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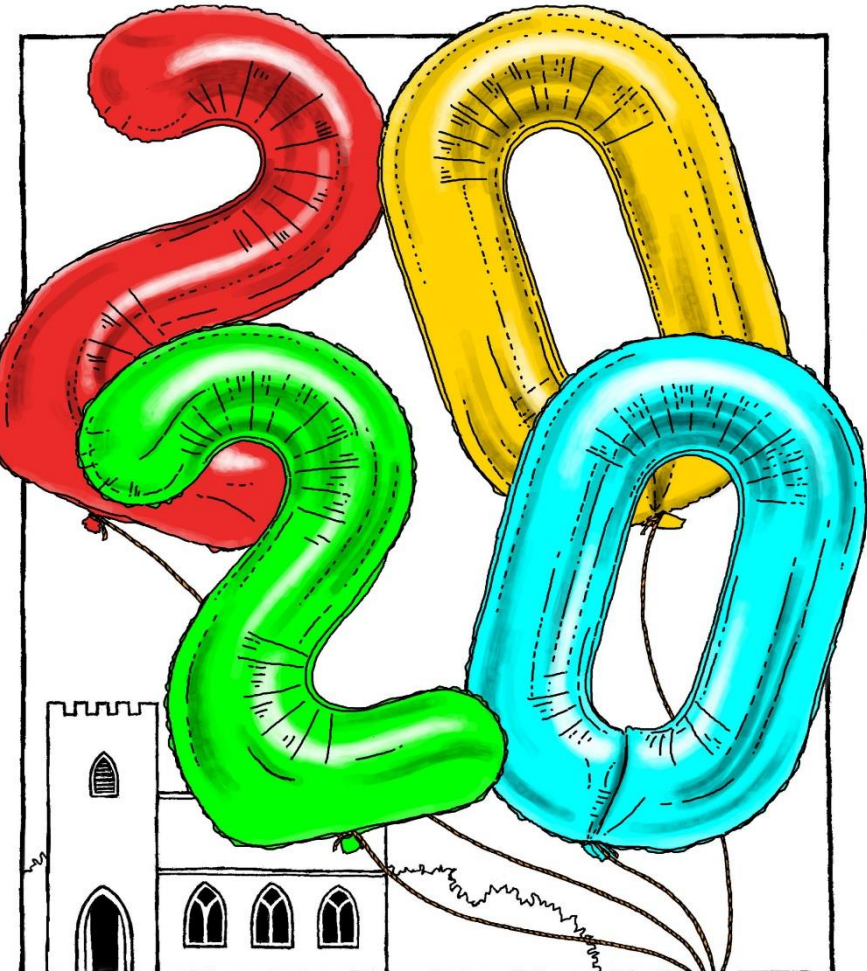
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January
2020

Parish of Stockport and Brinnington

St Mary - St Thomas - St Luke



"Here we are at the start of a brand new year, it's like opening a book with 366 blank pages and writing each as we go along. What will you write I wonder? What will we write here as a parish and church community? The fact is that none of us know. We have plans but God may well have others; what will be written in our book this year will be authored by the Almighty and not by us, as ever. And that could feel frightening because we like to see where we're heading, we like to know what is in front of us, we'd like those pages of that book to be already written so that we can appraise ourselves of what lies ahead.

But God doesn't present us with a ready printed book either for the year ahead or for our lives - he presents us with that journal of blank pages and he hands us a pen and the freedom to write our own stories within the framework of his unknown divine purposes.

That's where we stand today at the start of this new year, with a story ready to be written and a new journey of discovery and hope upon which to embark.

Theologian Henri Nouwen wrote

"Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, 'How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or ten years from now?' But there are no answers to these questions. Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step; what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day.

ACROSS: 1, Cock. 3, Shackles. 8, Play. 9, Paradise. 11, Faithfully. 14, Enmesh. 15, Unseen. 17, Armageddon. 20, Benjamin. 21, Beri. 22, Capitals. 23, USPG.

DOWN: 1, Cup of tea. 2, Charisma. 4, Heap up. 5, Challenged. 6, Lois. 7, Slew. 10, The Servant. 12, Lewdness. 13, Unending. 16, Daniel. 18, BBFC. 19, Snap.

Old words, new meanings

In the 1990s a stream was a small river, the web was what spiders built in your shed, a net was something you used to catch things, the cloud brought rain, and tweeting was what birds did.

