975. He then went on to serve the parish of Heigham St. Barnabas with St. Bartholomew from 1982 until his retirement.

Howard lived as well as preached his Christian values. He was an active peace campaigner, including as a member of CND, and took part in various anti-war campaigns. He was also an avid reader, painter and poet.

He died at the age of 92 at North Walsham hospital. He was cared for and is missed by his wife, children and grandchildren. He generously donated his body for scientific research, and has asked for his ashes to be scattered at St. Michael's Church in Long Stratton.

Stoke Holy Cross Fuel Allotment Trust

The Trustees of the above charity invite anyone living in the Parish of Stoke Holy Cross who is suffering from "need, hardship, or distress" to apply to the charity for a fuel grant or other assistance. Application forms are available in 'Lower Stoke' from either the Post Office, Stoke Church Hall (opening hours Monday 0900-1300) or Mrs Margaret Nudds, 77 Norwich Road, NR14 8NX, and in 'Upper Stoke' from Julian Foster, 20, Chandler Road, Upper Stoke Holy Cross, NR14 8RG (07855-025027).

Please note: applications must be received by Saturday 30th November 2024

Caistor neighbours monthly walks and New Years get-together with drinks and nibbles

Residents and friends of Caistor St Edmund village get together on the first Saturday of the month for a leisurely walk in the countryside, followed by coffee and cakes at Old Hall Barn or sometimes at other homes in the village. We warmly welcome anyone from our village or neighbouring villages to join us. It's always very friendly and easy going and we love to see new faces. The next walk is on Saturday 2nd November at 9.30am starting at Old Hall Barn, followed by coffee and cake at about 10.45am.

If you can't join the walk, you are very welcome to come along just for coffee and chat.

We also warmly invite you to a drinks and nibbles party on Friday 10th January 2025 at Old Hall Barn from 6-8.30pm to wish each other a happy New Year. This is a chance for everyone to chat and catch up with friends and meet new ones. Please bring nibbles and/or a drink to share. This has been a very happy friendly occasion in the last few years, and you don't want to miss it! The fire will be on and there will be plenty of food for everyone.

If you'd like to join in with any of these activities and want to be kept informed of events please email Lia Day at cornelia.mclean1@gmail.com

We'd love to see more new faces and get to know people from in and around our village.

Lia and Brian Day and Jani Wymer.

Below is a photo from a recent walk and coffee (it was warm enough to sit in the garden!)



STOKE HOLY CROSS COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

We are looking for volunteers to join our team of Community Speed Watchers !

The benefits of Community Speed Watch lead to:

- Fewer fatalities and serious injury collisions
- Increase in road safety awareness by and for all road users
- Reduced vehicle speed leads to lower noise levels
- Raising awareness of anti-social road use
- Enhancing the role of community members as volunteers

We use teams of 3 individuals who will only be required to give two to three hours of their time each month. The venues are inspected and approved by the local Police and the times are arranged within the teams. Training will be provided as will all equipment. So if you can spare a few hours a month and want to do something for our community, we'd love to meet you.

For more information please contact

Peter Russell on 07974002063 or peter.russell1@gmail.com

Embers Fun and Games plus Jesus the shepherd

Nearly 30 of our Embers youth group enjoyed fun and games one evening as well learning more about Jesus as our shepherd.

There was also a crazy competition to create an animal from rubbish with some interesting examples of land and sea creatures as shown by these photos.



The Resurrection Window

My wife Barbara and I took our seats to fly to Boston USA, looking forward to visiting family in August. En route, we both watched an in-flight movie which was to greatly alter our plans, a documentary called "Holy Frit" – it had all the ingredients of an excellent film... high drama, nail-biting suspense, great characters and, above all, a wonderful story about the creation of the biggest** stained glass window in the world for a church building in Kansas City. We were glued and at the end I said to Barbara "what a great pity we'll never see it..."? (Famous last words...)

Two weeks later we were flying the 1,200+ miles to Kansas City in the Mid-West; known as the 'City of Fountains', it's famed for restaurants specialising in barbecue food and is built across two States, Kansas and Missouri, as it straddles the Missouri River.

