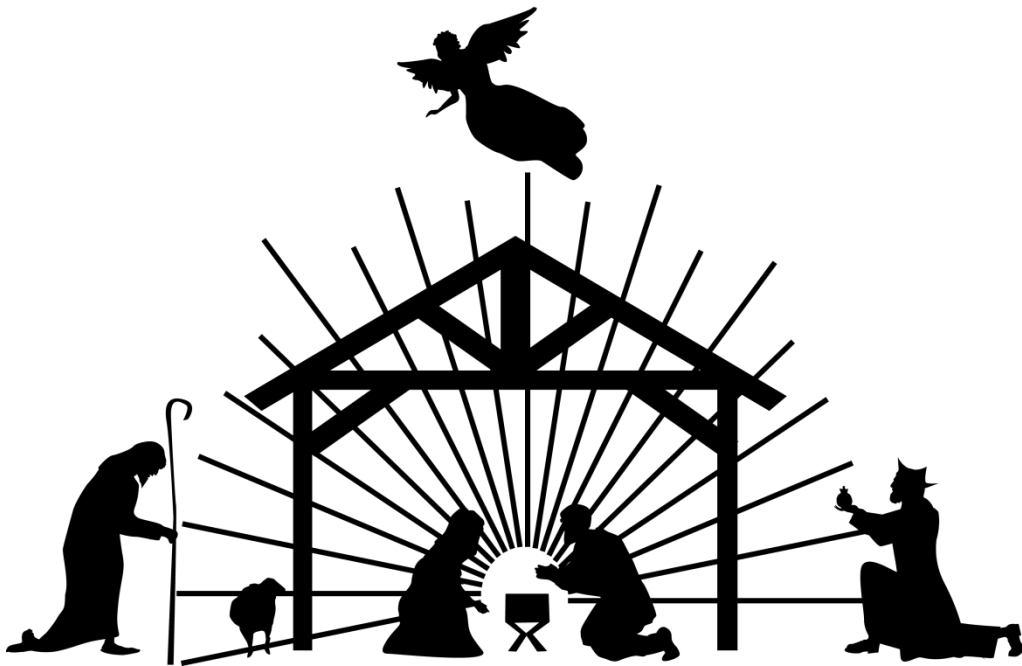


# St Margaret's Messenger



*Advent, Christmas, Epiphany*

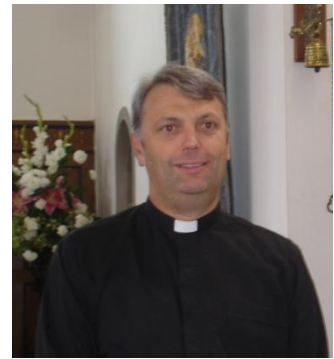
December 2011 and January 2012

## Calendar for December

1 <sup>st</sup>	Feria	Requiem for the month
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Feria	HARP
3 <sup>rd</sup>	St Francis Xavier	Missionaries
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Advent 2</b>	<b>The Parish</b>
5 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	The elderly & retired
6 <sup>th</sup>	St Nicholas	Bishop
7 <sup>th</sup>	St Ambrose	Christian courage
8 <sup>th</sup>	Immaculate Conception	Vocations
9 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Children
10 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Christmas preparations
<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Advent 3</b>	<b>The Parish</b>
12 <sup>th</sup>	St Jane	Our Mothers
13 <sup>th</sup>	St Lucy	The persecuted
14 <sup>th</sup>	St John of the Cross	Our Spiritual life
15 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	St Michael's School
16 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Home and Family life
17 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	The Sick
<b>18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Advent 4</b>	<b>Parish Mass 10am Carol Service 4pm</b>
19 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Those preparing for Baptism
20 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Those who travel
21 <sup>st</sup>	Feria	Those in Hospital or Hospice
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Feria	Emergency Services
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Feria	Those away from home&family
<b>24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>Crib Service 4.30pm</b>
		<b>Midnight Mass 11.30pm</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Parish Mass 8am &amp; 10am</b>
26 <sup>th</sup>	St Stephen	Bishops, Priests & Deacons
27 <sup>th</sup>	St John	Thanksgiving for the nativity
28 <sup>th</sup>	The Holy Innocents	Countries at war
29 <sup>th</sup>	St Thomas Becket	Our Archbishop
30 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	The Queen
31 <sup>st</sup>	Feria	Thanksgiving for the past year

## Fr Ian writes... Advent

It's here, yes it's that time again, but before we get caught up in the whirlwind of business that Christmas always seems to bring, let us remember that Advent comes first and is in itself a holy season.



