



**STOCKPORT PARISH CHURCH**  
**St Mary's in the Marketplace**  
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**Service times at St Mary's**

**Sunday: 10:30am Holy Communion or  
Morning Prayer**

Normally the first and third Sunday is Holy Communion with Morning on the second and fourth.

**Tuesday: 10.00am Holy Communion  
12.15pm Lunchtime Service**

Wedding, Baptism, Funeral and other services by arrangement.

**St Mary's and the Nave Café is open – Tuesday, Thursday, Friday &  
Saturday from 9.00am – 3.00pm**



**STOCKPORT PARISH CHURCH**  
**St Mary's in the Marketplace**

Parish Magazine

January 2017

Wishing all our readers a

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

50p

DIARY FOR JANUARY 2017			
Sunday	1 <sup>st</sup> January	Service of Holy Communion with the Ven Ian Bishop	10.30am
Sunday	8 <sup>th</sup> January	Service of Morning Prayer with Alan Brown	10.30am
Tuesday	10 <sup>th</sup> January	Holy Communion with Rev Andy Williams Lunch-time Service with Rev Canon John Briggs	10.00am 12.15am
Sunday	15 <sup>th</sup> January	Service of Holy Communion with the Rev David Parker	10.30am
Tuesday	17 <sup>th</sup> January	Holy Communion with Re Andy Williams Lunch-time Service with Rev Canon John Briggs	10.00am 12.15pm
Sunday	22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Service of Morning Prayer with Lynn Keeley	10.30am
Monday	23 <sup>rd</sup> January	PCC Meeting at St Mary's	7.30pm
Tuesday	24 <sup>th</sup> January	Holy Communion with Rev Andy Williams Lunch-time Service with Rev Canon John Briggs	10.00am 12.15pm
Saturday	28 <sup>th</sup> January	Nave Café Burns Supper	6.30pm
Sunday	29 <sup>th</sup> January	Service of Holy Communion with Rev David Parker	10.30am

## **New Year, New Life**

The month of January is named after the Roman god Janus, who is depicted with two faces. We may look back to the old year with sadness or regret, but how can we make a fresh start at the beginning of 2016? The apostle Paul writes 'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.' (Philippians 3:13,14).

Firstly, if you want a new start, you need to forget the things which are behind. Paul pictures himself as an athlete running for Christ, yet not looking back. He refused to allow his past sins and failures to define who he was. By God's grace, he no longer saw himself that way. The same can be true of ourselves, as we confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness and new life.

Secondly, we need to focus on the things that lie ahead. The athlete is entirely focused on winning the race and gaining the prize. Like Paul, we have to be single-minded in making Jesus the focus of everything we do. How can we go deeper in our prayer life and Bible reading this year? What will it mean to better serve Christ in our workplace and career, or family and children?

Paul looked forward to the day when he would stand before God, and God will say, 'well done, good and faithful servant'. In light of all that Jesus had done for him, Paul wanted to give his very best to Jesus. As we stand at the beginning of this New Year, let's ask ourselves, 'What can I do this year that will help me bring glory and honour to God?'

*Rev Paul Hardingham*



## St Mary's Bicentenary Celebrations 1817 - 2017

A lot to look forward to during 2017 including our Bicentenary Celebrations including exhibitions at St Mary's and Stockport Art Gallery during June & July [presently being prepared by Stockport Heritage Trust in partnership with representatives from Stockport Council].

We aim to have a special service as near to the 4<sup>th</sup> July as possible as well as various celebratory events during the year.

We also celebrate 40 years since the opening of St Andrews on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1977 - by the Bishop of Chester – replacing St Andrews, Newbridge Lane.

