

# PARISH NEWSLETTER

## IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is open for worship at 10 a.m. on Sundays. Places must be booked and social distancing maintained in the building and following services. Again, we stress there is absolutely no obligation to attend in person, and that your own safety and health & those of others must remain paramount. Our broadcast services will continue as follows: Sunday Eucharist at 10. a.m., and a reflection & celebration of Night Prayer on Wednesdays at 8 p.m. are live-streamed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/> and are available to watch at any time

Please help to keep us informed of anyone who is in need or is isolated over the next weeks and months, and anyone in need of our prayer and support  
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## 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022 The Epiphany of the Lord

### The Collect

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

AMEN

### A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

[60. 1 - 6]

*Reader / This is the Word of the Lord*  
*Response / Thanks be to God*

### Psalm 72 7 - 14

**R/ Kings bow down before him;  
all the nations do him service.**

Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to the king's son;  
That he may rule your people righteously  
and the poor with justice;  
That the mountains may bring prosperity  
to the people, and the little hills bring  
righteousness.

**R/ Kings bow down before him;  
all the nations do him service.**

He shall defend the needy among the  
people; he shall rescue the poor and  
crush the oppressor.  
He shall live as long as the sun and moon  
endure, from one generation to another.

**R/ Kings bow down before him;  
all the nations do him service.**

He shall come down like rain  
upon the mown field, like showers  
that water the earth.

In his time shall the righteous flourish;  
there shall be abundance of peace  
till the moon shall be no more.

**R/ Kings bow down before him;  
all the nations do him service.**

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles  
shall pay tribute, and the kings of Arabia  
and Saba offer gifts.

All kings shall bow down before him,  
and all the nations do him service.

**R/ Kings bow down before him;  
all the nations do him service.**

For he shall deliver the poor  
who cries out in distress, and the  
oppressed who has no helper.  
He shall have pity on the lowly and poor;  
he shall preserve the lives of the needy.  
He shall redeem their lives from  
oppression and violence,  
and dear shall their blood be in his sight.

**R/ Kings bow down before him;  
all the nations do him service.**

### A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians [3; 2-3; 5-6]

You have already heard of the  
commission of God's grace that was given  
me for you, and how the mystery was  
made known to me by revelation. In  
former generations this mystery was not  
made known to humankind, as it has now  
been revealed to his holy apostles and  
prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles  
have become fellow-heirs, members of the  
same body, and sharers in the promise in  
Christ Jesus through the gospel.

*Reader/ This is the Word of the Lord*  
*Response / Thanks be to God*

### **Gradual Hymn**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
We saw his star as it rose  
and have come to do the Lord homage.  
**Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you:  
**And also with you**

**Listen to the Gospel of Christ  
according to St Luke**

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**I**n the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

[St Matthew 2. 1-12]

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you, O Christ**

**A Prayer of Spiritual Communion**

My Jesus, I believe that you are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

(The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament)

**For Your Prayers**

That like the Magi we may follow the light that leads to Christ. Especially at this Christmas season for those who are homeless and without adequate food. For all migrants, refugees, and all forced to flee from their homelands Those who care for the environment and the natural world Those here and throughout the world who continue to suffer from the Coronavirus pandemic - for doctors, nurses and all medical staff, all carers, medical scientists and researchers. All who are anxious for their health and well being and those of their loved ones. For those in government throughout the world, that they may make informed, wise and compassionate decisions

**For the Church:**

For the bishops of the Church: Cherry, Bishop of Monmouth, Philip, Episcopal Visitor of the Society of the Holy Cross in Wales, Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury. & for all who hold and teach the Catholic faith that comes to us from the Apostles. All bishops, priests and deacons and all baptised Christians For the reunion of all Christians: for Pope Francis, for Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew, & for the leaders of the Reformed traditions

**For the Sick & those in need:**

Roy Staples, Ralph Hamilton, Patricia Hamilton; Sylvia; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Kim; Elisabeth; Helen Herbert; Dave;, John; Marion Webster; Mali; Lorna; Michael; John Metivier, priest.

