



# **Benefice Bugle!**



## **EPIPHANY**

The first two pages contain the Vital Information about services and contact details.  
Do print out them out for anyone you know who is not on computer, or for display.  
The following pages contain lots of news and views so we hope you enjoy them!

### [January services](#)

At the time of going to press we intend to maintain our reduced pattern of two physical services per week. However, this might change. Please look out for up-to-date information and continue to exercise extreme caution if you attend. Please do not attend if you feel unwell or have Covid19 symptoms.

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan      Christmas 2**  
0930 Middleton Stoney Family Service  
1000 Zoom service  
1100 Chesterton      Holy Communion

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Jan    Baptism of Christ**  
0930 Wendlebury      Holy Communion  
1000 Zoom service  
1100 Weston      Family Service

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Jan    Epiphany 2**  
0930 Bletchington    Holy Communion  
1000 Zoom service  
1100 Kirtlington      Morning Worship

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Jan    Epiphany 3**  
0930 Middleton Stoney Holy Communion  
1000 Zoom service  
1100 Chesterton      Morning Worship

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> Jan    Candlemas**  
0930 Wendlebury      Holy Communion  
1100 Bletchington    Family Service  
1800 Zoom Candlemas Service

## Contact details

### Ministry team

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Do feel free to contact a member of the ministry team if you would like to chat over anything, or a churchwarden if you would like information or help about the parish church.

In the rest of this bumper edition of the online Bugle:

- Page 3 What's been going on in the benefice
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## What's been going on in the benefice:

The Akeman Benefice has been adapting to the difficult circumstances. We couldn't meet up so easily to worship and sing together but we have found other ways of togetherness:

Our online Advent Reflections were very much appreciated by the select groups who joined in, both in the day and the evening sessions. Thank you to Nick for the opportunity to be quiet, to listen, look, discuss and to worship in this quietest of all Advent seasons.

The open-air carol services in all 7 churchyards were very popular, especially in Chesterton and Bletchingdon which saw a massive 80 plus people taking part. It was such a relief to be allowed to sing! Thank you to all those who organised heating, lighting and music, and to the communities who remained cheerful despite the cold!

Sue Ashdown organised a lovely Chesterton Young Family Service Crib Service which was livestreamed on Facebook. Well done to all the readers, singers, actors and the very incarnate baby Jesus, who was upset to be taken out of his cosy manger. Well done Sue, and, once again, Andrew Thomas, who has been the IT star of 2020. You can find it on Chesterton Facebook.

The benefice Carol Service was online, so we were able to have involvement from our link parish in Sweden, readings by young people in each of the churches, and singing by the Akeman choir, with a congregation of 120.

Gareth hosted a tea party especially for those who were having a particularly quiet Christmas (bring your own cake and appear on the screen) which was valued by those who came.

The Christmas Day numbers were down; maybe people had already been to the carol service, or did the thought of having to book in put people off?

Chesterton, Bletchingdon and Kirtlington have had living Advent windows which cheered the evening atmosphere beautifully.



Carols in Kirtlington, with the Bletchingdon Silver Band





*Our congregations are wonderfully varied, with people from many different cultures and countries of origin. Because Epiphany is a time to reflect on the fact that all peoples are invited to come and worship God born as man, individuals were invited to share their various memories and ways of celebrating Epiphany. Enjoy the response!*

**Bob Wilkes pondered:**

“Unusual astronomical events are always interesting - meteor showers, super moons, eclipses and so on. Then on December 21<sup>st</sup>, the shortest day, we had a rare "conjunction". Jupiter and Saturn looked to be very close in the lower early evening sky: a great sight if the rain clouds were not in the way. For Christians, the extra interest was the possibility that the bright light created by the conjunction was the light leading eastern visitors to Bethlehem.



Churches in the west read about these visitors on January 6<sup>th</sup>, the feast of Epiphany. The eastern Churches keep the tradition of celebrating Jesus' Baptism at Epiphany - which means "showing forth". This is a time to think again about the universal meaning of Jesus.

Matthew's Gospel does not speak about "three kings" with names, but "Magi" with three gifts. The gold, frankincense and myrrh were classic trade items on the Silk Road from the east. Where did this account come from? Who turned up, and where from?

For many years, I had the privilege of serving with the Church in the Middle East and Central Asia. Imagination is set alight by tantalizing historical hints of the vigorous missionary Church which spread east as far as Mongolia in the early centuries AD. From the buildings and books left by the rich cultures of the region, it is clear that astronomy, merging with what today we call astrology, was a sophisticated study. I remember visiting the sixteenth century sextant of Ulug Beg in Samarkand, where observations of impressive accuracy were made.

