



January Newsletter

We welcome you to this month's publication, which we hope will be something to lift your spirits and be thought provoking too! There are printed copies available in Lady St Mary Church and these can be picked up at the 10am service and taken to people who do not have the internet and so if you can share it by posting a copy to a neighbour, but please be careful to practise all necessary precautions.

News from the Ministry Team ...

Dear All,

As we enter a new year, with Christmas gifts having been given and unwrapped, the advertising messages we see in the media invite us to spend more on gifts for ourselves, in the January sales. The adverts and offers compete for our attention, hoping to win us over and convince us that we need whatever they are selling in our consumer culture.

Meanwhile, after the birth of Jesus, the gospel narrative continues with the visit of the wise men, which we celebrate at Epiphany. The mission of the magi is not to accumulate more 'stuff' for themselves, but to give their all in worship of the child Jesus. They travel great distances, guided by a star. They navigate the power dynamics of Herod's court. And when they finally reach the true King whom they have been searching for, they are filled with joy, they bow down in worship, and give him their precious and costly gifts (Matthew 2:1-12).

The wise men are not taken in by the earthly authority of Herod, who seeks to cling to power and preserve his own interests by means of violence and control. Instead, they recognise that true power and authority rest with the child they find in Bethlehem. Jesus is the true King who is worthy of our worship. So, the wise men do not hesitate when it comes to the seemingly extravagant act of giving gifts fit for a king to a small child. This is their rightful act of worship and devotion to the true King of all our lives.

In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul speaks about offering our whole lives to God as an act of worship. The Message version puts it like this:

Cont'd...

“So, here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life - and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t be come so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God, you’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” (Romans 12:1-2, The Message)

So, at the beginning of this new year, as we continue to navigate the challenges of the pandemic, and with many different things competing for our attention and seeking to win our devotion, may the focus of our hearts, like those of the wise men, be on King Jesus, that he may be enthroned in every part of our lives.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year!

Every blessing,

Stuart

An alternative Christmas Celebration



Looking ahead, on Sunday 2nd January there will be an opportunity to enjoy the Christmas festivities in a different way. At 11am there will be a relaxed celebration with music, songs, carols, jokes, and readings, in fact it can be whatever you want it to be. We hope that young and old alike will want to come along and join in the fun, either by being there or taking an active part. If you

would like to play a part, please do let Simon, or the Parish Office know so that we can arrange everything accordingly.



Mission



Thank you to everyone who has faithfully collected used stamps for the leprosy mission. This simple thing raises much money to support some of the

most disadvantaged people in the world. Stamps need to have at least a quarter of an inch surrounding them. Thank you for taking the time. Anne Bashford

Although this is the New Year edition of the Monthly News, it will be distributed before Christmas and so we thought you might enjoy this piece written by Tinaz Sequeira, who works in Tearfund's Donor Care team, based in Teddington, UK. It is good to have an insight into Christmas celebrations in another country.

Christmas with the neighbours: India

'Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights...' (James 1:17)

Growing up in Bombay, India – a huge country with many cultures, languages, religions and teeming with people – Christmas was easily the most anticipated religious festival. The East Indian village that I grew up in transformed itself into a magical, bright place, where houses and balconies were lit up with colourful Christmas lights and decorations reflecting the most joyous time of the year.

I grew up outside of the Christian faith but was surrounded by Christians on all sides and in religious India, a place where people embraced any excuse to celebrate their religious festivals, Christmas was the highlight of the year. The joy and mirth that Christmas brought was unmatched by any other festival. It is what drew me to Christianity and Christians in general.

Come December and we would join a small group of friends and go carol singing all over the village. Families started making all kinds of different and delicious sweets – the competition could get quite intense! People came together, strangers became friends, forgiveness, peace, and joy were in the air. It was truly a wonderful time! Even people of other faiths joined in the celebrations.

And what exactly did we do on Christmas day itself? We went to church for a midnight service, visited neighbours, exchanged gifts, showed off our lights and decorations, offered our guests the sweets and food we made, and generally shared all our experiences, often laughing with and at each other.