The season of Advent is focused on the "coming" of Jesus as Messiah. Our worship, scripture readings, and prayers not only prepare us spiritually for Christmas (Christ's first coming), but also for his eventual second coming. This is why the Scripture readings during Advent include both Old Testament passages related to the expected Messiah, and New Testament passages concerning Jesus' second coming as judge of all people. Also, passages about John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who prepared the way for the Messiah, are read. All of these themes are present in our worship during Advent.

Since Advent looks forward to Christ's birth and Incarnation, it is an appropriate way to begin the Church Year. However, Advent is *not* part of the Christmas season itself, but a preparation for it. Thus, we do not sing Christmas carols, or use Christmas readings, until the first Mass of Christmas which we celebrate at Midnight Mass.

A beautifully symbolic tradition of Advent is the Advent crown. The circle of the wreath reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that we have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. Candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son. The four outer candles represent the period of waiting and preparation during the four Sundays of Advent.



The following prayer captures the meaning of the holy season of Advent and would be a good one to use every day at home with your children as they open their calendars or as a morning or evening prayer.

All-powerful God,  
help us to look forward in hope  
to the coming of our Saviour.  
May we live as he taught,  
ready to welcome him with burning love and faith.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

May God bless you and those you love.

*Fr Ian*

Advent is a traditionally a time to make your confession. In the sacrament of confession we reflect on our life and express sorrow for our sins. This is done in the presence of a priest who listens and then assures us of God's love and offers some advice. Then we receive absolution that is God's forgiveness and mercy. Why not make confession part of your preparation for Christmas - Fr Ian is always available should you wish to explore this or any aspect of your faith.



Carols by Candlelight  
Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December  
St Margaret's Church  
4pm



**St Margaret's Church**

**Christmas Eve**

**Christingle & Crib Service  
4.30pm**

**The Living Nativity**

Come along dressed as a shepherd,  
a king, a star, an angel,  
your favourite animal.  
Come and be part of the  
Christmas story

**A service for all the family**

The Parish of Saint Margaret invites you to join us at the following  
Service times

**Tuesdays**

Mass 11am

**Wednesdays**

Mass 8.30am

**Thursdays**

Mass 9.30am & 7.30pm

**Fridays**

Mass 8.30am

**Saturday**

Mass 9.30am

**Sundays**

Said Mass 8.00am

Parish Mass 10am

**Vespers and Benediction** 6.30pm

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4th Sunday of the month.

**Morning & Evening Prayer**

Said daily at 8am and 5.15pm

(Please see weekly booklet for any service changes)

**Tuesday's in Advent** – At the 11am Mass on Tuesday mornings in Advent, Margaret Henning will be giving a 'thought for the day' style homily as part of our Christmas preparations.

## Hadleigh Deanery Tanzania Link



In recent months the Link has had firm news from the four deaneries it supports in the diocese of Kagera in north west Tanzania. The four Rural Deans are Rev Zacharia Samson in Chato, Rev Damian Charukula in Buseresere, Rev Laurent Baranga in Runazi and Rev Jonas Samwell in Biharamulo.

A report of expenditure of funds dated March 2010 finally reached us in September this year showing how some £5000 had been spent. Readers will recognise the familiar headings: church construction and repair, communication and travelling, evangelistic meetings, MU seminar and allowances to pastors and evangelists.

In reply the Link chair Sue Croucher asked for news of each deanery's plans and projects for which they would like to receive support. At its last meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011 the Link received a list of churches in each deanery which are due to receive a share of funds – it was encouraging to see that in Buseresere and Runazi deaneries' their planning extended over 5 years. At this point the Link decided to send £4421 which had been retained for over a year out to Tanzania.



Since the present Rural Deans do not speak English communication had become more difficult. However a lady at St James the Less Hadleigh knows Swahili and has begun translating and composing letters for the Link. Hopefully this will allow each deanery to send news as and when it becomes available.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Link walk in June. Sponsorship raised a total of £419, with St Margaret's contribution standing at £124. A meal in October raised £193.