## We, three kings?

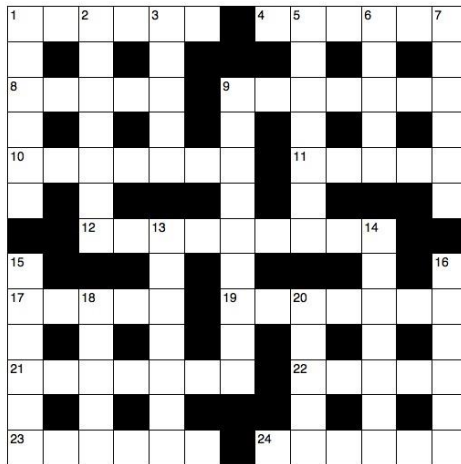
They're there in most Nativity plays, resplendent in regal gowns and cardboard crowns, carrying their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Actually, the Church celebrates the coming of these exotic people to the stable at Bethlehem not at Christmas but now, in January, in a season called 'Epiphany'. The word means 'revealing', and it reminds us that the Saviour was a gift to the whole world – even Gentiles from 'the East' were welcome at His coming. The story of the Wise Men, as we usually call them (but more accurately the Magi), is a 'revealing' – the 'new king' was to be the Saviour of the world, 'good news for all people', as the angels proclaimed to the shepherds.

The name 'Magi' should alert us to their true role. They were 'wise' in the sense that they knew and studied the stars, but their primary trade was fortune-telling. 'Magi' is the root of our word 'magic', and people like them held the ancient world in thrall to their predictions. In the Greek and Roman world of the time no major decision would be made without their sanction. Think of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and the superstitious fear that dominated people's lives.

Yet when these powerful representatives of the world of magic, portent and fear came to the stable, they prostrated themselves before the infant Jesus, as they gave Him their gifts. Thus, as the first Christians saw it, the old world of fear and superstition gave way to the new world of love, grace and faith. That was the 'revealing' that we celebrate in Epiphany – not some elderly men bringing gifts to a baby, but a baby bringing to the world the gr openedeatest gift of all, a Saviour.

Canon David Winter



### Across

- 1 Protective covering recommended to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:11) (6)
- 4 The number of apostles (Matthew 10:2) (6)
- 8 Tenth-century Bishop of Augsberg for 48 years, who became the first saint to be canonized by a pope (5)
- 9 'Do not — what is evil but what

is good' (3 John 11) (7)

10 Reading desk in a church (7)

11 'He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like — walking around"' (Mark 8:24) (5)

12 One of the qualities that Paul exhorted Timothy to pursue (1 Timothy 6:11) (9)

17 One of the meaningless pleasures acquired by the Teacher (Ecclesiastes 2:8) (5)

19 'Like — babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation' (1 Peter 2:2) (7)

21 Jesus said that Moses allowed this only because men's hearts were hard (Matthew 19:8) (7)

22 Girl's name (5)

23 Most sagacious (Judges 5:29) (6)

24 How Stephen, the first Christian martyr, died: after being — (Acts 7:59) (6)

### Down

- 1 A Jew whom Paul met in Corinth, whose wife was Priscilla (Acts 18:2) (6)
- 2 For example, turning water into wine, feeding the five thousand, walking on water (John 7:21) (7)
- 3 Abram's relationship to Lot (Genesis 14:12) (5)
- 5 'Jesus answered, "It is —: 'Man does not live by bread alone.'" (Matthew 4:4) (7)
- 6 'Peace I — with you; my peace I give you' (John 14:27) (5)
- 7 'May the Lord deal with me, be it — — severely, if anything but death separates you and me' (Ruth 1:17) (4,2)
- 9 Lack of knowledge (Acts 17:30) (9)
- 13 This woman 'followed Paul and believed' after his words to the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:34) (7)
- 14 Or noise (anag.) (7)
- 15 'Even though I walk through the valley of the — of death, I will fear no evil' (Psalm 23:4) (6)
- 16 ' — Christian soldiers, marching as to war' (6)
- 18 Saver (anag.) (5)
- 20 'Unless a grain of — falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed' (John 12:24) (5)

## **Why we have Trump and Brexit**

Voters surprised politicians on both sides of the Atlantic last year. As a result, America has an unlikely President and the United Kingdom is in the process of leaving the European Union. There are hints that the electorate in other countries are also disgruntled with the status quo and may vote for untried alternatives.