In Iran I met with leaders of the Zoroastrian community, with its belief traditions going back many centuries. Christian scholars of the region wonder if the visitors to Bethlehem were Zoroastrian Priests.

The Bugle is not the place for lengthy speculations from me, but Epiphany is a season to open the mind and heart of faith to the diversity of communities who have and still do respond to Jesus as Lord. The relationship into which he calls us is personal - for sure - but it is not private or exclusive. The enigmatic visitors from the east are a hint to us to keep our mind and heart open to whoever is on the journey of faith with us.”

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**Belgian Monique Harvey from Bletchington and Ron and Cynthia Hill from Kirtlington, who lived in Switzerland for many years, described the tradition on the continent:**

“Bakers prepare a round cake, or a sweet dough bun, made up of 8 segments, one of which contains a small, plastic charm, sometimes in the shape of a king. The whole bun is contained within a paper, usually gold-coloured, crown (or it sits on top, as in the picture). Each child chooses his or her slice/segment that they then eat. Whoever finds the trinket in their slice of cake is King or Queen for the day and can wear the crown and keep the trinket.”



The cake is called ‘Dreikönigskuchen’ in German and ‘Galette des Rois’ in French. “My daughters loved it”, says Ron.

*(Editor happens to know that the King/Queen relishes being in charge that day! And that the apple cake with almond is scrummy!!! Look up the recipe below and make one)*

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**Shuba Ktorides gave us a picture of Epiphany in South-West India:**

“I only know something about the traditions of the Mar Thoma Church, (ancient St Thomas Christians of Kerala).



In Kerala the Feast of the Epiphany is still celebrated by many Mar Thoma churches in the traditional way on January 6; it is called Denha (ancient Syriac). The St Thomas Christians still embrace the ancient tradition of Epiphany held for centuries since the coming of St Thomas the Apostle to Kerala in the first century and encompass three epiphanies: the manifestation of Jesus to the ancient Roman-ruled Israel by the three wise men following the star and worshipping him at Bethlehem, the manifestation of Jesus’ divinity at his Baptism in the Jordan River, and his turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana.

The celebrations include the Pindiperunaal (stem of plantain feast) or a Rakkauliperunal (feast with a night bath).”

She goes on to ask, “I wonder what our Christmas would be like if we adopted the ancient traditions of Orthodox Christianity? Perhaps along with Mary and Jesus at the crib of baby Jesus, and the 3 Magi, we would also place the figure of the adult Jesus coming out of the river with a dove on his head, and the figure of Rabbi Jesus handing out a glass of the water-turned-wine at a wedding feast, watched by an astonished just-married couple!

Theologically it does make sense - as the Babe in the manger who we adore at Christmas is Christ the Anointed One, the Son of God. It is Christmas and Epiphany together that bear witness to the world most fully who the Lord of the Church, whom we worship, is.”

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**Andrew and Mona Thomas from Chesterton told us about the various traditions in their family:**

“Epiphany celebrations in Alexandria as orthodox Coptic Christians start with a communion service that usually begins at 8pm and finishes at midnight, although most people go later,



around 9pm. In my church, we always wore new clothes for the epiphany celebration and the family would spend many hours getting dressed and ready for church. People who do not have a big family usually stay in church after the service and have a buffet meal that is provided by volunteers. This finishes around 2 am. Those with families usually return home for a big family feast. The emphasis is on bringing as much of the

family together as possible and celebrating with a huge meal. This would often comprise: a whole roast lamb; rice soup that is cooked in the broth from boiled lamb; roast duck, savory pastries (layers of filo pastry filled with minced meat or white cheese and glazed with egg); vine leaves stuffed with minced beef or lamb mixed with parsley and dill, and various spicy pickles. The dessert varies. It might be a gateau or kunafa, which is made from shredded filo pastry, soaked in sweet sugar-based syrup and usually layered with white cheese and clotted cream and sometimes pistachio nuts. Celebrations usually end around 3-4 am. Drinks are usually wine, beer or whiskey drunk as shots. The following day the family gathers again for a large lunch at around 3pm, comprising much the same food. The emphasis is on a big meal-based family celebration.

