



Weekly news, readings and prayers

Sunday 4th January

Epiphany



New Year Greetings and Epiphany Blessings

It is estimated that, by the second week of February, about 80% of New Year's resolutions have already been broken and research indicates that we get worse at keeping them as we get older so, clearly, experience isn't an advantage!

The tradition of making resolutions goes back to Roman times. As you may know, January is named after the Roman god, Janus, who has two faces enabling him, simultaneously, to look back at the past and forward to the future so the New Year became a symbolic time for Romans to reflect on the past year and look forward with new resolutions for the year ahead.

Janus though, was one of many Roman gods - and there were literally hundreds of them - all 'demanding' different forms of worship by way of rituals, sacrifices and offerings; however Christians worship 'the one true God' who makes no such demands on us but instead simply invites us into a relationship with Him.

The words 'one true God' are to be found in verse 3 of chapter 17 of the Gospel of John which are immediately followed by 'and Jesus Christ whom you (God) have sent' so, as our celebrations of Jesus arriving on earth in the form of a helpless babe, born of the Virgin Mary, recede into the distance, let us resolve in 2026 to discover afresh the joy and peace of a deeper relationship with Him.

Now, that's a resolution definitely worth keeping!

George Woodward
Reader / Lay Minister

Vicar Sarah writes:

On Sunday we will celebrate Epiphany - though more usually it is celebrated on the day after twelfth night (6th January). Also known as 'Three Kings Day', it's the commemoration of the Magi visiting Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus, as recorded in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, which we will read and explore together in church on Sunday morning:

"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."

Western Christianity recognises the arrival of the wise travellers from the East as Christ's manifestation to the Gentiles, reminding us that Christ came for "every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (Revelation 7:9). The word "epiphany" means "manifestation," and early celebrations of Epiphany recognised all four manifestations of Christ: his birth, the visit of the Magi, his baptism and his first miracle turning the water into wine at Cana. We might better understand the word 'manifestation' as an event, action or object that embodies or makes tangible something that is abstract or theoretical: and we will continue see this in our services as our readings explore these ideas between now and the beginning of February when we will remember Candlemas and celebrate the day Jesus Christ was presented at the temple.

Meanwhile, as the magi visited Jesus' home, you may like to 'chalk the door' or threshold to your home, reminding you that Jesus Christ dwells in your home today. *Christus mansionem benedicat* - May Christ Bless this House - though too, you will also notice the traditional names for the three wise travellers are also visible in the initials Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar: an encouragement to us all to be generous to all in our hospitality as we travel through this life in faith, hope and love.

20 + C + M + B + 26

In 2026 may God the +Creator, +Redeemer and +Sustainer bless this house of worship and your homes in all of the goings-in and comings-out of this year.

January Prayer Diary

Services this Week

Livestreamed services are marked (L). Please use the button below to view services at the times given or to catch up at anytime.

Sunday 4th January

- 8 am BCP Holy Communion [30 mins]
- 10 am (L) Family Communion [60 mins]
- 6 pm Prayer & Praise Service [45 mins]

This Week

Tuesday 6th January

- 8 am Morning Prayer [25 mins]
- 3.30 pm Holy Communion at Christchurch Court [40 mins]

Wednesday 7th January

- 9 am St Margaret's School Service [20 mins]

12 pm Midweek Communion in the Chapel

[this week with Celtic Liturgy and prayers for healing and wholeness] [30 mins]

Thursday 8th January

12 pm (L) The Funeral of **Tony Thomas RIP** [40 mins]

Friday 9th January

8 am Morning Prayer [25 mins]

11 am (L) The Funeral of **Eveleigh Beaton RIP** [60 mins]

We look forward to welcoming you to St Margaret's Church.

Parking is available in St Margaret's School car park for Sunday services. During the week, the children are in school and we cannot use the playground as a car park. Please drive slowly and carefully through the gates. We are grateful for our partnership with the school.

The church will be open daily for private prayer, reflection and visiting from 10am to 3pm.

[Click here for Livestreaming](#)

Lectionary

This Sunday

Isaiah 60.1-6 ([KJV](#)) ([NRSVUE](#))

Matthew 2.1-12 ([KJV](#)) ([NRSVUE](#))

Read in traditional language - King James Version - at the 8am service and from the New Revised Standard Version (Updated Edition) at other times.