It was always very special and has given me some of the best childhood memories I still treasure.

Holy Days

1st Jan: The naming of Jesus



Matthew and Luke tell how the angel instructed that Mary's baby was to be named Jesus - a common name meaning 'saviour.' The Church recalls the naming of

Jesus on 1st January - eight days after 25th December (by the Jewish way of reckoning days). In Jewish tradition, the male babies were circumcised and named on their eighth day of life.

6th Jan: Epiphany



On 6th January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. But who

were these Wise Men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi,' and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It was not until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a

symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly, Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the 8th century, the Magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar, and Melchior.

For early Christians, the *name* of Jesus held a special significance. In Jewish tradition, names expressed aspects of personality. Jesus' name permeated His ministry, and it does so today: we are baptised in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), we are justified through the name of Jesus (1 Cor 6:11); and God the Father has given Jesus a name above all others (Phil 2:9). All Christian prayer is through 'Jesus Christ our Lord,' and it is 'at the name of Jesus' that one day every knee shall bow.

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Where did the Wise Men come from?

Magi from the East - it isn't a lot to go on. The Magi had originally been a religious caste among the Persians. Their devotion to astrology, divination and the interpretation of dreams led to an extension in the meaning of the word, and by the first

century the Magi in Matthew's gospel could have been astrologers from outside of Persia. Some scholars believe they might have come from what was then Arabia Felix, or as we would say today, southern Arabia.

It is true that in the first century astrology was practised there, and it was the region where the Queen of Sheba had lived. She of course had visited Solomon and would have heard the prophecies about how one day a Messiah would be born to the Israelites and become their king.

Matthew's gospel (chapter 2) is clear that the Magi asked Herod: 'Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.' So, it is possible that in southern Arabia the Queen of Sheba's story of how a Messiah would one day be sent to the Israelites had survived. Certainly, there are a number of other early legends that connect southern Arabia with Solomon's Israel.

To many people this makes sense: that the ancient stories of a Messiah, linked to later astrological study, prompted these alert and god-fearing men to the realisation that something very stupendous was happening in Israel. They realised that after all these centuries, the King of the Jews, the Messiah, was about to be born.

One more interesting thing that gives weight to the theory that the Magi came from southern Arabia is this: if

you study any map of Palestine as it was during biblical times, you will find that the old Arabian caravan routes all entered Palestine 'from the East'.

25th Jan: Conversion of St Paul



January is a month of the beginning of great things! As well as the naming of the Son of God, we celebrate the conversion of the greatest ever apostle of the Christian faith. Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as 'Saul' at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then, on his way to Damascus, Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed.

Saul changed overnight. He was given a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church,

and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote epistles to the young churches that he founded - and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: Paul was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned, and finally martyred.

Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in 64AD and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

Diary Date

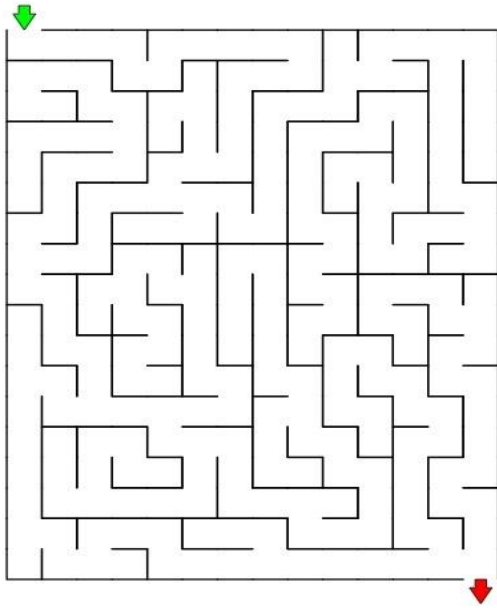


Purbeck Village Quire

The Purbeck Village Quire will be singing in the Parish Hall on **Sunday 9th January 2022** – The Handbell ringers to welcome you at 7pm and the Quire are in concert at 7.30pm. Please come and join in with some of the old Dorset carols.