Not anymore. In recent years these words from the 'natural world' have been so overtaken by technology that now they are used more in technology than in their original, natural state.

For example, the word 'web' is now used only seven per cent with regard to nature, and the word 'cloud' is down to 77 per cent for nature. The research was commissioned by the National Trust, who are concerned that 'as a nation, we are losing our connection with nature.'

As one academic in the study explained: "Language represents what is important to a culture or society. Nature language being replaced or used less frequently suggests nature potentially becoming less important or being replaced by other things."

Stockport Homes – Gift Service



Photo above: Kirstie Dunbar / Lynne Cullens / Sue Heap (photo by Adam Pinder)

Once again thank you to everyone who provided gifts (for young people aged 0 to 18 years) for Stockport Homes to distribute to families struggling financially. We were once again able to welcome Kirstie Dunbar to our Gift Service and to hear an update as to the work being undertaken by Stockport Homes to support their tenants during difficult times and to understand better the processes of the "Universal Credit" system. Kirstie left us absolutely delighted with the donations we had made – her little Toyota Yarris filled to the brim with games, toys, books and clothing etc. We will be keeping in contact with Kirstie during the year. SMH

The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all shadows away."

Trusting God for enough light to light the next step and not for the whole course of our journey.

That reminds me of the poem quoted by King George VI in his Christmas Day broadcast in 1939 – a time when the world faced a great darkness. It goes as follows

I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year,

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied, "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way."

May God bless each one of us as we take his hand and step out into the year ahead...

With love,

Lynne, Rector of Stockport & Brinnington

Remember the Millennium Bug?

Tim Lenton looks back 20 years...

Just over 20 years ago, there was widespread panic – or at least deep concern – over what might happen when the calendar switched over to the year 2000 on 1st January, and the effect on computers of the so-called Y2K ‘Millennium Bug’.

The problem was that computers so long ago were laughably short of memory, and to save space, years in dates had all been recklessly programmed with two figures – for example 80, instead of the full 1980. So, when they reached 2000, no-one knew what would happen. Would the computers think they were back at 00, the beginning of time, or in some other dimension where time had no meaning?

Possible consequences ranged from the Second Coming to explosions in nuclear plants and aircraft falling out of the sky. Many experts predicted disaster of one kind or another. Churches were not immune. But in the end more or less nothing happened. Some put this down to the preventative work done by computer technicians – at a price – while others thought it was never going to happen anyway.

The cost of countering the Y2K Bug threat cost Britain nearly £400 million. There were problems, but nothing huge – except the sigh of relief.

Bridge Over Troubled Water

Tim Lenton recalls a much-loved song

The album *Bridge Over Troubled Water* by Simon and Garfunkel was released 50 years ago, on 26th January 1970. It topped the charts in ten countries and sold 25 million records. It was their fifth and final studio album.

The song itself, one of their most widely known, was influenced by gospel music, especially the Swan Silvertones’ version of *Mary Don’t You Weep*, which includes the line “I’ll be your bridge over deep water, if you trust in my name” – a debt acknowledged by Simon.

Art Garfunkel initially refused to sing lead on the song, but was eventually persuaded, with Paul Simon transposing the key to suit him. Simon wanted a gospel piano sound, and so hired session musician Larry Knechtel. The song was initially two verses long, but he thought it was too short and asked Knechtel to play a third verse, to which he wrote more lyrics.

Despite the many accolades that followed, the duo split up later in 1970, with Garfunkel concentrating on his film career.

Simon and Garfunkel are both Jewish, and many of the later songs written by Simon have Christian overtones – this stunning song is no exception.

100 years of serving Wales

The Church in Wales is preparing to celebrate 100 years of serving Wales as it enters its centenary year.

In 1920, the Church in Wales became an independent part of the Anglican Communion after centuries of being part of the Church of England. The process was known as 'disestablishment' as it broke the link between Welsh churches and the state with the historic Welsh Church Act.

Events being held to mark the anniversary include celebration services in all six of the Church's cathedrals on June 7 and a visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury in April. A Centenary Appeal has also been launched which aims to raise £100,000 for two charities over the next five years.

The Archbishop of Wales, John Davies, said, "2020 is our centenary as a province of the Anglican Communion. We will be celebrating this landmark birthday throughout the year in churches and communities across Wales, and I invite everyone to join in giving thanks and praise for the fellowship we have shared over the years."