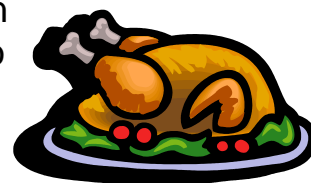
Financial reports are pinned on the board at the back of church for those who wish to see them.

Liz Greenwood



## Seniors' Christmas lunch

We shall be holding our usual Christmas lunch on Monday 2nd January for all those who came to the Summer Club this year and any others who would like to come. Please let me know of anyone who would appreciate an invitation. Offers of help with cooking and transport would be much appreciated.



Margaret Henning 712564

### Dates for your diary

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December**

**Carols by Candlelight 4pm**

**Christmas Eve**

**Crib & Christingle 4.30pm**

**Midnight Mass 11.30pm**



**Christmas Day**

**Said Mass 8am**

**Parish Mass 10am**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January**

**Combined Mass 9.30am**

### Sunday Mass readings for December

#### Bible Readings for December

**4<sup>th</sup> December**

**Advent 2**

**Isaiah 40.1-5, 9-11**

**2 Peter 3.8-14**

**Mark 13.33-37**

The passage from Isaiah speaks of preparing for the coming the Lord. The people have been in exile and Isaiah tells them that this time is nearly over and they must be ready for the Lord to bring them back and care for them once more. The time of punishment is almost ended.

Peter writes to those who have been expecting Jesus to return and are wondering why it has not yet happened. He reminds them that God's time is not the same as ours and that he is being patient giving them more time to bring others to knowledge of salvation. They must keep prepared for this great event.

The gospel story tells us of the lead up to the baptism of Jesus. John the Baptist, in the wilderness, has been calling people to repentance in preparation for meeting Jesus, so too, we prepare to meet him at Christmas.

**11<sup>th</sup> December                      Advent 3**

**Isaiah 61.1-2, 10-11      1 Thessalonians 5.16-24      Mark 1.1-8**

The passage from Isaiah begins with the part that Jesus read in the synagogue and commented that it referred to himself. Salvation will come to Israel and she will rejoice and grow in integrity and praise.

Paul calls on the Thessalonians to pray constantly and give thanks to God. He prays that they will all be kept safe and holy, ready to meet Jesus at his coming.

John the Baptist, baptising in the wilderness, is questioned about who he is. He tells them he is not the Messiah but the person foretold by Isaiah whose task is to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. As foretold he calls on the people to repent and be baptised as a sign of the washing away of their sin.

**18<sup>th</sup> December                      Advent 4**

**2 Samuel 7.1-5, 8-11, 16      Romans 16.25-27      Luke 1.26-38**

David wants to build a house for the Ark of God. Nathan the prophet delivers a message from God. God has taken David from being a shepherd to lead his people and to establish his house. The Lord has built David's house, David is not the man to build one for God.

Paul praises God for giving the Romans the strength to live according to the Gospel. They must spread this news to the pagans and so give glory to God.

The gospel story tells of the visit by the archangel Gabriel to Mary, asking her to become the mother of God's son. How bewildering this must have been for her, her whole life would be changed. Not only that, but she is told that her cousin, who was thought to be barren, is also expecting a child. God waits for her response, and Mary says yes! God has found himself a home on earth.

**25<sup>th</sup> December                      Christmas**  
**Midnight Mass**

**Isaiah 9.2-7**

**Titus 2.11-14**

**John 1.1-5, 9-14**

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.” A saviour has been born to those who are oppressed and God is among his people once more to bring them salvation.

When we see the wonder of God’s grace, his great gift to us, and the knowledge of our salvation dawns on us surely we should respond by living our lives focussed on God as we prepare to meet him.

“In the beginning was the Word”, as we hear this we recall the great creation stories of Genesis. Jesus, the Word, with God from the beginning has come into the world. All the darkness of this world cannot overcome that great light as we see the glory of God. In this tiny baby we see God himself born as one of us. Praise be to God.

**Christmas Morning**

**Isaiah 52.7-10**

**Hebrews 1.1-6**

**Luke 2.1-14**

“How beautiful, on the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news”, and what better news could there be. God has come among his people and the world sees the salvation of God.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that God has spoken to his people in many ways and through different people but now God himself has come among us. The angels worship him, and after his time here on earth takes his rightful place in heaven.

