

Good News Parish Magazine

for Eastling, Otterden, Stalisfield and Throwley

www.goodnews.rf.gd



JANUARY 2026

8th History Society Christmas meeting
Charing Parish Hall 7.30pm

13th Eastling Parish Council Meeting
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.45pm

14th Egerton Arts Society
Egerton Millennium Hall 2.30pm

15th Warm Welcome
Stalisfield Village Hall 12 - 2.30pm

15th Stalisfield Parish Council Meeting
Stalisfield Village Hall 7.45pm

20th Deadline for February Good News:
goodnewsmagazine@me.com

23rd Together in Boots
Doddington Church leave at 2pm



Warm Welcome Village Social

Thursday 15th January

Stalisfield Village Hall 12 - 2.30pm

Join us for social drop-in and stay for coffee, tea and delicious lunch for everyone in the village. Come to the hall and join an activity, use the wi-fi to work or just have a chat with your friends and neighbours.

Free to all residents of Stalisfield and Otterden.

For some people their path to Christ is short - an epiphany moment, if you will. But the original recipients of an epiphany revelation - the magi - had a very long journey from the moment of seeing the star to that of worshipping at the feet of Jesus. That must have been a long and very difficult journey, with setbacks and temptations to rest a while in the oases, but they persevered and were rewarded for doing so...



Endless Desert?

We cross the endless desert sands
To seek a Royal Son,
We've travelled from our distant lands,
So long since we'd begun.

Oases lie along our way
With cool, clear waters deep;
Their wayside pleasures bid us stay
Therein to sup and sleep.

Yet, drawn by yonder shining star
We rise and take our leave;
Our onward route may yet be far
But we will still believe.

Ignoring pains and tempting calls
To cease our onward trek -
The faithful get up after falls
Their aim no fall can wreck.

At last we reach our journey's end
We meet God's Saviour Son!
Our gifts we offer as we bend -
Our path to life is won!

by Nigel Beeton

Message for the New Year

We live in a warring world. We see this in the local, national and international news. We may also encounter aggression in our everyday lives. As we drive, on the train, in the shops, or even within ourselves.

There was once a king who offered a prize to the artist who could paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all the pictures, but there were only two that he really liked, and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for the peaceful towering mountains all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The second picture had mountains, too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, and in which lightening played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all. But when the king looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the

rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest.... a perfect picture of peace.

Which of the pictures won the prize? The king chose the second picture.

Do you know why? "Because," explained the king, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:27)

We can know the peace of Jesus. This is more than an absence of hostilities but a deep knowledge that God loves us unconditionally and has accepted us through what Jesus has done for us. This enables us to be at peace with God, people and nature. We just need to ask him.

I pray that you will know more of the peace of Christ in our tumultuous world.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

David Pickup, a solicitor, considers January.

Going from Strength to Strength – even in January!

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. (Psalm 84: 5-7)

January can be a grim month! Back to work after Christmas, dark days and early nights. Colds, sniffles and bugs, then the bills, renewals and invoices come in. There is not much going on in church, as Candlemas is not until February.

I like the psalms, as they are written from personal experience. This one is a belter and has been called one of the sweetest psalms. I suppose January could be a type of 'valley of Baca' or 'veil of tears', meaning a difficult time to get through. The psalmist encourages us to look for wells and pools of water even in the driest desert.

Many people have debt or other problems. Perhaps the church could set up a group to support members or look for local sources of advice, foodbanks or help.

January may be cold, costly and dark but there are things to look forward to: snowdrops, bulbs and days beginning to lengthen and at least the stress of Christmas is past!

New Year Prayer Pointers

Sundays - Give thanks for our freedom and pray for people living through war.

Mondays - Give thanks for our food and pray for all who are hungry.

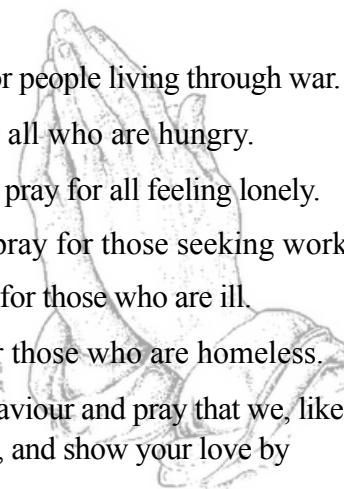
Tuesdays - Give thanks for family and friends and pray for all feeling lonely.