The Provincial Secretary, Simon Lloyd, said, "The Church in Wales is involved in community life in all parts of Wales – in cities, towns, villages and hamlets, in both of our languages, amongst people of all ages. We welcome everyone. The centenary is an opportunity to share our story and our life together with our friends, our neighbours and our nation."

St Mary's Christmas 2019

Many thanks to Warren Dean and colleagues at J E Dean Ltd (Hazel Grove) for managing to get the heating back on at St Mary's in time for the beginning of the Christmas programme. How wonderful it was to have a warm church.

To start the programme of concerts and special services (somewhat happier than at their first visit of the season - although they didn't complain when we had no heating on) it was delightful to welcome back Stockport Youth Orchestra for their Christmas Concert. Continuing throughout December it was wonderful to see so many people at St Mary's. Our thanks to Beechwood Cancer Care, Age UK Stockport, Shopmobility, the Ex-Services Association in liaison with the Sea Cadets, the Wellspring and Stockport Homes for asking us to support their Christmas initiative, providing gifts for those needing a little seasonal cheer (0-18 year olds). Thanks to our visiting schools – Warren Wood Primary School; Vernon Park Primary School and Banks Lane Junior School - to the Beechwood & Affinity Choirs; Offerton Methodist Choir and the Doing Dementia Differently Intergenerational Choir. Thanks to our guest organists (even if the organ did develop a faulty circuit board – what a good job we have a concert standard grand piano) as well as bell ringers from Derby Cathedral. With our own Christmas Fayre and schedule of services (including the new Christingle service) it all added up to be a most enjoyable Advent/Christmas 2019.

Thank you all for your supporting us and of course to "Team St Mary's" for making it all happen.

SMH

C of E's Environment Group calls for greater church action on Climate Change

The Church of England's Environmental Advisory Group has called for all parts of the Church to recognise the Climate Crisis and step up its action to safeguard God's creation.

In guidance sent to bishops, dioceses and church leadership teams, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) points to the ambitious programme of action required, covering everything from the Church's buildings to its investment assets.

The paper also highlights future mission challenges including a need for churches to be ready to provide sanctuary for those affected by extreme weather events in this country and beyond as the impact of climate change accelerates.

With work already underway to develop a carbon footprint tool and local energy audits for churches, schools and houses, the EWG says the assessment of our carbon footprint must extend to all areas within the overall Church of England portfolio such as investment holdings in farming and forestry.

Several areas of focus for 2020 have been identified, including a Lent Campaign on the Environment backed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and plans for events surrounding COP 26, the UN climate change summit, in Glasgow. Climate change and the environment will also be a central part of the Lambeth2020 Conference which brings together bishops from the global Anglican Communion.

THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF THE SAVIOUR

February	25	<i>Father forgive</i> Luke 24.34
March	03	<i>Today you will be with me in Paradise</i> Luke 24.43
	10	<i>Woman behold your son!</i> John 19.26-27
	17	<i>My God, my God why have you forsaken me?</i> Matthew 27.46 & Mark 15.34
	24	<i>I thirst</i> John 19.28
	31	<i>It is finished!</i> John 19.30
April	07	<i>Into your hands I commend my spirit</i> Luke 23.46

St Mary's Lunchtime Service – 7th January – 7th April 2020

January 7 Epiphany

THE BEGINNING OF EVERYTHING

January 14 *Origins: whose world is it?*
Genesis 1.1-2.3

21 *Human beings: who are we?*
Genesis 1.26-30; 2.4-25

28 *Sin: what went wrong?*
Genesis 3

February 04 *Families: bane or blessing?*
Genesis 4

11 *Noah: getting on board*
Genesis 6 - 9

18 *Abraham: the promise of more to come.*
Genesis 11, 12

Heating Update (St Mary's)

We are pleased to report that two of our three aged and beyond repair boilers have now been replaced and are fully operational. There is however a snag in that the pressure to keep the water circulating is causing us to loose water through at least one identified leak in the pipework under the floor. This will require part of the floor to be taken up as soon as possible in January to reach the relevant area – no guarantee of course that this is the only leak in the system – but one step at a time.

Other new parts are on ordered where additional problems have been identified in the boiler room.