**For the Departed:**

The recently departed; for Matthew Oubridge; Derek Higgs; Desmond Tutu, bishop; our own departed relatives & friends, & those whose anniversaries of death fall at this time: Margot Jenour; Maynard Jenour; Elizabeth Howell; Muriel Sunderland; James Smart;

**The Jereboam Interview**

*We continue our series of extracts from the Jerusalem and Galilee Gazette, an imaginary first-century newspaper. Week by week the correspondent Jereboam interviews various people whose lives have been affected in some way by Jesus Christ and his teaching.*

*Thanks to the Parish of St Catharine's Chipping Campden & to the author for permission to reproduce 'Jereboam'*

**Innkeeper**

**Innkeeper:** Please don't take this the wrong way, Jereboam, but I hadn't expected to see you around here again so soon.

**Jereboam:** No: I'm surprised myself, but I heard that some people had made their way here by following a star.

**Innkeeper:** Oh, our royal visitors, you mean...

**Jereboam:** So it's true that they're kings?

**Innkeeper:** When they first arrived, they certainly looked like royalty of some sort.

**Jereboam:** Am I right that they followed a star?

**Innkeeper:** Apparently so...and several of us did spot an unusual star the other night. I can only assume that these gentlemen had seen the same one.

**Jereboam:** Well, I don't know much about astronomy, but even I reckon I've seen some fairly unusual stars before – or some of them might have been planets, I'm not sure. Anyway, the point is that I've never felt the urge to walk towards one of them!

**Innkeeper:** Strange, isn't it? From what I gather, these people somehow felt drawn towards the star.

**Jereboam:** There's another thing: I can see that a star could lead you in a certain direction – sailors use them for

navigation, obviously -- but how does the star tell you where to stop? It sounds like someone reaching the base of a rainbow: it just wouldn't happen.

**Innkeeper:** Such a curious business! They almost seem to have had their own connection with the star, as if it had summoned them personally. At least that would explain why half the world hasn't been turning up here.

**Jereboam:** That's a point: nobody else has followed this star, have they?

**Innkeeper:** Not as far as I know...although I think one or two of the shepherds might have mentioned it.

**Jereboam:** Look, can I pick you up on something you said a moment ago? You said that the men looked like royalty when they first arrived. Do you mean that they didn't look royal afterwards?

**Innkeeper:** They came into the town with great pomp and ceremony -- all very impressive in its way. But then everything seemed to change, and you'd hardly notice that they were around. In the end they just slipped away, almost in secret.

**Jereboam:** I can explain that. From what I was told, they needed to avoid being spotted by certain people.

**Innkeeper:** I heard that rumour too -- but there's more to it than that. Everyone that's seen this young family has gone away changed in some way -- myself included. With those kings, or whatever they were, you could see they'd been humbled, even startled. Everybody seems to be affected in a different way.

**Jereboam:** I'm beginning to realise that too.

### Thought for the Week

"Welcome! all wonders in one sight!  
Eternity shut in a span!  
Summer in winter, day in night!  
Heaven in earth, and God in man!  
Great little One,  
whose all-embracing birth  
Lifts earth to heaven,  
stoops Heaven to earth!"

Richard Crashaw (1613-1649), from  
"A Hymn of the Nativity, sung by the  
Shepherds"

## This Week

On Sunday, January 2, we celebrate the **Epiphany of the Lord**, although it may also be observed on its traditional date of January 6. The Epiphany celebrates the light that has come into the darkness of the world and that our salvation was made known to the Gentiles.

In the week that follows the Epiphany we continue with more of the beautiful first readings from the **first letter of St John**. He wants us to believe the message that: we are from God and are loved by God and "whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love."

