

Lark Valley and North Bury Team Ministry

VIRAL BULLETIN

4 January 2026

Epiphany

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



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Epiphany

(transferred)

Isaiah 60.1-6 Psalm 72.[1-9]10-15 Ephesians 3.1-12 Matthew 2.1-12a

In this season of Epiphany, we remember the star which led the wise men to the Christ child. The word Epiphany simply means *showing forth* or *manifestation*. The glory and beauty of the star points to the glory and beauty of the young Jesus.

Imagine living where there is very little artificial light. You would be much more conscious of what was going on overhead in the heavens. The wise men (also known as Magi) were those who studied these matters. They were the professors of astronomy of their day. At that time there was no distinction between astronomy and astrology.

We tend to think of astronomy as being a respectable scientific subject whereas astrology is often associated with the features pages of the popular press. For the Magi, the heavens and the earth were closely interlinked. If something unusual happened in the heavens, then something unusual would be happening on earth - and vice versa. They would look out for these things. Moreover, changes in the heavens were associated with the rise and fall of rulers on earth.

When the Magi observe the star, it's quite natural that they should decide to visit Herod the Great in Jerusalem to make enquiries about a new king. This visit gives King Herod a very nasty turn because this new ruler is nothing to do with him. Although Herod is a king, he has no royal background or ancestry.

Our gospel writer points out that the new king Jesus has a far better royal pedigree than Herod and quotes from the prophet Micah who says that this new ruler will be born in Bethlehem, where King David lived and was anointed king. The descent of Jesus from David is set out right at the beginning of Matthew's gospel. No wonder Herod is unnerved. Maybe he thought that the same star that signified the rising of the new king might also be signifying his own downfall. He doesn't challenge the wise men about their conclusion concerning the new king - these Magi were considered to be part of the intellectual elite of the time. He just tries to get them to do his spying on the new king for him.

Perhaps all this talk about kings has led to the idea that the wise men were kings themselves. Time has passed since the stable visit of the shepherds. Jesus and his mother are found in a house, not a stable and Jesus is referred to as a child, not an infant. Later, when Herod decides to slaughter children living in Bethlehem, these are aged two years and under.

The Magi bring three unusual, expensive gifts to Jesus. This has led to the assumption that there were three wise men but we are not told how many there were. These gifts have traditionally been seen as gold for Jesus as king, frankincense for Jesus as God and myrrh for Jesus as the one to die since it was used to prepare dead bodies for burial.

Our gospel writer may have had our Isaiah reading in mind with its references to gold and frankincense and how all nations, all peoples will come to Jerusalem to dwell in the light of God. This light, Christ our light, is here and the wise men are often depicted as representatives of the three ethnic groups known in the Roman world, that is, African, Asian and European. As Jesus receives these gifts he shows himself to the first Gentiles, the first non-Jews who pay him homage. The wise men must have discerned that Herod was a threat to the child Jesus, so they did not return to Herod, but returned home by another route.

And the world is turned upside down. Here the wise men offer their economic and intellectual wealth and prestige to a young child in a small town in a backwater of the Roman Empire. Herod in his stylish palace starts to realize that his days of power are numbered. All Herod has to offer the child Jesus is deviousness, exile into Egypt and a ferocious massacre of young children.

On this Epiphany Sunday we too might like to imagine ourselves in the company of the wise men. What gifts can we bring our Saviour today, as he gives us the gift of himself in the bread and wine of the Eucharist?

*Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem
The Kings are travelling, travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace,
Shall lead thy heart to its resting place.
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring;
Offer thy heart to the infant King.
Offer thy heart.*

The Three Kings by Peter Cornelius 1824-1874

Julia Mann

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

SERVICES WEEK BEGINNING 4 JANUARY

SUNDAY 4 January Epiphany *(transferred from 6 January)*

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
9.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Timworth
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	West Stow
10.00am	All Age Worship	Fornham All Saints
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Monday 5 January

Tuesday 6 January

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

Wednesday 7 January

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

Thursday 8 January

9.30am	Eucharist (CW)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
6.00pm	Adoration and Benediction	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

Friday 9 January

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

Saturday 10 January *William Laud, archbishop, 1645*

SUNDAY 11 January Baptism of Christ First Sunday of Epiphany

8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	All Saints', Bury St Edmunds
8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Culford
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)	Lackford
10.00am	Eucharist (CW)	Fornham St Martin
11.00am	Sung Eucharist (CW)	St John's, Bury St Edmunds
5.00pm	Team Epiphany Carol Service	St John's, Bury St Edmunds

SANTA BABY CAPTION COMPETITION RESULT



It is customary at this time of year for Caroline to petrify an unsuspecting clergyman by sitting on their lap to sing the Eartha Kitt classic 'Santa Baby'.