Wednesdays - Give thanks for employment and pray for those seeking work.

Thursdays - Give thanks for good health and pray for those who are ill.

Fridays - Give thanks for our homes and pray for those who are homeless.

Saturdays - Give thanks for Jesus, born to be our Saviour and pray that we, like Him, will be always humble, gentle, and patient, and show your love by being tolerant with one another.



Eastling Church Flower Rota 2026

January

4th / 11th - Suzie

18th & 25th - Bay

1st Feb - Bay

If you would like to join the flower arranging rota, please call Bay on 01795 892036.



A Happy New Year To All Our Readers

CHARING & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Happy Birthday Jane Austen

To celebrate the 250th birthday of one of the UK's most revered authors, come and join us on this tour through her life, concentrating particularly on places she has seen in Kent, relatives she visited here and why, and what she had to say about the places and people around her.

Speaker: Kerstin Müller

8th January 2026 in the Parish Hall, Station Road

Doors open 7.30pm, talk starts promptly at 8pm

Members free - Guests £3. Membership from £10/year



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Otterden with Stalisfield W. I.

Our W.I. Group had a last minute outing to an event organised by the Canterbury Festival - a talk by James Frost on Mumming, Wassailing and the Hooden Horses of Kent, very seasonal with the runup to Christmas. James currently teaches Theatre Design at Canterbury Christ Church University and is also an artist, designer and puppeteer. His knowledge of Kent Folklore, and the increasing popularity of this subject since Covid, is quite astounding and spellbinding. Towards the end of the lecture, around a dozen Hooden Horses joined us which was rather spooky as they are quite strange creatures. Mulled wine and mince pies finished off a very different evening.

The last Meeting of 2025 was a social event, whereby we made paper decoration snowflakes, which was surprisingly successful, followed by a wonderful buffet supplied by Helen Brooks. The evening was finished off by various quizzes and word games (some of us were more successful than others!)

The first month of the year we do not hold an official Meeting, but we will be gathering together for lunch on 15th January 2026 at what was Bybrook Garden Centre, Ashford. Please let Helen Brooks know if you wish to come along.

We meet the first Wednesday of each month at Stalisfield Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.. If you would like to join us please contact our President Helen Brooks on 07477580727 or Secretary Ellie Cameron on 07775649337. We are an informal, friendly Group.

Happy New Year to everyone.

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Our long love affair with coffee

London's first coffee house opened in 1652, using beans imported from modern-day Yemen. Although many in Cromwell's Britain had doubts about this new drink, others welcomed its reviving effects - and asked for another cup.

Nearly 400 years on, coffee drinking in Britain is a vast industry. We drink 98 million cups of it every day. Even though a takeaway flat white can now cost you more than £5 in London, still coffee has become a daily necessity for millions of us.

And nearly 400 years on, we can better appreciate why this should be so.

Coffee keeps us awake. This is because when caffeine accesses the brain, it actively blocks our adenosine-producing receptors, which run our sleep-promoting system.

Coffee makes us alert. The caffeine drives our brain towards a more excited state which allows us to process information faster.

Coffee can also improve our mood, especially during the winter, when the loss of daylight acts as a depressant.

And although too much coffee can make us jittery and even prone to heart palpitations, there is growing evidence among neuroscientists that coffee can even help to lower our risk of neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.



Smile lines

A churchwarden went to the Police Station wishing to see the burglars who had slipped in and out of the church during evensong. "You'll get your chance in court," said the Desk Sergeant.

"I don't want revenge," said the warden. "I want to know how they got out of the service early without the vicar noticing. I've been trying to do that for years!"



THE ARTS SOCIETY EGERTON

THE PAINTED HALL AT GREENWICH presented by Nick Salmond. *Nick is a Blue Badge Guide who has worked for the BBC for over 30 years*

WEDNESDAY 14th January at 2.30 pm (doors open from 2.00)
at Egerton Millennium Hall, Elm Close TN27 9DS

Visitors are always very welcome at £8 (just turn up and pay on the door), refunded if you join. For further information please contact Christine Willis, our Membership Secretary via cmwillis75@gmail.com or 01233 756377.