Mary and Joseph leave their home town to travel to Bethlehem for the census. There the baby is born among strangers with no comfortable room but being laid in a manger. The shepherds are called by the angels to witness this apparently inauspicious birth, and the heavens resound with the song of the angels.

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**Sunday Mass readings for January 2012**

Will be available separately at the back of Church from mid December.

## Children's corner

### Where is it?



Congratulations to all of you who spotted that this photo is from the banner of the Blessed Sacrament.



There is a nativity picture like this in the Church can you find it, why not colour this one in.

### Living Stones

Living stones takes place, during the 10am Sunday Parish mass. We welcome 3 to 12 year olds. (Children under 3 must be accompanied by a parent.) A variety of fun activities, songs, games and prayers are used to teach the themes of the Gospel .It is good to see new children joining and the group growing in regular members. If you or anyone you know would like to come along and join in come and speak to Lynda Bartholomew or Fr Ian after any Sunday service.

# An angel appears to Mary

Luke 1:26-38



An \_\_\_\_\_ appeared to Mary and told her she would have a child and name him Jesus.

GAERT

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NIKG

		2	

LHIDC

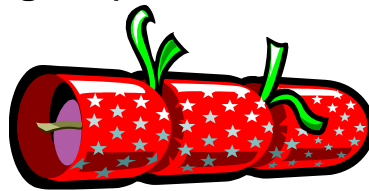
			5	

RIADFA

1					

1	2	3	4	5

(Answer to puzzle on page 10)



What did Adam say on the day before Christmas ?  
It's Christmas, Eve !

What's brown and sneaks round the kitchen?  
Mince spies

What do you get if you cross Santa Claus with a duck?  
Christmas quackers

What did one snowman say to the other snowman?  
Can you smell carrots

## SAINT MARGARET'S SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING

**Why are we fund raising?** Our hall is in urgent need of renovation and refurbishment. Our aim is to create a Parish centre where the church can reach out into the community providing a safe and warm environment where God's love can be seen in action. Phase one of this project is now underway, watch this space for further details.

A number of events will be held to raise funds for the Church this will include the following:-



**Cake sale** after the 10am Mass on 4<sup>th</sup> December  
Any donations of cakes to sell would be gratefully received.

### Film night – Date to be confirmed



Full details of events and celebrations will be made known nearer the time, but please book these important days now. We look forward to seeing you in the weeks ahead. Plans are already in hand for future social evenings with a difference

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#### Answers to Children's puzzle

great  
king  
child  
afraid  
angel

### On a lighter note

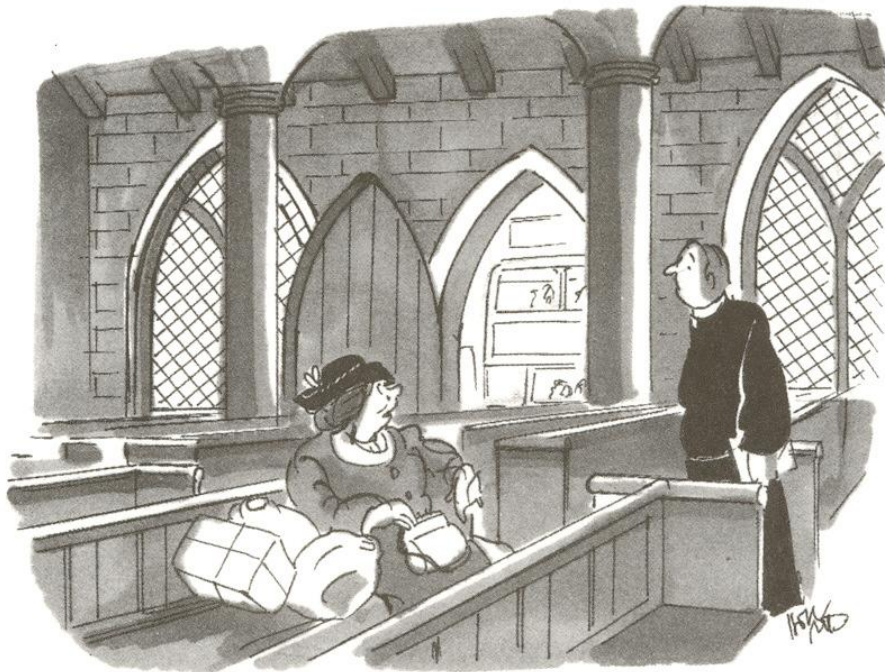
The Vicar was looking over the Crib the day after Christmas when he noticed that the baby Jesus was missing. He went outside and saw a little boy pulling a new red wagon. In the wagon was Jesus.

