

January 2026

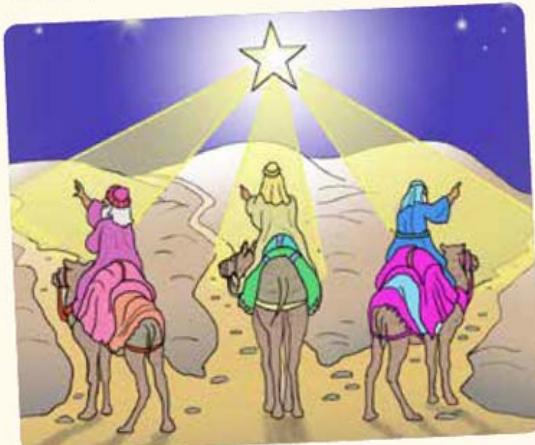
Epiphany: Jesus revealed to the Wise Men



January's Teatime Church is taking place at 4pm on **Sunday 11th January**. At this service we will be thinking about Epiphany, which commemorates the revealing of Jesus to the three Wise Men – and to the world. Children will be able to make Magi telescopes, create Epiphany scenes, decorate crowns and enjoy our pin the tail on the camel game!



Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem when Herod was king in Jerusalem. One day, wise men from eastern lands came to speak to Herod, asking 'Where is the new born King of the Jews? We have followed the Birth Star all the way here. We have come to worship him.'



Herod was frightened when he heard this and so was everyone else in Jerusalem.

He called a meeting of all the wise and religious scholars to find out where this Messiah was to be born. * 'The prophet Micah wrote that it was to be Bethlehem,' they told him. *

Herod met again with the wise men, in secret. He found out more about their learning and in turn told them to go and search for the newborn king in Bethlehem. Herod also asked the wise men to come back to him and tell him exactly where the baby was to be found, 'So that I too may worship him.'

So, the wise men set off again, following the same star, and it led them to Bethlehem, right to the Christ-child. When they entered the place where the child and his mother Mary were, their hearts were overwhelmed with joy.

The wise men knelt down before him and worshipped indeed. Then they offered their precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But when it was time for them to leave, the wise men went home by a different route, because God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. *

Matthew 2.1-12

Epiphany

Epiphany means:

1. A day which celebrates the baby Jesus appearing to the three Wise Men
2. A moment of suddenly understanding something

Epiphany is a Christian feast day that celebrates the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus. This was an important time because it represented God, (in the form of the baby Jesus) being revealed to man (in the form of the Wise Men).

Epiphany is when we celebrate the arrival of the Wise Men who came from far away to recognise the baby Jesus as the Son of God. They brought gifts which symbolised his kingship and prophetic and priestly roles. A special star led the Magi – also known as the Three Kings or the Wise Men – to visit the baby Jesus after he had been born. Epiphany always falls on January 6th, twelve days after Christmas.

The word 'epiphany' means 'to reveal', as it is when the baby Jesus was 'revealed' to the world; and so God was revealed to the world through this special baby. Jesus came for all people of the world – rich and powerful kings, humble, poor shepherds, non-Jews, natives and non-natives – all of us. The Wise Men came in fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies that indicated the Messiah would be known by all nations.

The word epiphany has carried into modern language, often when a piece of crucial information has been revealed to a person that leads to a better understanding of a subject.

The account of the Wise Men in the Bible (Matthew 2: 1-12) involves searching – initially by looking in the wrong place – for the new-born king. They eventually find him by following a star to Bethlehem. God's guidance in a dream warns them to take a different route home, saving baby Jesus from King Herod, who felt his position as King was threatened by the coming of a new 'King of the Jews'. They brought the baby three gifts which held special meaning:



Gold - a symbol of royalty, because they saw Jesus as a king.

Frankincense – this was burned during worship in the temple, reminding us of God and how Jesus is His representative on Earth.

Myrrh – this was an oil used to anoint the dead, it was symbolic of the death Jesus would face to save humanity from sin.

The Wise Men sacrificed their time, energy and possessions for an unknown but compelling hope. As gentiles (non-Jews) who acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God, they played a key role in confirming to others the true nature of Jesus.

In the year ahead, we may experience uncertainty, and both difficult and joyful events. The Wise Men encourage us to journey forward in hope, guided by the light of God.

Looking for the direction God has for us is not always as easy as following a star or hearing from God in a dream. As the new year starts, it would be a good time to reflect on where best we can look for and recognise signs from God that offer us guidance and remember back to times when we have experienced God's help and love. We can think about:

- How do we seek God?
- What lengths will we travel to find him?
- Are we as dedicated as the Wise Men to seeking truth and answers?
- What is our equivalent to following the star?
- How might we welcome those worshippers (like the foreign Wise Men) that we do not expect?

