

ALL SAINTS NEWS

4th January 2026
Epiphany

What the Bible Tell Us About the Magi

Matthew 2:1-12 is the only gospel text that mentions the Magi. Over time, Christian tradition added bits and pieces to the account, including certain details about who the wise men may have been. These bits of speculation have been passed down over time and are infused in many popular retellings of the Christmas story. However, these details about the Magi are not based on the biblical account.

What does the Bible say about them?

- ★ They were called Magi, which means “wise men” in Greek (Matthew 2:1). Extrapolating from the text, these men were probably astrologers as their study of the sky led them toward Jesus (Numbers 24:17, Matthew 2:9).



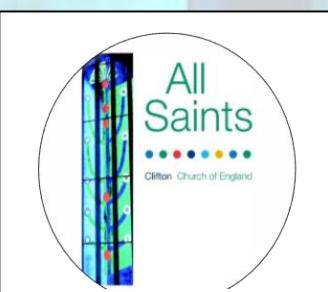
- ★ They told King Herod they were seeking the new “king of the Jews” (Matthew 2:2). It’s assumed in the story that they did not realize what type of king Jesus would be.
- ★ The Magi came from the East when they sought Jesus during the time of Herod, which means they likely came from somewhere in modern-day Iraq, Iran, or Saudi Arabia.
- ★ They arrived during Herod’s reign, which helps to place this within the narrative of world history. He reigned from approximately 37 BC – 4 BC.
- ★ They brought gifts fit for an earthly king and came to pay homage to him (Matthew 2:2,10-11).

Contact us

Office 01179741355
Web www.allsaintsclifton.org
Email office@allsaintsclifton.org
Address 68 Pembroke Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 3ED
Vicar Fr. Charles Sutton
Mobile 07785912663
Associate Priest Fr Paul Hawkins



Home 0117 9078088
Email charleses@me.com



The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the All Saints Church community.

What the Bible Does NOT Say About the Magi

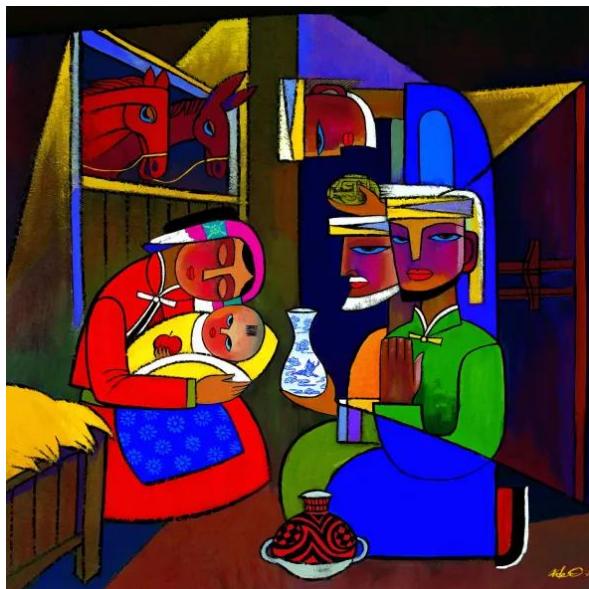
Misconceptions and half-truths surround our cultural misunderstanding of the wise men and their part in the Nativity account as recorded in the Bible. Over centuries, tradition has added details to the story, very few of which can be confirmed, and the biblical account confirms none.

Here are some popular misconceptions:

- ★ They were present the night Jesus was born. Contrary to our Christmas nativity decorations, the Magi were NOT there for the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Matthew 2:1 tells us they arrived in Jerusalem AFTER Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
- ★ There were three wise men. Matthew never records how many wise men came to honour Jesus. We know there was more than one because of the plural use of "men." Most people assume there are three because of the three gifts they gave, as recorded in Matthew (gold, frankincense, and myrrh).
- ★ They were kings. Many people believe that the wise men were kings, which isn't supported by what Matthew wrote. This idea is more related to the popular Christmas song We Three Kings than it is to the biblical account.
- ★ We know their names. Traditionally, they have been named Balthasar, Caspar, and Melchior. In some cases, entire backstories have been told about them. Modern media hasn't helped this misconception, as if it is a biblically established part of the Christmas story.

Why Do the Magi Matter?

Despite the layers of misconception added by tradition, there are valuable lessons these mysterious characters of the Nativity story can teach us. Here are five of those lessons that come to mind.