We walked up to the boy and said, "Hi, there. Where did you get the baby Jesus?"

The boy answered honestly, "In the church."

"Why did you take him?" the Vicar asked.

"Well," said the boy, "I prayed to the Lord Jesus and asked him for a wagon for Christmas. I told Him that if He gave me one, I'd take Him for a ride in it."



*"You don't mind, do you, Vicar? It's the only place where you can escape from Christmas for a few minutes."*



## The Candy Cane

Today candy canes come in all colours and flavours. They are pink, pale blue, yellow, purple and many others.

Not too long ago all candy canes were white with red stripes. It has been said that candy canes were first made by a candy maker who wanted to remind people of Christ.

Here is what the candy cane was to represent:

It was made from a hard candy because Christ is the Solid Rock on which we are to build our lives.

The candy was shaped to resemble either a "J" for Jesus or a shepherd's staff because Jesus is our good shepherd.

The colours were also to represent the importance of Jesus. White was to represent the purity and sinlessness of Jesus.

The wide red stripe represents the blood Christ shed for the sins of the world.

The three thinner red stripes represent the stripes Christ received on our behalf when the Roman soldiers whipped him.

The flavour of the cane is peppermint which is similar to hyssop. Hyssop is in the mint family and was used in the Old Testament for Purification and sacrifice. Jesus is the pure Lamb of God come to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world.



## Fr Ian writes a bit more...

## Christmas

‘Jesus is the reason for the season’ – so ran a Church advertising slogan some years ago. It is good to remember that Christmas is in itself a season and not just the end of Advent. It also reminds us that it’s all about Jesus and how his birth in time demonstrates the great love God has for us, his creation.

So often we moan about the commercialisation of Christmas, saying that the world has hijacked a beautiful Christian celebration in the name of profit. Again we complain when Christmas cards and decorations are displayed for sale from September and when Noddy Holder shouts ‘it’s Christmas’ in a well known 70’s pop song from the beginning of November. Usually when it comes to the new season of Christmas, we are fed up, grumpy and tired suffering from that well known condition – santa claustrophobia!

Could it be that as Christian people we have forgotten the true meaning of Christmas too? How many of us will actually celebrate the feast of the Incarnation in Church? When we gather with our families do we encourage them to join us in Church to give thanks to God for the birth of Jesus? All too often the opposite is true; many say ‘because the family is coming I won’t be able to make it to Church, there’s just too much to do’. Yet the greatest gift we could give to those we love is to bring them into the Lord’s presence, invite them to gaze a while at the crib and remind them that ‘Jesus is the reason for season’. Maybe then Christmas will regain its rightful place in the world

However you celebrate the joyful season of Christmas I wish you and those you love every blessing.



May the joy of the angels  
the eagerness of the shepherds  
the perseverance of the wise men  
the obedience of Joseph and Mary  
and the peace of the Christ child  
be yours this Christmas.

# NOBODY SHOULD BE ALONE, HUNGRY AND ON THE STREETS AT CHRISTMAS.



Help your local homeless charity by sponsoring a Christmas dinner for just £10 and give someone the gift of hope for the coming year.

Over the 12 days of Christmas, **HARP** provides up to 700 dinners. Please help your local charity.

#### Donate now:

**ONLINE:** Visit [www.harpsouthend.org.uk](http://www.harpsouthend.org.uk) and click on *The Big Give* link.

**TEXT:** Text **HOME43** followed by **£10** to **70070**. No charge for the text.

**CHEQUE:** Payable to HARP, 117 York Road, Southend, Essex SS1 2DL.

If we exceed our appeal target of £7,000, the money will be spent where the need is greatest.



