

New Year Message

By the time you read this we will have arrived in Adelaide in Australia in temperatures of 40 degrees plus. We will be enjoying the first few days of the New Year with our daughter Sarah and her family who we have not seen for a year since their visit to the United Kingdom in January 2023. Like them and us, New Year hopefully will be a time for fresh and new starts and beginnings. Perhaps like a blank page ready expectantly to record the story or to resolve what the story will be. The wise men from the East travel on following a star. This reminds us that we too are on a journey.... the journey through life. And in these dark days of chaos and challenge the best guide of all is still Jesus the Light of the World.

January 6th is the Feast of the Epiphany which marks the arrival of the Wise Men bearing their gifts to the Christ child in the manger of Bethlehem.

This season opens up for us the facts of who Jesus is...in His Baptism in the River Jordan, by His cousin John, a voice from heaven tells us He is God's own Son....and then in the first of His miracles, at a wedding in Cana, where water is turned into wine, we see a sign of God's abundance and generosity which He longs to share....And finally our Christmas season comes to a close when we remember the swaddling cloths of the manger are soon to be replaced by cloths binding the body for burial...recalling three days later they will be left abandoned by an empty tomb.

And so we leave Bethlehem and Nazareth and Christmas behind and set our face towards Jerusalem and travel on towards Easter via the reverent days of Lent.

Jesus the Light of the World is with us in every step, alongside and pointing the way ahead. He shines into the darkness before us and disperses it. At the same time giving us daily strength to face whatever is before us with confidence and hope.

And so in the coming days we continue to write and share our stories as they develop perhaps sharing them along the way as we encourage one another in our relationship with the Living God who is active all around us.

And so we wish you a Happy and Peaceful year ahead...and look forward to hearing your story on our return at the end of the month just before the weekend when we celebrate the Presentation of Christ with Christingles for All.

John and Sue Richardson

**The Parish of All Saints
With St Philip, Maidstone and
St Stephen, Tovil**

**Sunday 07th January 2024
The Baptism Of Christ
(The First Sunday after the Epiphany)**



**10.00am Morning Worship at St Stephens
(Archbishop Courtenay School)**

3.30pm Choral Evensong at All Saints

Next Week's Service's

Sunday 14th January 2024

**10.00am Parish Eucharist at All Saints
The Second Sunday after the
Epiphany**

Collect

O GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only begotten Son to the Gentiles: Mercifully grant, that we, which know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

The Glory of Zion

“Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn
“Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the hip.
Then you will look and be radiant,
your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,

to you the riches of the nations will come.
Herds of camels will cover your land,
young camels of Midian and Ephah.
And all from Sheba will come,
bearing gold and incense
and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.

The Gospel

St. Matthew 2.1-12

WHEN Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them, where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

January 2024 Sunday Services

- 21st 10am. Parish Eucharist at St. Philip's
 - 28th 10am. Morning Worship Christingle for Adults at St. Stephen's
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February 2024 Services

- 4th 10am All Saints Parish Eucharist and 3:30pm Choral Evensong
- 11th 10am St. Philip's Parish Eucharist
- 18th 10am St. Stephen's at Archbishop Courtenay School. Holy Communion for the beginning of Lent
- 25th 10am All Saints Parish Eucharist

PLEASE NOTE THAT ASH
WEDNESDAY IS FEBRUARY 14th
and there will be a Holy Communion at
St. Philip's at 10:00am

Community Café

The community Café will re-open on the
13th of January 2024 10am-2pm

Special prayers

*Matt 5.3 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven'*

*Daphne Holland, Mary Wheeler, Jane Sadler,
Sue Marks, Pamela Hocking, Claire & Family,
John Wilson, Paul Crease, Joan Bull*

Vicar: All saints, Maidstone with St. Philip's, and St. Stephen's Tovil

The Very Revd. John S. Richardson
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**Please note Revd John will be on Leave
on Wednesdays of each week.**

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