

Four Seasons Flowers

*Flowers For All Occasions
Weddings, Parties, Funerals*

0161 338 4227

07595 937 046

 Fsf fourseasonsflowers

 fourseasons655866@yahoo.com

29 Grosvenor Street, Stalybridge SK15 2JN

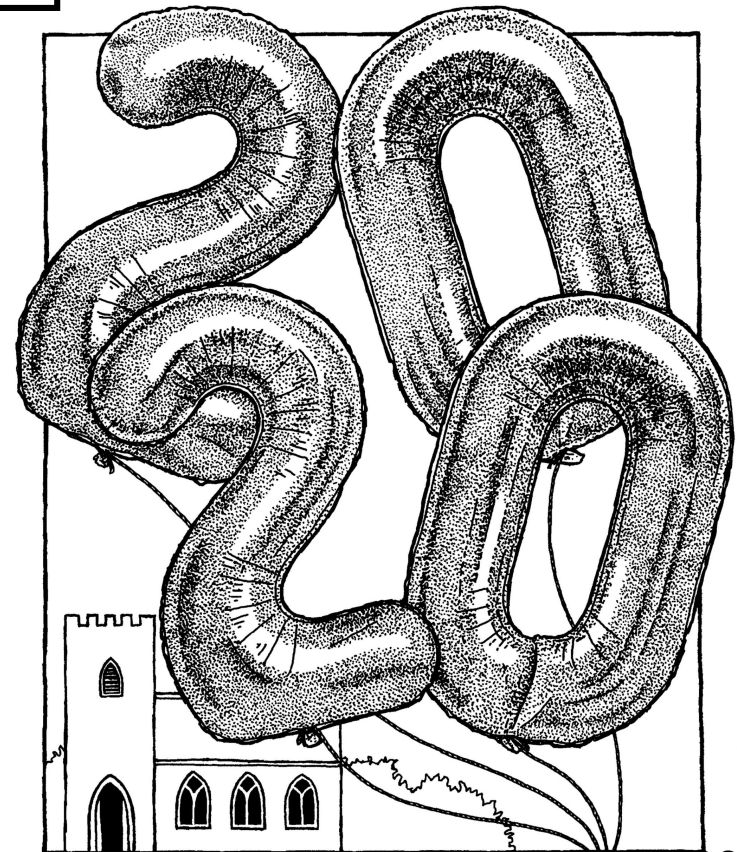
St George's Parish Church Stalybridge

Diocese of Manchester

35p



 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



January 2020

St George's Church Stalybridge



Clergy

Vicar

Wardens

Mr Derek Redeyoff 0161 338 4779

Mrs Janet Vidler 0161 303 7689

Deputy Wardens

Mrs Rose Hayward 0161 303 1731

Mrs Gillian Cotton 0161 303 2787

Mrs Valerie Fallows 0161 304 9522

P.C.C. Secretary

Mrs Lynn Moon 0161 338 5773

Treasurer

Mr Michael Davies 0161 338 5112

Magazine Editor

Mrs Linda Hurst 0161 330 0518

Room Hire

Mrs Janet Vidler 0161 303 7689

email: stgwarden@hotmail.co.uk

Worship

Sunday

10.30 a.m.

Sung Communion and Junior Church
(4th Sunday – Family Service)

18.00 p.m.

Occasional Special Services as
announced

Tuesday

10.30 a.m.

No service during interregnum

To receive Communion at home when you are sick or housebound, or to have the name of a departed friend or relation entered in the Book of Remembrance, please contact one of the Wardens.

For Baptisms, Marriages or Funerals please phone the Warden, Derek Redeyoff on 0161 338 4779. Baptisms are usually conducted at 12.30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