Why? Here's one suggestion. Dreams of utopia have evaporated. Not so long ago we thought the human race was set on a moving walkway called progress, which would deliver health, wealth and happiness. Up to a point it has done that. Modern medicine has kept millions alive. We can fly to the other side of the world in a day or if we prefer, sit at home and communicate with our distant relatives via Skype. Astonishing advances are being made, but simultaneously the bloodiest wars are being fought and there's no sign of a let-up. Human beings are no nicer than they ever were.

Confidence has been rocked by nightly news of carnage across the world. We are losing faith in progress and in politics. And when it comes to prosperity, we have witnessed the world's economy shipwrecked by a handful of bonus-greedy bankers. The outcome? The rich have become richer and the poor, poorer. We still have a built-in yearning for something more stable, more trustworthy, more just. Imagine a different world where the Kingdom belongs to the spiritually poor, where mourners find comfort and meekness is rewarded. Where a deep desire for right to prevail will be satisfied, mercy is offered and received, purity of heart brings a vision of God, and peacemakers are His children. This is Christ's alternative to the status quo. It isn't cheap. Some will be persecuted, as He was, simply for being identified with righteousness. Their place, too, is in heaven. Is that the manifesto we're seeking?

The Ven John Barton

**THE WAY I SEE IT : Everything New?** Canon David Winter, a former Head of Religion, BBC.

I have now reached the point in life when the mere sight of the adjective 'new' attached to anything causes mild panic. My favourite tomato soup comes in a new-fangled can, and I know I won't be able to open it. My internet provider insists on burdening me with an 'update' - a 'new' approach to computing. I'm thrown into blind panic, until I see that I can click on 'decline' which I always do. 2016 had more than enough that was 'new' – Brexit, a new Prime Minister, and a new President-elect of the USA. Is there a pause button somewhere?

So how do I approach the New Year? Well, it's a nuisance to have to change my computer letter-head, and I know in mid-February I shall absent-mindedly revert to typing '2016' everywhere, but on the whole it's a bit of a non-event. So what? Some numbers have changed. Nothing significant is different. What the people baptising themselves in the Trafalgar Square fountains are celebrating eludes me. Peace in the Middle East? An end to poverty, homelessness and loneliness? The coming of an age of justice, love and compassion? It might take a bit more than a change in a single digit on the calendar to bring those about. What I suppose New Year does spark, in a low-key kind of way, is hope. Really, that should be celebrated at Advent, when the great theme is the 'Christian Hope' of a new kingdom of justice and love. Or at Easter, when the Spring's new colours are matched by our songs of resurrection and new life. In ordinary English usage, 'hope' can imply doubt – 'I hope so'. But in the language of faith, hope is something clear and promised. Human hopes can be dashed. Hope in an unchanging God is another matter altogether.

## Burns Night Supper

**Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017  
at The Nave Café**

**6.30pm**



**Booking Essential**

**Tickets: £15.00 per person**

## **New Year Prayer 2017**

Lord of the Years,  
At the start of this New Year we ask for your presence,  
protection and guidance for every minute of every day of every  
month ahead.

Thank you that we do not go into this New Year alone.

Thank you for loving us so much that you gave us Jesus to lead  
us to you.

May we commit ourselves afresh to serve you, to love you and  
to share your love with those who don't yet know you.

May we make a difference for your Kingdom in 2017.  
In Jesus name.

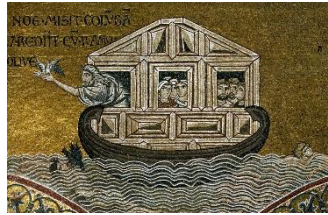
Amen

By Daphne Kitching

## God in the Arts

### Outstanding people in great stories of the Bible

#### **Noah and the Flood**



'Once upon a time' is the traditional way to begin a story. In the Bible it might be 'in the days of' or 'it came to pass': those words introduce us to the wealth of stories in Scripture. We read stories about the triumph of good over evil, others that are full of derring-do, and yet others that are heart-rending and poignant. And all of them revolve around colourful individuals. This year we shall be exploring that treasury of stories narrated in the Bible – it might be a patriarch or a king, a mother or a wife, a disciple or an evangelist. We shall see them described in Scripture and also reflected in a painting or sculpture.

