

## **Shirley Parish Magazine**



## SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE (see also inside the back cover)

### Vicar - in vacancy

#### **Reverend Richard Haynes**

email: curate@shirleyparishb90.co.uk Tel: 07972 530161

**Reverend Wendy Carter** 

email: revwendy@sky.com Tel: 0121 744 6315

**Reverend Dr. Theresa Jones** 

email: theresaj1@btinternet.com Tel: 0121 272 3366

Gill Gough

email: g.gough@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 0121 603 2636

Sarah Penfold

email: penfold633@gmail.com Tel: 0121 681 1525

**Denise Smith** 

email: deesmith1181@hotmail.com Tel: 07815 193892

#### **Parish Administration Manager - Emily Ellis**

## Parish Office, Church House, Church Road, Shirley, B90 2AX

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 12.30pm

Telephone: 0121 745 8896

Email: office@shirleyparishb90.co.uk

Parish Website: https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk Social Media: facebook.com/@AdventureinFaithB90

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@shirleyparish5736

Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4904334906



## FOR ANY ENQUIRIES ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE PLEASE CONTACT THE PARISH OFFICE OR THE EDITOR -

Gill Hanton - Telephone : 07973 942145
Email : shirleyparishmagazine@gmail.com

### Deadline for information and articles for next month's magazine: 12th of the month

Whilst every care is taken to ensure that the contents of the magazine are correct, the Parish cannot be responsible for any errors that may occur in the editorial or advertisements, nor for the actions of the advertisers.

## **OUR SERVICES IN JANUARY**

Date	Time	Service	Venue
Sunday 4th	10.30am	Parish Communion	St James Church
Epiphany	3.30pm	Reflective Worship	St James Church
Thursday 8th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 11th	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Holy Communion	St John's Church
	10.30am	Morning Worship	St James Church
Thursday 15th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Saturday 17th	10am	Messy Church	St James Church
Sunday 18th	10.30am	Parish Communion	St James Church
Thursday 22nd	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 25th	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Morning Worship	St John's Church
	10.30am	Worship 4 Everyone	St James Church
Thursday 29th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church

PLEASE CHECK FOR ANY CHANGES TO OUR SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES ON THE WEEKLY NOTICE SHEET OR ON OUR WEBSITE https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk

Sunday Services at St James Church are live-streamed on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/@shirleyparish5736

Copies of the sermons preached at our services can be found on our website https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk/download-a-sermon

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### **OUR PRAYER FOR THE TIME OF VACANCY**

Heavenly Father,

thank you that we are held together as a community in your love.

Let us be ready to share the good news of Jesus with those around us.

Strengthen us as we patiently wait as a parish,
remembering that your Son is the Good Shepherd
who will guide us along our future path.

May we gently encourage one another,
be quick to listen
and humbly reach out to support those in need.

With everlasting hope,
we trust in you alone to provide in this new season.

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In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk/future-ministry-in-shirley-parish





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## **JOURNEY TO THE STABLE 2025**

Emily, in the office, keeps reminding me that we are a team. We certainly were a team for the Journey to the Stable. What with the preparation beforehand, getting the church ready, the five days when the schools visited, and getting the church back to normal for Sunday. That's a lot of doing, and a lot of people involved.

It was unclear just how scary it would be, as we have made so many changes to what we do since Paul arrived, so would we be able to manage it all with two experienced people having left? Could we do it? Yes, we could! I even, for the first time in about twenty years, delegated church preparation to others and went to a family lunch instead.

We are aware that our team is getting older, less available and a little less adventurous, but our numbers were boosted by two new members. True I broke them in gently, but both have confirmed they will help again.

By the end of the week, people were looking tired, and there was a tinsel mountain in the choir vestry. But we had retold the Christmas story to about 650 five year olds (and their teachers and parent helpers). The story had been reinforced by activities – learning to be shepherds, visiting the Wise Man's house, looking at the origins of Christmas decorations, and crafting a star to take back to school. And we have renewed our friendship with some of the teachers who have come along for years.

Back to the team though. Gaps in the rota? 'I could come on Thursday if it helps.' Someone is sick? 'I can lead that activity'. There's an inset day? 'I can bring my daughter to help'. Not forgetting the people who enabled church business as usual that week so ran the café, Jimmy Tots and the Thursday service. All part of the wider team.

