

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

19 January 2025

Epiphany ~ Wedding at Cana

Please forward this to anyone you know who might not be in our Google group.
For information about us please visit: www.northburychurches.org.uk



Marriage at Cana, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua

Giotto di Bondone

In this issue:

Wedding at Cana: Andy Miller * Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Worship this week * Big Garden Churchyard Birdwatch
From the Registers * Epiphany Carol Service * All Saints' Coffee Morning
Beetle Drive Supper: West Stow Hall * Lower than the Angels
The History of Surnames: Charlie Haylock at All Saints', Bury
Wonder Club at Lackford * Caption Competition * Contacts

Epiphany: Wedding at Cana

Isaiah 62.1-5 Psalm 36.5-10 I Corinthians 12.1-11 John 2.1-11

An Epiphany. A moment of sudden and great revelation and realization. And we find ourselves in the season named after this word. And this is a word that is so very apt for the themes of this time in the church year that follows and indeed adds to the most wonderful time of the year that is Christmas.

For this is a season where we have heard of a star leading those from lands afar to a child hence revealed as King of all the nations. A season where we hear of heavens opened and the dove like Holy Spirit descending on a young man declared to be the beloved Son of God by God themselves. And a season where miracles are recalled to further sure up the truth that the baby we celebrate being born at Christmas is none other than God made flesh.

The miracle of the conversion of water into wine at the wedding at Cana is one that may be thought of as an obvious choice to recall when thinking of things that point to the truth that Jesus was and is Emmanuel, God with us. For here we have an event that ticks that crucial box that one must surely wish to see filled in when it comes to a miracle, and especially during the season of Epiphany. For here what is revealed is the huge and amazing abundance of God, as six stone jars of water, of twenty to thirty gallons capacity, are converted into the juice of the grape.

That this is a ludicrous amount of wine for Jesus to produce is widely accepted. It is more by far than would have been needed to quench the thirst of the invited guests throughout the whole wedding meal, never mind tide them over as proceedings draw to a close. This is not some cheap plonk either. This is good stuff, as agreed by the chief steward, a man who we can assume knows a fair bit about what makes up a decent wine list. Certainly, it is better than he is expecting to give to a load of people who are already pretty well pickled in what has been flowing from carafes at the banquet.

Here then is a true miracle. Or a true sign as John calls it. A sign that in Jesus the huge and amazing power of God is revealed. Power that overflows and over-runs anything that can be expected, and can only come from a God whose love is so great that they created all things, love all things, and save all things. So yes, this event then truly reveals that Jesus is nothing short of divine.

And yet another reason that this sign is the one chosen for this season of revelation must be that it is the start of these miraculous divine occurrences, the first of the signs that show the glory of Jesus as stated in John's Gospel. The reason that this miracle sits so well in this time of Epiphany, and after the great feast of the incarnation that is Christmas, is that it is one that speaks so much into the human as well as the divine. For here we are introduced to the human side of Jesus and more, we are shown how humanity reacts to the actions of God.

That this miracle is one that sees Jesus seeming to do little more than indulge those who have already shamefully indulged themselves with alcohol causes the faces of some of those of faith to go as red as the wine produced at Cana, such is their embarrassment.

And yet as with all those other stories we can think of from the Gospels where Jesus shares meals with people, this miracle shows at the least that Christ wishes for life to be a thing of joy and celebration for the people that he encounters and that he wants these people to be satisfied. And furthermore, it shows that God wants to be a part of bringing joy to those lives.

But there is more that goes beyond even this. For this is a miracle that is performed to help people in need. That the bride and groom have really dropped the ball in running out of wine to celebrate their nuptials is no understatement. Shame and even talk of bad omens for their future would have been the result if such under-catering had become known by those gathered for their big day.

This miracle can be added then to other occasions when Christ shows compassion for those who are in need. And in this is revealed a God who cares for those things that the humanity they created care for themselves. This is a God who has a deep and caring understanding for those things that we, God's people, hold dear.

And yet the miracle at Cana also reveals something else about the relationship between God and ourselves. It says quite clearly that it is God who is in charge and God alone who will decide and who will act. For when Mary informs Jesus that the wine has given out, she receives short shrift from her son and is told that it is none of her business.

Again, embarrassment surrounds this treatment of Mary by Jesus. How can he be so rude to his mother, many ask? However, those who know about these things suggest that Jesus is being nowhere near as harsh as our modern reading of their interaction suggests.

