

50p

The Herald

January 2026



Reservoir Group of Churches



The Parish of
St Margaret, Downham with
St Peter, South Hanningfield and
St Mary the Virgin, Ramsden Bellhouse

www.downhamchurch.org.uk

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Keep up to date with events as they happen

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www.facebook.com/ramsdenbellhousechurch

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What's on when and where

Sunday 4 January - Epiphany

10.00am St Peter's South Hanningfield Holy Communion

11.00am St Margaret's Downham Family Service

Note: No service at Ramsden Bellhouse

Sunday 11 January - Baptism of Christ

11.00am St Margaret's Downham Sung Eucharist

Note: No services at Ramsden Bellhouse or South Hanningfield

Sunday 18 January - Epiphany 2

11.00am St Mary's Ramsden Bellhouse Group Holy Communion

Note: No services at Downham or South Hanningfield

Sunday 25 January - Epiphany 3

10.00am St Mary's Ramsden Bellhouse Holy Communion

11.00am St Margaret's Downham Sung Eucharist

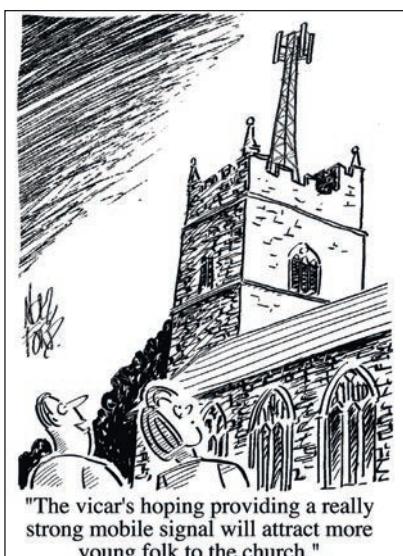
Note: No service at South Hanningfield

Sunday 1 February - Presentation of Christ

10.00am St Peter's South Hanningfield Holy Communion

11.00am St Margaret's Downham Family Service

Note: No service at Ramsden Bellhouse



From the ministry team

On 6 January the church celebrates the feast of Epiphany (which is also when our brothers and sisters in the Orthodox church celebrate Christmas). Epiphany marks when the wise men reached Bethlehem after they had travelled, following a star that they believed would lead them to a new king; the new 'king of the Jews'.

There is a lot about these travellers we don't know. We don't know where they came from (apart from somewhere in 'the East'). We don't know their names, or even how many there were (we always say there were three, but that is solely based on the fact that they brought three gifts).

Yet there are some things that we could surmise from what information we do have: They were intelligent - they knew about the stars, enough to identify a new star and to use the stars to navigate across a large distance; they were probably quite wealthy (or at least represented people who were); and they were brave. They would have been targets for robbers, travelling as they were with valuable gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

They were also persistent. We don't know how long their journey took them, but it could have been as long as two years (based on Matthew's account of Herod ordering the deaths of all male children in Bethlehem aged two and under, when he learns of the birth of a potential rival to his throne).

Two years, travelling (most likely on camels) across wild and treacherous terrains, far from home, to a foreign land. You might think that, at the end of that journey, finding the new king not in the palace in Jerusalem (as they had initially expected) but in a simple dwelling in a backwater town, they might have been a bit disappointed. Yet the bible tells us that:

"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." (Matthew 2.10-11a).

What joy may we find in unexpected places this year? What treasures might we find if we are persistent in searching out the good in this world? And what might the impact be on our own lives and the lives of others if we intentionally seek out Jesus? To seek out the King of kings; the one who made us, who loves us, who died for us, and who rejoices when we turn to Him?

I pray that 2026 may be filled with many blessings for you and your loved ones.

God bless,

The Revd Jacqui

Note: Because our printers are closed between Christmas and the New Year, this edition of *The Herald* is being published before Christmas. Reviews of Christmas events and services will appear in the February edition of *The Herald*.

Have you ever wondered where the name ‘Jesus’ comes from?