See also our website www.theartssocietyegerton.org.uk
Image provided by lecturer



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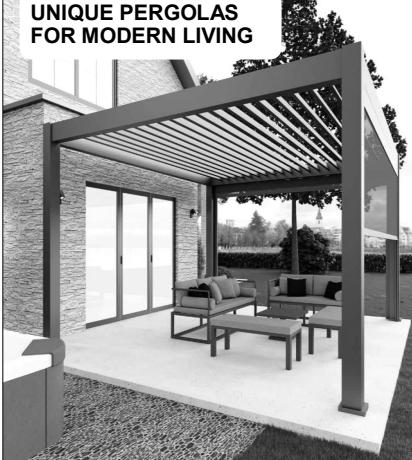
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...I know he's a great fan of 'Strictly Come Dancing' - but I wish he wouldn't refer to it in every sermon he preaches.

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Conversion of St Paul

January is a month of the beginning of great things!

As well as the naming of the Son of God (1st January), we celebrate the conversion of the greatest ever apostle of the Christian faith (25th January).

Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as 'Saul' at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then, on his way to Damascus, Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed.

Saul changed overnight. He was given a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church, and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote epistles to the young churches that he founded - and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: Paul was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned, and finally martyred. Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in 64AD, and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

Services in our Benefice

4th January Epiphany

Ephesians 3. 1 - 12, Matthew 2. 1 - 12

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion
Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

11th January Baptism of Christ

Acts 10. 34 - 43, Matthew 3. 13 - 17

Throwley 10.30am Morning Prayer
Newnham 10.30am Holy Communion

18th January Epiphany 2

1 Corinthians 1. 1 - 9, John 1. 29 - 42

Eastling 10.30am Morning Worship
Norton 10.30am Holy Communion

25th January Epiphany 3

1 Corinthians 1. 10 - 18, Matthew 4. 12 - 23

Throwley 10.30am Holy Communion
Newnham 10.30am Morning Worship

1st February Candlemas

Hebrews 2. 14 - 18, Luke 2.22 - 40

Eastling 10.30am Holy Communion
Norton 10.30am Morning Worship

Online Daily Worship Continues

9am Morning Prayer resumes on 5th January 2026
on the Benefice Facebook Page

via <https://kc-hd.org.uk> .

More information is updated weekly on
St Mary's Eastling 'A Church Near You':
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11982/>

Anna Chaplaincy

Please contact our Anna Chaplain, Caroline Ramshaw,
if you know of someone who is isolated, alone or
unable to attend church.

An Anna Chaplain can offer a listening ear and company.
Communion can be brought to you in your own home.



Contact your local Anna Chaplain on:
ramshawcaroline@gmail.com 07799 538 809

High Downs Parish

Rector Revd Paula Jardine-Rose
07516 411269 paula.jardine.rose@kc-hd.org.uk

Parish Administrator Joyce Warren
01795 521831 joyce.warren@kc-hd.org.uk

Associate Priest Reverend James (Jim) Pye
01795 890726 jim.pye@kc-hd.org.uk

Reader Caroline Ramshaw (07799 538809)

Anna Chaplain Caroline Ramshaw
ramshawcaroline@gmail.com

Reader Pim Baxter (07710 116269)

Church Contacts

Eastling Andrew Baxter, Warden (07749 403727)

Administrator E mail: stmaryeastling@gmail.com

Stalisfield with Otterden

Jenny King, Warden (01795 890366)
Chrissie Webster, Administrator (07590 351977)

Throwley David Elvin, Warden (07973 837122)
E mail: david.j.elvin@gmail.com

High Downs Parish Safeguarding Officer

Mark Harlow (07979 864000)
E mail: mark.harlow@kc-hd.org.uk

From The Registers

Funerals

Joan Vant
16th December 2025 at Faversham Memoria
Crematorium

Michael Harrison
22nd December 2025 at Stalisfield

CONTACT THE **GOOD NEWS** EDITOR

Hilary Harlow 01795 890338
If you would like to submit articles, or to advertise in
the February 2026 magazine, send your submission by
20th January to: goodnewsmagazine@me.com

Past and current issues of the Good News may be
viewed on www.goodnews.rf.gd



Updates from Citizens Advice Swale

At the start of a new year you may be particularly worried about your finances and feel unable to cope, especially if it's been difficult to budget over the festive period. People get into debt for all sorts of reasons. It's important to know you're not alone and help is available.