And either way, these words shared between son and mother fall in line with other times that Jesus has made clear that all relationships, no matter what they are, pale into insignificance when compared to our relationship with God. For it is whoever does the will of his Father in heaven who is described by Jesus as being his mother, brothers and sisters, later on in his ministry when told his family wish to see him.

This makes the further and important point that God does not play favourites. All are of equal import when it comes to being loved and cared for by God. Additionally, whoever we are, none of us can bend God to our will, as not even his mother, who may be felt to have some justification in thinking that she could, can do so.

But unsurprisingly from Christ's mother Mary, who as always is a great guide of how to be when it comes to Jesus and being his follower, we learn something else of significance about faith in God here. For we see from Mary that faith requires perseverance and trust.

Even in the face of the less than encouraging words from Jesus, Mary perseveres. This marvellous woman carries on, whether bruised or not by what Jesus has said, using her knowledge to direct others in what to do to receive God's loving presence in their lives. And furthermore, in telling the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them to do, Mary is trusting in him to know what is best and guiding these men to do the same, as he wants her to. And, as we know, the results are amazing.

Through letting God lead the way, the abundance of God is revealed in front of those gathered. A miracle unfolds before their very eyes, and all realize that God is with them. A realization that has the most profound effect upon that other group of people present, the disciples. This produces in them the most wonderful outcome in life, faith in God. For, as described at the end of the miracle, this group of men, having seen the water turned into wine and the glory of God revealed in Jesus, believed in him. It was this miraculous truth about Jesus that saw these men who will become foremost amongst Christ's followers come to faith.

This then is the season that is an Epiphany. It is a season of revelation and realization. A season when what is revealed is no less than the divine, and our place in allowing others to realize this alongside us. For we are now those who can be signs for Jesus. Signs based upon what is revealed not least through the miracle seen at the wedding at Cana. Signs that are people bringing the joy of God

to people's lives. Signs that are those who care like God for people and what is going on in their lives, showing love and compassion not least at times of need. Signs that like Mary persevere in our faith no matter what and trust in God to lead the way, and help lead others in this way as well. Signs that can see others realize as the disciples did, that Jesus is King of all the nations, God's beloved Son, the performer of miracles, the source of our faith, the divine. Signs who, like those disciples, point to Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, in how we live out our faith each day.

Andy Miller

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ~ January 2025

The launch service this year is on 19 January at 6pm.

It is hosted by Garland Street Baptist Church and will include a simple Agape meal of bread and soup. To help with catering, it would be helpful if a rough idea of numbers could be sent to Helen h.moore883@btinternet.com or Gavin gshwalter@gmail.com

Do you believe this?

For 2025, materials were prepared by the ecumenical community at Bose in Northern Italy. As we celebrate 1,700 years since the Council of Nicaea, the worship service has at its heart the Nicene Creed. Reflecting this, the scripture readings for this year focus on belief. We are invited to reflect on the story of Martha's confession of faith in Jesus as narrated in John 11:17-27. We sit with Jesus' question to Martha: "Do you believe this?"

During the following week there will be lunchtime meetings at churches around the town:

Monday 20	St Mary's Church
Tuesday 21	Garland Street Baptist Church
Wednesday 22	Trinity Methodist Church
Thursday 23	St Edmund's Roman Catholic Church
Friday 24	United Reformed Church
Saturday 25	St John the Evangelist

Meetings start at 12:30pm.

Please bring your own lunch, the host church will provide hot drinks.

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 19 JANUARY

SUNDAY 19 January 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Matins (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Eucharist (CW) <i>gathering at 9.15am</i>	West Stow
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham All Saints
10.30am	All Age Worship	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Monday 20 January *Richard Rolle, spiritual writer, 1349*

Tuesday 21 January *Agnes, child martyr, 304*

10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
6.00pm	A Quiet Space	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Wednesday 22 January *Vincent of Saragossa, deacon, martyr, 304*

8.30am	Morning Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
5.00pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds

Thursday 23 January

9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
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Friday 24 January *Francis de Sales, bishop, teacher of the faith, 1622*

5.15pm	Evening Prayer (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Saturday 25 January *Conversion of Paul*

9.30am	Solemn Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
12.30pm	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Lunchtime Meeting	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

SUNDAY 26 January 3rd Sunday of Epiphany

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	St George's, Bury St Edmunds
9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Culford
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
12 noon	Holy Communion (BCP)	Flempton



Big ~~Garden~~ Churchyard Birdwatch

**Saturday, 25th January, 2025
2pm at St Lawrence, Lackford**

Join us counting birds, making wildlife crafts
and drinking hot chocolate.