The name Jesus is a transliteration of a name that occurs in several languages. It is of Hebrew origin, ‘Yehosua’, or Joshua. There is also the Hebrew-Aramaic form, ‘Yesua’. In Greek, it became ‘Ιησοῦς’ (Iēsoûs), and in Latin it became ‘Iesus’.

The meaning of the name is ‘Yahweh delivers’ or ‘Yahweh rescues’, or ‘Yahweh is salvation’. No wonder the angel Gabriel in Luke (1:26-33) told Mary to name her baby Jesus: “... because He will save His people from their sins.”

From the registers

South Hanningfield

Burial of ashes

13 December Eileen Anne Lillian Cripps

Downham WI

Our Christmas lunch was a great success as always. We had the Ladybirds entertaining us with a variety of old and new songs and of course Christmas sing- a -longs.

We are looking forward to this year’s guest speakers who have all been booked into our new programme for this year.

Each year we fundraise for a new local charity but this year we have selected two as we couldn’t decide between them.

- Basildon Hospital Radio
- Hanningfield Sailability Project- sailing for disabled people

Our first meeting this year is 20 January which will be a social gathering with soup and French Bread served.

The Tuesday club will start even earlier on 6 January for the usual socialising and taking of refreshments.

Happy New Year from Downham WI.

Wendy

St Margaret's Downham

Christmas Bazaar

Thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas Bazaar on 6 December, whether you were stallholders, cake makers, jam makers, refreshment providers or visitors. The atmosphere in the hall was wonderful and we raised over £1,400 for church funds which was about £100 more than in 2024. Unfortunately Father Christmas was a little downhearted. He fitted us into his busy diary, but there were few children there to see him.



Downham Church of England Primary School

Happy New Year! We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone in our local community a very happy 2026.

As 2025 drew to a close at Downham Church of England School, it was a time for reflection as we considered the many changes we had experienced throughout the year. Change can be challenging and, in some cases, incredibly difficult but we move forward into this new year with hearts filled with

hope and confidence that the God who sustained us throughout 2025 goes with us into 2026.

The new year can be a time for resolutions and setting new goals. At school, we are always encouraging the children (and staff) to take on new challenges and to soar to new heights. Perhaps this will be the year a child learns to read fluently, gains confidence with writing independently or learning times tables facts. Perhaps this will be the year new friendships are built, new responsibilities given and accepted, or even next steps taken in a child's educational journey (with Year 6s moving to senior school and new children joining our Early Years class in the coming September). Achieving these goals is not the work of a moment but can be the culmination of a great deal of effort and hard work. Often we are tempted to give up when a little encouragement and kindness would surely give us a much-needed boost to keep going. May this be the year when we offer that encouragement and kindness to those we meet along our way.

We look forward to keeping you up-to-date with the happenings at Downham Church of England Primary School and sharing our successes and achievements with you throughout the year. As ever, we appreciate all of your ongoing support and encouragement.

Lynne Boyd

RE and Humanities Leader at Downham Church of England Primary School

Community Cuppa & Cake afternoon

**Ramsden Heath Village Hall
Dowsetts Lane CM11 1HX**

Tuesday 13 January 2.00 to 4.00pm

Our last meeting on 2 December was as usual very well attended to listen to the Downham School Choir who were excellent. Our charity for the month was for Children in Need and we raised £220.

Thank you to all our customers who never fail to support us in whatever charity we are raising money for.

Our January meeting will be for the Billericay/Wickford Parkinson Group. Come along and enjoy a cuppa for 50p and a piece of homemade cake for £1.50 in a lovely friendly atmosphere.

Best wishes

Ramsden Cupcakes

Downham Village Hall

QUIZ NIGHT

Friday 20th February 2026
in the Village Hall
at 7.00 for 7.30 start

£10 per head (tables of 8)

Bring your own food and drinks

Raffle

To book please call:
Mike Roome 07770 795388

All proceeds will contribute to the cost of maintaining the Village Hall
(Registered Charity no. 296139)

The Village Hall is available for hire and if you would like further information
please call 01277 413343 or e-mail contact@downhamvillagehall-essex.co.uk

Ramsden Heath Horticultural & Allotment Society

2025 Christmas Party

Our annual Christmas party was held on 4 December 2025 with yet another record turnout. The food, as always, was superb and plentiful and many thanks to Rita Elcock and her team of helpers for putting on such a wonderful buffet which all ran like clockwork. Thanks also to everyone who helped in any way, cooking food, putting up and taking down chairs and tables or the mammoth task of clearing away all the dishes. This all added to making it such a great evening.