Popular traditions of Epiphany Day

In the countries that commemorate it, Epiphany Day is celebrated with many local and national traditions. Here are some of them:

- In the UK, many people leave their decorations up until the Twelfth Night of Christmas, only considering the Christmas festivities over when Epiphany Day is over.
- On Epiphany Day, many Christians mark their front doors using chalk with a special pattern with the numbers referring to the calendar year to bless the house. In some places, the chalk is blessed by a priest.
- Many countries have made Epiphany a public holiday.
- A 'King Cake' is traditionally eaten on Epiphany. King Cake started as a dry, bread type cake roughly 300 years ago, but now the type of cake varies depending on the country it is from. Often a figure of a baby, or a bean, is hidden in the cake and the person who receives it becomes the 'king of the feast'.
- Ireland traditionally called Epiphany Day 'Women's Christmas', during which women were encouraged to rest and relax following the hard domestic work over the festive period. Today, women often go to pubs and dine together to continue the tradition.
- In Poland, the 'Trzech Króli', or 'Three Kings' festival, is celebrated with a huge parade that features three costumed kings riding on zoo animals and handing out sweets and gifts to children.
- In some German-speaking countries, groups of people called 'sternsinger', or 'star-singers', travel from door-to-door singing carols dressed as the Three Wise Men.
- In Austria, you may see a special sign written above the front door of many homes. It serves as a reminder that the Wise Men visited Jesus and will protect the house in the year to come.
- In some countries, children leave their straw-filled shoes outside for the animals belonging to the Wise Men or leave them out empty to be filled with presents.
- In Mexico, a special cake called a 'Rosca de Reyes' is eaten. A figure of the baby Jesus is hidden inside, and whoever is served the piece containing it will become 'godparent' of Jesus for the coming year.
- In some European countries, Christians celebrate the feast of Epiphany by jumping into freezing water to retrieve crucifixes thrown in by priests.
- In New York, the Latino Museum holds an annual Epiphany parade with many colourful floats and puppets.



Facts about Epiphany Day

- The earliest mention of Epiphany as a Christian feast was in A.D. 361 by Ammianus Marcellinus, who was a Roman soldier.
- The Bible never mentions how many Wise Men there were, but because there were three gifts, people assume that there must have been three men.
- Frankincense is a strong-smelling, white gum from an African tree which could be burnt like incense.
- Myrrh was traditionally used as an antiseptic for soothing sores and relieving pain.
- The three Wise men have become known as Gaspar, Balthasar, and Melchior. According to Western church tradition, Balthasar is a King of Arabia or sometimes Ethiopia, Melchior a King of Persia, and Gaspar a King of India.
- Other Biblical epiphanies include the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist when the heavens opened, the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and a voice from heaven declared, "This is my Son, whom I love". This is a major epiphany event, particularly for the Eastern Orthodox Church, which also calls this holiday Theophany. The transformation of water into wine at the wedding in Cana is also considered an epiphany, as it was Jesus' first public miracle and revealed his divine power.



Please click on the following links for more information about Epiphany:



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/42565054>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06w2nf8>

Our monthly prayer

We do not always have a star to follow like the Wise Men to show us that we are following what God wants us to do. But when we pray, God guides us to do what is right, if we listen.



God of wonder,
Help us to have as much faith as the Wise Men who followed your star to find Jesus.
Open our hearts to follow you so that all that we do may be guided by your love.
Amen

Community information

Toddlers Together: Our parent and toddler group



Toddlers Together, our parent and toddler group held at Westbury-on-Trym Methodist Church Hall, runs every Thursday 10-11:15am during term time. All are very welcome! Details can be found on our website <https://www.westbury-parish-church.org.uk/youth-and-family/parents-and-toddlers/>. This term starts again on 8th January 2026.

Some questions for the whole family to think about at home...please do come to Teatime Church with any questions that you have!

Why did God need to be revealed to the world through Jesus – why not come as God the Father?
How much of the Nativity Story is symbolic and how much is fact?
How is Jesus revealed to us today?

Please click on the following link if you would like to donate to Westbury on Trym PCC to support the work and mission of Holy Trinity Church, Westbury-on-Trym. Thank you

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/westbury-on-trym-holy-trinity-bristol/>

From Georgie and the Youth Team
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HOLY TRINITY
WESTBURY ON TRYM - BRISTOL

TEATIME CHURCH DATES 2026



TEATIME CHURCH IS OUR MONTHLY SUNDAY SERVICE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. IT'S A VERY RELAXED SERVICE WITH CRAFTS, TOYS, LEGO, SINGING, STORY TIME AND PRAYER FOLLOWED BY SUPPER FOR THE CHILDREN AND REFRESHMENTS FOR THE ADULTS.

THERE IS PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHILDREN TO MOVE AROUND AND MAKE SOME NOISE, ENJOYING THE BEAUTIFUL CHURCH SURROUNDINGS WHILST LEARNING ABOUT GOD'S LOVE FOR THEM ALL. ALL ARE VERY WELCOME!

THE SERVICE IS HELD AT THE BACK OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH FROM 4 - 5:15PM

11TH JANUARY

15TH FEBRUARY

8TH MARCH

APRIL: GOOD FRIDAY CRAFTS

17TH MAY

21ST JUNE

12TH JULY

20TH SEPTEMBER

4TH OCTOBER: HELD DURING THE HARVEST FESTIVAL AT WOT METHODIST CHURCH

15TH NOVEMBER

6TH DECEMBER

[HTTPS://WWW.WESTBURY-PARISH-CHURCH.ORG.UK/TEATIME-CHURCH/](https://www.westbury-parish-church.org.uk/teatime-church/)
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