In 2025, our specialist Money Advice team supported Swale clients with over 3,000 debt issues and helped write off debts of almost £500,000. The advice we provide is non-judgmental and is focused on exploring ways to manage your finances.

When you contact us for advice, we'll assess your circumstances and advise you of the most appropriate course of action based on your situation, capacity and needs.

We can help you to:

- Identify ways in which you may be able to increase your income and reduce your expenditure. We can carry out a benefit check so you know if there are any benefits you're entitled to.
- Help you understand the difference between priority and non-priority debts, and how to manage repayments. You'll then know what your most important debts are and it may ease any anxiety you may have around what creditors can do.
- Explore options to deal with your debts. You may be surprised at the options that could be available to you.
- Provide guidance and support to help you put a debt solution in place.

We're not just here to help with debt. We provide advice on a wide range of issues including benefits, housing, employment, relationships, discrimination, healthcare, education, cost of living and energy.

How can we help you?

Drop-in sessions (no appointment necessary):

Sittingbourne

Mondays 10am-12pm - Swale House

Tuesdays 11.30am-1.30pm - Murston Family Hub

Sheppey

Tuesdays 10am-12pm - Sheppey Gateway (except the second Tuesday of every month, which is held at Sheerness East Working Mens Club)

Faversham

Wednesdays & Fridays 10am-12pm - 43 Stone Street, Faversham

Thursdays 10am-12pm - West Faversham Community Centre

Telephone advice: Call Adviceline on freephone 0808 278 7979 (Monday-Friday 10am-3.30pm)

Email advice: Contact us online at www.citizensadviceswale.uk/email-general-advice

Specialist debt advice: Request a call back at www.citizensadviceswale.uk/debt

To stay up to date with our opening times, please visit www.citizensadviceswale.uk or follow us on Facebook.

citizens
advice



When Springtime Comes

by Audrey Keen

I'll walk beside the grazing sheep
And in the wood where I will keep
Onto a path that takes me through
The trees that drip with morning dew.
I'll linger there as perfect smells
Exude from thousands of bluebells;
While little birds sing songs to please
And playful breezes gently tease
The newborn leaf that shakes so much
To feel the first moist dewdrops touch.
I'll rest, perhaps beneath a tree
That's tall and shady over me,
Or pick wild violets as I wait
Beneath the willow by the gate.
And from a hedge of fragrant may
I'll stand to watch white lambs at play
And listen, for I hope to see
The cuckoo as he calls to me.
I'll walk where flowering blackthorn grows,
Wayfaring and the guelder rose
And see perhaps, a thrush at rest
Upon her young ones in their nest.
Oh yes, I'll spend such happy hours
Just walking through the cuckoo flowers
Towards the steep and windy hills
Where primroses and daffodils
Will wave to white clouds moving past
An April sky, that's blue at last.



What, oh what, is that person's name?!

Do your New Year Resolutions include the forlorn hope that you will be better at remembering people's names in 2026?

Many of us – and not only those of the older generation – have difficulty remembering names. It's not just TV personalities and so on, but people we meet in the street. We know exactly who they are, we see them every week in church or the supermarket, we know what job they do and which school their children go to. But as for their name – it's a blank.



Help is at hand, however. Not to solve the problem, but at least to name it. 'Anomic aphasia' is the clinical name for the inability to remember a name, even when we can remember everything else about someone.

There is also the strange truth that the cure for anomic aphasia comes spontaneously, often in the middle of the night, when that elusive identity pops unbidden into our memory. We must be sure, of course, to put the light on and write it down, because for sure it will be gone again with the morning light!

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Stalisfield Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday 15th January at 7.45pm in Stalisfield Village Hall.
All are welcome to attend.

Eastling Neighbourhood Watch



Village Warden 07794 010 394

or 01795 890848

Police 101 Emergency 999

For any cyber attacks or scam calls please report it on: 0330 123 2040

There has again been a lot of activity in the Belmont/Throwley area relating to hare coursing. If seen please ring 999 and mention Operation Galileo it will bring a response.

Take extra care on the roads as it seems the temperature is going to drop and that will bring the dreaded ice.

Be interesting to see when the drink/drug figures come out for the Christmas period let's make sure it does not increase for the new year.