Following the meal we were entertained by Debbie Watt, a professional singer who got us singing along to all the 'oldies', and even a dance or two. Debbie then led us into our finale, the usual rousing 'Twelve days of Christmas'. Debbie ended the evening with Ave Maria, a beautiful and moving end to the evening.

So now we look forward to another great year which will begin on Thursday 8 January with our regular 'bring and buy' social evening to welcome in the new year. This is a time to catch up with friends, plus a light-hearted quiz just to get the brain cells back into gear after the celebrations. Please bring along any items you don't want for our 'bring and buy' sale and maybe pick up a

bargain of your own. Please bring your own drinks and nibbles and a glass to drink from.

Our AGM will be held on Thursday 5 February. We are always looking for new faces to join our Committee. If anyone is interested, please contact a member of the Committee.

Ramsden Heath Social Club

Our first monthly Bingo of 2026 is a SUPER BINGO on Friday 2 January at 8.00pm. Still just £1.00 to play plus £2.00 for each book you would like to play but with bigger cash prizes to be won this month.

All welcome. FREE tea/coffee/biscuits at the half-time break, but please feel free to bring other drinks/snacks of your own.

Next up in January we have a BARN DANCE on Saturday 17 January also at 8.00pm. Tickets on sale now are priced at £7 for Members & £10 for Guests

Featuring a live band & caller, come along & enjoy the fun, whether you fancy dancing or just watching.

Please bring your own drinks & snacks to this event.

All our events take place in Ramsden Heath Village Hall, Dowsetts Lane.

For more information/tickets please contact:

Dave Quinney on 07950 309524 or Dave Charlton on 07940 540819

St Peter's South Hanningfield

Carol Singing at the Old Windmill

On the evening of 9 December we were invited by the management of The Old Windmill to sing carols to entertain diners. A record fifteen people, representing all three churches, attended to sing carols and we received donations of approximately £100 to support church funds.



Carol Service Sunday 14 December

Thank you to everyone who came to our carol service, we had a record attendance of over 70 people and we think everyone enjoyed the experience. Thanks to the choir and organist/pianist, the readers and those who provided the refreshments. A special thank you to Margaret Lowry who, because Sylvia Roberts was unwell, stepped in at the last moment and spent the best part of two days producing the wonderful floral decorations in the church



South Hanningfield Village Hall

Thank you to everyone who visited our recent Christmas Crafts & Gifts Fayre at the hall.

Thank you to our volunteers who helped us set up the day before including decorating the hall for Christmas; on the day with car parking for stallholders and the public; helping during the event and clearing up after the event (you know who you are!) We are also very grateful to the stallholders especially those who donated prizes. Thank you to Bond Residential for sponsoring the letting boards. We raised nearly £900 which was a fantastic achievement and will go into the upkeep of the village hall. The photos can be viewed on our website <https://e-voice.org.uk/shanningfieldvillagehall>



Our next events for this year are:

South Hanningfield Charity Ball will take place on Saturday, 24 January which includes pre-dinner drinks, 4-course luxury menu, after dinner entertainment and a Raffle at Stock Brook Manor, Billericay in aid of South Hanningfield Village Hall and St Peter's Church charities. For further information, contact Emma on 07961 963914.

St Patrick's Ceilidh We are planning a Ceilidh Dance on Saturday, 14 March, doors will open from 7.00pm. The Yardarm Ceilidh Band will be in attendance, with a caller to show dancers the steps to the music. Tickets cost £8 per person and there will also be a Raffle. For further information and to book, email vallisc@aol.com or phone 07891 653238.