From Our Book of Remembrance

1 Jan	Ezekiel Lomas	1941	18 Jan	George William Catlow	2000
2 Jan	Edward Cooper	1980		Marian Hulme	2002
	Ernest Bramall	1982		Reginald Hewitt	2008
	Marjorie Day	1982	19 Jan	Mary Eastwood	1989
	David Cotton	2007	20 Jan	Raymond Jack Clarke	1983
3 Jan	Ivy Marshall	2006		Katherine Devlin	1988
4 Jan	William Parkinson	1943		Jean Ollerenshaw	2012
	Phyllis Peck	1981	21 Jan	Heather Alwyn Clarke	2012
	Barry Aldred	1999	22 Jan	Thomas Howard	1964
	Nellie Mellor	1977		Harry Walton	1967
5 Jan	Joseph Hibbert	1957		Eliza Emma Sidebottom	1988
	Hugh Shepley	1987	23 Jan	Jesslyn Tonge	1991
	Gertrude Sullivan	1998		Neil Hadfield	2011
6 Jan	Harry Walton	1988	24 Jan	Henry Howard	1981
	John Barratt	1996		Rhoda Hancock	1989
8 Jan	George Leonard Eakins	1981		Harold Spencer	1962
	James Norman Kelday	2000		Albert Marcel Hough	2017
	Fred Harris	1979	25 Jan	Agnes Smith	1975
9 Jan	Sarah Clews	1994		Carol Hyde	2010
	Susan Ann Maud Barnfield	1953		Joseph Middleton	2019
	Derek Greenwood	2019	26 Jan	Edith Emma Clinton	1987
10 Jan	Tom Sidebottom	1979		Nellie Wood	1987
11 Jan	Jesse Horsefield	1984		Eric James Chorlton	2001
	Drinda Jefferson	1990		Margaret Slack	2007
	Evelyn Barlow	2003	27 Jan	Fred Kay	1968
	James Watson	2014		Bridget Bower	1994
12 Jan	Ethel Battersby	1992		Ronald Bower	2000
13 Jan	Kathleen Thwaites	1992		Geoffrey Phillip Brown	1995
14 Jan	Robert Nicholson	1988		Abraham Newton	1983
	Eva Helen Ollerenshaw	1989		Veronica Quinn	1997
	Kyle Martin Cropper	2004	29 Jan	Fred Holt	1939
	Ramsden			Eddie Holden	1990
15 Jan	Norman Council	2014		Karen Jane Bradbury	2007
	James Ireson	1990		Mildred Bradshaw	2014
16 Jan	William Gudger	1963	30 Jan	Alice Saxon	1997
	Minnie Schofield	2012	31 Jan	Alice Ann Priestley	1955
17 Jan	David Lees	2011		John Robert Stanley	1990
18 Jan	William Frederick Ireson	1962		John Patrick Higgins	2006

+++++



BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

To have the name of a loved one entered into this special book, and remembered in our intercessions for their anniversary please have a word with one of the wardens.

The cost for the special inscription is £10 per entry



DEMENTIA CAFÉ

We are thrilled to announce the start of a new initiative here at St George's. Starting on Friday 3rd January, we will be hosting a Dementia Café. Many of us have been affected by the diagnosis of dementia to a friend or relative and know first hand how devastating this disease can be, indeed a relative of mine has just been diagnosed. We aim to give the sufferer and their carer a safe place to get together for a chat, to share experiences, access vital support, take part in quizzes, crafts and not least enjoy a cuppa and cake!

Willow Wood Hospice already hosts such an event twice a month and we are aiming to dovetail into their service in order that there will be a meeting almost every week. Rose and I have been to the meetings at Willow Wood and they have offered us lots of support and ideas.

We have already got a great band of volunteers for brewing duties and I am in the process of accessing funding and generally pulling it all together. What we do need are your prayers and support for this exciting new initiative.

The meetings will be held on the first and third Fridays of the month between 1pm – 3pm. The only stipulation is that the guest must be accompanied by a carer. There is no need to book – our doors will be open.

So come along and see what we have to offer, our first meetings in 2020 will be on 3rd and 17th January 1pm to 3pm.

+++++

Chris Crabtree

+++++

Hello!

I am delighted to have been appointed as Vicar here and have already heard many good things about all that's going on, as well as about the challenges and opportunities for the future. A little about me by way of introduction – I'm sure we'll discover much more about each other over the coming months but here I am in a nutshell!


I'm originally from Hertfordshire and that is where my family still live. I went to university in Canterbury, studying theology and religious studies, before moving, from south to north, to Manchester to work as a parish assistant at St Chrysostom's, Manchester and chaplaincy assistant at Salford University. From Manchester I moved to the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield to continue formation for the priesthood and study for an MA. I was ordained deacon in 2013, priest in 2014 and served my curacy at St Elisabeth's, Reddish, a beautiful grade I listed Alfred Waterhouse building (which often features on ITV on Christmas Eve!). After my curacy I moved to a very different kind of ministry, in semi-rural Newchurch in Rossendale. I have enjoyed being part of a supportive community and working alongside others in outreach and pastoral care in the parish, and in our creative churchyard heritage project. In 2019, I married David, who you will already know as the Vicar of Mossley (scope for some friendly competition, er, I mean, collaborative working, between our neighbouring parishes, I'm sure!)

