

PRAYERS

We pray for all those who are sick, or in need, particularly those who have Covid and have had to be admitted to hospital. Please be with them Lord and give the medical staff and other front-line workers the strength and resilience to see this pandemic through in these dark months.

We pray for our country at this time, for what the new restrictions mean for people, and for those whose jobs and livelihoods are in jeopardy.

We give thanks for the vaccines that are being rolled out nationally, and look forward to the time when we will all be able to meet again.

We pray for all those known to us who have asked for prayers, particularly **Graham Webster, Nick Ward, Jennifer Morshead, Eileen, Sally Calvert, Nicky, Sandy, Ron Backhouse, Beryl, Mary Clarke, Douglas James, Win, Clare, Elizabeth, Finlay Relf, Richard Handforth** and all who are still very vulnerable and continuing to shield, including Zofia Golebiowska.

We remember those who have died recently, particularly **Colin Bushnell & Ian Rankin**. We pray for their families as they mourn their loss and we ask for God's blessing and comfort on all who mourn.

Online services The PCC took the difficult decision to suspend church services for January due to the continuing high number of cases in the area and the plea for those in tier 4 to stay at home as much as possible. We have however decided to move online! From **Sunday 10 January**, we will be having an online service each week. Would you like to be part of one of them? We would love you to do one of the readings for the week or even some simple prayers. Have a chat with Revd Liz 01306 711260 if you can help.

Zoom coffee meet up 3 January 10am For this Sunday we have organised another Zoom meet up. Do join us if you can the link to the meeting is:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86989100325> Meeting ID: 869 8910 0325

Other resources Revd Liz recommends a Radio 4 series **The History of the Bible on weekdays at 9.45am** or on catchup at:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000qlrw>

Caring for each other During this difficult time we are here to support you. Please do ring Revd Liz or Sylvie Beckett our Parish Pastoral Assistant, in confidence if you would like any help.

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Parish of Capel and Ockley

Sunday 3 January 2021 Epiphany



Welcome to your church

Our churches are still open for private prayer, Capel every day and Ockley at the weekends but all services are cancelled for January.

Today's readings are all about light as we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany. A feast which celebrates the coming of Christ to the whole world. Echoing Isaiah's prophecy in our first reading that 'nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn' Matthew's gospel tells how wise men came from the east. They have seen the light - the light of the star which they interpret as heralding the birth of a king so great that they feel compelled to make a long and arduous journey to pay homage to him.

What is there about this light, this star, that is so out of the ordinary that it convinces them that this is something special, a once in a lifetime, world changing event that they have to be part of?

Coming as they do towards the end of the 'Christmas story' as we know it, these royal visitors can seem as if they are a bit of an afterthought. Tradition though has put them very much at the centre of proceedings in nativity plays and such like. Bishop Jo's sermon goes into more details about likely timings of their arrival.

Recently, there was great excitement just before Christmas when an especially vibrant planetary conjunction was to become easily visible in the night sky over two weeks as the bright planets Jupiter and Saturn came together culminating on the date of the winter solstice. Last time visible I believe by Galileo in 1610 some think this 'conjunction' may have been similar to the star that the magi saw. Fascinating to read about the movement and the tracks of the stars as it is, some observant locals may have noticed the star above our nativity scene in the front garden has also moved! Finally knocked down by Storm Bella, the star now sits a little lower right above the stable which is historically accurate of course!!

The light that our readings speak of is not any ordinary light, however spectacular the heavens and is not one that the clouds can cover up or be put away with the decorations for another year. This light remains; is a light which never dies out, an eternal light which cannot be extinguished even by corona virus. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World, and as we stand in the light of that first Epiphany, our own spiritual experience is part of that light too. We join the shepherds and wise men in their joy, praise and worship of God as we worship the Christ child.

We don't hear anymore of these first witnesses hereafter in the scriptures, they've played their part, and like Paul and so many over Christian witnesses over the centuries, here on in, its over to us! Happy New Year!

For all Services & Events

<https://www.capelandockleychurch.org.uk/events-calendar/>