The Gospels this week are from all four gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We read of Jesus traveling through Galilee "teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people." He feeds loaves and fishes to the hungry and exhorts his disciples, "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!" when they are caught in a storm at sea. When he reads from the scriptures at the synagogue, he proclaims, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." When a leper begs for healing, Jesus says, "'I do will it. Be made clean.'" On Saturday, John tells his followers he is not the Christ. "He must increase; I must decrease."

**Next Sunday** is the Baptism of the Lord. We hear the Lord say in the first reading from Isaiah, "Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit." Those words are echoed in the reading from St Luke's Gospel, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This feast marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of the Epiphany Season in the Church calendar.

### A Reflection for the Epiphany

+ The word 'Epiphany' means revelation or 'showing forth.' Today's feast is really about God revealing himself to the entire world, not just to the chosen people of the Old, original Covenant. In many ways, in its use of Old Testament themes, St Matthew's is the most Jewish of the

four Gospels. But here right at its beginning, it emphasises the message that God is reaching out to all peoples -- to both Jews and Gentiles alike. The Old Testament is largely concerned with God's dealings with the people of Israel, and the New Testament with his revelation of himself to the peoples of the whole world. That's what the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus represents, the offer of salvation to everyone.

Matthew portrays the magi as having been led by a star to discover where the promised king of the Jews was to be born. God builds upon their wisdom and their knowledge of the stars and uses it as a starting point for their journey, a journey which leads them to faith in Jesus, to a recognition that here in the new-born Jesus is God's revelation of himself to the world. Yet their wisdom doesn't take them directly to Bethlehem, first they had to consult those who knew the Jewish scriptures, and allow themselves to be guided by writings which the more intellectually-arrogant then and since have often been tempted to dismiss as having nothing to say to modern, sophisticated minds. And when they reached Bethlehem, they offered the worship which is due only to God, the source and goal of our intellect, to a new-born baby, the most vulnerable of all living creatures.

In the person of Jesus, the almighty and transcendent God, the creator of heaven and earth, expressed his divine love in becoming a human being. He could be seen and heard, held in his mother's arms and later when he is a man, displayed to the world upon the arms of the cross. As we know, the Magi brought gifts: gold, which acknowledged his kingship, frankincense which speaks of his divinity (in the ancient world incense was only offered to a god) and myrrh which foreshadows his death (saying this is someone whose death will be significant). In return, Jesus gave them the gift of faith. St Matthew says they instinctively recognise who he is and they knelt and paid him homage.

The feast of the Epiphany is all about calling, revelation and mission. God called the gentile, pagan, wise men to recognise him and to welcome the salvation he was bringing about through this child. When they returned home, avoiding the plots of Herod, they would have told others about the wonders they had seen.

And what does this say to us? Like the magi, we are called to welcome Jesus with faith, and to be epiphanies, revelations to the world ourselves, proclaiming the Good News not only by what we say but also by the way in which we live.

The story of the journey of the Magi to the infant Christ says to us that the Epiphany is about recognizing that Jesus is God. When we begin to accept that Jesus is God, and not just a good and great man, then we inevitably take more seriously his invitation to follow Him. No one really follows a figure from history, however significant the things they had to say. But we will follow someone who is a living reality, who shows his love for us and offers us life without limit.

Almost all of the imperfections and problems of our human lives come about because we are looking for happiness and are not sure how to achieve it. The answer to our search is the same as that of the Magi - in Christ we find the ability to live truly human lives that reflect God's love and compassion.

The magi from the East were wise men, philosophers, those who studied the stars, the intellectual leaders of their culture. In a sense they are also representative of all those who for the deepest meaning of life. Today we ourselves are invited to continue our searching for God, our seeking of the deepest meaning of human existence. Yet as with the Magi, it is not an unaided search, we are not journeying in the dark. God has come to meet us and share his life with us. Our search for God is in reality our recognition that it is God who has come searching for us.