Puzzles



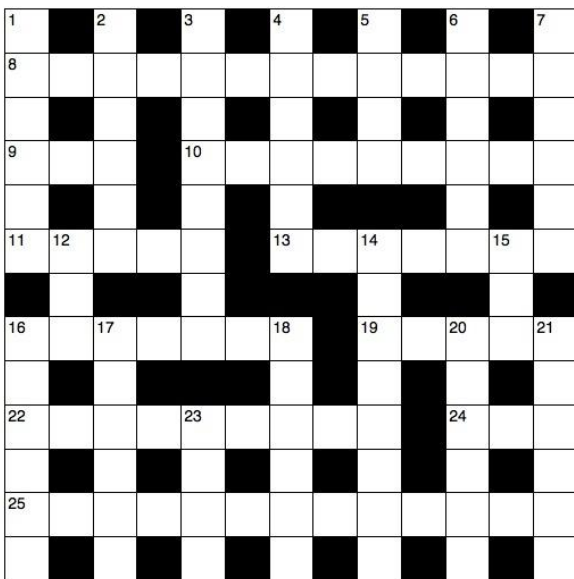
The Maze

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Sudoku

Crossword



Clues Across

- 8 How the Abyss (NIV) is described in the Authorized Version (Revelation 9:1) (10,3)
- 9 Frozen water (Ezekiel 1:22) (3)
- 10 The Ten Commandments (9)
- 11 In Roman Catholic theology, neither heaven nor hell (5)
- 13 Des cons (anag.) (7)
- 16 'Though [your sins] are red as — , they shall be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18) (7)
- 19 Keen (Romans 1:15) (5)
- 22 Repugnant, loathsome (Jeremiah 24:9) (9)
- 24 Drink like an animal (Judges 7:5) (3)
- 25 First and last (Revelation 22:13) (5,3,5)

Clues Down

- 1 Father of Ahi, a Gadite (1 Chronicles 5:15) (6)
- 2 Where David found the stone with which he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (6)
- 3 'Hour by hour fresh lips are making thy — doings heard on high' (8)
- 4 'And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their — at night' (Luke 2:8) (6)
- 5 United Society for Christian Literature (1,1,1,1)
- 6 'If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would — — or a tax collector' (Matthew 18:17) (1,5)
- 7 Where Paul was taken when things became difficult for him in Berea (Acts 17:15) (6)
- 12 Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican Bank) (1,1,1)
- 14 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new — ; the old has gone, the new has come!' (2 Corinthians 5:17) (8)
- 15 Used to colour ram skins red for use in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5) (3)
- 16 Vat car (anag.) (6)
- 17 'Be joyful — — , patient in affliction, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (6)
- 18 'The parts that are unrepresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts — — special treatment' (1 Corinthians 12:23) (4,2)
- 20 Ancient rowing boat (Isaiah 33:21) (6)
- 21 Say again (2 Corinthians 11:16) (6)
- 23 What Jesus did in the synagogue in Nazareth after he stood up (Luke 4:16) (4)

Contact information



Parish Office

The Parish Office has now reopened to answer all face-to-face enquiries, telephone and email enquiries Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am to 1pm. At all other times enquiries and queries can be made by email and they will be dealt with as soon as possible.

Contact details: www.warehamchurches.org.uk

Tel: 01929 550905, Email: parish.office@warehamchurches.org.uk

Address: Parish Office, Church Green, Wareham BH20 4ND

***Please note that the Parish Office will be closed for the Christmas holidays from Thursday 23rd December 2021 and will reopen on Wednesday 5th January 2022**

Members of the Team are available for confidential help, support, and advice. Please contact:

Clergy Team

Team Rector The Reverend Canon Simon Everett
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Team Vicar The Reverend Stuart Cocksedge 01929
550972

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Schools Worker and Pioneer Priest The Reverend Hilary Bond
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Email: hilary.bond@me.com



Something to make you smile

