

**S. BOTOLPH'S CHURCH,  
CAMBRIDGE  
NEWSLETTER FOR JANUARY 2018**

*From the Priest in Charge*

Dear Friends,

The Magi kings followed a star and came to where the Christ child of Bethlehem lay. They came, they saw and adored. And *“they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh”*.

The gifts, as one of the great hymns of the Epiphany teaches us, are *“sacred gifts of mystic meaning”*. They are gifts which teach. They are about the deeper and true meaning of gifts—not simply useful things like a hairdryer or raincoat (or money which is equivalent to gold), but gifts which honour the one to whom the gifts are given.

Thus, the gift of gold honours Christ as a King; but it is not just about wealth and power. Frankincense is even more direct; it is a part of worship; the smoke of sweet-smelling incense ascends like prayer to the throne of God. It honours Christ as God. But the most troubling gift is the gift of myrrh. The ancient burying spice, it signifies sacrifice. It foreshadows the death and burial of Christ. It speaks to the deeper purpose and meaning of Christ's birth in the Christian understanding of things. Suffering and death are not hid from view. Christ was born for this. He comes as redeemer.

The Magi *“departed into their own country another way”* having been *“warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod”* in Jerusalem to give him word of where the child-king of Israel was born. There is an element of danger that is part of the story. One of the most disturbing Christmas stories comes out of this sense of danger – *The Feast of the Holy Innocents*. Herod instigating a policy of infanticide upon

all the little ones of Bethlehem to extinguish the threat of a potential rival to his throne and power.

The poet, T.S. Eliot, gives another perspective on this return from Bethlehem in his poem *The Journey of the Magi*. The Magi return to their palaces, he says, “*but no longer at ease... in the old dispensation*”. What Eliot has glimpsed in the story is how they have been changed by what they have seen and adored.

That is the point of our liturgy, most especially the Holy Communion. We are being constantly changed in our outlook and understanding by what we have been given to see. Such is the power of ideas, the power of God’s Word and Will conveyed to us on angels’ wings and by the gifts of kings. If we are indeed wise then we shall learn. It may mean that we shall be unsettled and no longer at ease in the comfort of our homes and practices. But that is the point of the encounter with God. He seeks more for us than our attempts to domesticate and sentimentalize the mystery of Christ. We are challenged in our liturgy to think about things and to then “*depart into our own country another way*”.

Yours in Christ,

Stephen.

*Looking ahead*

### **Saturday 20th January – Development Action Planning.**

The working group of those who have responded to the open call for volunteers meets at 2 Duxford Road, Whittlesford at 11.00 a.m. The purpose is to discuss and propose a Development Action Plan to further the mission of S. Botolph’s, very broadly. As required by this Diocesan initiative, the Plan will be presented to the Archdeacon / Rural Dean, PCC and APCM in due course. The intention is to consider a range of practical initiatives which can be agreed and implemented. It is not too

late to join this group. Please have a word with me if you would like to do so. *Stephen.*

## CALENDAR

**EPIPHANY** (transferred) Sunday 7th January

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. Epiphany Carol Service

12.15 p.m. Holy Communion (shortened)

Refreshments, Hunter

Wednesday 10th January Holy Communion 10.30 a.m.

**SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY** Sunday 14th

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. Mattins

1. Genesis 14.17-20, Mr Jarvis; 2. John 2.1-11, Mrs. Horbury

12.15 p.m. Holy Communion (shortened)

4.15 p.m. Evensong

Wednesday 17th 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion

**THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY** Sunday 21st

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. Sung Eucharist (Common Worship)

Epistle, Mrs. Durham; Intercession, Mr Hodson

Preacher: The Reverend Dr Jonathan Holmes, Fellow of Queens'

4.15 p.m. Evensong

Wednesday 24th *Conversion of S. Paul* (transferred)

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion

**SEPTUAGESIMA** Sunday 28th

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. Mattins

1. Jeremiah 1.6-10, Mrs. Irvine; 2. Mark 1.40-end, Mr Hodson

Preacher: The Reverend Patrick Cotton

12 noon Holy Communion

4.15 p.m. Evensong

Tuesday 30th P.C.C. 8.00 p.m.

Wednesday 31st 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion

**PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE / PURIFICATION  
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (CANDLEMAS)**

Sunday 4th February

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. Sung Eucharist

Epistle, Mr Barker; Refreshments, Barker

4.15 p.m. Evensong

Wednesday 7th 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion

*S. Botolph's Cambridge*

Priest-in-charge

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