They Sought a King That Didn't Belong to Them

This group of foreign Gentiles set out on a considerable journey to meet and honour a king who was to be born. They were probably astrologers who served in the Zoroastrian temples of Persia, searching the stars for prophecies and omens. In this regard, it is noteworthy that these very men who sought to worship Jesus were of the same category who were denounced multiple times in passages like Isaiah 47:13-15. Their theology was idolatrous, and yet, by the mercy and providence of God, they sought Jesus anyway.

They Bowed and Worshipped

The Christmas story provides profound and inclusive accounts of worship. Jesus was worshipped by the lowly (shepherds) and the prominent (Magi). Both came to celebrate and honour the newborn king. The Magi recognized the differences between Godly kingship (Jesus) and worldly kingship (Herod), which is why did not honour Herod's instructions to tell him the exact birthplace of the child they sought. Additionally, the arrival of these learned, foreign men who chose to travel a great distance to worship Jesus gives us a glimpse into God's heart to draw Gentiles and graft them into the family of God (Romans 11:11-31). God's house is a house of prayer for all nations (Mark 11:17).

- **They Gave Generously**

They brought the rare and expensive gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh as gifts for Jesus. They chose to visit a king they did not know or owe their allegiance, a journey that likely took months. As the Magi discovered, giving their time and possessions caused great joy to spring from their hearts (Matthew 2:10). God calls us to give to him cheerfully and joyfully from our hearts, not with reluctance or obligation.

- **They Were Obedient**

Most Bible scholars believed these men had access to ancient Jewish scrolls because of the Jewish diaspora during the time of Israel's exile to Babylon. These scrolls tell of the Messiah's coming, through whom God would deliver His people. These foreigners, who had their own king, obediently followed what they knew of the Torah and came to see the new king. Their obedience did not end there. When an angel warned them to be cautious with what they learned of Jesus's location, they returned home another route, bypassing Herod.

Written By Bryan Barrineau

Bishops join church leaders in message after 'Unite the Kingdom' rally

A group of Church of England bishops and senior clergy have joined leaders from across denominations in speaking out against any "co-opting or corrupting" of the Christian faith and symbols to exclude others.

The bishops of Winchester, Manchester, Southwark, Croydon, Bradford, Woolwich and Kingston were among the signatories to a joint letter from church leaders voicing concern at the use of Christian symbols, particularly the cross, at last week's 'Unite the Kingdom' rally.



They joined with senior leaders in the Methodist, Baptist and Pentecostal churches; the Church of Scotland; the Salvation Army; the Catholic social action network Caritas and leaders of major cross-denominational groups such as the Evangelical Alliance and Churches Together in England in the letter which appears in the media today. Other signatories include the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Williams, leaders of Christian charities such as the Bible Society, CARE and the Oasis trust, as well as prominent clergy and theologians.

The letter acknowledges that many of those involved in the rally felt a "deep sense of frustration at feeling unheard and forgotten in the democratic process" but that it also included "racist, anti-Muslim and far right elements".

Full Text of letter:

We are deeply concerned about the co-opting of Christian symbols, particularly the cross, during Saturday's 'Unite the Kingdom' rally. Many individuals and communities felt anxious, unsettled and even threatened by aspects of the march.

There were undoubtedly diverse motivations for those engaged in the event. We respect the right to free speech, to hold different views on issues such as immigration, the importance of healthy debate between religious communities and the need to disagree well when consensus is difficult.

We also understand that for many of those involved in the rally there is a deep sense of frustration at feeling unheard and forgotten in the democratic process. We know that we cannot heal this wound unless the Church, and society as a whole rises to do more to address the issues of poverty, inequality and exclusion.

However, this rally included racist, anti-Muslim and far right elements. As Christians from different theological and political backgrounds we stand together against the misuse of Christianity. The cross is the ultimate sign of sacrifice for the other. Jesus calls us to love both our neighbours and our enemies and to welcome the stranger. Any co-opting or corrupting of the Christian faith to exclude others is unacceptable.