So, on behalf of Richard and me can I just say a massive big 'thank you' and we will see you on the Easter Journey in March.

Sarah Penfold

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A Very Happy New Year to you all.

Our annual Advent Service held on Wednesday 3rd December was a combined service with members from our Home Communion Community joining us. Rev Wendy Carter led the service. During the service Myra Taylor was enrolled and welcomed into our branch. This was Wendy's last service as she has decided to retire, thanks were expressed to Wendy by Rev Richard Haynes, and this was echoed by all present. Liz Yates presented Wendy with a Hellebore from the Mothers' Union.

Refreshments followed, looked after by Jan Dalton. Thank you, Jan.

By now members should have received their Branch Newsletter and 2026 programme. Members annual subscription for 2026 of £30.00 is now due, payment to the Treasurer would be appreciated by the 23rd of January please.

There will be no meeting in January. However, there will be a Wave of Prayer, please see the pew slip for further information.

Our next monthly meeting will be the A.G.M on Wednesday 4th February at 2pm in Church House.

Susan Knight

## **'THANK YOU'**

We celebrated the MU Advent Service on December 3rd 2025 and members were delighted to welcome many of our Home Communion Community to enjoy the service with us. For many of the less mobile this service at 2pm, gives them freedom to come to church without worrying about time constraints which make morning worship difficult and there was a willing band of drivers to collect and return people to and from their homes.

The Advent service is one in which members of MU renew our vows and enrol new members and we very glad to welcome Myra Taylor as a new member of Shirley MU on this occasion.

It is always a great privilege for a priest to preside at the Eucharist and sadly this was the last time I will lead the service - but this is the third time I've 'retired' and this is now the right time as Parkinsons has become a reality in my life.

At the end of the service, I was delighted to receive a beautiful pure white hellebore from the Shirley branch, which I am enjoying as it blooms in the porch.



In the spring it will be planted in a shady spot where I can see it from my 'prayer chair'. Thank you for the kind thoughts and good wishes which accompanied the gift!

I would also like to thanks Rev'd Dr. Theresa Jones for her sermon on this occasion, Rev'd Richard for his computer skills, Sarah Penfold as our pianist and all the providers of mince pies, sausage rolls, and other tasty treats we enjoyed with a cuppa after the service

With every blessing,

Reverend Wendy Carter

## HOME COMMUNION COMMUNITY

On Wednesday 3rd December, I, along with many others, attended the Advent Service for those of us who cannot normally attend church as we are disabled, the service was also for members of the Mothers Union, and we saw a new member enrolled. On behalf of all who attended I want to say a huge thank you to the ministers, especially Rev'd Wendy who informed me that this was the last time she would be taking the service; she will be greatly missed although we shall see her in church. I must thank the helpers who acted as chauffeurs, the kind people who readied the church, moving furniture and waiting on us and our super chefs who really surpassed themselves with the magnificent spread laid on for us.

There were miniature flaky pastry sausage rolls, slices of Christmas cake and small sponge cakes with "snow" on top consisting of white cream and edible snowflakes to finish them off. There was also ham, wrapped around cheese on sticks together with chunks of pineapple and we must not forget the mince pies! The whole ensemble was a virtual feast and I offer my congratulations to whoever dreamed up the menu. Whoever brews the tea does a jolly good job too!

Pam and I had the privilege of meeting Rev'd Wendy's granddaughter who is a doctor in Liverpool and was due on duty the next day but was busy cheerfully hoisting chairs about and generally helping.

The service was lovely and after the service we were visited by a four-legged friend; a Shetland Sheepdog, who was soon enjoying a big fuss from those worshippers gathered by the table. "Oh, I'd love to give him a fuss" I said to Pam. Bless her, she stood up, turned her walker around and marched over to where the dog and her human mum were, next thing they had all trouped back to me. ... continued over the page

## **HOME COMMUNION COMMUNITY continued**

The dog, whose name turned out to be Misha, needed no encouragement and was soon beside me on the pew enjoying a fuss. He then sat looking hopefully at my nearly empty plate.