Three of our children have Polish-Ukrainian heritage. My in-laws - Petro and Katherine - would celebrate epiphany by a visit to the church followed by a meal. Traditionally the meal was of twelve small courses, although I only remember there being six or seven. As far as I can see it was a mix of Ukrainian, Polish and German traditions (as teenagers they were forcibly taken to German work camps in the second world war where the traditions became blended). There was usually borscht (beetroot soup), buckwheat with a sauce of some kind, perogies (dumplings which were usually filled with cabbage and / or potato) and a small pot of crushed poppy seeds mixed with honey. Usually this is made into a drink but my in-laws left it as a thick paste that one ate as a desert. And there was always ‘kuche’ - King cake in Polish and German. This was a round cake with a hole in the centre. It was always a very dense cake (my in-laws loved putting lots of eggs in cakes), heavily flavoured with vanilla and always had a hidden coin in it. Traditionally, the person who found the coin was ‘King of the Day’. (*sound familiar? Ed*) Although not usual, we always drank sherry with the meal. It was always a very relaxed, family, time - full of chatter and laughter, reminiscences, and future plans.”

*Andrew apologises for the emphasis on food in the above description, but this seems to be a common theme. Is it something to do with cold climates needing cheer mid-winter?*

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**Nico Rubio from Caversfield shared his memories from Spain:**

“Celebrations start on the 5<sup>th</sup> January in the evening with a parade where the 3 Wise Kings arrive everywhere at once... Madrid, Seville, Bilbao, even your neighbourhood ...

That night we do not do a special meal, but all families, especially kids, brush their shoes as much as they can to get them really shiny. Before they go to bed, all shoes go under the tree or close to a window so the kids think they would come through into the house with the camels and of course many lovely presents for them. The kids leave out a little plate with carrots and cookies and of course water and a small glass of sherry (x3).

On that night, parents encourage kids to go to bed earlier and to sleep hard and NOT wake up until the morning. Then the party starts. You see SOO MANY parents ‘taking the rubbish out to the bins’ and going quickly to open the boot of the cars... picking a lot of parcels and bags (presents) and silently returning home...



By a miracle, next morning lots of presents appear under the tree bearing labels with names and special messages (e.g. “next year be more obedient to your parents...”) Also, you will find some money and sweets inside your shoes, unless you have not been a good boy, which means you get left instead some “black charcoal”.

Carbon Dulce / Sweet black charcoal  
for the naughty ones!

At lunch time there is a special meal, that always ends with “Roscón de Reyes” / “Three Kings Cake”.  
(Aha!!! Ed) After lunch, family and friends visit each other to share even more presents that the 3 Wise kings leave at their houses for them...



The Spanish version of the cake

*In case this is all making your mouths water, here is a link to a recipe for a King Cake.  
Why not try it and send in some pictures for next month’s Bugle?*

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/marys\\_galette\\_38999](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/marys_galette_38999)

## A chance to reflect on the three wise men in art...



*Andrea Mantegna, Adoration of the Magi, J. Paul Getty Museum*

Traditionally, paintings of the three wise men have them in a variety of ages and races, to show that all types of people are invited to worship Jesus. Usually the exoticism of their supposed origins provides the painter with a wonderful excuse to show off his skills in suggesting gold and fur, prancing horses and magnificent headgear. But in this painting of c.1495 by Mantegna the artist seems to have something else he is wanting to put across.

What do you think is going on in these faces? How is each person feeling?

What is Jesus doing?

What is suggested by the porcelain cup in the foreground?

And HOW does Mantegna get a baby to look so mature, while still being a baby, and so tender?



## Still time to book in for:

### Parentalk – the Primary Years

**Parentalk – the Primary Years** is a six-week parenting course created by the national charity

[Care for the Family](#).

It's a fantastic opportunity to chat together and think hard about the incredibly hard job of parenting, led by a wise and experienced local person, Vicky Lavy, who is a Care for the Family facilitator and local mum with 3 grown-up boys. This is what she says about the course: "Parenting is a tough job – a rollercoaster ride of joy and fun, anxiety and heartache. **Parentalk** is an opportunity to reflect, learn and support one another. It's not just for people with problems – we can learn from each other's experiences both in the good times and the hard times."

The course is a mixture of video material and group discussion and is both informative and great fun. Parentalk – the Teenage Years has been run in three secondary schools in Oxford and over 400 parents have done the course. You can see more information and a short video about the course on the Care for the Family [website](#).

The course will run, online, from 7:30-9:30pm on Tuesdays, 2,9,23 February and 2,9 March - there is no session in half term. The fee is £10 per family. A Financial Assistance Fund is available for parents who are in receipt of specific benefits.