David and I have a three year old border terrier, Buddy, who is full of character and mischief! I have interests in walking, reading, poetry, pastoral care, and good liturgy which encourages and inspires prayer and seeks to deepen our relationship with God and to better serve the world around us. (I also play the clarinet and oboe but am a little rusty!)

It's a new year and a new start for us all, and an exciting time in the life and ministry of St George's church and this parish. I'm very much looking forward to getting to know people and places within the parish - please do introduce yourselves once I have arrived and share all the info you think I should know!!

Please be assured of my prayers, and may I ask for yours as we begin this new ministry together.

With love and prayers,
Penny



If anyone would like to take up the bread and wine at the offertory—to celebrate a special occasion, in memory of a loved one or just to take part, please have a word with one of the wardens for any Sunday this year.



Saint of the Month 11 January – Mary Slessor of Calabar

Mary Slessor was born in December 1848 into a wretchedly poor family. Her father was an alcoholic who lost his job as a shoemaker. Mary was the second of seven children, and in 1859 they moved from Aberdeen into the fetid slums of Dundee. Her father and mother worked in the mills, and Mary joined them there when she turned 11.

When Mary's father and both brothers died of pneumonia, Mary's mother struggled on to keep Mary and her two sisters alive. By the time Mary was 14 she was doing a 12-hour day as a jute maker.

But life was not all drudgery. Mary's mother was a devout Christian who read the family Bible to her daughters, and also the *Missionary Record*, a monthly publication from the United Presbyterian Church. The stories of the missionaries captivated Mary. When she heard that David Livingstone, the great missionary explorer, had died, she decided that she would follow in his footsteps. She wanted to devote her life to taking the gospel to Africa. She was 25.

In August 1876 the Presbyterians sent her out to Calabar, Nigeria, an area where no European had ever yet set foot. With her red hair and blue eyes, Mary grabbed attention wherever she went, but despite recurring illness and constant danger, Mary settled happily among the tribes. She learned their traditions, quickly becoming fluent in their language, ~~and soon she won~~ the confidence of their tribal leaders. She taught their children and was soon determined to put an end to some of their barbaric practises, such as the killing of twins (whom they thought were evil). Over the years Mary put an end to many witchcraft practises, and she adopted every twin child she found abandoned. And she talked endlessly about Jesus Christ, the passion of her life.

Mary was tough – she made long trips through the jungles and took canoes up remote rivers. When her shoes gave out, she went barefoot. Her great passion was to go to 'the regions beyond' with the Gospel. She thrived in places and among people who would have terrified most women in her day.

It has been written of her: 'Practically singlehanded she tamed and transformed three pagan communities in succession. It is a question if the career of any other woman missionary has been marked by so many strange adventures, daring feats, signal providences, and wonderful achievements.' (Dr Robert H. Glover, *The Progress of World-Wide Missions*.)

When in 1901 Southern Nigeria became a British Protectorate, Mary was appointed the first ever female Magistrate in the British Empire. She became a skilful diplomatic emissary.

H. REVELL & SONS LTD.

A Family of Funeral Directors since 1888

Pre-payment Plans arranged

96 Stamford Street Stalybridge

0161 338 2520

*Proprietors: N.T. Revell
K. Revell BA (Hons)*

Millbrook

Millbrook Care Home enjoys a wonderful location in the popular town of Stalybridge in Manchester and is a welcoming, purpose-built home offering residential care in luxurious surroundings



Our welcoming care home offers a home-from-home environment where older people receive the care they need and the support they want to continue to live their life with dignity and choice.

Please visit our website or contact one of our friendly Careline team.

Offering:

- Personalised care and support
- Sun lounge with patio doors
- Cinema room
- Hairdressing salon
- Wellbeing programme
- 9.7 carehome.co.uk user rating

W hc-one.co.uk
T 0333 999 8661
E careline@hc-one.co.uk
A Huddersfield Road, Stalybridge, SK



Ridge Hill Lane WMC

Entertainment Saturday night or Sunday afternoon

New members always welcome

Main room can be booked free of charge for various functions, subject to availability

Free pool table midweek

All live sport shown on large screens

Children allowed under supervision

Contact manager for further info on

07450352283

She was known for saying: "It is not Mary Slessor, but God and our united prayers that have brought the blessings to Calabar. Christ shall have all the honour and glory for the multitudes saved."