He made short work of the ham I offered him, after gaining permission to feed him from his human mum Brenda, and then I tried him with the cheese as most dogs like cheese, and that quickly disappeared. "You would think I didn't feed him!" was Brenda's comment. We all agreed that he would make a lovely Pat Dog and for those who don't know, a Pat Dog is one who visits hospitals and care homes to mingle with the patients and have a big fuss made of them. These dogs are very popular with patients, especially children, and hospital staff have found that anyone stroking them has lower blood pressure so visits are very beneficial.

We also said what a lovely idea it would be to have an animal service in church and mentioned this to Richard. I have an adopted donkey and jokingly said I could bring him. You must ride him up the aisle was the comment and I had a mental picture of myself doing just that: what a sight that would be, but have no fear, Jasper my donkey lives in a sanctuary in Devon so he would not be attending. Just in case anyone reading this thinks I am lazy not getting up to go to Misha myself, I have a balance problem caused through brain damage so need help walking, Richard's strong arm is just the job!

Richard kindly took me home and I think I was the last one in Church, apart from the helpers, who by that time must have thought I was going to stay the night and must have been relieved to see me go. What a lovely start to Christmas it was.

God bless, have a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year everyone.

Mary Hayes

## **OUR 2025 CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL**



Our Christmas Tree Festival was a great success thanks to all those who contributed and visited.

The most 'favourite tree' votes went to the Mothers' Union's beautifully decorated tree, the Fairtrade hampers were won by Pat Coward and Wendy Carter.

£100 was donated to the 'Open Doors' charity.

The festival ended with a joyous Carol Service led by Harry Brown and the choir.

## SHIRLEY PARISH BOOK CLUB

The Book Club had a choice of three books this time, everyone read at least one of these books and their thoughts are as follows:

### The Fortnight in September - R C Sherriff

'This book about nothing turns out to be about everything.' A beautiful book, one that you would want to keep and read again. The book is just about a fortnights holiday. Those who read it talked about the characters and how well described they were and endearing. It also shows you how much life has changed. The characters were very accepting of everything. All who read this really loved it, and thought it was a delightful read.

#### The Island of Missing Trees – Elif Shafak

Another lovely story, this time based on the troubles in Cyprus, a love story encompassed with sadness and war. The social commentary on the times is provided in the voice of the Fig Tree that features heavily in the story. There is a lot of information about the times described by the tree, and it helps to understand what was going on in Cyprus. There are happy times and sad times in the book, and it is very cleverly tied together, flicking between Cyprus in the 1970s and London in the 2010s. Again, all who read this enjoyed it.

#### Restoration - Rose Tremain

This is an historical novel, based on the time of Charles 2nd, a man who goes through life making the wrong choices and is a bit of a buffoon. He ends up in a big house married to the mistress of the King, arranged by the King as a cover up. The man has feelings for the mistress, but it goes sour and he loses everything. He ends up living in Norfolk with a friend who runs an asylum. He helps a female patient and discovers he can soothe her, she develops feelings for him, and his life falls apart again.... All those who read this book really enjoyed it.

We swapped the books between us for those who fancied an extra book over the Christmas period before we meet again.

Our next choice is an interesting one, we are tasked to find a children's book that has a significant memory for us, whether we read it as a child or had it read to us, or whether we have read it to our children or grandchildren. Then to think about how it made us feel and share with the group.

Our next meeting is on **Monday 12th January,** 2pm in Church House, if you'd like to join us – please do!

Shirley Parish Book Club Hit Parade 20	)25
Name of book	Average Score
Conclave - Robert Harris	10
The Fortnight in September - R C Sheriff	10
The Secret Collector - Abigail Johnson	9
The Land of Missing Trees - Elif Shafak	9
The Women - Kristin Hannah	8
Away with the Penguins - Hazel Prior	8
Restoration - Rose Tremain	8
The List Of Suspicious Things - Jennie Godfrey	8
The Awakenings - Sarah Maine	7
The Last Dance - Mark Billingham	7
The Lamplighters - Emma Stonex	7
The Boy at the Top of the Mountain - John Boyne	7
The Book of Beginnings - Sally Page	6
The Hunting Party - Lucy Foley	5

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## THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES 100 CLUB

Congratulations to the December winners £50 ~ Mary Appleby £25 ~ Wendy Carter

#### REVEREND JULIE HUMPHRIES R.I.P.

Reverend Julie Humphries, whose funeral took place on 24th November 2025, was from 2012 – 2017 a Team Vicar in Shirley Parish; initially when Fr Michael Caddy was Rector and later during the time of Fr. Peter Law-Jones.

