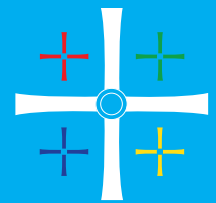


# Free for All



THE MAGAZINE OF THE VENTA GROUP

SEPTEMBER 2024

## Some recent gatherings at Stoke



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Yesterday I was pruning our big rose bush; it produces loads of little pink flowers and doesn't take much looking after at all, which is very good news if you prefer low-maintenance gardening. But the one thing I do know about it, is that if I want the flowers to keep coming, I have to cut the old ones off as soon as they have finished, in order to encourage new growth. This year I have been a bit slower than I sometimes am, and there are quite a lot of rosehips starting to form already, using up potential flower energy.

As I was merrily snipping away at them, it occurred to me that what I was actually doing was cutting off the fruit. It doesn't matter with a rose bush, of course, unless you are going to make syrup or jam or tea with the hips – or, as I think I recall from a childhood book, itching powder. But with plants which we grow for their fruit, like apples or pears or tomatoes or whatever, it would be madness to cut off the dead flowers in search of new ones; there would never be any fruit.

All of this got me thinking, like most things do, about being a follower of Jesus, and about making followers of Jesus. It struck me that it is fairly easy to make something look good, like a flower looks good, but that a lot more work, or energy, whether on the plant's side or ours, is needed to produce fruit. And I wondered whether sometimes we can be so keen to chase after something that looks good, that we end up choosing that over the fruit that will take longer to grow, but will be so valuable in the end.

It is so exciting when someone becomes a follower of Jesus for the first time. It's just like my rose bush bursting into flower. But that flower has to change into fruit, and that doesn't happen straight away, or make a big show of it. The rosehips I was cutting back yesterday were green and boring compared to the lovely pink flowers, but slowly the potential for new life was forming – at least until my secateurs got in the way. When the bible talks about the Holy Spirit producing fruit from these first flowers of faith, it lists a lot of things which take time, and aren't superficially impressive: patience, goodness, kindness, and so on. It strikes me that our social media age is one of flowers rather than fruit, and that maybe patience just doesn't look so good on TikTok or Instagram. But when I sit at a table with my family and there is a vase of flowers and a bowl of fruit on there, I know which one is going to get eaten.

*Rob*

#### 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](mailto:rob@venta-group.org) 01508 492305

#### 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

Kirsty Long, 1 Ponsonby Way, Poringland, NR14 7FJ  
[kirstylong204@gmail.com](mailto:kirstylong204@gmail.com) 07878 047289, 01508 830368

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Rob (492305) or Lyn (493422)

#### Caistor St Edmund

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#### ST GEORGE'S HALL BOOKINGS:

Rob Baker (492305)

#### STOKE CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS:

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

#### STOKE HOLY CROSS PAVILION BOOKINGS:

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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.

#### INTERMENT OF ASHES

#### THOMAS CLARKE

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August  
at Arminghall

#### WEDDING

#### LEON McCARTHY

&

#### ABBIE DOUGLAS-HUNT

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August  
at Stoke Holy Cross

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

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By 10<sup>th</sup> of this month please.



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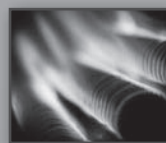
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# From our Curate, Kirsty

The beginning of September marks the start of a new school year, a time when parents are frantically rushing around buying last minute bits of uniform and stationery which is require for the school year ahead. One of the things I remember taking all four of my children out to buy before the new school year began was new lunch boxes. All with different designs on the front many of which would be the new craze for that time, including Thomas the Tank Engine, Barbie, Postman Pat, Spiderman, Snow white, Nemo and the Frozen characters. The last time I had to buy one of these was about 8 years ago, but it doesn't look things has changed as the shops are full of new lunch boxes with the latest designs including Minecraft, Peppa Pig, Pokemon, Harry potter and Disney Princess' to name but a few.

Having a packed lunch for school or for work or to take on a day out is something that many of us take for granted. However, when I was at 'New Wine' (a Christian Festival) listening to a talk by the Trussel Trust last month it was drawn to my attention that many families across the country are struggling to fill a lunch box, let alone to buy a new trendy lunch box to use. Due to the cost-of-living crises many families who once were managing well are now struggling to provide the basic needs for their families.

Having heard this I was reminded that Paul in his letter to the Romans wrote "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." (Romans 12:13)

Is this something we are in a position to do? Are we able to share what we have with those in need? For each of us this the way in which we can do this will differ. For example, you may be able to put an extra can in the food bank box at the local supermarket or put some items in the community pantry cupboard at Stoke Holy Cross Village Hall or give a struggling friend (or stranger) and their family a meal or even pay for some groceries to be delivered to them or financially support the Trussel Trust or other charities supporting individuals who are struggling to provide food for themselves and their families.

Whatever we can do, big or small, will make a real difference to those who find themselves in these difficult situations at this present time. Is there something you can share with those struggling to feed themselves today?

## STOKE HOLY CROSS THURSDAY CLUB

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

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September  
Club Day

Outing to Southwold for members on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>

Games afternoons commence at 1.00pm on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and includes refreshments - £2.00 (Please bring your own games to share with friends).

