

### The New Year message from the Archbishop of Canterbury

*This past year, we came together to mourn and celebrate, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.*

*I met many people from all over the world who queued to pay their respects. People looked out for each other day and night.*

*It's one thing to do that for a few hours, another when we need to give or receive care day after day. Then we all need help.*

*Like many I rejoice that elderly relatives like my mother are still around. Their memories, their presence, their independence, are precious. Caring for them, loving them, is a privilege after what we have received from them.*

*Whitstable, in the Diocese of Canterbury which I serve, is a wonderful town. Like many coastal areas it has a high proportion of elderly people. People here – like everywhere – are dealing with rising costs.*

*Care homes are struggling too. Bills have risen; hiring and keeping staff is a challenge.*

*Why work as a carer when you might get paid more in less demanding jobs?*

*Caring's not easy. Good carers are wonderful people to be valued.*

*Like Anne: who has worked as a carer at this care home for over 42 years.*

*We know our care system is broken: but it doesn't have to be. We can rise to the challenge of fixing it. That means action from all of us; you, me, families, communities and government.*

*In a few weeks' time, the Archbishop of York and I will publish a significant report on social care. It will offer a hopeful vision of our society. One where no one is held back, over-looked or treated as a burden – where families and unpaid carers get support too.*

*Caring goes to the heart of what it means to be human. It's hard, but it can also be the most life-giving thing we ever do. It comes back to that essential lesson: we need each other.*

*Jesus reminds us of the value of every single person, young or old. He challenges me to love everyone as I know he loves me.*

*For love alone, Jesus came into our difficult world. I pray that in the hard times and the good, you find yourself loved and cared for.*

*And I wish you all a very Happy New Year.*

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**BELONG - BELIEVE - BUILD - WITH CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE**



Parish of Stone, Dinton and Hartwell



Churches of: St. John Baptist, STONE; Ss Peter & Paul, DINTON; Assumption of St. Mary the Virgin, HARTWELL

[www.stonedintonhartwell.com](http://www.stonedintonhartwell.com)

## St. John the Baptist STONE Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January

10:30am

**WE THREE KINGS**

**All Age Communion service**

*Led by Canon Phil Groves*

*Readings: Matt. 2:1-12; Psalm 72:8-11*



Our coffee cup collection at the end of our services this month will be for PACE in Aylesbury. PACE helps children with neurodisabilities to achieve their fullest potential.

3:00pm

**PARISH EVENSONG**

*at **SPP Dinton** led by David Pickup*

**January**

- 9<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm SJB Fabric committee online
- 11<sup>th</sup> 8:00pm PCC meeting @ SPP Dinton
- 15<sup>th</sup> 9:00am **Matins** (Prayer Book service) - David Pickup
- 10:30am **Morning Worship** - Rector Cassa Messervy and David Pickup and our **EXPLORERS** group for Bible stories, craft and games
- 22<sup>nd</sup> 10:30am **Holy Communion** - Canon Phil and our **EXPLORERS** group.
- 29<sup>th</sup> 11:00am **Special Service** of unity in the chapel with our Methodist friends  
There is no service in SJB Stone

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## Matthew 2:1-12

### The Magi visit the Messiah

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written:

6 "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

We all love the imagery of the Wise Men travelling from afar, led by a wandering star, to discover the baby born to be king of the Jews. However, it is also helpful to remember why Matthew wrote his gospel. His message was always that the birth of Jesus was not only for the Jews, but for other nations too. The Magi demonstrate this wider dimension of the gospel as they probably came from Persia. The gospel message also helps us to realise that God calls not only the poor and the ordinary, but the great intellects of the world as well. Despite all their wisdom and wealth the Magi were still seeking something. They showed great persistence in searching for the truth, and as Christians we should do the same. For the Magi it was a star that led them to Jesus but we will all have our own 'stars' or important stepping stones that lead us to Christ if we are prepared to be persistent and choose to follow them.



*Lord Jesus Christ, as I reflect on the Wise Men with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, I wonder what I can offer you? I pray you may use me for the good of your kingdom as I seek to follow your star, wherever it might lead. Amen*

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**WANTED - AN UPRIGHT VACUUM CLEANER FOR THE CHURCH  
IF ANYBODY HAS ONE THEY CAN PASS ON PLEASE LET SUE BIRRELL KNOW  
THANKYOU**

### Benefice Notices

Happy Epiphany! As the rest of the world 'gets on' with the New Year, the Church continues the Christmas celebration through the season of Epiphany by reflecting on passages in the Bible that reveal who Jesus is. Look out for the visit of the magi, Jesus' baptism, his first miracle and then his 'presentation at the temple (Candlemas) which brings this season to a climatic close.

### Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> January

For this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we are guided by the churches of Minneapolis as we seek to explore how the work of Christian unity can contribute to the promotion of racial justice across all levels of society. Through this resource, the CTBI writers' group has also focussed our attention on the 30th anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence, which we mark in 2023. The work of restoring hope through justice undertaken in Stephen's memory continues to inspire and change lives for the better. As we join with other Christians around the world for the Week of Prayer we pray that our hearts will be open to see and hear the many ways in which racism continues to destroy lives, and to discern the steps we can take as individuals and communities to heal the hurts and build a better future for everyone.

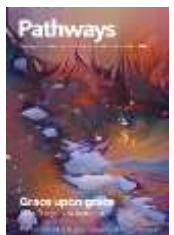
Resources: <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2023/>



*You made us God in your own image,  
and then became one of us, proud of those you have made.  
Make us proud of being part of that worldwide family,  
and eager to discover and celebrate your image  
in every person, every culture, every nation  
that we are privileged to encounter.  
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

### Pathways magazine

Pathways is the magazine for people in the Oxford diocese featuring articles to help equip Christians on their walk with God, while informing enquirers as they learn more about faith. From deepening your spiritual life to practical tips on living out your faith, Pathways will provide something for everyone and be enjoyed by many. The latest edition is now available online <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/pathways> and there are a few printed copies in the church porch that are free to take.



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