CONTACT US: 117 York Road, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 2DL  
TELEPHONE: 01702 615000  
EMAIL: [admin@harpsouthend.org.uk](mailto:admin@harpsouthend.org.uk)  
CHARITY NO. 1098126

## Calendar for January 2012

Day		Intention
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Holy Family</b>	<b>Combined Service 9.30am</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ss Basil & Gregory	The religious life
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Feria	Prayers for the New Year
4 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	The elderly
5 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Nursery, Schools, Colleges
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Feast of Epiphany</b>	<b>Christian witness</b>
7 <sup>th</sup>	St Raymond	Confessors & penitents
<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>The Baptism of Christ</b>	<b>Living our Baptism vows</b>
9 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Teachers
10 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Bishops
11 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Fairhavens Hospices
12 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Prisoners
13 <sup>th</sup>	St Hilary Bp & Dr	Teachers of the faith
14 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Emergency & medical services
<b>15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ord time</b>	<b>The Parish</b>
16 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	The lonely and afraid
17 <sup>th</sup>	St Anthony	Those in the religious life
18 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	The sick & suffering
19 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Edward Bear Club
20 <sup>th</sup>	St Fabian & St Sebastian	Christians facing persecution
21 <sup>st</sup>	St Agnes	All Children
<b>22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ord time</b>	<b>The Parish</b>
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Feria	Local councillors
24 <sup>th</sup>	St Francis de Sales	HARP and the homeless
25 <sup>th</sup>	Conversion of St Paul	The Archbishop
26 <sup>th</sup>	Ss Timothy & Titus	Missionaries
27 <sup>th</sup>	St Angela Merici	Those in Education
28 <sup>th</sup>	St Thomas Aquinas	Theologians
<b>29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sun in Ord time</b>	<b>The parish &amp; community</b>
30 <sup>th</sup>	Feria	Uniformed organisations
31 <sup>st</sup>	St John Bosco	Joy in our faith

**Fr Ian writes again...**

## **Epiphany**

Observed on January 6th, the Epiphany celebration remembers the three miracles that manifest the divinity of Christ. The name "Epiphany" comes from the Greek word Epiphania, and means "to show, make known, or reveal." The celebration originated in the Eastern Church in AD 361, beginning as a commemoration of the birth of Christ. Later, additional meanings were added - the visit of the three Magi, Christ's baptism in the Jordan River, and his first miracle at the wedding in Cana. These three events are central to the definition of Epiphany, and its meaning is drawn from these occurrences.

While some Greek Orthodox Churches still observe the Epiphany celebration as the Nativity of Jesus, the majority of the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Anglican Churches focus on the visit of the Magi and Jesus' baptism. The significance behind the visit of the Magi is the revelation of Christ as "Lord and King." The Wise Men were the first Gentiles to publicly recognize the divinity of Jesus, by way of their offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



The Church observes a variety of Epiphany rituals and traditions. In places throughout Europe and Latin America, Christians commemorate Three Kings' Day by offering prayers, burning herbs that have been dried and blessed, sprinkling entrances with holy water, and inscribing the initials of the Magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar) on structures in order to receive a blessing.

For many Christians, the definition of Epiphany is a reminder of God the Father's unlimited love and mercy, which He has extended to all of mankind through the revelation of His Son, and of the hope of salvation that is now manifest for all who come to him in faith. It is also our hope that we may show Christ to others by living the faith we profess in our daily lives.

## Useful contact numbers

### **Priest available anytime day or night in an emergency**

**Fr Ian Booth 01702 471773**

frianbooth@googlemail.com

**Parish Website** [www.saintmargaret.org.uk](http://www.saintmargaret.org.uk)

Remember that I am called by God to serve you, and to guide you in your attempts to live the Gospel life.

Also available for confession after mass or by appointment

### **Church Wardens**

wardens@saintmargaret.org.uk

Mr Stephen Bishop 713039

Mr Michael Bridge 716931

**Reader & Baptism Coordinator** [baptisms@saintmargaret.org.uk](mailto:baptisms@saintmargaret.org.uk)

Mrs Margaret Henning 712564

### **Parochial Church Council**

*Secretary:* Mrs Lorina Cockett 335567

*Treasurer:* Mr Peter Maddox 478413

**Hall Bookings** [hall@saintmargaret.org.uk](mailto:hall@saintmargaret.org.uk) 07531 356694

Saint Margaret's Messenger is published monthly by Saint Margaret's Church, Leigh on Sea. Essex. It is available free of charge within the Parish. The deadline for submissions for the February issue is January 22nd and all contributions for consideration are welcome.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Margaret, Leigh-on-Sea Charity Number: 113067