Thank you for putting up with the chill factor whilst trying to cope with electric heaters – and thank you Val for bringing in some hot water bottles for us to use. SMH

More “local” news next month.....

Parochial Church Council members please note that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 8th January 2020 at 7.30pm St Mary's.

The Joys of January!

Hail to the Lord's anointed,
Both clergyman and lay,
They're seldom disappointed
To get past Christmas Day!
The hectic Christmas season
Of service constantly –
There can't be better reason
To welcome January!

The Curate and the Vicar
A busy schedule keep,
As they rush, ever quicker
They don't get that much sleep.
The overworked Churchwarden
And their sidespersons team,
Who don't get time for boredom
But only seldom scream!

So, when the season's over;
The crib has been put by,
The drapes to green changed over
They breathe a heartfelt sigh!
They laugh and smile with pleasure
And sing a merry rhyme,
But short-lived is their leisure –
For soon comes Easter time!

By Nigel Beeton

Holocaust Memorial Day *The Rev Paul Hardingham on the problem of evil.*

Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. One of the disturbing questions that arises from the horrors of the Holocaust is *'where was God when the six million died?'*

In his moving memoir, *'Night,'* Eli Wiesel tells the story of an execution that the prisoners were forced to witness. Two men and a boy were made to stand on chairs with nooses around their necks. At the guards' signal, the chairs were kicked from beneath their feet. The men died instantly as the fall broke their necks, but the boy, flailed about, gasping for breath. Wiesel heard someone cry out, *'For God's sake, where is God?'* In that moment, he heard a voice inside: *'Where is He? This is where: hanging here from this gallows'.*

As we think of this boy dying on the gallows, we are reminded of another Jew, who suffered and died on a cross. As the crowd gathered around the cross, it was Jesus who posed the same question: *'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'* (Matt 27:46).

Jesus became a human being, because God wanted to identify with His lost and suffering world. He willingly took upon Himself God's judgment for the sin of the world, as God turned away from the Son he loved: *'God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God'* (2 Cor. 5:21).

So where was God when the six million died? The truth is that God is present in our suffering, to identify and suffer with us and to provide help, hope and meaning to those who suffer. Whatever we go through this New Year, let's not forget this truth!

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020

'Unusual kindness' is the unusual name for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18th to 25th January). The materials for the week have been prepared by the Christian churches in Malta and Gozo (Christians Together in Malta). 'Unusual kindness' is found in the book of Acts. The phrase refers to the warm welcome that the people of Malta gave to Paul and his companions when they were shipwrecked on the island. In return, Paul shared the gospel with them, and thus founded the church in Malta. Something that the Christians in Malta thank God for!

World Leprosy Sunday – 26th January

World Leprosy Day aims to raise awareness and knowledge of this horrific disease. The good news is that nowadays, it can in fact be cured, and so it is vital to change attitudes that stigmatise the people affected. Many churches and groups across the country will hold their own local Leprosy Sunday sometime between 26 January and 26 April 2020. They will look back to the gospel of Matthew, when just after delivering the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was approached by a man with leprosy. The leper knelt before Him and pleaded for help.

Matthew tells us: 'Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. "I am willing," Jesus said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.' (Matthew 8:3).

Mouse Makes

EPIPHANY is the time in the Church year that we remember when the 'wise men' or 'Magi' followed a star that led them to the Christ child Jesus. They bowed down and worshiped him and left *three* special gifts:

GOLD
A valuable metal. Reminds us that Jesus is **King of Kings**.

FRANKINCENSE
A sweet smelling incense used in the Temple to worship God. Reminds us that **Jesus is God**.

MYRRH
A fragrant spice put on a body before burial. Reminds us that Jesus was to die so that he could be our **Saviour**.

Can you find these words below in the word search?

How did God warn the wise men?
READ
Matthew 2:1-12

JESUS • BORN • BETHLEHEM • JUDEA • WISE • EAST • JERUSALEM • KING
STAR • WORSHIP • HEROD • PRIESTS • CHRIST • PROPHECY • SHEPHERD
ISRAEL • GO • FIND • LOOK • SAW • JOYFUL • MARY • BOWED • GIFTS
GOLD • FRANKINCENSE • MYRRH • WARNING • DREAM

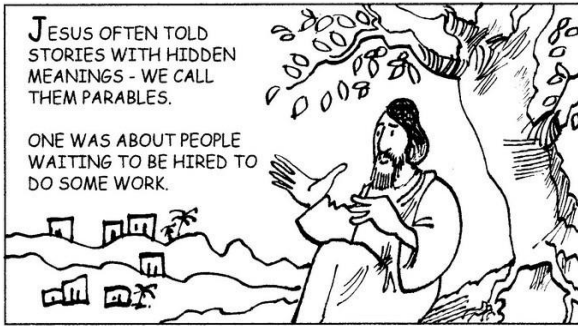
Jan20 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

The Hired Workers



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS - WE CALL THEM PARABLES.