To book your place please email Joanna, on [joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com](mailto:joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com) - closing date 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.

If you have any questions or would like more information then please do email Vicky at [parenting@standrewsoxford.org](mailto:parenting@standrewsoxford.org)



*Note to other members of our churches: this may not be appropriate for your stage of life, but please do pray for this new initiative, which is being advertised by each of our schools and in all the villages.*

## Introducing...



My name is Charles Darby and I have just become Churchwarden at St Giles', Wendlebury. I moved to Wendlebury in July 2019 with Maggie, and we are going to be married in the village in July next year, which is very exciting. We have loved living in Wendlebury over the last year, even through COVID-19 and the lockdowns; there has been a great spirit and we have managed to meet plenty of people, under the circumstances.

We moved from Kidlington, and before that I lived in North Oxford - I have been in Oxford since the 1990s when I finished my post-graduate studies at Oxford Brookes. I am an architect with a practice in Summertown and Maggie and I work together. We work all over the country, and we mainly specialise in ecclesiastical, community and education buildings.

I have 3 children - 2 girls and a boy, all between 20 and 27 - and Maggie has 3 girls, between 21 and 24, so we often have quite a houseful (when regulations allow). We love to travel and have managed to get away "wild" camping during this Summer - we plan to honeymoon in a Campervan! I run regularly, participating in Parkrun, as well as many half-marathons and two marathons, and I still play competitive league hockey at Oxford Hawks. I also play a bit of tennis and enjoy most water-sports, especially when on holiday - sailing, water-skiing and surfing mainly.

As a child I attended a Methodist Church in Northampton, where I went to Sunday School and sang in the choir (hard to imagine these days!). After that I went to a CofE Boarding School, but all three of my children have done their First Communion, so I spent many years attending Catholic churches around Oxford. So it has been quite an "ecumenical journey" to end up in a Parish church in a small village, but I am loving it here. I have particularly enjoyed visiting other churches in the Benefice, and even during lockdown, the Zoom services have enabled us to get to know many people from other villages.

We look forward to the exciting years ahead...

## Activities for all ages:

Young ones: try dressing up as a wise man and acting out that long journey and the discovery at the end.

### Epiphany quiz:

Answers will be given in the next *Benefice Bugle*. OR submit your responses to [joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com](mailto:joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com) and all will be revealed, plus a fairtrade chocolate bar for the person with the most correct answers.

1. How many wise men are referred to in the Bible account?  
a) four b) two c) three d) The Bible does not say
2. Which king of Israel wanted to kill the baby who would grow up king of the Jews?  
a) Herod b) Quirinius c) Caesar Augustus d) Flavius Josephus
3. Who wrote the text of the Carol "We Three Kings of Orient Are"?  
a) Father Josef Mohr b) Phillips Brooks  
b) c) John Henry Hopkins Jr d) Charles Wesley
4. The story of the visit of the wise men appears in the Gospel according to whom?  
a) John b) Mark c) Matthew d) Luke
5. Which of the following is not a kind of Three Kings Cake?  
a) Kulitch b) Galette des Rois c) La Rosca de Reyes d) Dreikönigskuchen
6. Whose poem « The journey of the Magi" begins "A cold coming we had of it, just the worst time of year for a journey, and such a long journey"?  
a) TS Eliot b) O. Henry c) WB Yeats d) Longfellow
7. What is the origin and meaning of the word "Epiphany"?  
a) From the Greek, meaning "to show forth"  
b) From the Latin, meaning "astrologers or magicians"  
c) From the Greek, meaning "before Lent"  
d) From the German, meaning "After Christmas"
8. What are the traditional names given to the Wise Men?  
a) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego  
b) Huey, Dewey and Louie  
c) Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar  
d) Peter, Paul and James

9. The "Adoration of the Magi" was commissioned in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century as an altarpiece for the Augustinian monks of San Donato a Scopeto in Florence. It was unfinished and now hangs in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. Who painted it?  
 a) Sandro Botticelli b) Andrea del Verrochio  
 c) Leonardo da Vinci d) Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi
10. What is myrrh?  
 a) The Arabic word for silver  
 b) A mercurial compound used to treat flesh wounds  
 c) nutmeg  
 d) The dried sap of an African tree used anciently in embalming ointments and burned at funerals

### Epiphany Word-search

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

magi      jesus      parades      broomstick  
 gifts      january      feast      la befana  
 italy      epiphany

NB La befana is yet another tradition, this time from Italy - she comes on the morning of January 6<sup>th</sup> to put treats into children's stockings (if they have been good!)