This week's suggested captions are:

The Team Rector was shocked at how much things had changed since he had last visited an ecclesiastical tailor...

Gina Robertson

Terror made flesh: A P Miller and the theology of the Christmas Santa Baby

Henry Allen

"It's alright, Andy, I won't hurt you."

J C Higginbotham

Andy was sure he'd heard Margaret and Hugh saying that the bishop had just arrived.

Charlie Holmes

*But the winner is **Janet Hayward** with:*

The Rector's been impersonating Neil Diamond again!

Donations to

The
Children's
Society

Coffee Morning

Tuesday 6th January

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

WEST STOW CHURCH

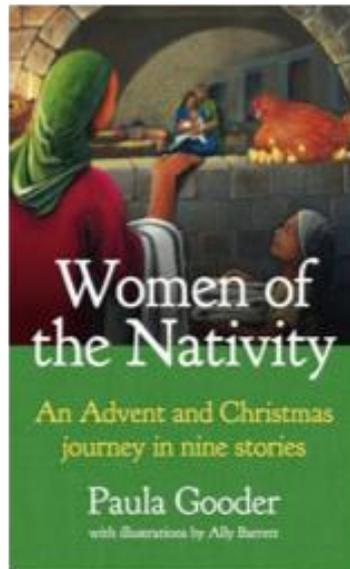
JANUARY 7TH

**CHAT, COFFEE, TEA,
BISCUITS**

9.30 – 11.30

**Donations in aid of
MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT
this month**

Advent Book Club January Meeting



We have been using

Women of the Nativity by Paula Gooder

as we journeyed through **Advent** together, but the book also takes us into the Christmas and Epiphany season.

So there will be a One-off **Epiphany** book club!

It will be on 8th January 2026

7.30pm – Abbeygate Cinema, Hatter Street

We'll be looking at Mariamne's story and Rachel's story, and reading the relevant material before each session, both the stories and the accompanying notes.

To express interest, contact Mother Ali Miller

teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com

Lark Valley and North Bury Churches

St John the Evangelist

St John's Street Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SN



Epiphany Carol Service

Candlelit people's procession

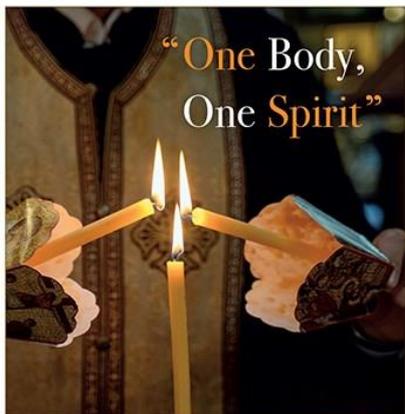
Epiphany carols

Readings and reflections

Seasonal refreshments

Sunday 11 January 2026 at 5pm

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2026



Un Corff, Un Ysbryd
Aon Cholainn, Aon Spiorad
Aon Chorp, Aon Spiorad

18-25 JANUARY 2026


www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

Churches Together
in Bury St Edmunds
and District

WEEK OF PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIAN
UNITY

18 -25 January 2026

Launch Service:

All Saints', Bury St Edmunds,
at 6pm on Sunday 18th January

Lunchtime Meetings

*Lunch, Bible Study and Reflection on weekdays,
material provided by churches in Armenia,
starting at 12.30pm ~ venues will provide drinks,
please bring your own lunch.*

Monday 19 at the Cathedral

Tuesday 20 at Garland Street Baptist Church

Wednesday 21 at Trinity Methodist Church

Thursday 22 at St Edmund's Roman Catholic Church

Friday 23 at Whiting Street United Reformed Church

Saturday 24 at St John's, Bury St Edmunds

WONDER CLUB

Wonder Club is our monthly
All Age afternoon benefice service,
using Godly Play.

We meet at St Lawrence, Lackford, 3pm
Expect stories, wondering, craft, cake



2026 dates
1st February
1st March
12th April
3rd May
7th June
5th July

What does Godly Play offer?

Ways to be community - Building trust and exploring together

Ways to create sacred space - Making a place to wonder, and taking time to reflect

Ways to get inside stories - Discovering the languages of word, gesture, symbol and silence

Ways to search for meaning - Supported by community, story and space, deepening spiritual meaning in our lives



With thanks to Huey Wong for the photo

Time for Cake

Recent birthdays shared at St John's

Free to a good home!

15 white cups and saucers

20 green Beryl dinner plates

Happy to split numbers if needed.

Please contact Valerie Wilde wildevl953@gmail.com

Contacts

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Revd Ali Miller	01284 728714	teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com
Team Office	01284 700400	NBTLVB@outlook.com

We also have assistance from priests within the benefice who have 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, especially those suitable for the Caption Competition, which can have a high value on the art market.
