

BENEFICE OF ARICONIUM

25th January
3rd Sunday of Epiphany

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Old Testament	Isaiah 9. 1-4.
New Testament	1 Corinthians 1. 10-18.
Gospel	Matthew 4. 12-23.

WISE MEN

Although Christmas, with its twelve days, is over we still have Epiphany and the visit of the "wise men". We do not know how many of them there were in their visitation, but here in the west we have settled for three because three gifts are mentioned in Matthew's account. Who were they and why are they sometimes referred to as kings? Well, we do best to stick with "wise men" for that is what they were. In the Persia of the time there flourished a group of scholars who studied astronomy, languages, geography and just about any discipline of learning that existed at the time. They were scholars and researchers, and their great learning earned them respect from everybody, including the king. In fact, they were thought of as the king's equal. We know little about them other than that they were acknowledged by the kings of that region as their equal and magus was the term by which they are known. It is an ancient Persian word and is the basis of our word "magic". They were not actual kings, but they were considered to be of royal rank, kingly chaps. The "star" was most likely a comet which can make more than one appearance before it peters out. They appear only in Matthew who knows nothing of the shepherds who only appear in Luke who knows nothing of the magi or the flight into Egypt. So we have the shepherds, again we do not know how many, in Luke and the wise men (magi) in Matthew. In each case we have settled for three of each, based on those three gifts.

The thing that I find encouraging in these stories is this: the magi were of royal rank while the shepherds, farm hands, were the lowest of the low. Thus we have a Saviour in Jesus who applies equally to humans of all ranks and importance, a Saviour of the world.

Would that the modern Persians, the Iranians, could listen to their wisdom once again and act on it. That would be real magic.

Services next Sunday 01st February – **Candlemas**

Weston-under-Penyard	Morning Worship	11.15 a.m.
The Lea	Family Communion	9.30 a.m.
Hope Mansell	Parish Communion	9.30 a.m.
Aston Ingham	Evensong	4.30 p.m.
Linton	Communion Service	11.00 a.m.
Upton Bishop	Mattins	10.30 a.m.

Forthcoming Services & Events

LINTON. Bible Book Club Bible Book club is an informal monthly book club reading through the Bible one book at a time. The next Bible Book Club will be on Sunday 8th February at Wrens Nest. In February we will be discussing the three letters of John. Each session is stand alone and starts with refreshments at 10.30am, everyone welcome. Contact Charlotte for more information.

LINTON. Lent Discussion Group Following a very enjoyable Lent discussion group last year based on Hamilton there will be meetings on Friday evenings in February and March, starting on 20th February. This year we will be using the book A Beautiful Friendship: A Lent course based on the film Casablanca. We will be looking at themes of sacrifice, repentance, suffering, loss and hope using clips from the film as a basis for the discussion. Everyone welcome, contact Charlotte if you want more details.

WESTON: The new season of Bible Studies will recommence at Penyard Rise, HR9-7PH on 22nd January 2026 at 2.30 pm. Tony & Mary Pitt 07534510614.

UPTON BISHOP have a BCP communion Service at 9.30 am on the first Wednesday of each month. A quiet midweek service. All welcome"

Please be aware that if you have any events you would like to advertise here, do please contact Debs directly (details below) and she will be pleased to include them.

Please pray for all who are sick, Mary Salmon (WuP)

Please pray for all who have died, Stephanie Watts (HM), Joy Kinsman (WuP)

Rev David Howell: 07903 790049 email: revdavidhowell@jcloud.com

Rev Ewan Gillings: 07568 515628 email: revgillings@gmail.com

If you would like to receive this pew sheet via email, please email Debs

debsparishsecretary@outlook.com

Website: www.ariconium.church