ONE WAS ABOUT PEOPLE WAITING TO BE HIRED TO DO SOME WORK.



A HOUSEHOLDER HIRED A GROUP OF WORKERS FROM THE MARKET PLACE, FIRST THING IN THE MORNING. HE AGREED UPON A FAIR WAGE.



A BIT LATER ON THE HOUSEHOLDER RETURNED TO THE MARKET PLACE AND HIRED SOME MORE WORKERS.



HE RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE DAY, EACH TIME HIRING MORE WORKERS. HE EVEN HIRED SOME PEOPLE JUST AS THE SUN WAS SETTING!



WHEN THE DAY WAS OVER THE HOUSEHOLDER BEGAN TO PAY THE WORKERS, STARTING WITH THOSE WHO HAD ONLY JUST ARRIVED. HE PAID EVERYONE THE SAME.

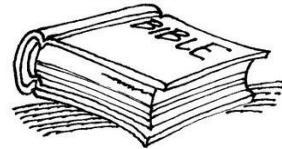


THIS UPSET THOSE WHO HAD WORKED ALL DAY. THEY THOUGHT THEY SHOULD GET MORE.



BUT THEY WERE BEING PAID WHAT THEY HAD AGREED AT THE START OF THE DAY.

JESUS CONCLUDED "SO THOSE WHO ARE LAST WILL BE FIRST, AND THOSE WHO ARE FIRST WILL BE LAST" - IT'S A HARD PARABLE!



see Matthew 20:1-16

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in 1 Samuel chapter 1

In the time before there were kings in Israel, there lived a rich man, Elkanah, and his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah.

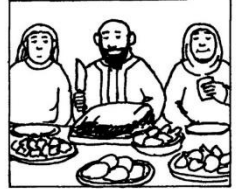
Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.



Each year they travelled to Shiloh to worship God.



After the worship, they feasted.



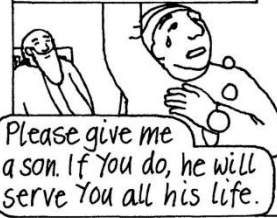
Elkanah always gave Hannah a special portion of food to show he loved her.



But Hannah was too sad to eat. She left the meal and went to pray.



She prayed silently.



Please give me a son. If you do, he will serve you all his life.

Eli the priest saw Hannah's silent weeping and praying and thought she was drunk.



I'm not drunk! I was just pouring out how I feel to God.



I'm sure God will answer your prayer.

Back home, Hannah had a son, and she named him Samuel.



She stayed at home with him when the rest of the family went to Shiloh.

When Samuel was old enough, Hannah and Elkanah took him to Shiloh to live there and serve God.





He gave us eyes to see them': 'The Peaceable Kingdom' by Edward Hicks

St Francis' Canticle of the Sun invites all creatures to praise God the Creator. But we live in a world of climate change and global warming. A thousand species are at risk of extinction in the United Kingdom alone. The richness of creation St Francis knew in his day is no

longer. We need to heed the urgent call to care for the biodiversity of our planet and its richness in plant and animal life. This year we shall be looking at animals and birds – their grace and strength, their beauty and wonder – as reflected in art and scripture, and so learn to value the glory of Creation all around us. Isaiah in chapter 11 had a vision of a special child who would bring paradise to the earth once more. He spoke of a world where the wolf would lie down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid. It is the theme of 'The Peaceable Kingdom' by the American Quaker artist, Edward Hicks. This subject occupied all his artistic talent for he painted almost a hundred versions. Sixty still exist and this one is from 1834. The foreground is occupied by not just one child, but several. They are innocent and free, playing with the animals around – lion, tiger, leopard, bear, wolf, cow and lamb. There is no sign of 'nature red in tooth and claw' here. All is peace and tranquillity. The bear and cow nudge each other in the bottom corner with no fear. That peaceful co-existence is echoed in the distance with William Penn and other Quakers working on a treaty with the Indians. The animals in the foreground symbolise the human traits we see at work in the background: leadership and power, sensitivity and gentleness. Edward Hicks as he worked on later versions knew that this peace was not a straightforward achievement. Selfishness, pride and greed got in the way. But the vision remained. Follow the inner light of God's grace, he is saying in his art, and that harmony can be achieved. Cherish the world around and give thanks for its rich variety and colour. Then we can follow Edward Hicks and St Francis in caring for 'all creatures great and small.'