Church News

Services from January 2026: Sundays 8am, 10am & 6pm: Wednesdays 12pm

Click [here for all the details](#) of the new service pattern. The services from January 2026 are all set out inside the Christmas leaflets, so do take a copy home to put on your fridge. It will take us all time to adjust to these changes. We may arrive at the wrong time or be surprised if the format of service is different to the service that we planned to attend. Those leading the services: stewards, ministers, readers, intercessors, musicians and many others will also be getting used to the changes.

In the coming weeks let us be gentle and kind to one another. Bearing with one another in love as we grow more deeply into the breadth of our worshipping traditions. As the former 9.30am and 11am worshipping communities learn and grow together in God and with one another may we find fresh rhythms to our worship that will encourage, challenge and sustain us as we seek to live out God's love in our lives and in the world today.

Today: Saturday 3rd January

8.30-10.30 Men's Breakfast - in the church centre. Food and fellowship followed by worship. No charge - give as you can.

Thank you!

So much energy is invested in church life during the Advent and Christmas seasons - and I would like to thank all those who helped in different ways to make this season a special season of celebration and generous hospitality. Thank you.

In the week of Christmas, we welcomed almost 1,000 people through the doors of the church and gifts totalling around £3,500 were given to the church in response to the blessings people received through gathering to celebrate or to worship here. Please pray for all who encountered an unexpected love, hope and peace through the remembering of Jesus birth, Emmanuel, God with us.

The Christmas decorations are still up for a few more days... have you read the prayers written by the children in Year 5 at St Margaret's school? They're on the wreaths in the first window in the north aisle. Do take a closer look.

Taking Down the Christmas Decorations

The Crib, Advent Wreath and the strings of fairy lights will be with us until Candlemas. All the other Christmas decorations need to be taken down, packed away and stored **by Wednesday evening of this week**. If you set up a flower arrangement or a window, please would you clear them by the end of Wednesday. If you are joining in the midday Communion service on Wednesday, there will be an opportunity after the service to help take down some of the decorations.

Christmas Cards - recycling

Please save your Christmas cards - from next Sunday we will be collecting them all up to gift to All Hallows Church who will re-use them in the making of Christmas Cards for next year, which they sell to raise funds.

In Memoriam

We keep in our prayers all who are recently bereaved. In particular:

- We remember Tony Thomas (Norwood); praying for his family and loved ones as they prepare for his funeral in church at 12pm on Thursday, 8th January 2026.
- We give thanks for Eveleigh Beaton; praying for her family and loved ones as they prepare for her funeral in church at 11am on Friday, 9th January 2026.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Growing Deeper

Prayer

Praying for our community: residents, visitors, businesses passers-by this week as we pray for Bolton Lane, St Margaret's Green, Devereaux Court, St Margaret's Plain and Soane Street.

Thanksgiving

We are grateful this week to be entering another year alongside Alcoholics Anonymous as they meet in the Church Centre. Do pray for the community, their members and their work. January is

often a difficult time for many people and a complex relationship with alcohol and other addictive substances or behaviours can make it an even more challenging time.

Support

Remember our Pastoral Team are here to support members of the St Margaret's community whether ill or in need of a friendly listening ear, details can be found towards the bottom of this email.

Social Action

The food banks are often inundated with gifts at Harvest and Christmas time. Do remember we have a box at the back of the church all year round to collect contributions of food and toiletries.

Growing Greener

Green Tip of the week

Hold on to those Christmas cards and either reuse them to make your own cards, gifts or tags for next year, or get ready to bring them to Church next week to gift them to All Hallows Church!

Revd Richard Stainer's weekly tips return soon.

Loving God · Care for Creation · Love Our Global Neighbours

Forthcoming Services

Sunday 11th January

8 am BCP Holy Communion
10 am Café Church in the Church Centre
6 pm (L) Choral Communion

Tuesday 13th January

8 am Morning Prayer in Church

Wednesday 14th January

9 am School Service
12 pm Holy Communion in the Chapel
7 pm Prayer Gathering in Church [30-60 mins]

Thursday 15th January

3.15 pm onwards - 5 pm 'Together' in the Church Centre: faith, food and fellowship afterschool for children and their families.

Friday 16th January

8am Morning Prayer in Church

Saturday 17th January

8.30 -10.30 am Men's Breakfast in the Church Centre: faith food and fellowship

Sunday 18th January

8 am BCP Holy Communion
10 am (L) Family Communion

6 pm Time Out [45 mins] a reflective service with contemplation and meditation

Tuesday 20th January

8 am Morning Prayer in Church

Wednesday 21st January

9 am School Service

12 pm Holy Communion in the Chapel followed by a soup lunch in the Gladwyn Room

Thursday 22nd January

8 pm Compline - Night Prayer by zoom. [Click here to register and receive the zoom link.](#)

Friday 23rd January

8am Morning Prayer in Church

Forward Dates

Saturday 24th January 2026

The Welcome and Enthronement of The Right Reverend Dr Joanne Woolway Grenfell as the 12th Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The service at 2pm will be livestreamed from St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

Saturday 28th January 2026

The Confirmation of Election of The Right Reverend Dame Sarah Mullally as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury is taking place at St Paul's Cathedral today.