When she finally died of fever in January 1915 the native Christian girls and women wept bitterly: "Our mother is dead. Everybody's mother has left us." Mary Slessor once wrote to a friend who had long prayed for her: "I have always said that I have no idea how or why God has carried me over so many funny and hard places, and made these hordes of people submit to me, or why the Government should have given me the privilege of a Magistrate among them, except in answer to prayer made at home for me. It is all beyond my comprehension."

+++++

As we start a new decade

Do you remember the Millenium Bug?

Just over 20 years ago, there was widespread panic – or at least deep concern – over what might happen when the calendar switched over to the year 2000 on 1st January, and the effect on computers of the so-called Y2K 'Millennium Bug'.

The problem was that computers so long ago were laughably short of memory, and to save space, years in dates had all been recklessly programmed with two figures – for example 80, instead of the full 1980. So, when they reached 2000, no-one knew what would happen. Would the computers think they were back at 00, the beginning of time, or in some other dimension where time had no meaning?

Possible consequences ranged from the Second Coming to explosions in nuclear plants and aircraft falling out of the sky. Many experts predicted disaster of one kind or another. Churches were not immune. But in the end more or less nothing happened. Some put this down to the preventative work done by computer technicians – at a price – while others thought it was never going to happen anyway.

The cost of countering the Y2K Bug threat cost Britain nearly £400 million. There were problems, but nothing huge – except the sigh of relief.

+++++

CHURCH FINANCES

December 2019 Weekly Giving

Date	Sunday	Open Plate	Envelopes	Total	Monthly Shortfall
01 Dec 2019	1st Sunday of Advent	£48.20	£328.00	£376.20	
08 Dec 2019	2nd Sunday of Advent	£60.80	£338.38	£399.18	
15 Dec 2019	Christingle, Toy and Nativity Play	£96.38	£307.80	£404.18	
22 Dec 2019	4th Sunday of Advent	£40.52	£527.38	£567.90	
29 Dec 2019	1st Sunday of Christmas	£236.22	£265.50	£501.72	
	Standing Orders etc		£940.00	£940.00	
	Monthly Total	£482.12	£2,707.06	£3,189.18	-£276.82

* Assuming £10 per adult per week needed for running the church this means we need £3,466 per month

+++++

200 CLUB

The 200 Club winners for December 2019 are:

1st Prize	£25	2	Jackie Mellor
2nd Prize	£15	94	Samuel Winstanley
3rd Prize	£10	52	Andrew Trudgeon

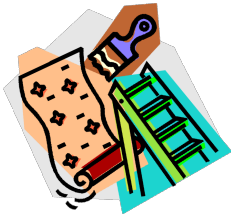
Subscriptions for 2020 are now due and should be paid to Rose Hayward as soon as possible.

The cost of the 200 Club is £12 per year per number and there are still some spare numbers available and new members are always welcome.

If you would like to join please see Rose Hayward or ring 303 1731.

+++++

Need some odd jobs doing?
Can't get round to finishing the decorating?



Then call
Brian Allsopp
on
0161 338 6834



Curtain rails
Professional Painter and Decorator

No job too small

Free estimates



My Feet

MOBILE Chiropody & Podiatry
Foot care at home

Nail care,
Corns,
Callus,
Fungal infections,
Ingrowing toe nails.
Footwear advice
Insoles, and other
foot related problems.

Janette McLean
BSc (Hons) Podiatry



Tel: 0161 338 8950
Mobile: 07961 583 668



HPC registered Podiatrist

Carr's

THE BAKERS
of Stalybridge
Wholesale and Retail



Est.1922
44-46 RIDGEHILL LANE
STALYBRIDGE
0161 338 2177
164 MOSSLEY ROAD
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
0161 330 1341

Parish Meal

We have a change in location for this years' Parish meal which will take place at **Oaklands Hall** (Hyde Masonic Hall) on **Sunday 29th March 2020 at 1.30pm**

The list for you to sign up and the menu are now available in the church lounge. *Please note that menu choices and payment in full is required by Sunday 1st March 2020.*

Please see Sarah Dentith (or Chris Crabtree) if you have any questions.

2-courses £17.50 – plus any supplement

3-courses £18.50 – plus any supplement

Tea/Coffee & Mints £1.50

Children's menu also available.