SOUTH HANNINGFIELD VILLAGE *Charity Ball*

£82 PER HEAD THIS INCLUDES

PRE DINNER DRINKS

4 COURSE LUXURY MENU

HOUSE TABLE WINES AND BEERS

HOUSE BAR 10:30 TILL 12:30

AFTER DINNER ENTERTAINMENT:

DJ & 2GAMES HEADS+ TALES (CASH PRIZE)

RAFFLE & AUCTION WILL BE HELD

DRESS CODE: BLACK TIE +EVENING DRESS

£30 NON REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT

CONTACT EMMA

07961 963914

JAN

24TH

7:30PM

STOCK BROOK MANOR
QUEENS PARK AVE, BILLERICAY
CM12 OSP

RAISING MONEY FOR SOUTH HANNINGFIELD VILLAGE HALL CHARITY NUMBER 301402
ST PETERS CHURCH CHARITY NUMBER 1209035

St George's Day We have booked Tom Carradine musical act for Saturday, 25th April, doors will open from 7pm. Tickets are £15 each and bring your own drinks and nibbles. There will also be a Raffle! To book, please call Sandra on 07396 546050 or email shvhall@gmail.com

Raffle Prizes Needed If anyone has any suitable items that could be used as Raffle prizes, please can you donate them to us which would be used at future fundraising events for the hall. The committee would be very grateful.

No Parking on Pavement by Hall South Hanningfield Village Hall Management Committee requests that vehicles don't park up on the pavement outside the village hall because of the health and safety risks. Please alert the volunteer committee if you see such vehicles parked in this way outside the hall on 07891 653238.

Mobile Library

The Mobile Library visit South Hanningfield Village Hall every three weeks.

Day of visit: Tuesday Time of visit: 11.25pm to 11.55pm

Next visit date is 20 January.

Regular Activities

Coffee Morning

Second Wednesday of each month from 10.30am – 12.30pm (Wednesday, 14th January).

Please call the listed contacts below to book a place.

Pilates & Keep Fit

Monday 9.45am – 10.45am

Thursday 10.30am – 11.30am

Contact Hayley on 07758 427379

Puppy Dog Training Classes

Monday from 6.00pm

Dog training for puppies of all ages

Contact Rachel on 07484 706085 or

email Rachel@PuppyPotentialDogTraining.co.uk

Line Dancing

Tuesday afternoons 12.30pm-1.30pm (beginners) and 1.30pm to 2.30pm (more advanced)

Contact Richard from the Super Troupers Line Dance Club

email thesupertroupersldc@gmail.com or tel 07740 360554

Boxfit Personal Trainer

Personal Trainer available from 7.00pm during Tuesday evenings.

For more information, contact Rachael, Boxfit instructor on 07912 344560.

1-1 Ballroom and Latin lessons and wedding dance lessons

With Callie every Wednesday afternoon and evening from 3.00pm £30 for a 45-minute lesson. Please contact Callie on 07885 630241

Tai Chi Beginner Class

11.45am to 12.45pm Thursdays

Tel Sen 07853 239103 or email senfitness@outlook.com to find out more information.

Yoga and Zumba Thursday night

Zumba 6.30pm to 7.20pm and Vinyasa Flow Yoga 7.30pm to 8.30pm.

Pay as you go.

Tel: Charlene on 07772 443028 or email info@sakurayogastudios.co.uk

Upholstery Class

Friday morning 9.30am – 1.00pm Contact Fiona on 01621 776586 or 07887 507208

Wickford Board Game Club

Friday evenings from 6pm - the club are a friendly mix of players of all ages and experience levels with a huge range of modern board games for those interested to come and try! For more information, contact Mike on 07958 456575 or look up the Wickford Board Game Club on Facebook.

Zumba Saturday mornings

9.20am to 10.20am

Pay as you go

Tel: Charlene on 07772 443028 or email info@sakurayogastudios.co.uk

If you would like to book the South Hanningfield Village Hall for any regular activities or events, please call Sandra Graves, our Bookings Secretary on

07396 546050 or email shvhall@gmail.com to check availability and prices.

Happy New Year! Please continue to support our local village hall in 2026 and if there are any other ways you can help us, let us know. Please contact the Chairman, Clive Vallis for further information on 07891 653238.

