



**The Parish Churches of St Mary the Virgin, Gillingham,
St Simon & St Jude, Milton on Stour and St Nicholas, Silton**



Open to God, Open to all

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Sunday 4 January The Epiphany

CW Lectionary Eph. 3. 1 - 12; Matt. 2. 1 - 12

8:00am	Holy Communion	St Mary's Church, Gillingham
10:00am	Holy Communion	St Mary's Church, Gillingham <i>Hymns: 63, 96, 94, 98 (choir), 103</i>
<i>Prayers for healing are usually available after the 10am service in the side chapel at St Mary's</i>		
10:30am	BCP Holy Communion	St Nicholas Church, Silton
10:30am	Morning Worship	St Simon & St Jude, Milton on Stour <i>Hymns: 65, 379, 740, 529</i>



Collect

Creator of the heavens, who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child: guide and sustain us, that we may find our journey's end in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion

Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek: may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

For your thoughts and prayers

Norma Morris, Adam Cooke, Steve & Mary Rae, Roberta Wyatt, Rita Burns, Allen & Pauline Bryant, Carol Hebden, Mary Andrews, Diane Whitford, Ann Lockyer, Jean Harding, Anne Clarke, Shirley Lynch and Sandra Harwood.

We commend to God's care all those who have died, and we pray for those who mourn the loss of loved ones.

READING Ephesians 3. 1 – 12

I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles – for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

GOSPEL Matthew 2. 1 – 12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." ' Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Wednesday 7 January

10.30am Holy Communion at St Mary's Church, Gillingham

10:30am – 12noon The Gillingham Men's Group at Rawson Court

2:00pm – 4:30pm Eden Café and TerraCycle recycling in the Vicarage School Room

Today at Eden, there will also be an opportunity to purchase a variety of handmade craft items by J K Hall including cards, notelets and bags. Commissions also taken. A donation from each item sold will go towards St Mary's Church Funds.

2:00pm – 3:30pm Dementia Friendly Gillingham 'Singing Together' at Rawson Court

Thursday 8 January

10:00am – 12noon Eden Café and TerraCycle recycling in the Vicarage School Room

Friday 9 January

9.30am – 10am Informal Prayer Group at St Mary's Church, Gillingham

2:00pm – 3:30pm Dementia Friendly Gillingham 'Name This Tune' at St Martin's House

Saturday 10 January

10:00am – 12noon Meditation in the Vicarage School Room

12:30pm – 3:30pm Repair Café in the Vicarage School Room



Sunday 11 January The Baptism of Christ (The First Sunday of Epiphany)

CW Lectionary Acts 10. 34 – 43; Matt 3. 13 – end

10:00am Holy Communion St Mary's Church, Gillingham

10:30am Matins St Nicholas Church, Silton

10:30am Holy Communion St Simon & St Jude, Milton on Stour

Bishop's Letter for January

Taking the plunge

Rebecca and I spend New Year with a group of friends on the Devon coast who have developed the custom, common in such parts, of taking an invigorating dip in the ocean on the morning of New Year's Day. For many years I eschewed what seemed to me a reckless and unnecessary practice, preferring to stay on the beach, safely swathed in several layers of wool. For some daft reason, last year I decided to join the bathers and (as I write, sat cosily by a log fire) am currently weighing up whether to do so again. Needless to say, it was breathtakingly cold but also huge fun.

Taking the plunge into something new always takes a measure of determination and mutual encouragement, I think. It helps if others are doing it alongside us, and things are no different when it comes to our faith. A step forward – perhaps being Confirmed, as so many have been in recent months – or into a new church responsibility, is a fine and necessary thing to do if we consider ourselves to be Christians. For Christ is the 'way' and those who follow him are called to a pilgrim's progress through life.

What fresh new thing might the Lord be asking you to consider in the months ahead? This may mean shedding or leaving behind something that is no longer right. In the light of this season, then, may we encourage one another to join and enjoy 'the new', knowing the Lord goes ahead, calling us forward.

- Bishop Andrew

Thursday 29 January, 7pm at St Mary's Church – Licensing Service of The Revd Rebecca McDonnell.

Everyone in the benefice is invited to the Institution by the Bishop of Sherborne and the Induction and Installation by the Archdeacon of Dorset of **our new Rector**, The Revd Rebecca McDonnell. Following the service, refreshments will be served. We hope to see you there!

Our Iranian friends

You have probably heard that Ramin, Fariba and Zahra are back in Gillingham on what is hoped to be a permanent basis, having been found a flat by Dorset Council. The difficulty is that this flat is unfurnished – at the time of writing it has just beds and a washing machine (no chairs, table, curtains or carpets). If you can think of any ways in which you could help, either financially, with furniture and other household necessaries, or with practical assistance, please let Margaret know. In addition, Ramin is not well. The family undoubtedly feel embarrassed at requesting more help when you have been so generous when they first came here. Thank you.