Please wear outdoor appropriate clothes.

From the Registers

Wedding Blessing

2nd January

Collette and Gavin Reynolds

St Mary's, Culford

Funerals

18th December

(John) Malcolm Ransome

Fornham All Saints

followed by burial in Fornham All Saints Cemetery

6th January

Michael Condon

West Suffolk Crematorium

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches Epiphany Carol Service



l-r: Andy Miller, Sarah Gull, Steve Robertson, Ali Miller, Scarlett Blacker

Coffee Morning

Donations to

my **WISH**
Cardiac Unit charity
West Suffolk Hospital

Tuesday 4th February

10:00 - 11:15 am

Coffee or tea, cake and chat

All Saints Church

All Welcome

Lark Valley & North Bury Team Ministry

www.northburychurches.org.uk

Beetle Drive Supper

at

West Stow Hall

Saturday 25th January - 6.00pm



IN AID OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, WEST STOW

FABRIC FUND

Tickets £13 for adults, £5 for children, to include baked potatoes with meat or
vegetarian chilli

Tickets available from

Eileen Gilbert eileengilbert54@aol.com Tel: 01284 728127

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BOTTLE!

St John the Evangelist

St John's Street Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SN

Professor

**Diarmaid
MacCulloch**

Kt FSA FRHistS FBA



will speak about his recent book

Lower than the Angels

Thursday 6 February 2025 at 7.30pm

Admission £12 + 10% booking fee

Advance tickets from We Got Tickets

<https://wegottickets.com/event/642413>

Magisterial ... Diarmaid MacCulloch offers a history of sex and Christianity that is both confronting and reassuring in its detail and complexity, taking biblical scholarship and theological development seriously at the same time as insisting on the historian's independence. A thrilling read.

Lucy Winkett, Financial Times

All Saints Church

Saturday 8th February

Scones and Speaker

Doors open 3pm for a prompt 3.30pm start



Photo courtesy of Two Sisters Arts Centre, Trimley



The brilliant speaker **Charlie Haylock** and his talk

'The history of surnames'

An entertaining look at the different types of surnames -
their origins and meanings

Please note: This is not a talk on family history backgrounds

Tea and scones

All welcome

Tickets £10

Book with Sheila on

01284 762774 (answerphone)

07815 504991

Lark Valley & North Bury Team Ministry

www.northburychurches.org.uk

Wonder Club

Story
Wondering
Craft
Prayer
Cake



St Lawrence, Lackford

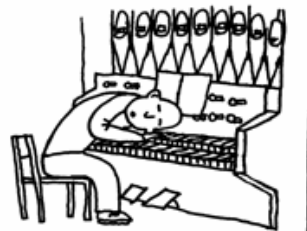
9th February, 3pm

THE LITURGICAL PAUSE

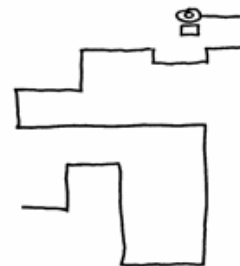
THIS IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL ELEMENTS OF A CHURCH SERVICE.
WE OBSERVE A LITURGICAL PAUSE AT THE FOLLOWING POINTS:



AT MOMENTS WHEN
PONDERING IS EXPECTED



WHEN THE ORGANIST
HASN'T COME IN



WHEN THE READER HAS
A PARTICULARLY GRUELLING
JOURNEY TO THE LECTERN



WHEN AN EASTER FIRE
OR ADVENT CANDLE
REFUSES TO LIGHT



WHEN NO-ONE WILL ADMIT TO
BEING THE PERSON DOWN
TO LEAD THE INTERCESSIONS



WHEN NOBODY HAS A
CLUE WHAT IS SUPPOSED
TO HAPPEN NEXT

CAPTION COMPETITION

A choice of fairtrade wine or chocolate awaits the person who can contribute the winning caption for this photograph, taken by Ali Miller following the Epiphany Carol Service.



Please send your entries by Tuesday 21 January to the Viral Bulletin at adrian.mann@btinternet.com

Contacts

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We also have assistance from priests within the benefice with permission to officiate.

Please don't forget ...

to let Julie Hooton NBTLVB@outlook.com

and the 'Viral Bulletin' adrian.mann@btinternet.com

have news and details of events which have happened as well as events which are coming up at your church.

And your photographs are always welcome.