## Looking back at 2020:

Before leaving 2020 for ever with cheers of relief, let's reflect on some good things we have experienced over this past, awful year, such as:



Sunrises while isolating    Regular Zoom fun with grandchildren  
More time to read    cricket on TV    Bird-song    Drawing trees    Seeing family and friends on Zoom    Thursday clapping    Neighbourhood cake-cooking    Time to reflect    Clean air

*What would you add to this list?*

Monique has enjoyed “having morning coffees, picnic lunches, afternoon teas and evening drinks with lovely friends and neighbours in my garden.”

Margaret adds on behalf of Kirtlington that “In consequence of an anonymous donation made for that purpose, the C15 wall-painting was cleaned and given conservation treatment.” And her own celebration: “We saw more of our sons (on Zoom) than we would have done in the flesh during that period. And we celebrated our diamond wedding - that is still true, even though we didn't have the big family party we had planned.”

Bletchingdon provides a heartening story of village togetherness and thoughtfulness:

### **Cake and Calendar**

The first lockdown in Bletchingdon was marked by an upsurge in kindness. A group of villagers organised a leaflet drop to every house to ensure that everyone who needed help was allocated a friend to provide it. They also set up a new WhatsApp group to swap information, ideas and produce. But support did not stop at the village boundary. Word reached Bletchingdon that the usual café and snack outlets at the John Radcliffe had shut down, so the Bletchingdon Bakers stepped up to provide cakes and biscuits to the hospital staff.

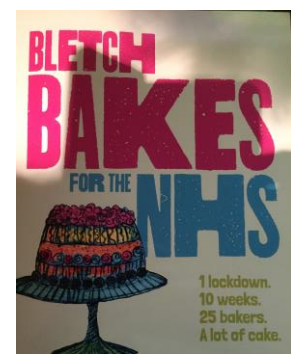


Over the course of ten weeks hundreds of cakes were sent to the hospital. Some messages of thanks were surprising—they included a petri dish with “thank you Bletch bakers” written in live bacteria. One note read “you should consider yourselves part of the front line.”

As if that were not enough a cake sale was organised which raised £860 for MacMillan.

During the Summer the recipes were collected and published and the money raised from the sale of the resulting book was shared between local and NHS charities.

By November plans were being laid to organise a “living” advent calendar. Twenty- two households, the shop and the church agreed to provide a display on a designated day. The programme was published at the co-op and in the early evening families made their way to the new attraction. Contributions included four calling birds hidden in a front garden, a manger in a real stable, flying horses and the shop's nativity tableau complete with a donkey, a goat and two sheep. If you are reading the Bugle online here is the link to the BBC's report.

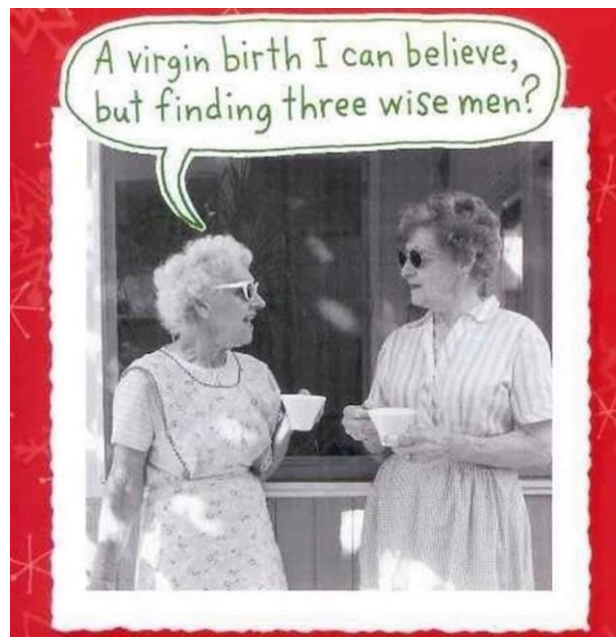


<https://www.facebook.com/bbcoxford/videos/698452227477472>

## Looking forward to 2021:

**H**opes for 2021 -  
health,  
hugs and even a  
holiday.  
Here's to a whole New Year!

## And finally:



Thanks to Jo Cropp for the above: we are sure it does not reflect her experience  
of living in Middleton Stoney!