Website <https://e-voice.org.uk/shanningfieldvillagehall>

Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/southhanningfieldvillagehall>

All in the month of January

It was:

250 years ago, on 1 January 1776 that, according to tradition, George Washington raised the first American flag, the Grand Union Flag, at Prospect Hill in Charleston, Somerville, Massachusetts.

Also 250 years ago, on 24 January 1776 that E T A Hoffmann, German fantasy/Gothic horror writer, composer, artist and judge was born. Offenbach's opera The Tales of Hoffman is based on his stories. Tchaikovsky's ballet The Nutcracker is also based on one of his stories.

200 years ago, on 30 January 1826 that the Menai Suspension Bridge was first opened. It links the island of Anglesey to mainland Wales, and was the world's first major suspension bridge.

175 years ago, on 7 January 1851 that French physicist Leon Foucault set up the first Foucault pendulum in the cellar of his home, to demonstrate the rotation of the earth. On 31 March he created his most famous pendulum, hanging a 28-kilogram (62-pound) lead weight from a 67-metre (220 foot) wire from the dome of the Pantheon in Paris.

150 years ago, on 12 January 1876 that Jack London, American novelist and journalist was born. Best known for his novels The Call of the Wild and White Fang.

125 years ago, on 1 January 1901 that the Commonwealth of Australia was established when the six British colonies of New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia were federated.

Also 125 years ago, on 22 January 1901 that Queen Victoria died, and was succeeded by her son, Edward VII.

Also 125 years ago, on 27 January 1901 that Giuseppe Verdi, Italian composer died. Best known for his operas Aida, Requiem, Otello and Falstaff.

100 years ago, on 13 January 1926 that Michael Bond, children's writer, was born. He created the characters Paddington Bear and Monsieur Pamplemousse.

Also 100 years ago, on 14 January 1926 that Warren Mitchell, radio, TV, stage and film actor was born. Best known for his role as Alf Garnett in the TV sitcoms *Till Death Us Do Part* and *In Sickness and in Health*.

Also 100 years ago, on 26 January 1926 that Scottish engineer and inventor John Logie Baird gave the first demonstration of his TV system to members of the Royal Institution.

90 years ago, on 18 January 1936 that Rudyard Kipling, writer and poet, died. Best known for *The Jungle Book*, *Kim*, *If*, and many more. Winner of the 1907 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Also 90 years ago, on 20 January 1936 that King George V died and was succeeded by his son Edward VIII, who abdicated that December.

80 years ago, on 3 January 1946 that William Joyce, Lord Haw-Haw, British fascist politician died. He had broadcast Nazi propaganda from Germany during WW2. (Hanged for treason)

80 years ago, on 8 January 1946 that Elvis Presley received his first guitar on his 11th birthday. (Apparently, he would have preferred a bicycle.)

Also 80 years ago, on 10 January 1946 that the United Nations General Assembly convened for the first time, in Westminster Central Hall, London.

75 years ago, on 9 January 1951 that the UN headquarters in New York City was officially opened.

Also 75 years ago, on 30 January 1951 that Ferdinand Porsche, Austrian automotive engineer died. He designed the Volkswagen Beetle, the Tiger tank and founded the Porsche sport car company.

70 years ago, on 8 January 1956 that five American evangelical Christian missionaries were killed by members of the savage and isolated Huaorani tribe in Ecuador. The missionaries were attempting to bring Christianity to the Huaorani people, and had spent several months dropping gifts from an airplane. They had established a camp a few miles from the Huaorani settlements on 6 January, but were all killed within two days.

Also 70 years ago, on 31 January 1956 that AA Milne, writer, poet, humourist and playwright died. Best known for his stories about Winnie the Pooh.

65 years ago, on 20 January 1961 that John F Kennedy was inaugurated as the 35th President of the USA.

60 years ago, on 17 January 1966 that the album *Sounds of Silence* by Simon and Garfunkel, was released.

50 years ago, on 12 January 1976 that Dame Agatha Christie, crime novelist,

short story writer and playwright died. Best known for creating the characters Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, and for the world's longest running play, The Mousetrap.

