

St John's

Prayers:

You have called us into the family of those who are the children of God. May our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ be strengthened by your grace. Lord, in your goodness, help us to grow in faith and hope each day and to trust in the future you have prepared for us.

We lift to you all who are **sick** among them: Peggy Aris, Scott Bradley, Susan Khazoom, Ruth Gillespie, Brenda Hunt, Susan Jones and Bridie O'Shea. Also, those who have **died** recently, among them Trevor Loates. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Jesus, Lord of the Church, you have called us into fellowship with all your saints. We unite our prayers with theirs and ask for grace to serve you with joy. Lord, in your mercy.

Contacts

Rector	The Revd Matthew Stone	020 8954 3876
	Email: rector@stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk	
Assistant Curate	The Revd Jonny Rapson	07557 808527
	Email: jonny.rapson@london.anglican.org	
Safeguarding Officers	Mark Lynch	07982 906833
	Louise Gregory	07504 527118
Children's Champion	Sue Wright	07958 499682
Adults at Risk Champion	Sheila Oliver	020 8954 4976
Churchwardens	Mark Lynch	07982 906833
	Jane Prentice	07976 388958
Deputy Wardens	Susan Jones	07864 846148
	Graham Nicholson	01923 226969
Treasurer	Jenny Neve	07989 378840
	Email: jenny.neve@gmail.com	
Data Protection Compliance	The Rector	020 8954 3876

The Parish Office is closed.

Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer at home. Join them [here](#).

St John's Church

Pew Sheet

3rd January 2021

The PCC has taken the decision to close the church for physical services during the month of January.

This is to play our part in ensuing we are not contributing to the spread of Covid-19 and adding any pressure to the NHS.

**"...and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."
(Matthew 2:11b)**

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk

Please do check our website for future updates

St John's

The Feast of the Epiphany

Collect:

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Readings:

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

Short Sermon from the Rector

I wonder what they saw in the sky that first night. What was it that got them thinking? What was it that motivated them to pack and begin a journey to who knew where? Something had been revealed to them. But what was it? Was it in the sky, in their mind, in their heart?

We don't have much historical information about these wise men and their journey. St Matthew says they came from the East. Some have speculated they were from Persia. We like to think that there were three of them but St Matthew doesn't say that and the number has varied throughout the church's history; 2, 3, 4, 8, even 12. We call them Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar but those names didn't come about until the seventh century. And what about "the star?" It has been viewed as a supernatural phenomenon, just a regular star, a comet, or sometimes as a conjunction or grouping of planets.

This anonymity and lack of historical information is a reminder that this story, this Epiphany journey, is not just the wise men's journey; it is everyone's journey. The truth of sacred scripture is never limited to or contained only in the past.

I don't know what was in the sky, what they saw, that first night. I don't know what was in their minds; what they thought, asked, or talked about. I don't know what was in their hearts; what they felt, dreamed, or longed for. That mystery will need to continue. But I know that there have been times when we each have experienced

St John's

Epiphany; times when our night sky has been lit brightly, times when our minds have been illumined, times when our hearts have been enlightened. Those times have revealed to us a life and world larger than before. They have been moments that gave us the courage to travel beyond the borders and boundaries that usually circumscribe our lives. Epiphanies are those times when something calls us, moves us, to a new place and we see the face of God in a new way; so human that it almost seems ordinary, maybe too ordinary to believe.

That's what happened to the wise men. They began to see and hear the stories of their lives. Something stirred within them and they began to wonder, to imagine, that their lives were part of a much larger story. Could it be that the one who created life, who hung the stars in the sky, noticed them, knew them, lived within them, and was calling them? Could it be that the light they saw in the sky was a reflection of the divine light that burned within them, that burns within each one of us?

To seriously consider these questions is to begin the journey. That journey took the wise men to the house where they found the answer to their questions in the arms of his mother, Mary. We may travel a different route than the wise men did but the answer is the same.

Yes, Yes, Yes. God notices us, knows us, lives within us, and calls us. God is continually revealing himself in and through humanity, in the flesh.

Maybe it was the day you bathed your first child or grandchild and saw the beauty of creation and the love of the Creator. Or that day you said, "I love you" and knew that it was about more than just romance or physical attraction. Perhaps it was the moment you really believed your life was sacred, holy, and acceptable to God. Maybe it was the time you kept vigil at the bedside of one who was dying and you experienced the joy that death is not the end.

These are the stories of our lives, epiphanies that forever change who we are, how we live, and the road we travel. They are moments of ordinary everyday life in which divinity is revealed in humanity and we see God's glory face to face.