Saturday 14th February 2026

4pm Trianon Concert at St Margaret's Church

Offertory

The life and mission of St Margaret's is financially sustained through generous giving. If you have been giving regularly as part of your practice of gratefully living in God's service, thank you. If you're new to the community, or would like to think about celebrating life in this way, you may find the following helpful: we receive no income from 'The Church'... we are the church! So, thank you – for anything and everything that you are able to give in response to God's generosity.

In church you can give in a couple of ways on the day:

- **Collection plate** – during services a collection plate is sometimes passed among the congregation, but you will more often find it at the South door as you leave or arrive. Do use a yellow envelope if you're a tax payer so gift aid may be re-claimed.
- **Tap giving** – during services a tap giving machine is located on the pillar on the west wall, to the left of the bell tower – do consider tapping your card or device. As well as giving regularly, this is also a good way of offering an occasional additional gift.
- **Regular Giving** – St Margaret's is registered with the [Parish Giving Scheme](#), allowing you to be in control of your giving and to give securely and safely online by Direct Debit.
- **Online giving** – If you wish to make a one-off or extra gift online, you can do so securely via the [Parish Giving Scheme](#).
- **Gift Aid** – if you are a tax payer, St Margaret's can claim back the basic tax you have already paid to the government. To make the appropriate declarations, please speak with the treasurer, [John Grierson](#).
- Leaving a **gift in your will** or making a **donation in memory** of a loved one – no matter how large or small, every gift makes a difference. If you would like to talk about this with someone, in confidence, then please consider speaking with the treasurer, [John Grierson](#) or the Vicar, [Sarah](#).

Contact us:

Revd Sarah Geileskey - Priest-in-ChargeEmail: revsarahgeileskey@gmail.com

Address: The Vicarage, 32 Constable Road, IP4 2UW

Telephone: 07841 687879

Sarah's rest days are usually Thursday each week and the second Friday of each month**Revd Helen Prior-Townsend - Curate**Email: helenptstmags@gmail.com

Telephone: 07541 707543

Helen's rest days are usually Monday each week and every fourth Tuesday of each month.**George Woodward - Licensed Lay Minister (Reader)**Email: reader.stmagsips@gmail.com

Telephone: 07990 573258

George's quiet days tend to be Wednesdays and Fridays.**Churchwardens**

Margaret Woodward

Email: churchwardens.stmagsips@gmail.com**Office**Email: office.stmagsips@gmail.com

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30am - 2.30pm

Number: 07733 609661 and leave a message.

Church Office and Contacts during the Church Administrator's period of Maternity Leave

We are taking the opportunity to rationalise email addresses. With immediate effect, please use office.stmagsips@gmail.com for all correspondence. The verger.stmagsips@gmail.com will be monitored until the end of August. There is a plan in place to maintain the current office opening hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Fridays 9.30am - 2.30pm. However, if you have a particular reason for visiting the office, do email or call ahead of time to confirm.

Pastoral Support: The Pastoral Care Team are a small group of volunteers who try and support people in a variety of situations by offering a listening ear, a helping hand or by providing useful information. Please click [here](#) for more information or contact Maggie Conder at pastoraleteam.stmagsips@gmail.com.

Safeguarding: This parish recognises that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount and that we have a duty of care when they are in our charge. We will do everything that we can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they attend our activities. When there is a disclosure of harm or there are concerns about the welfare of any children, young person or vulnerable adult, all adults in our church community are expected to share their concerns and allegations with one of the following:

Carol Klug - Parish Safeguarding Officer. Email safeguarding.stmagsips@gmail.com

Frederike Jacob is our assistant Parish Safeguarding Officer

More information on how you can report any safeguarding concerns is available from The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich [here](#)

Newsletter Contents

Please send any items for next week's newsletter to the Church Office (office.stmagsips@gmail.com), ideally by email, by **Thursday lunchtime please**. If you would like to receive this mailing each week please [complete this form](#) <https://stmargaretsips.churchsuite.com/connect/mydetails/submit>