I first met Julie at The Queen's Foundation Edgbaston, while she was training for ordained ministry. We were often sitting next to each other at the college evening dinner and discovered that we both came from Worcester Diocese. Julie completed her training and served her Title as Curate in Redditch Holy Trinity, which included St Leonard's Beoley; St Philip's Webheath and St Stephen's Redditch. The Rector at the time was Reverend Canon David Rogers and Julie and her husband Mick, remained friends with David until he died.

In 2012 Fr. Michael asked if I knew anyone who would be interested in applying for the post of Team Vicar in Shirley Parish with responsibility for St Patrick's and St John's. I mentioned Julie and he asked me to contact her, which I did. Julie told me she had already applied for the post and felt her decision to do so affirmed. I recall, at that time, another Curate from Redditch parish telling me that they didn't know how hard Julie worked until she left.

Throughout her time in Shirley Parish, I observed that Julie was always a dedicated priest who was thoroughly well prepared for whatever her ministry entailed. Speaking recently to one of the parishioners I was told how she always found Julie's ministry at St John's sincere and heartwarming and how she spoke passionately and with commitment. Another commented on Julie's enthusiasm for 'Open the Book', a legacy which continues to this day, sharing Bible stories with children in local schools. Apart from her usual ministerial responsibilities Julie found time to take part in 'Journey to the Stable' at St James, which ministers in Advent to hundreds of pupils from surrounding schools. I found Julie to have a lively and cheerful personality coupled with a keen sense of fairness.

There were many challenging times for Julie during her ministry and a major step was leading St Patrick's through a transition period to become a separate parish. Her ministry continued for a further two years as Vicar of St Patrick's and she left in 2019. When Julie left Birmingham, she returned to ministry in Worcester Diocese. Julie will be sadly missed by many who knew her. She died surrounded by her family on 31st October 2025. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Reverend Theresa Jones





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### **NEW HEATING IN ST JAMES CHURCH**

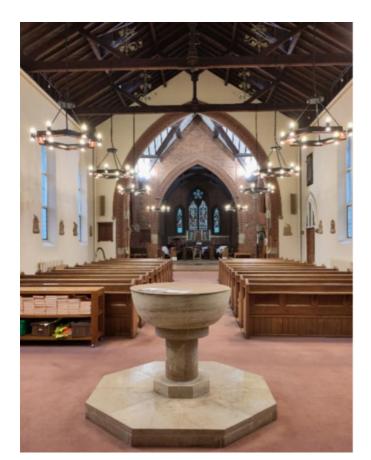
There is now an even warmer welcome than usual at St James's Church!

We have just replaced our 35 year old gas boilers with electric heating chandeliers and panels. We now no longer use fossil fuels to heat our buildings.

The chandeliers were supplied and installed by Electric Heating Solutions, who pioneered this form of heating for churches over 12 years ago in Kings Lynn Minster and, as well as being very effective, they look beautiful in our grade 2 listed Victorian church.

We are a Demonstrator parish and our local fundraising was matched by a grant from the Demonstrator Project (funded by the Benefact Trust and the Archbishops' Council Net Zero Carbon Programme). We will be evaluating our project closely and will be very glad to share our experiences with anyone looking at solutions for a cold, dark church.

This has been a big team effort with so many people contributing ideas, advice, donations, expertise and support. Thanks to you all for making the project happen.



Kate Crocker

## TANZANIA DELICIOUS CASHEWS

Here in Shirley Parish, we are 'going for gold' following on from our successful efforts to gain silver standard as an Eco church. One of the requirements is to engage with events globally, and our PCC has chosen to support financially Tanzania Delicious Cashews. The mission of the organisation is to build the industry for the benefit of the local community, local processors, workers and farmers and their families, and to bring sustainable development to the Makonde Plateau in Tanzania.