Happy New Year everybody
Alan

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January is often a time when we plan our holidays. You might be interested in this small company which offers simple pilgrimage holidays.

Journeying in 2026



It is January, and the adverts for summer holidays are hitting our TV screens again. But have you ever considered a walking holiday with a spiritual side to it, here in the UK? If so, Journeying might be a website well worth visiting (<https://www.journeying.co.uk>).

Travelling through beautiful landscapes to places where for centuries people have felt especially close to God – sacred places, places of pilgrimage – Journeying holiday groups are small, perhaps a maximum of 12 including two leaders who stay with the group throughout.

There is a family feel and a sense of community, with everyone is accepted just as they are. The days are not crowded with activity, allowing space and time for reflection.

The origins of Journeying lie in pilgrimage, and Celtic spirituality is a thread woven through all that they do. Their purpose is to enable guests to venture out, leave the every-day and connect with God in Creation, in each other and in themselves.

Each holiday has a rhythm of gentle prayer; morning and evening and occasionally when the group are out, perhaps by a mountain stream or on a hillside. All who feel the informality and ambience of the holiday will help nurture their own spiritual journey, are warmly welcomed.

The 2026 programme includes holidays with long walks, short walks and some with elements of retreat:

The Island of Anglesey. 24th- 30th April

Llŷn Peninsula, North Wales. 16th- 23rd May.

Caldey Island Pilgrimage retreat, West Wales. 4th- 8th June

Grasmere and Lake District. 14th - 19th June

Monasticism in the Wye Valley. 6th - 11th July

Canterbury, England. 17th- 24th August

Tenby and the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path. 12th- 19th September

