

THE LINK

50p

January 2025

Tarporley Parish Magazine



New Children's and Families Worker for Flourish, Debbie Wood, with Tarporley Primary Ethos group and Flourish board

ANDREW P. DEAN

Dip N.T.C., C.G.L.I., A.V.C.M.

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6th Jan: What about the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?

The story of the coming of the Magi grew in the telling. By the 6th century they had acquired names: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. By medieval times they were considered to be kings. Whoever they were, we do know from Matthew that they brought three gifts to Jesus.

What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? While we cannot know for sure what was in the minds of first century Magi, one Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation as to the significance of their gifts. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote his much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'.



Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine, and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people.

The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. What faith they had! They travelled for months over difficult terrain, they never saw any evidence of Jesus' kingship, His divinity or His sacrificial death. They worshipped Him through faith in God's promises about Him. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi's eyes of faith saw clearly and far into the future.

PARISH DIRECTORY – TARPORLEY

Services See Calendar tab on the website or page 5 in 'The Link'

Weekday Service At St Helen's each Wednesday at 10.00am Holy Communion

Rector: Jim Bridgman, Rectory, High St, Tarporley CW6 0AG **01829732491**

Email: revjimb1017@gmail.com 07526243702

Tarporley: St Helen

Churchwardens Phillip Posnett 01829260251

Liz Neely email: neelyeliza@hotmail.com 07890470899

Treasurer Dave Smithson

email tarporleyparishtreasurer@btinternet.com

P.C.C Secretary Paul Emerson 01829290372

Cotebrook: St John and the Holy Cross

Wardens Walter Gibson

Peter Copland 01829732618

Eaton: St Thomas

Warden Amelia McCourty aemccourty@btinternet.com 01829 730155

Link Editor Andy Jobson 01829732437

email jobsonajpj@btinternet.com items for 'The Link' should be emailed to the above by the 16th of the month.

Safeguarding Officer Liz Neely email StHelenssafeguarding@outlook.com

Contact points

Please do not hesitate to report cases of sickness, pastoral need to the Rector.

To make arrangements for a Funeral please contact the Rector. 01829732491

Done Room Booking Phillip Posnett 01829260251

To ask about Wedding arrangements, Baptisms or general enquiries

please contact our Rector Jim by email on

Email: revjimb1017@gmail.com

Website: www.tarporleyparishchurch.org

SERVICES FOR THE MONTH January 2025

January 5th THE EPIPHANY

St Thomas 9.00am Holy Communion

NO SERVICE AT ST HELEN'S

St John 11.15am Holy Communion for the 150th
Anniversary of St John and the Holy Cross
Cotebrook, See poster on page 12

12th BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Done Room 9.30am Café Church

St Thomas 4.00pm Holy Communion

19th EPIPHANY 2

St Thomas 9.00am Holy Communion

St Helen 10.00am Holy Communion

St Helen 4.00pm Evensong

26th EPIPHANY 3

St Thomas 9.00am Songs of Praise

St Helen 10.30am Joint All Age service with The
Chapel for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Done Room 4.00pm Messy Church

February 2nd THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST

St Thomas 9.00am Holy Communion

St Helen 10.00am Holy Communion

St John 11.15am Holy Communion

Each Wednesday at 10.00am at St Helen's: Holy Communion.

Follow us on Facebook:-Search:- [facebook.com/ParishOfTarporley](https://www.facebook.com/ParishOfTarporley)

If you have time, please stay for refreshments after the service. Every Sunday at St Helen's, 1st and 4th at St Thomas', 1st Sunday at St John's

The Rector Writes:-

I'm not going to talk about resolutions, I resolved as I sat down to write this article; nor new starts or beginnings, or the anticlimax of post-Christmas. Then what else is there to say in January??



Perhaps not much, and perhaps that wouldn't be bad. In one of our Advent book group sessions, we talked at length about silence: both the desire to escape the noise of life, but also the inner silence, the place where we can still our heart and minds, and connect with God. I must admit that between the carols and mince pies, the crackers and roast turkey, the celebration of Christmas is a joyous, but noisy one; did I create room for God to speak and me to listen, or was I too quick to sing instead (with such irony) 'How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given'?

Maybe at the start of a new year, instead of the rush to fill each moment with words and noise, we could look no further than cultivating space and silence in which to listen to God regularly. Whether that is going to a special place, or carving out a particular time, or simply turning off the outside noise and the inner monologue for a few moments, to let God have space to talk instead.

You can call it a resolution if you like...but I hope it would become more of a revolution...a changing of priorities where finally I might put God first, and me second. It might take a long time, but we've got all year haven't we?

Jim

Eco Church News January 2025: Affordable Housing – in Uganda

As part of our Eco Church journey we are being encouraged to pray for an overseas environmental project. The PCC recently approved a proposal to support Smart Havens Africa, a social enterprise known to one of the Eco Church team. We'd like to introduce them to you.