The company is 100% locally owned and sources cashews only from the Makonde Plateau; they count among the best cashews in the world. They are grown traditionally by farming families with long experience of producing this crop. TDC was founded in 2020 by local farmers; seven women and one man. This is a woman led company that fights hard to reduce poverty and create better living conditions for farmers and other workers families.

The chairperson, one of the Executive Directors, Finance Director, Head of Production and Quality Manager are all women; the other Executive Director and the Operations Director are men. As a result of their success the company is currently constructing a new factory building.

The director general of the World Trade Organisation, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, says that the surest way for Africa to lift itself out of poverty is to grow its economies and create jobs.



Tanzania Delicious Cashews is doing just that.

To find out more about the company go online and type in their web address: https://tanzaniadeliciouscashews.com.

Chris Terry on behalf of the Shirley Parish Eco Group

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## 'THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES' DATES FOR YOUR 2026 DIARY

Annual General Meeting - Tuesday 10th February

Coffee Mornings with books & bric-a-brac Saturday 7th March and 26th September

**Christmas by Candlelight** 

Saturday 28th November



## BIBLE STUDY MORNING 'AN INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW'S GOSPEL'

## Saturday 10th January, 10am – 11.30am in Church House

On Saturday 10th January, I will be leading a Bible study session on the Gospel according to St Matthew, and everyone is warmly invited to attend.

You may know that the Church of England's lectionary follows a three-year cycle, focusing in turn on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with John interspersed at key points. This year, our readings focus mainly on Matthew.

Matthew's Gospel is carefully structured and richly layered. It has provided a strong foundation for the Church's teaching on Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Christian life. During our study morning, we will *lift the lid* on this Gospel, exploring questions such as: Who was Matthew? When and why was the Gospel written? What are its main themes, and how have they shaped the history of the Church and continue to speak to us today?

Whether you are new to exploring Matthew's Gospel or already familiar with it, I hope that there will be something for everyone. We all know more of Matthew than we might realise, and this session will be a chance to deepen that understanding together.



The only requirement is to bring a Bible with you - not a phone or electronic device - and to come with an open mind, ready to think, learn, and be challenged. Refreshments will be served, and if you have any questions beforehand, please feel free to ask me.

Rev'd Richard Haynes

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### **EPIPHANY SEASON**

The weeks that follow Christmas can sometimes feel like a low point in both church life and daily routine. The decorations come down on Twelfth Night, work and school resume, and January's cold weather can bring a sense of gloom. Yet the church season of Epiphany is anything but gloomy. Far from being an anticlimax to Christmas, Epiphany is full of richness and wonder.

The word Epiphany means "manifestation". It celebrates one aspect of the Christmas story: the visit of the far-travelled Magi, understood as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. But the season extends far beyond this moment. Epiphany invites us to pray for the worldwide mission of the Church. It embraces the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It also recalls Christ's baptism, when the heavens opened and the Father's voice was heard, and the miracle at Cana in Galilee, where water was turned into wine.

Epiphany season concludes with the Feast of the Presentation, also known as Candlemas, in early February. Here Simeon's words in the temple move us from the joy of Christmas towards the deeper mysteries of Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

In 2026, we will celebrate Epiphany (traditionally 6th January, the day after Twelfth Night) on **Sunday 4th January** at the Parish Eucharist at St James Church. The preacher will be the Reverend Paul Hinton, Head of Ministry in the Diocese of Birmingham (and my former Vicar of Warley Woods). As in previous years, we will bless chalk, inviting you to mark your homes with the initials of the Magi as a sign of Christ's welcome to all who come visiting.

Rev'd Richard Haynes



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All of the advertisers in this magazine pay fees which help to cover the cost of producing it - paper, ink and printing.

If you would also like to make a donation towards the cost it will be gratefully received.

### **NEW YEAR 2026**

If we put our hand in God's hand As we enter this New Year Not knowing what the future holds But that our Friend is near.

We shall not fear what lies ahead If He is by our side, Nor wander from the pathway If He will be our guide.

The Sinless One from heaven came
To dwell with us on earth,
He sought and bought us with His blood
And offered us new birth.

Now as we travel through this year He knows the things He's planned, So let us trust and know just this -Our times are in His hands.