We begin this year with Noah and the Flood, vividly described in Genesis and taken up by the Chester Mystery Plays and Britten's 'Noye's Fludde.' God's intention at the Flood is to judge the world and purify it, but to save a remnant. He chooses Noah, a just man, who with his family will be saved to people that renewed world. Like the other stories, we see human figures caught up in God's plans, and they abound in the glorious mosaics that decorate the interior of the magnificent 12th century cathedral of Monreale, near Palermo in Sicily. Among the scenes depicted there, one mosaic shows Noah and his family looking out of the ark. The bodies floating in the water are signs of the old sinful world, but Noah is leaning out to welcome back the dove. It bears an olive twig – a sign that the waters have receded. The dove and the olive twig promise a new earth and a new life to faithful Noah, who will preside over that reborn world. January marks a new year for us, and our hopes echo this scene as we pray for our world and a renewed desire for peace and harmony in it. Michael Burgess

## **Happy New Year**

Welcome to our first edition of the Parish Magazine for 2017. Our busy Christmas Programme is now behind us, thank you to "Team St Mary's" for your help and support throughout December ensuring the smooth running of all our services and events. Thank you to all those organisations and individuals who arranged to come to St Mary's and all of you for coming and joining in.

Clearly we could have come seriously unstuck with such an ambitious programme during an interregnum without help (and lots of it), so another big thank you to visiting clergy, readers and everyone else that has taken part. Our "thank you" of course extends further than just December, but since Easter 2016. It is always difficult to name names without the risk of missing someone out and causing great upset – BUT – a special thank you is given to Rev Andy Williams (for his regular attendance taking our 10am Tuesday Holy Communion Service), to Rev Canon John Briggs (for taking on our Tuesday lunch-time services) and Rev David Parker (for taking the majority of our Sunday Holy Communion Services). Our three "wise men" are all back with us in January, along with some familiar and some new faces.

We have no news to share at the present time as to what future arrangements will be, either here at St Mary's or in the wider community – we are waiting for news. We continue "business as usual" under the guidance of the Ven Ian Bishop – Archdeacon of Macclesfield and Rev Canon Diane V Cookson – Rural Dean (Stockport Deanery).

Life goes on however, and we already have quite a few bookings in the diary for 2017 and a lot of interest in supporting our bicentenary celebrations in the summer. We have a lot to look forward to, new challenges and new opportunities. It's all very exciting. Sue Heap

## **What's happening at St Andrews?**

I'm glad you asked – and am delighted to say that eventually we have new flooring in the main halls but not yet the kitchen. There is still a lot of work to be done.

Part of the decorating is completed and work will start again shortly to repair the damage to the fire door, window etc. We aim to then complete the interior decorating and obtain new tables.

It has been a long process with loss adjusters and contractors but finally there is a light at the end of this particular tunnel and we hope to be fully functional again shortly, with those temporarily meeting elsewhere returning to us.

Many of our users have of course stayed with us and “managed” as best they could – the Stockport Evangelical Church, RC Drift Club and our Tai-Chi group. Stockport Operatic Society, Manchester Bach Choir will be back when rehearsals start again and Slimming World return shortly.

We welcome a new user Stockport Family Church and are re-opening the diary for bookings (one-off or long-term).

**We do need help, a team from St Mary's to take turns to look after St Andrews.** Once we have cleaned out the kitchen cupboards and returned what crockery we are retaining, there is the question of the weekly maintenance of the building, emptying the bins, general cleaning and keeping the premises tidy. Someone to act as “caretaker” to one-off users, unlocking and locking the premise, showing them round and explaining “housekeeping” rules. We can't expect our users to pay for using St Andrews if we don't keep it to the required standard.

**Can you help?**

S M Heap

**ACROSS:** 1, Armour. 4, Twelve. 8, Ulric. 9, Imitate. 10, Lectern. 11, Trees. 12, Endurance. 17, Harem. 19, Newborn. 21, Divorce. 22, Erica. 23, Wisest. 24, Stoned.

**DOWN:** 1, Aquila. 2, Miracle. 3, Uncle. 5, Written. 6, Leave. 7, Ever so. 9, Ignorance. 13, Damaris. 14, Erosion. 15, Shadow. 16, Onward. 18, Raves. 20, Wheat.