We often hear about the shortage of affordable housing in the news in this country. And it is a real issue. It is an even bigger problem in Uganda, where many families live in slum houses, paying high rents for inadequate, poorly built homes. A high proportion of these families are headed by women, as much as 30%. They live precarious lives, with little security and unable to offer their families the kind of future they desire.

This is the challenge that the founders of a social enterprise called Smart Havens Africa are tackling. Anne Rweyora, the CEO (pictured with the eco bricks) and Will Broad, the COO, had first-hand experience of these problems as children and resolved to do something about it. They set up Smart Havens Africa in 2018 to build affordable, eco-friendly homes for women and their families.



They offer them a rent-to-own model which means that within ten years they can own their own home. They use a special compressed soil brick which can be made on site and is much cheaper than conventional bricks, and better for the environment as they do not need firing. They are already having an impact: to quote from their website they have “ built 100+ homes, created 1700 jobs, ensured 600 low-income individuals are living in safe, affordable housing communities, saved 3400+ of Africa’s rare trees, and transferred \$1.5m worth of assets to women” (<https://shafrica.org/our-impact/>). Impressive!

They want to help even more women and they face many challenges. It takes a lot of courage and resilience to do what they are doing with a small team and little funding. We can help by praying for them and the PCC also wants to explore how we can support them financially. Over the coming months Revd Jim and the Eco Church team will have more to share about how we are building this new connection with Anne and Will.

Look out for the next **Eco Church Film Night** which will be on **February 28th** – we are planning to show the film **'Six Inches of Soil'** and say more about the work of Smart Havens Africa.

The Eco Church team



An SHA community in Kampala

News about our local involvement in a new national Church of England project.

St Helen's Church and Tarporley CE Primary School are delighted to be taking part in a brand new national Church of England project called Flourish. Flourish is an innovative pilot project which is taking place in around 40 schools across the country, seeking to start new, intergenerational worshipping communities within schools.

As part of this process, our project in Tarporley wanted to appoint a Children's and Families Worker, to help lead the project and develop the young leaders in our school. After a rigorous interview process, we are delighted to announce that Debbie Wood has been appointed to this role! Continued Overleaf

Headteacher Kerry Forrester said: *"I am absolutely delighted to share that Debbie Wood has been appointed as our Flourish Children's and Families Worker. Debbie brings a wealth of experience, warmth, and passion to this role, and I am confident she will make a meaningful difference in supporting our children and families to Flourish. We are so fortunate to have her as part of our Flourish community."*

Debbie is already well known to school as all three of her children attended school over the past twelve years, and she comes in to lead Collective Worship fortnightly with Revd Mark Elder from Tarporley Chapel.

Debbie commented: *"I am thrilled to have been appointed as the Flourish Children's & Families Worker, I am really looking forward to working with the children of Tarporley CE Primary to*



explore and create a new worshipping community".

Pictured above right with the Flourish board, comprising (l-r) Sandra Hardy, Christine Robinson, Debbie Wood, Kerry Forrester and Revd Jim Bridgman)

Although each Flourish project will be unique, there are five core values underpinning them all:

- 1. Young people's voices will instinctively be at the centre of all leadership decision-making and implementation*
- 2. There will be a clearly articulated and shared purpose to grow a younger and more diverse community of Christian disciples*
- 3. There will be a strategic leadership partnership between school/college and at least one church community*
- 4. Each Flourish project will be an intergenerational faith development experience, involving children and their families of all ages*
- 5. Flourish will lead worship that is fully integrated into the regular rhythms, practices, structures and resources of the school/college's vision for the flourishing of children and adults*

Revd Jim Bridgman from Tarporley Parish said: *"We are really looking forward to Debbie joining us on the Flourish journey, and she will be a real asset to us."*

Flourish was launched on Dec 20th at school with a special Christmas themed event, full of Lego and songs and refreshments. Further sessions are planned for the New Year when Debbie starts: keep your eyes peeled!

This Time Tomorrow at Café Church

Emily offered to present TTT at Cafe Church describing details of her school day on a Monday attending Tarporley Primary School. Reverend Jim and Reverend Jenny proudly watched as their wonderful youngest daughter confidently explained how God guided her so that her little light shines.

Emily demonstrated the vision of the school

....Let Your Light Shine...Matthew 5: verse 16.

As a member of our Messy Church Team I see Emily setting an example of this vision during our many craft and Christian learning sessions.

Well done Emily Gold Star Awarded.

Elaine Meredith



Emily and Reverend Jim

Register

We commend to God and pray for those who mourn:

Elaine Attwater

Roy France

Nancy Pollard

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meeting which is held at the*

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