40 years ago, on 28 January 1986 that the US space shuttle Challenger exploded shortly after lift-off from Cape Canaveral, Florida. All seven astronauts were killed, including the first teacher in space, Christa McAuliffe.

30 years ago, on 20 January 1996 that the first Palestinian general election chose Yasser Arafat to be President of the Palestinian National Council in a landslide victory.

Also 30 years ago, on 22 January 1996 that a mass grave was discovered near Brcko Bosnia that contained the bodies of nearly 3,000 victims of Serb ethnic cleansing. They had been killed in May-June 1992.

Also 30 years ago, on 27 January 1996 that the first Holocaust Remembrance Day was observed in Germany. It became International Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2005 when it was adopted by the United Nations. It marks the day (27 January 1945) that the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration/death camp was liberated during WW2.

25 years ago, on 12 January 2001 that Swedish football manager Sven Goran Eriksson became the first non-Briton to coach the England national football team.

20 years ago, on 12 January 2006 that at least 346 people were killed in a stampede during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mina, Saudi Arabia.

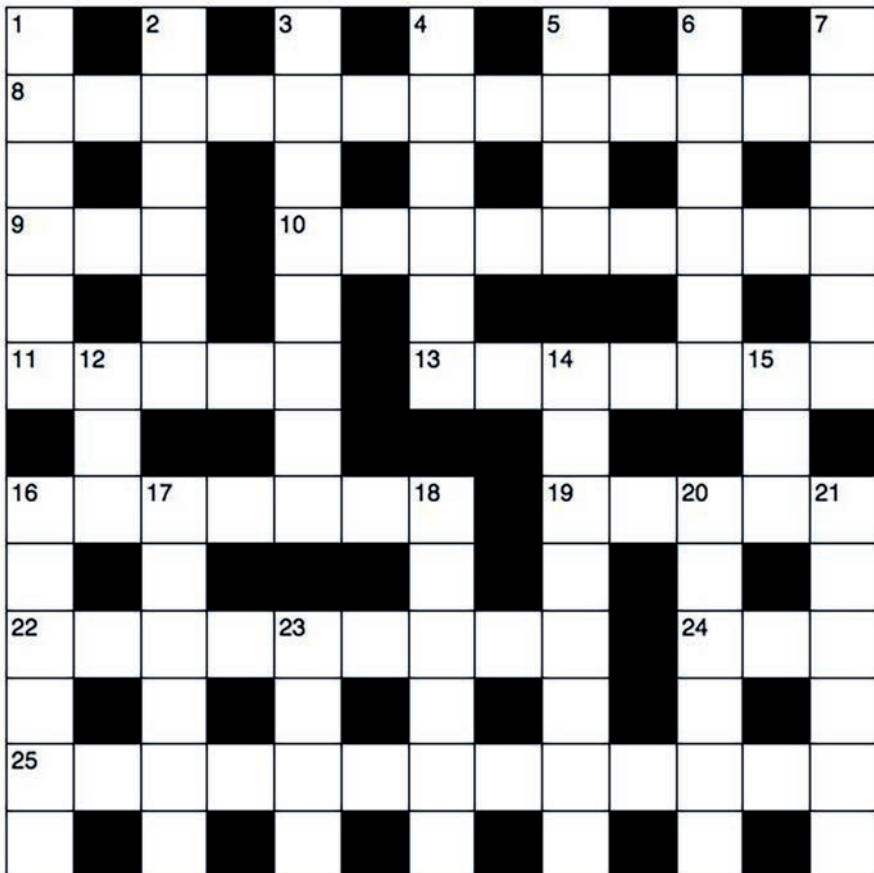
10 years ago, on 31 January 2016 that Terry Wogan, Irish radio and TV broadcaster, died. Known for his long-running BBC Radio 2 show, and for presenting TV's Wogan, Blankety Blank, Come Dancing, the Children in Need, and for his commentaries on the Eurovision Song Contest.