+++++

Bridge Over Troubled Water

The album *Bridge Over Troubled Water* by Simon and Garfunkel was released 50 years ago, on 26th January 1970. It topped the charts in ten countries and sold 25 million records. It was their fifth and final studio album.



The song itself, one of their most widely known, was influenced by gospel music, especially the Swan Silvertones' version of *Mary Don't You Weep*, which includes the line "I'll be your bridge over deep water, if you trust in my name" – a debt acknowledged by Simon.

Art Garfunkel initially refused to sing lead on the song, but was eventually persuaded, with Paul Simon transposing the key to suit him. Simon wanted a gospel piano sound, and so hired session musician Larry Knechtel. The song was initially two verses long, but he thought it was too short and asked Knechtel to play a third verse, to which he wrote more lyrics.

Despite the many accolades that followed, the duo split up later in 1970, with Garfunkel concentrating on his film career.

Simon and Garfunkel are both Jewish, and many of the later songs written by Simon have Christian overtones – this stunning song is no exception.

+++++

Readings and Psalms for January 2020

Sun 5th	Epiphany	10.30	Jeremiah 31.7-14; Psalm 147.13-end; Ephesians 1.3-14; John 1.1-18
Tues 7 th	10.30	No Service	
Sun 12th	1st Sunday of Epiphany - The Baptism of Christ	10.30	Isaiah 42.1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10.34-43; Matthew 3.13-end
Tues 14 th	10.30	No Service	
Sun 19th	2nd Sunday of Epiphany	10.30	Isaiah 49.1-7; Psalm 401-12; 1 Corinthians 1.1-9; John 1. 29-42
Tues 21 st	10.30	No Service	
Sun 26th	3rd Sunday of Epiphany	10.30	Isaiah 9.1-4; Matthew 4.12-23
		18.30	Worship For All
			Licensing of the Reverend Penny Warner
Tues 28 th	10.30	No Service	

+++++

December Crossword Solution

ACROSS: 1, Lame. 3, Obtained. 8, Omit. 9, Merchant. 11, Burdensome. 14, Crafty. 15, Please. 17, Blacksmith. 20, Splendid. 21, Tier. 22, Singeing. 23, Hand.
DOWN: 1, Look back. 2, Main road. 4, Breast. 5, Accomplish. 6, Near. 7, Date. 10, Pestilence. 12, Basilica. 13, Tethered. 16, Action. 18, Asa's. 19, Clan.

Monday 5 & 7pm
ST George's Church
With Terri

Tuesday 5 & 7pm

Wednesday 9.30am & 12 noon

ST Paul's Church
With Cassandra

Wednesday
3.30, 5.30 & 7.30

Revive Church
With Marie

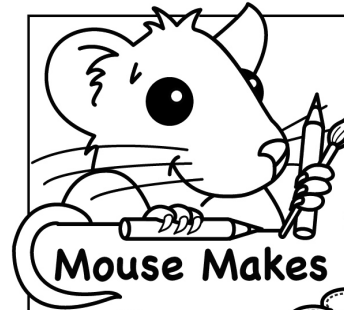
Saturday
7.30 9.30 & 11.30am
The Bridge Inn
With MARIA

Thursdays 7pm
West Hill School
With Marie

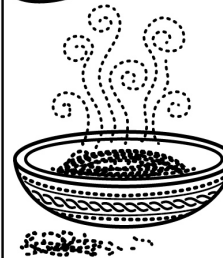
slimmingworld.co.uk
0344 897 8000



Children's Page



Mouse Makes



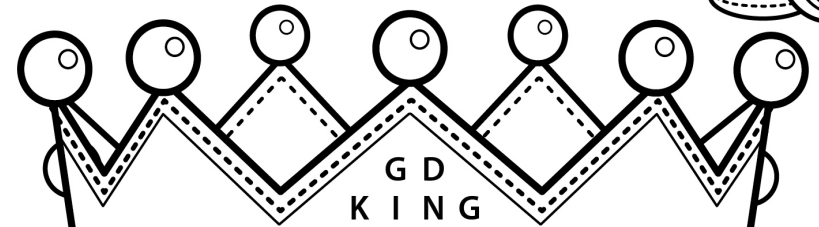
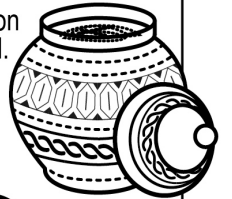
FRANKINCENSE
A sweet smelling
incense used
in the Temple
to worship God.
Reminds us
that **Jesus is God.**

EPIPHANY is the time
in the Church year that we
remember when the
'wise men' or 'Magi'
followed a star that led
them to the Christ child Jesus.
They bowed down and
worshiped him and left
three special gifts:



GOLD
A valuable
metal.
Reminds
us that Jesus
is **King of Kings.**

MYRRH
A fragrant spice put on
a body before burial.
Reminds us that
Jesus was to die
so that he could
be our **Saviour.**



Can
you
find
these
words
below
 in the
word
search?