The Rev Michael Burgess

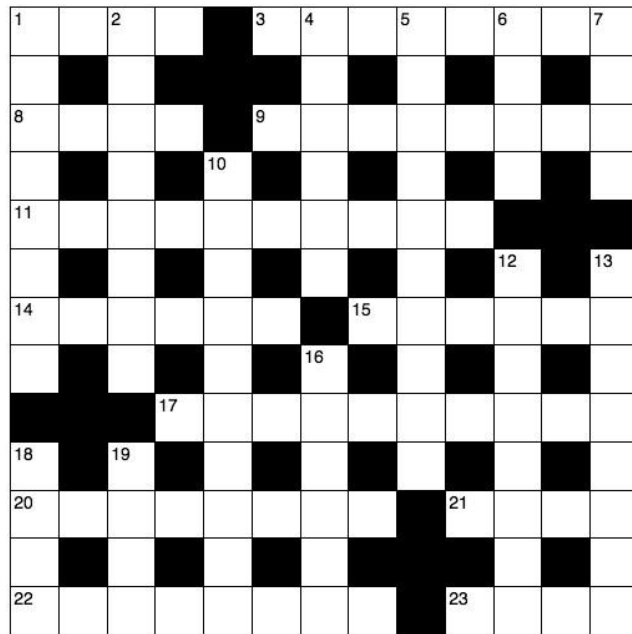
Epiphany

'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.' So Matthew tells of the coming of the Magi, or Wise Men, to Bethlehem. Did they come from Arabia Felix – nowadays southern Arabia? How many came? No one knows, but by the 6th century they were named Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. Why gold, frankincense and myrrh? Gold stands for kingship: Jesus was King of the Jews. Frankincense stands for divinity; Jesus was to be worshipped. Myrrh stands for death and burial; Jesus would become a sacrifice and die for his people. The Wise Men were the very first Gentiles ever to worship Jesus. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi wanted to worship Jesus; Herod wanted to kill him.

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

Wordsearch
 King Jews
 Star east
 Worship magi
 Wise men
 baby Jesus
 Epiphany
 Arabia Felix
 Gaspar Melchior
 Balthasar Gold
 Frankincense
 Myrrh kingship
 Isaiah nations
 Herod kill
 Bethlehem

Crossword



Crossword Clues

Across

- 1 'Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a — began to crow' (John 18:27) (4)
 3 Fetters (Job 33:11) (8)
 8 Perform on a musical instrument (1 Samuel 16:23) (4)
 9 Paul describes it as 'the third heaven' (2 Corinthians 12:2–4) (8)
 11 Loyal (Deuteronomy 11:13) (10)

- 14 Hens? Me? (anag.) (6)
 15 Not visible (Matthew 6:6) (6)
 17 Predicted site of the final great battle (Revelation 16:16) (10)
 20 Jacob's youngest son (Genesis 35:18) (8)
 21 One of Zophar's eleven sons (1 Chronicles 7:36) (4)
 22 For example, London, Paris, Rome (8)
 23 United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1,1,1,1)

Down

- 1 Favourite church activity: Fellowship round a — — — (3,2,3)
 2 Divinely bestowed powers or talents (8)
 4 Pile together (1 Thessalonians 2:16) (4,2)
 5 Commanded to justify (John 8:13) (10)
 6 Timothy's grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5) (4)
 7 Killed (Psalm 78:34) (4)
 10 One of Graham Kendrick's best-known songs, — — King (3,7)
 12 Indecency (Mark 7:22) (8)
 13 Unceasing (Jeremiah 15:18) (8)
 16 He prophesied 'the abomination that causes desolation' (Matthew 24:15) (6)
 18 British Board of Film Classification (1,1,1,1)
 19 Pans (anag.) (4)