Sir John Rutter

Sir John Rutter is a composer perhaps best known for his Christmas carols. His music is written with cathedral, college and choral societies in mind, and best performed with the accompaniment of a string orchestra. Somewhat beyond the resources of our church choir. Those who attended our carol services at South Hanningfield or Ramsden Bellhouse would have heard me play a piano version of Rutter's work "The Angels' Carol". Towards the end of November I read on social media that he had just published a collection of his Christmas carols as piano solos and I purchased a copy straight away. If you attended one of the carol services I hope you enjoyed hearing The Angels' Carol.

Robert Andrews

Puzzle corner



Across

- 8 How the Abyss (NIV) is described in the Authorized Version (Revelation 9:1) (10,3)
- 9 Frozen water (Ezekiel 1:22) (3)
- 10 The Ten Commandments (9)
- 11 In Roman Catholic theology, neither heaven nor hell (5)
- 13 Des cons (anag.) (7)
- 16 'Though [your sins] are red as — , they shall be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18) (7)

- 19 Keen (Romans 1:15) (5)
- 22 Repugnant, loathsome (Jeremiah 24:9) (9)
- 24 Drink like an animal (Judges 7:5) (3)
- 25 First and last (Revelation 22:13) (5,3,5)

Down

- 1 Father of Ahi, a Gadite (1 Chronicles 5:15) (6)
- 2 Where David found the stone with which he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (6)
- 3 'Hour by hour fresh lips are making thy — doings heard on high' (8)
- 4 'And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their — at night' (Luke 2:8) (6)
- 5 United Society for Christian Literature (1,1,1,1)
- 6 'If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would — — or a tax collector' (Matthew 18:17) (1,5)
- 7 Where Paul was taken when things became difficult for him in Berea (Acts 17:15) (6)
- 12 Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican Bank) (1,1,1)
- 14 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new — ; the old has gone, the new has come!' (2 Corinthians 5:17) (8)
- 15 Used to colour ram skins red for use in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5) (3)
- 16 Vat car (anag.) (6)
- 17 ' Be joyful — — , patient in affliction, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (6)
- 18 'The parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts — — special treatment' (1 Corinthians 12:23) (4,2)
- 20 Ancient rowing boat (Isaiah 33:21) (6)
- 21 Say again (2 Corinthians 11:16) (6)
- 23 What Jesus did in the synagogue in Nazareth after he stood up (Luke 4:16) (4)

Answers on page 33

Children's pages



DID YOU KNOW ?

Stars shine different colours, the colour we see depends on the temperature of the star. The hottest stars shine blueish-white, then yellowish-white, yellow, orange and the coolest stars shine red.

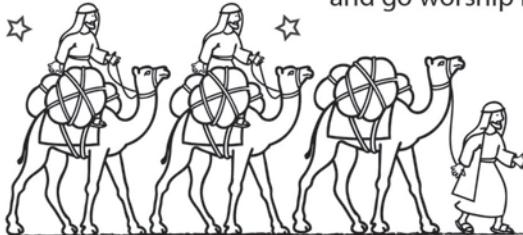
WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

The Wise Men came from a land far away, they had seen a star that shone brighter than day.

The star was a sign of the birth of a king, so they followed that star to pay homage to him.

They found him in Bethlehem as the prophets foretold, they gave him three gifts: myrrh, frankincense and gold.

The star led to Jesus our saviour and king, let us join with the Wise Men and go worship Him!



Read the story of the Wise Men in Matthew 2:1-12

S B E T H L E H E M J O I Y
T K J E S U S K I N O W W C
A G O E P I P H A N Y O I V
R I U M E S S I A H G R S I
K F R A N K I N C E N S E S
I T N G O L D M Y R R H M I
N S E I J V S I G N B I E T
G O Y A C H R I S T C P N M

Can you find these words in the word search?

WISE MEN • MAGI
STAR • SIGN
JOURNEY • BETHLEHEM
VISIT • JESUS • MESSIAH
CHRIST • KING
GIFTS • GOLD • MYRRH
FRANKINCENSE
WORSHIP • JOY
EPIPHANY



Bible Bite

It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel chapter 1

A short story from the Bible

In the time before there were kings in Israel, there lived a rich man, Elkanah, and his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah.

Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.



Each year they travelled to Shiloh to worship God.



After the worship, they feasted.