By Megan Carter





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### JANUARY WORDSEARCH

6th January brings Epiphany - the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. Matthew calls them 'Magi', the name of an ancient priestly caste from Persia. Early church tradition says there were three: Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior. As for their gifts? Gold is a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense is a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh is a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things.

ANCIENT	GIFTS	MEN	TRADITION
BALTHASAR	GOLD	MYRRH	VISIT
CASPAR	HEALING	PERSIA	WEALTH
CHALLENGED	INCENSE	PRIESTLY	WISDOM
EMBALMING	MAGI	SACRIFICE	WISE
EPIPHANY	MELCHIOR	SYMBOL	WORLD
			WORSHIP



Answers are on page 24



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## WORDSEARCH ANSWERS





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### THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

#### Across

- 8 How the Abyss (NIV) is described in the Authorized Version (Revelation 9:1) (10,3)
- 9 Frozen water (Ezekiel 1:22) (3)
- 10 The Ten Commandments (9)
- 11 In Roman Catholic theology, neither heaven nor hell (5)
- **13** Des cons (anag.) (7)
- 16 'Though [your sins] are red as —, they shall be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18) (7)
- 19 Keen (Romans 1:15) (5)
- 22 Repugnant, loathsome (Jeremiah 24:9) (9)
- 24 Drink like an animal (Judges 7:5) (3)
- 25 First and last (Revelation 22:13) (5,3,5)

#### **Down**

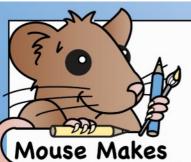
- 1 Father of Ahi, a Gadite (1 Chronicles 5:15) (6)
- 2 Where David found the stone with which he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (6)
- 3 'Hour by hour fresh lips are making thy doings heard on high' (8)
- 4 'And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their at night' (Luke 2:8) (6)
- 5 United Society for Christian Literature (1,1,1,1)
- 6 'If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would — or a tax collector' (Matthew 18:17) (1,5)
- 7 Where Paul was taken when things became difficult for him in Berea (Acts 17:15) (6)
- 12 Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican Bank) (1,1,1)
- 14 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new ; the old has gone, the new has come!' (2 Corinthians 5:17) (8)
- 15 Used to colour ram skins red for use in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5) (3)
- 16 Vat car (anag.) (6)
- 17 'Be joyful —, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (6)
- 18 'The parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts — special treatment' (1 Corinthians 12:23) (4,2)
- 20 Ancient rowing boat (Isaiah 33:21) (6)
- 21 Say again (2 Corinthians 11:16) (6)
- 23 What Jesus did in the synagogue in Nazareth after he stood up (Luke 4:16) (4)

				27				
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25								



Answers	are	on	page	29
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## DID YOU KNOW?

Stars shine different colours, the colour we see depends on the temperature of the star. The hottest stars shine blueish-white, then yellow, orange and the coolest stars shine red.

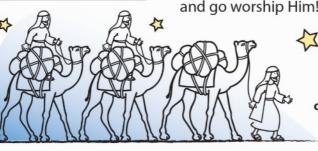
#### WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

The Wise Men came from a land far away, they had seen a star that shone brighter than day.

The star was a sign of the birth of a king, so they followed that star to pay homage to him.

They found him in Bethlehem as the prophets fortold, they gave him three gifts: myrrh, frankincense and gold.

The star led to Jesus our saviour and king, let us join with the Wise Men and go worship Him!



Read the story of the Wise Men in Matthew 2:1-12

SBETHLEHEMJOIY
TKJESUSKINOWWC
AGOEPIPHANYOIV
RIUMESSIAHGRSI
KFRANKINCENSES
ITNGOLDMYRRHMI
NSEIJVSIGNBIET
GOYACHRISTCPNM

Can you find these words in the word search? WISE MEN • MAGI

STAR • SIGN
JOURNEY • BETHLEHEM
VISIT • JESUS • MESSIAH
CHRIST • KING
GIFTS • GOLD • MYRRH

FRANKINCENSE

WORSHIP • JOY

EPIPHANY

	PUZZLE ANSWERS								
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18th Peter Hill





## SHIRLEY PARISH GUIDE continued

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