Late Summer in Oxfordshire. 22nd- 25th September

More info at: www.journeying.co.uk

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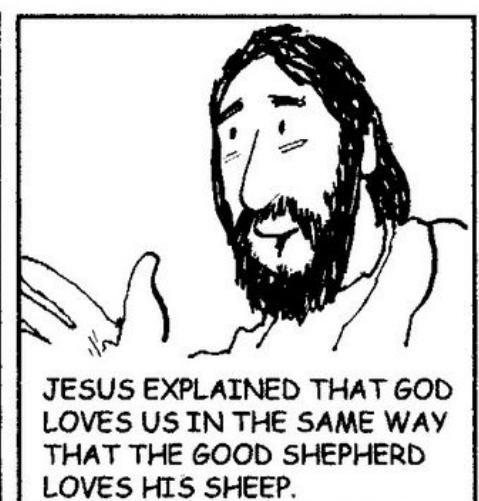
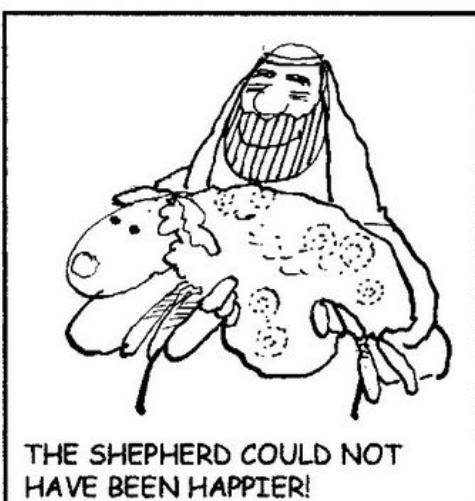
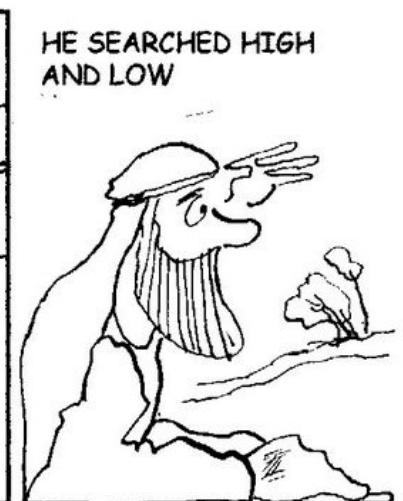
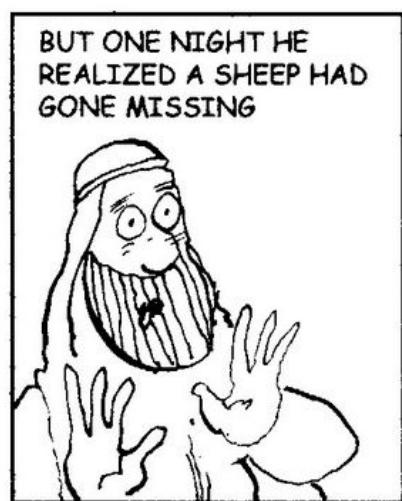
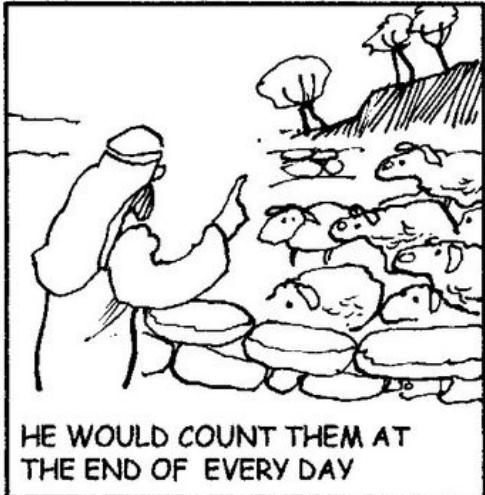
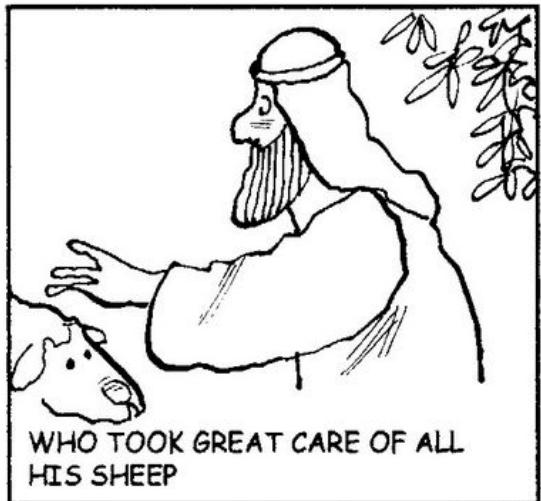
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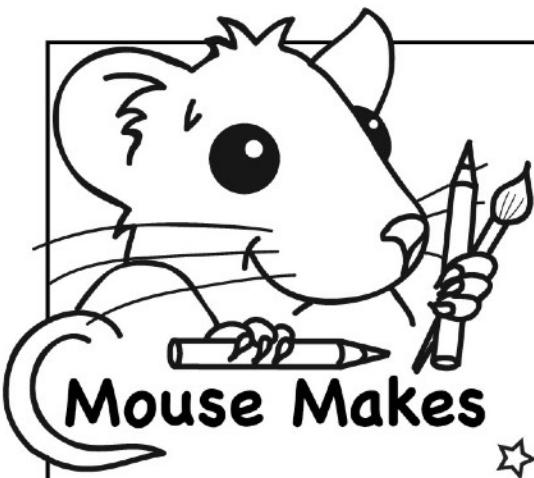
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The tale of the Lost Sheep





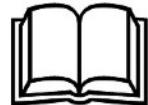
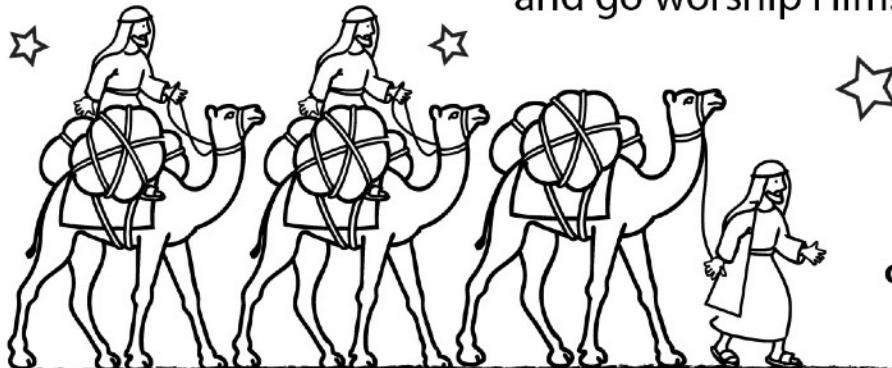
WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

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 fortold,
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
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