Elkanah always gave Hannah a special portion of food to show he loved her.



But Hannah was too sad to eat. She left the meal and went to pray.



She prayed silently.

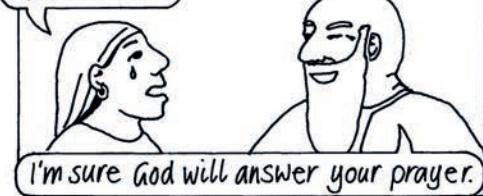


Please give me a son. If You do, he will serve You all his life.

Eli the priest saw Hannah's silent weeping and praying and thought she was drunk.



I'm not drunk! I was just pouring out how I feel to God.



I'm sure God will answer your prayer.

Back home, Hannah had a son, and she named him Samuel.



She stayed at home with him when the rest of the family went to Shiloh.



When Samuel was old enough, Hannah and Elkanah took him to Shiloh to live there and serve God.





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Smile lines

Are you taking a mid-winter break?

If you are preparing to take off for foreign climes, do keep an eye out for signs that have English words... but perhaps not an English meaning! In hotels and train stations and airports all over the world there are polite little signs that will bring a smile to the lips of even an exhausted traveller. For instance, how about these*:

Switzerland: We have nice bath and are very good in bed.

Romania: The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret you will be unbearable.

Russia: If this is your first visit, you are welcome to it.

Italy: If service is required, give two strokes to the maid and three to the waiter.

Spain: Our wine list leaves you with nothing to hope for.

Denmark: In the event of fire, open a window and announce your presence in a seemly manner.

Canary Islands: If you telephone for room service you will get the answer you deserve.

*With thanks to 'Lost in Translation: Misadventures in English Abroad' by Charlie Croker (Michael O'Mara Books, £9.99)

Political leaders

"Don't worry about your son, he is set to become a great politician," the teacher said. The parents were delighted and asked how she could tell. *"Well, he can say more things that sound well and mean nothing at all than anyone else in the class."*

Famous last words

- Step back a bit, I can't get you in the picture.
- Don't worry, it's not used any more.
- I thought it tasted rather strange.
- You have driven this before, haven't you?

One-liners to fill a gap...

- What did the raspberry say to the blueberry? Breathe, breathe!!!
- A hangover is the wrath of grapes.
- When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I.
- Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
- A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

Contacting The Herald

Contributions to the February edition

Copy for the next edition of The Herald should be sent by email to Robert Andrews at theherald@downhamchurch.org.uk by **Thursday 16 January**.

Please send files in .doc, .docx or .rtf format. Because we wish to maintain a common house style please keep any formatting to an absolute minimum and do not embed photographs or other artwork. If you wish to include photographs or other artwork they should be sent separately in .jpeg or .pdf format. If you are unable to use email or are unsure about file types please telephone Robert on 01268 733817, but be aware that the telephone line has BT Call Guardian installed to deter nuisance callers, therefore you may have to announce your name and press the # key in order to be put through.

Advertising in The Herald

All general enquiries about advertising should be addressed to Mike Roome on 07770 795388 or email advert.theherald@downhamchurch.org.uk

Advertising rates are currently:

Full page	£100 for 12 insertions
Half page	£60 for 12 insertions
Quarter page	£40 for 12 insertions

We will accept one off or limited run insertions on a pro rata basis

If you have existing artwork your advertisements should be emailed to advert.theherald@downhamchurch.org.uk preferably in .jpeg or .pdf format.

If you wish us to produce artwork for you this can be arranged for a small one-off fee.

Answers to the Crossword puzzle

ACROSS: 8, Bottomless pit. 9, Ice. 10, Decalogue. 11, Limbo. 13, Seconds. 16, Crimson. 19, Eager. 22, Abhorrent. 24, Lap. 25, Alpha and Omega.
DOWN: 1, Abdiel. 2, Stream. 3, Wondrous. 4, Flocks. 5, USCL. 6, A pagan. 7, Athens. 12, IOR. 14, Creation. 15, Dye. 16, Cravat. 17, In hope. 18, Need no. 20, Galley. 21, Repeat. 23, Read.

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