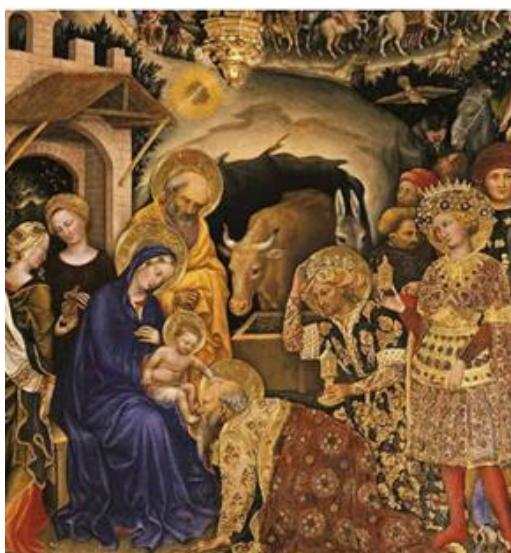
As Christian leaders we are proud of our country and commit ourselves to work with others building a more United Kingdom where the values of love, humility and compassion shine through in every community; and we do so unapologetically in the name of Jesus Christ.

Signed by over 40 church leaders, including:

★ *Rt Revd Dr Rowan Williams, Honorary Assistant Bishop, Llandaff*

★ *Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, Bishop of Kingston*

From: Church of England Press Office



Tuesday 6th January 2026

Said Mass for Epiphany

6 pm



Exploring Christianity

What do we mean when we say we are Christians?

- If this is a question which interests you, there are 4 opportunities over this winter designed to explore the answers.
- Ideal for those who have recently started their journey, as well as those further along the way.

Topics: Jesus Christ. Use and misuse of the Bible. Christian Worship. Christian Living

Dates: 2nd Nov, 7th Dec, 4th Jan, 1st Feb. **Time:** 12.30-1.30. **Place:** Sacristy. Sandwich lunch provided. No need to book, all are welcome.

The purpose of these sessions is to explore what we mean when we talk about being Christian. It will be ideal for those commencing their journey of understanding as well as those already established on the path.

CS Lewis wrote: *'Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important.'*

Sessions are held on Sundays, starting at 12.30 and finishing at 1.30pm. Meeting in the Sacristy with lunch provided.

In 2026 the sessions are Sunday 4th January and Sunday 1st February

Warm coats for Winter

Take a coat if you need one.

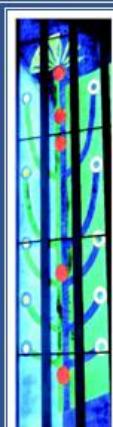
Leave a coat if you can.



The coat rack has been very popular and is now looking a little empty.

Please donate a coat this weekend if you can.

Thank you



All Saints

Clifton Church of England



Parish Lunch



Join us in the Randall Room after Parish
Mass for a
'Bring & Share' Parish Lunch for Epiphany
Sunday 11th January 2026 @ 12.30pm

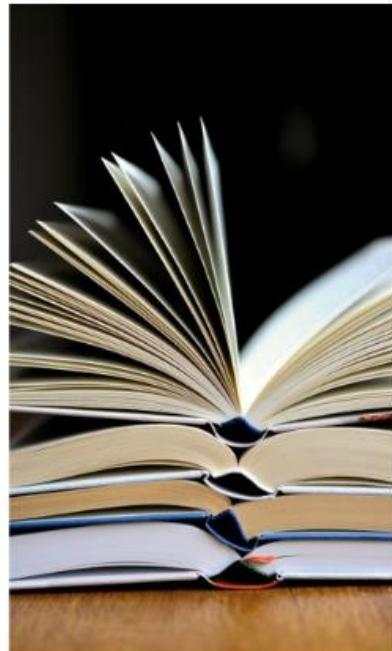
The first event in this year's All Saints' Social Calendar!

*Please sign up on the list in the Porch with your name and the dish
you'll be bringing to share – just to avoid duplication – and we'll all
share the feast!*

Cash Bar

Bring a friend, or just come and share a delicious lunch with good
company

All Saints Parish Office
0117 974 1355; www.allsaintsclifton.org



All Saints Book Group

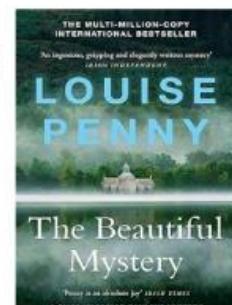
Wed 21st January 2026, 7-9 pm
in the Sacristy

Join us for our bi-monthly book group in the
Sacristy of All Saints.

Every other month, a new book – bringing
readers together for lively discussions and great
company!