Bingo commences at 1.30pm sharp on 19<sup>th</sup> (Please bring a raffle prize)



**Save the Date 7pm**  
**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November**

**tearfund**

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## A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE



at Caistor St Edmund Church  
on Sunday 15th September 2024 at 4pm

We are personally inviting people who have lost people close to them during the past five years, but everyone is very welcome. As part of the service you will be invited to light a candle to thank God for your loved one.

If you know of someone who might find such a service helpful, please do encourage them to come along.

Tea and cake will be served afterwards.



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rob@venta-group.org | 01508 492305



# Baptism of Beauden and Zara at Stoke Holy Cross on 21<sup>st</sup> July

It was lovely to welcome Beauden and Zara and their parents and godparents, wider family and friends, as we celebrated their baptisms on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July. As you can see from the pictures there was a lovely crowd of people and it was wonderful to share with them all that Jesus is the good shepherd who loves coming and looking for sheep who have got lost.

We're always really pleased to hear from families on our community or with a close connection to our churches, who would like to celebrate their new baby in some way. Whether that's a baptism (Christening), where parents and godparents promise to bring up the child to know and follow Jesus, or another form of service like a thanksgiving, we're happy to talk about what we can do for you, and encourage you to get in touch.



## All Invited afternoon at the Vicarage

It was so lovely to see so many young families and masses of children all enjoying fun in the garden as you can see from the photographs. There was lots to do and time to chat as well as enjoying some home made cakes for afternoon tea on the lawn.

Then to top it all off we had a burgers and sausages barbecue with salads plus yummy home made puddings for afters.



# Deep Sea Divers Holiday Club

What a brilliant week we had at Deep Sea Divers Holiday Club! These are just a few pictures of the great time we had with 30 or so children having fun together and finding out more about the deep love of Jesus.

One of the things we did was to learn this wonderful bit of Ephesians 3: "I pray that you can understand how wide and how long and how high and how deep Jesus's love is." If your children came along, why not ask them if they have been thinking about that since the Holiday Club; if not, you could pray it for yourself: it's amazing what happens when people start to make these words their own.



## 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

Dates for September are: 9<sup>th</sup> September a trip to Pensthorpe has been arranged

23<sup>rd</sup> September we are planting some bulbs in pots ready for Christmas flowering.

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](http://www.st.george's-dementia-support-group.uk)

## New Community Hall

The new hall is really looking splendid now with the scaffolding down and 50 solar panels on the roof. The cladding makes the outside of the building look very smart and the windows are in and the glazing finishes the outside. But of course, there is the matter of the inside.

Some members of the Parish Council and others, who have been involved with the planning for the hall, were allowed a brief visit inside. It was very exciting to see the lay out, with a good-sized hall, generous storage rooms, hatches from the kitchen for a cafe/bar. But there is a way to go. The work now begins on installing the services, kitting out the kitchen, and other areas. So, progress visible from the outside will slow, but it is full steam ahead inside.

Unfortunately, there has been a delay in the date on which the building will be handed over to the PC. This is due in part to the sustained bad weather early on in the build and also due to a couple of amendments which were made to the original plan which became necessary as the build continued in order to maximise the potential of the hall. The combined effect has resulted in an increase in costs so there will be a series of fund raising events over the next few months which we hope everyone will support.

Glyn Davies, who has played a huge role in the project, has completed a 75 mile bike ride to raise funds for the pre-school to buy storage equipment for the new hall. He has raised over £1000.

The hand over date is now likely to be sometime in October but it is still a little fluid.

If you are interested in helping with the cafe or the bar which we hope to run please contact Sandy Collins on [Sandy.01@me.com](mailto:Sandy.01@me.com) or call on 07949 607182.



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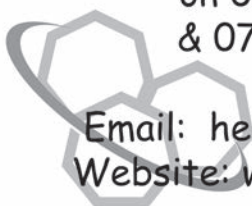


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# SEPTEMBER 2024

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10am Sat

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Prayer meeting  
with Bible reading

## Sunday mornings at 9.30am

1<sup>st</sup> Sept

Caistor St Edmund

Praise & Worship

## Morning Worship at Stoke Holy Cross at 10.30am

1<sup>st</sup> Sept

Worship for all ages

8<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept

Morning Worship with communion and children's group

15<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> Sept

Morning Worship with children's group

## Sunday afternoons in September

1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Sept

Cream Teas at Caistor from 2-5pm

8<sup>th</sup> Sept

All Invited at the Church Hall from 3.30-5pm—Food, fun and faith for all ages

15<sup>th</sup> Sept

Service of remembrance/ hope after bereavement, 4pm at Caistor St Edmund

22<sup>nd</sup> Sept

All invited at the Church Hall from 3.30-5pm—Food, fun and faith for all ages

Followed by time to sing together—all welcome!

## Midweek gatherings in September

4<sup>th</sup> Sept

Arminghall church open for refreshments from 2pm,  
finishing with prayer at about 3.30

5<sup>th</sup> Sept

10am at the Hall

Communion

followed at 10.30am by

Coffee and Chat

19<sup>th</sup> Sept

10.30am at the Hall

Coffee and Chat

*Caistor church building is open about 10-4 daily, and Arminghall most Saturdays - space to reflect, and to pray*

### Coffee and Chat



5<sup>th</sup> September  
19<sup>th</sup> September

Communion at 10am  
on first Thursdays

### Caistor Cream Teas



Sundays

September 1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> 2024

2-5pm

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