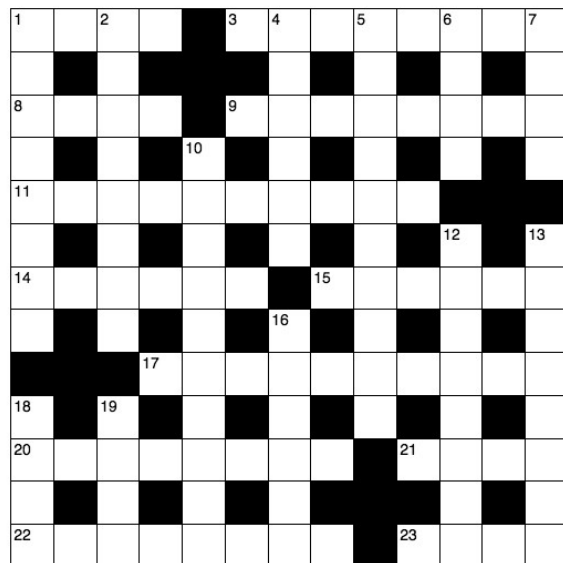
G D
K I N G
E S B P R I E S T S J B J B P B
F H O M B O I S R A E L E E R O
I E W Y R W A W C H R I S T O R
N P E R J A J O Y F U L U H P N
D H D R U R L R W I S E S L H N
E G H D N O S S T A R A E E
R I E E I O H G O L D W H C
D F R A N K I N C E N C E Y
O T O S G O P H B M L E M
S D T N D R E A M A R Y

How
did
God
warn
the wise
men?

READ
Matthew
2:1-12

JESUS • BORN • BETHLEHEM • JUDEA • WISE • EAST • JERUSALEM • KING
STAR • WORSHIP • HEROD • PRIESTS • CHRIST • PROPHECY • SHEPHERD
ISRAEL • GO • FIND • LOOK • SAW • JOYFUL • MARY • BOWED • GIFTS
GOLD • FRANKINCENSE • MYRRH • WARNING • DREAM

January Crossword



Across

- 1 'Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a — began to crow' (John 18:27) (4),
 3 Fetters (Job 33:11) (8), 8 Perform on a musical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23) (4)
 9 Paul describes it as 'the third heaven' (2 Corinthians 12:2-4) (8)
 11 Loyally (Deuteronomy 11:13) (10) ++++++
 14 Hens? Me? (anag.) (6)
 15 Not visible (Matthew 6:6) (6)
 17 Predicted site of the final great battle (Revelation 16:16) (10)
 20 Jacob's youngest son (Genesis 35:18) (8)
 21 One of Zophar's eleven sons (1 Chronicles 7:36) (4)
 22 For example, London, Paris, Rome (8)
 23 United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1,1,1,1)

Down

- 1 Favourite church activity: Fellowship round a — — (3,2,3)
 2 Divinely bestowed powers or talents (8)
 4 Pile together (1 Thessalonians 2:16) (4,2)
 5 Commanded to justify (John 8:13) (10)
 6 Timothy's grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) (4)
 7 Killed (Psalm 78:34) (4)
 10 One of Graham Kendrick's best-known songs, — — King (3,7)
 12 Indecency (Mark 7:22) (8)
 13 Unceasing (Jeremiah 15:18) (8)
 16 He prophesied 'the abomination that causes desolation' (Matthew 24:15) (6)
 18 British Board of Film Classification (1,1,1,1)
 19 Pans (anag.) (4)