The book for our **January 2026**
meeting will be:

The Beautiful Mystery
By Louise Penny

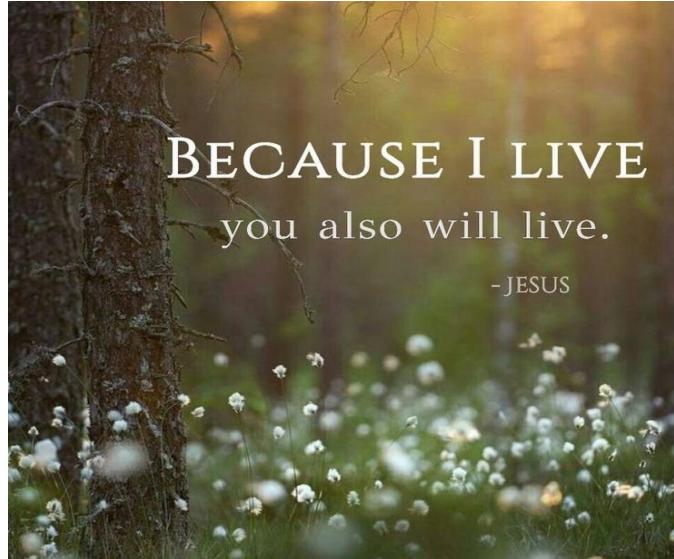


Prayers Requests

'In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.'

(John 14: 19).

Please let Fr Charles know of anyone who would like to be remembered within the weekly prayer list or anyone who you would like to be remembered in prayer.



Those of the parish and our hearts whom we remember in our Prayers:

Sunday

Tabitha Clark, Ruth and Richard Harding, Katie Norman, Neal Gordon, Joyce Shepherd, Cynthia Ashford Nicky Epinay Sarah Jean Bradford Andrew French Swarna Simpson Jenny Oates Sister Rosie Martin Rogers Gillian Clark Pepe Messel William and Lincoln Gwladys Hughes Sue GayLard – Hughes Aiden Downton Lucy Briggs- Owen Jonathan Welland

Monday

Sathia Aruliah Susie King

Tuesday

Pam Parker Oussama and Claire Sader

Wednesday

Katrina and Katherine King, Philip Miles, Samantha Tucker, Maureen Mumford

Vy and Angel Wray Jennie Williams

Thursday

Remie Clarke

Friday

Charlotte Hopkins, Caroline Semon, Nadine Benn The O'Sullivan family

Saturday

The Departed

Hugh Farry Lucille Osafa Mary Whittington Diana Verity Rhona Bennett Tim Draycott Arthur Cleaver

Years' Minds - this week we remember:

Freda Smith Mavis Heller Jill Racy Iris Morton Rachel Stilliard Jeanette Seager Derek Jay Molly Micheal Cliff Hawkins Jack Ashford Elizabeth Ralph Anne Hurst

ALL SAINTS PRAYERS

Mon 5	The work of the RSPB, British bird population, conservationists, those who work to care for creation, those who work to halt and inform about climate change.
Tue 6	The Epiphany Through the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face.
Wed 7	Mass 10.00am Orthodox Christmas Day Pray for our brother and sister Christians who, in some part of the Orthodox Church, celebrate the Nativity of Christ today. Pray also for Earth Scientists who study all aspects related to planet earth. May their work inform us so that we are better able to care for creation
Thurs 8	Pray for Physicists and also Earth Scientists who study all aspects related to planet earth. May their work inform us so that we are better able to care for creation. (Today is Rotation of the Earth Day and we remember Leon Foucault and his pendulum)
Fri 9	Mass 10.00am Pray for all those who work in the broadcasting industry. Television and radio (and on-line streaming) are hugely important in bringing news and entertainment to all. Pray for those whose main connection with others is through TV and radio.
Sat 10	William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645 Pray for the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. Laud, as well as being a supporter of more catholic practice, worked to generate uniformity on the Church. Pray for our divided Church and the challenging debates and decisions on human sexuality.
Sunday 11	The Baptism of Christ Father, at the baptism of Jesus you revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children. Early Worship 9.00am Parish Mass 10.30

If you would like to give regularly to the Church, please set up a standing order to the church account, details below

Parochial Church Council of All Saints

Account No. 65256747

sort code 08 92 99

Gift Aid forms are available from the office

office@allsaintsclifton.org

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people, victims of domestic abuse and vulnerable adults.

If you have any Safeguarding concerns please contact:
:

The Parish Safeguarding Officers - Caroline Davenport & Janice Callow at safeguarding@allsaintsclifton.org