The church is the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas City. From small beginnings in 1990 with some 10 people attending the first service, today it's a multi-site church with an active membership of over 24,000 and a staff of 250 plus a similar number of volunteers. The founding and senior pastor is Rev Adam Hamilton. We had the pleasure of meeting him before the Sunday Morning Service where he singled us out and the congregation of well over 1,000 spontaneously stood to applaud!

Their latest and largest church building containing the new window was opened in 2017 and houses a sanctuary seating 3,500 folk, together with many other facilities and spaces for a multitude of church activities including charitable food distribution and teaching,

not forgetting the bookshop and two cafes.

Of course, we had been moved to visit in the first place by the Resurrection Window. It's the breathtaking and spectacular focal point of the Sanctuary measuring almost 100 feet wide and 35 feet high. There are 161 panels, each 5 feet high by 4 feet wide, the total weight of glass is eight tons, without the metal frame. It employs a newer technique of painted, fused, etched and glazed glass rather than just traditional stained glass methods.

That's the technology. The visual and emotional imagery of the Resurrection Window is simply stunning. Photographs cannot do justice. It tells the biblical story in magnificent detail, using three gardens namely The Garden of Eden, The Garden of Resurrection and The Garden of Paradise Restored. You can sit in absorbing contemplation for a long time studying this giant masterpiece yet still want to keep returning for more. It's all the beautiful handiwork of artist Tim Carey and his team, including the central compelling and commanding vision of Jesus.

We spent most of our three days in Kansas City at this life-enhancing and tranquil place.

(Malcolm Cutts)

1. See more about the Resurrection Window at sacredspaces.cor.org
2. 'Holy Frit' is not yet freely streamed but is available for online rental or purchase. A trailer is available.
3. ** It's not clear where the largest stained glass window in the world is today, other contenders are in Justice, Illinois and Krakow, Poland.

St George's Hall Dementia Support Group



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 welcome anyone wishing to become a volunteer, a very rewarding thing to do, and a place to meet new friends.

For information call, 01508 493661, 01508 494742, or 01508 495580 Website is www.st.george's-dementia-support-group.uk

The Dementia Café & Support Group hosted a bulb planting session in St George's hall on Monday, 23rd September which was attended by 40 of our regular guests, visitors and volunteers.

The hall was transformed into a potting shed worthy of Monty Don's own. Keen gardeners and non gardeners alike set to in planting Narcissus Bridal Crown to take home and enjoy. We hope that these pretty and perfumed narcissi will show their colour & fragrance during the darker early months of 2025.

May we take this opportunity to thank Angela and the staff at Homestead Nurseries in Kirstead for their advice and kindness.

Our next Café sessions are on Monday 11th November and Monday 25th November, 10:00-12midday.

St George's is a perfect venue to enjoy a natter over a fresh brew and biscuit, especially now that the daylight hours are shorter. You will be warmly welcomed. We wish you all good health.

THE NEW COMMUNITY HALL

The construction of the new community hall is now nearing completion, despite yet more bad weather in October. The building now has a roof equipped with solar panels, fully glazed doors and windows, attractive black cladding to the outside, and a paved patio with steps to the playing fields. It also has a bespoke 'Community Hall' Sign over the front door, including a 3D image of Stoke Mill, which has been kindly donated by Charles Bussey and his family.

It is hoped that the new hall will be handed over to the Parish Council by the beginning of November, and will comprise a subdividable main hall, a meeting room, a kitchen and café area, and a carefully designed pre-school facility.

Finally, the '75@75 Tour de Broads' appeal has now raised over £1400 to help the pre-school relocate into the new hall, which is fantastic news. The fund is still open and anyone wishing to make a late donation, can do so at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/SHX-Pre-School-Ride.

Anyone interested in holding classes or running events at the hall is asked to contact the Parish Clerk at stokeholycross.pc@gmail.com.



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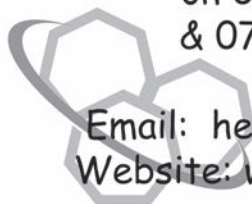


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