Some dates for your diary - January 2020

- Thurs 2nd 9.00a.m. No activities - Holiday
 7.30p.m. No activities - Holiday
 Fri 3rd 1.00p.m. to 3.00p.m. Dementia Café
 3.30pm Cleaning Crew Meet (Volunteers Welcome)
 Sat 4th 10.00am Coder Dojo
Sun 5th THE EPIPHANY
10.30a.m. Parish Eucharist & Junior Church with Guest Revd. Roger Dixon
 Tues 7th 9.00a.m. Maintenance Team Meet (volunteers Welcome)
 1.00p.m. - 3.00p.m. Come Together Café
 Thurs 9th 9.00a.m. Time 4 Fun (0 to 5yrs)
 7.30p.m. Tameside Community Voices Practice
 Fri 10th 2.00p.m. Cleaning Crew Meet (Volunteers Welcome)
Sun 12th BAPTISM of CHRIST - Epiphany 1
10.30a.m. Parish Eucharist & Junior Church with Guest Revd. Richard Hawkins
 Tues 14th 9.00a.m. Maintenance Team Meet (volunteers Welcome)
 1.00p.m.- 3.00p.m. Come Together Café
 Thurs 16th 9.00a.m. Time 4 Fun (0 to 5yrs)
 Fri 17th 1.00p.m. to 3.00p.m. Dementia Café
 3.30pm Cleaning Crew Meet (Volunteers Welcome)
 Sat 18th 8.00pm Quiz
Sun 19th 2nd Sunday of Epiphany
10.30a.m. Parish Eucharist & Junior Church with Guest Revd. Adrian Rhodes
 Tues 21st 9.00a.m. Maintenance Team Meet (volunteers Welcome)
 1.00p.m.- 3.00p.m. Come Together Café
 7.45p.m. Parochial Church Council Meeting
 Thurs 23rd 9.00a.m. Time 4 Fun (0 to 5yrs)
 7.30p.m. Tameside Community Voices Practice
 Fri 24th 2.00p.m. Cleaning Crew Meet (Volunteers Welcome)
 Sat 25th 2.00p.m. Over 65's Party
Sun 26th 3rd Sunday of Epiphany
10.30a.m. Worship For All
6.30p.m. Licensing of the Reverend Penny Warner
 Tues 28th 9.00a.m. Maintenance Team Meet (volunteers Welcome)
 1.00p.m.- 3.00p.m. Come Together Café
 Thurs 30th 9.00a.m. Time 4 Fun (0 to 5yrs)
 7.30p.m. Tameside Community Voices Practice
 Fri 31st 2.00p.m. Cleaning Crew Meet (Volunteers Welcome)
For more information please go to our website www.stg.org.uk

Epiphany

Where did the Wise Men come from and what about the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?

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.

Certainly, 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.

The story of the coming of the Magi grew in the telling. By the 6th century they had acquired names: Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. By medieval times they were considered to be kings. Whoever they were, we do know from Matthew that they brought three gifts to Jesus.

+++++
What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? While we cannot know for sure what was in the minds of first century Magi, one Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation as to the significance of their gifts. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote his much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'.

Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine; and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people.

The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. What faith they had! They travelled for months over difficult terrain, they never saw any evidence of Jesus' kingship, His divinity or His sacrificial death.

They worshipped Him through faith in God's promises about Him. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi's eyes of faith saw clearly and far into

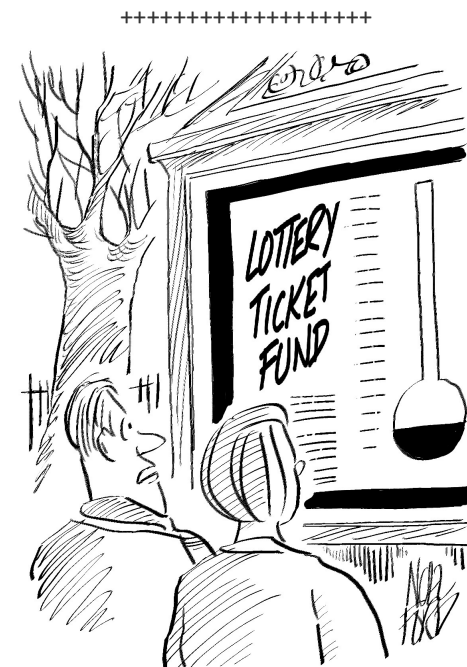
the future.

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'.

Compare that with the High Priest and religious leaders whom the Wise Men saw in Jerusalem when they first arrived. These head priests knew all about the prophecies of their own coming Messiah, but NOT ONE Jewish religious leader travelled to look for Him in Bethlehem. And it is only six miles down the road!



"It's the only way we stand a chance of raising enough money for the organ repair!"