We find him here, at the Eucharist, as the Wise men found him at the stable, in the humble elements of Bread and Wine. The gifts the Magi brought are exchanged for the gift of faith and belief and meaning. The gifts that we offer are themselves transformed by God himself into the person of our crucified and risen Lord who gives himself to us as nourishment, sacramental food, to strengthen us in our lives as Christians.

The message of the Epiphany is the message of the Incarnation itself, of the mystery of the divine shining through the human. It is the recognition that there is a God who loves us and who comes to us, as one of us, to save us. +

## **The Epiphany Proclamation**

While a day like Christmas is fixed in our minds and on our calendars on December 25th, many of the important feasts of the Church year move, based upon the date that Easter is set. Easter changes each year moving to the Sunday after the "Paschal Full Moon," and can fall between March 22 and April 25.

In ancient times before calendars were common, most people did not know the dates for the upcoming Liturgical year. On Epiphany Sunday, the upcoming dates are "proclaimed" after the gospel in this way: . It still serves as a useful reminder of the important dates in the Christian year

**D**ear brothers and sisters, the glory of the Lord has shone upon us, and shall ever be manifest among us, until the day of his return. Through the rhythms of times and seasons let us celebrate the mysteries of salvation.

Let us recall the year's culmination, the **Easter Triduum** of the Lord:

his last supper, his crucifixion, his burial, and his rising celebrated between the evening of the Fourteenth day of April and the evening of the Sixteenth of April, **Easter Sunday** being on the Seventeenth day of April.

Each Easter -- as on each Sunday the Holy Church makes present the great and saving deed by which Christ has for ever conquered sin and death. From Easter are reckoned all the days we keep holy.

**Ash Wednesday**, the beginning of Lent, will occur on the Second day of March.

**The Ascension of the Lord** will be commemorated on Sunday, the Twenty-ninth day of May or Thursday, the Twenty-sixth day of May.

**Pentecost**, the joyful conclusion of the season of Easter, will be celebrated on the Fifth day of June.

And, this year the **First Sunday of Advent** will be on the Twenty-seventh day of November, 2022.

Likewise the pilgrim Church proclaims the passover of Christ in the feasts of the holy Mother of God, in the feasts of the Apostles and Saints, and in the commemoration of the faithful departed.

To Jesus Christ, who was, who is, and who is to come, Lord of time and history, be endless praise, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **Services in the Group today Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022**

**Sung Eucharist at St Arvans at 10 a.m.**

**Holy Eucharist with hymns  
at St Mary's, Penterry at 11.30 a.m.  
Epiphany Blessing of Chalk**

*Traditionally, on the Feast of the Epiphany chalk is blessed to be used in the blessing of our homes for the coming years*

### **Instructions for Blessing the Home**

Using the blessed chalk write 20 + C + M + B + 22 on the lintel of your front door (or front porch step or other convenient location) while saying:

The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, followed the star of God's Son who became human two thousand and twenty-two years ago. May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

*The following prayer may be said:*

Visit, O blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence. Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*"Chalking the door" is a way to celebrate and physically mark the occasion of the*

*Epiphany and God's blessing of our lives and home. With time the chalk will fade. It is a reminder to let the meaning of the written symbols sink into the depths of our heart and be manifest in our words and actions.*

Hymns sung during the liturgy today are from the New English Hymnal:  
52; 39; 49; 47

*MJG 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022*

## **Our Ministry Area Prayer**

Dear Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to work together as a Ministry Area.

May we engage with each other with faith and encouragement.

May we manage each situation with wisdom and mutual respect.

May we serve with integrity, creativity and purpose.

May we speak with openness and gentleness.

May we offer our gifts, time and finances with generosity.

May we face each challenge with courage and the desire to grow through it.

May we all be drawn deeper into our relationship with you and be known as your disciples.

Help us to show your love, proclaim your Good News and grow your Kingdom in this place.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. **AMEN**