

Stour Vale Letter No.195

Services in the Stour Vale – Sunday 7th January

9:15am Parish Communion Todber
10:30am Morning Worship West Stour (CW)
11:00am Parish Communion East Stour



Readings for Sunday 7th January Epiphany/Baptism of Christ

Isaiah 60.1–6

Psalms 72.10–15

Ephesians 3.1–12

Matthew 2.1–12

Other Benefice events coming up in January:

Every Tuesday – Said Morning Prayer West Stour Church 9:30am

Thursday 25th – Stour Vale Prayer Group 2pm East Stour Church

Stour Vale Benefice
Service
in the
Pub



Friday 19th January
Open from 11am for an 11:15 start

The Ship Inn, West Stour, SP8 5RP

Full Details below (page 4)

Matthew 2.1-12 (NIV)

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Praying for our communities

This week in the Stour Vale we pray for the community in Stour Provost, the congregation of St Michael and All Angels and all who live and work in and around the village. Please find a few moments in your week to remember this community.



And we pray for:

Those in our communities who are ill or recovering at home, for those in hospital or care, and for those who are waiting for procedures and surgery. And we remember those who have lost loved ones and miss them. We pray for those who find life difficult, particularly the lonely, isolated and afraid, those who feel themselves forgotten or unloved, and those who are low in spirits or find the world a confusing place. May they all know the healing presence of God's love.

In particular we pray for:

Henrietta (KM), Barry (SR) and Margaret (WS) and all known to us, or only to God, who are ill and in need of prayer.

And for the bereaved family and friends of Graham Dyke (BW), Frances Austin Jones (ES), Barry Score (ES) and June Hough (FM).

If anyone would like to be included in our prayers, please ask your Church Warden to let Jill know, or contact her direct – details at the end of the newsletter.

*Please remember if you asking on behalf of someone else,
check they are happy for their name to be included.*

Other Prayers

The Archbishops' Prayer: God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine. We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons. We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions. Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen



Private Prayer

Many of our churches are open throughout the week for private prayer. Please do take advantage of this, and if you visit our beautiful churches and feel you can make a donation to their life and upkeep, please do so. It would be very much appreciated.

6th Jan: What about the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?

The story of the coming of the Magi grew in the telling. By the 6th century they had acquired names: Caspar, 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.

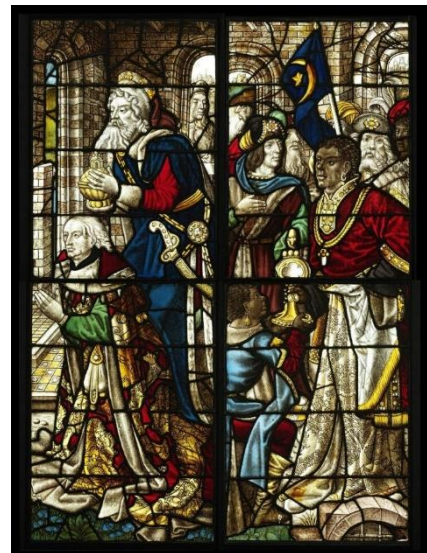
What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? While we cannot know for sure what was in the minds of first century Magi, one Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation as to the significance of their gifts. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who 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.

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!



Parish Pump

God loves the way you delight in His creation.

You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. Isaiah 55:12

God longs to delight you, to fill you with the wonder of His creation. He wants to be your greatest romance. The most charming of all princes. He woos you with butterflies in springtime and jewel-coloured leaves in the fall. He paints the skies with sunsets every evening and sunrises every morning. He gifts you with soaring mountains and azure oceans and endless starry skies. And when you notice, He fills you with His joy, His peace, and His song. Because God loves to be your delight.

From '100 Things God Loves about You' by Tama Fortner

Please note that for most other events around the Benefice, 'For you Diary' has returned to the back page of Octavo

– but there's an extra event taking place at **Kington Magna Church** at **4:30pm** on **Saturday 20th January** – Alvira presents '*Echo*' – for full details see the poster below (page 5)

This Newsletter



We hope you find this newsletter helpful. If you know of anyone who would like to join the mailing list, tell them to send their name, parish and email address to Jill Perry at octavoeditorsvb@googlemail.com with the subject "Newsletter Mailing List". But, if you do not wish to continue receiving them, please email her with "Unsubscribe" in the subject field.

You can contact Revd Clare on: 01747 838171

Or by email: clare@evzone.co.uk



Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089949903748
or search for 'The Church of England in the Stour Vale' in Facebook,
or follow the link on the Benefice Website.

It's church, but not as you
know it!
Join us for a drink, a chat and
a chance to spend some time
with God.

Fri 19th Jan

*Stour Vale Benefice
Service
in the
Pub*



Open from 11am for an 11.15 start

Tea and coffee will be provided, and
the licenced bar will be open
throughout for those who would like to
buy a drink.

After the service, feel free to leave or
stay for a drink and a chat. If anyone
would like to stay for lunch, we would
advise you to reserve a table in the
usual way.



**The Ship Inn,
West Stour, SP8 5RP**

For more details, please contact Fiona Hedges on
01747 838942 or stourvalemessychurch@gmail.com

ALVIRA
PRESENTS

echo

a performance art piece exploring the sounds,
sentiments and movements of the echo
through music, spoken word and dance
(40mins no interval)

PREVIEW SAT. JANUARY 20 4.30PM
ALL SAINTS CHURCH KINGTON MAGNA
NO BOOKING REQUIRED - JUST TURN UP
DONATIONS WELCOME!
HOT DRINKS

MAIN SHOW - SATURDAY JANUARY 27 7.30PM
ST. MARY'S CHURCH BRUTON BA10 0EB
TICKETS £10 ON DOOR OR SCAN HERE:



@ALVIRA.ARTIST

Newsletter produced on behalf of the Stour Vale Benefice:
Buckhorn Weston – East Stour – Fifehead Magdalen – Kington Magna –
Stour Provost – Todber – West Stour