

**Men's Group** - It has been proposed that Church forms a Men's Group to meet for friendship, fun and food. The proposal is to meet once every two months on the last Monday of the month commencing at 7:00pm on 24<sup>th</sup> February upstairs at The Queens on Lytham front. The cost would be £10 for which you would receive a set main course and a bottle of beer or soft drink. There would also be a speaker or some form of entertainment. If this idea appeals to you, please put your name and details on the list at the back of church.

**Help needed** – We are looking for some new Servers. If you would be interested being put on a rota, please let Clive Barnes know.

**Fylde Foodbank** - Thank you to everyone at St Cuthbert's Church, Lytham for all your donations to the foodbank this year. The foodbank team wish you a peaceful Christmas. Please keep supporting when you are able, the need is ongoing. As well as your usual donations, please will you consider giving full fat UHT milk, tinned potatoes, tinned protein, long life orange and apple juice, toiletries and some luxury item for Christmas - i.e. chocolate, coffee, biscuits. Thank you.

**Prayer** – This morning Nick will be talking about our new prayer initiative and inviting people to commit to pray each day, at 9am if possible, so the whole of St Cuthbert's prayers together each day, though in separate places. We plan to send a daily email to those who wish to be included which will give prompts for our daily prayer, the prompts will cover the life of the church and the roads across the parish. Forms to sign up are available at the back of church, once completed please place in the folder alongside them.

What's on This Coming Week			
Mon	19:00	Choir Practice	Vestry
Tues	09:00	Daily Prayer	Church
	19:00	Study Group	Vicarage
Wed	09:00	Daily Prayer	Church
	09:45	Bertie Bears	Hall
	13:00	Funeral of Geoffrey Barlow	Church
	19:00	Bell Ringers Practice	Church
Thurs	09:00	Daily Prayer	Church
	10:30	Community Craft Group	Church
	14:30	Mothers' Union	Hall
Fri	11:00	Holy Communion	Church
Sat	09:30	Daily Prayer	Church
	10:00 - 4:00	Open Church	Church
Sunday	08:30	Holy Communion	Church
	10:00	Holy Communion & Sunday School	Church
	12:00	Baptism	Church
	18:00	Evening Prayer	Church

**John Henry Newman** – was canonised (made a saint) by Pope Francis last autumn. To celebrate this recognition of an English priest we had mark the event on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm here at St Cuthbert's. As well as a service of Holy Communion at which Bp Philip will celebrate we will also have a talk on Newman by Revd Dr Canon Rod Garner who has recently written about him.

**Sunday, 5th January 2020**  
**The Epiphany**  
 [The Second Sunday of Christmas]



**A warm welcome to St Cuthbert's today**

**8:30am Holy Communion [BCP]**

President: The Revd Nick Wells  
 Preacher: The Revd Nick Wells  
 Readings: Isaiah 60. 1-6; Matthew 2. 1-12.

**10:00am Holy Communion**

President: The Revd Adam Thomas  
 Preacher: The Revd Nick Wells  
 Psalm 72 vv 10-15  
 Readings: as above.

**7:00pm Contemporary Worship**

Officiant: Mrs Bev Wells

St Cuthbert's is a charity registered in England and Wales Charity  
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Keep up to date with us on Facebook at St Cuthbert,  
Lytham and by regularly visiting our website  
[stcuthbertslytham.org](http://stcuthbertslytham.org)

**Home Communion** – We currently have the privilege to take communion out to a number of the congregation who find it increasingly difficult to get to church. The team who assist with distributing communion in church have agreed to ensure, with the support of the clergy, that this continues on a regular basis. If you, or someone you know who is not currently receiving communion at home, wishes to receive communion, especially over Christmas, please will you speak to one of the clergy so arrangements can be made.

**Imagining the Magi** - What did the magi look like on your Christmas cards? Riding camels over distant dunes? Humbly approaching the Christ-child in the manger? Richly dressed? Exotically foreign? Decidedly 'eastern'? Were they differentiated in any way, for example by one of them being black, or by varying in age? Bearing gifts, often in elaborate caskets? Always three, though, and occasionally even named: Caspar, Balthasar and Melchior. Where does all this come from? The story of their coming is told only in Matthew's gospel, where they are called *magoi*. It's a word that occurs elsewhere in the bible, and is usually translated as 'magician'. Here, though, this rather disparaging term is avoided and it is instead rendered as 'wise men'. These are clearly 'good *magoi*'! The gospel specifies their costly gifts which, in light of the Christian belief about the nature of the child who has been born, bear symbolic and prophetic meaning: gold signifying kingship, frankincense signifying priesthood, and myrrh signifying death. But we are not actually told that there were three of them. That's an assumption based on the reference to three categories of gift. As for their names, these first appear in texts from the sixth century, although Caspar, Balthasar and Melchior are special to Western Christendom. Other traditions have different names and even different numbers of 'wise men', sometimes as many as twelve. It's clear that the story is told in

Matthew to demonstrate that Jesus' birth fulfilled a biblical prophecy. This is found in Micah chapter 5, v. 2 and is quoted in Matthew chapter 2, v. 6. Matthew's narrative embodiment of the prophecy, directed at his Jewish audience, will doubtless have generated the assumption that, coming from east of Judaea and being interested in interpreting heavenly bodies, the *magoi* were Zoroastrians from Persia — a religion and a region and where the study of the stars flourished. Of course, getting to Judaea from there would involve crossing deserts, so the camels which we see in art are a logical elaboration. But there is nothing in the gospel to suggest that they were imagined as kings. That's a much later creative development, as is their portrayal which distinguishes them by age and ethnicity. What has happened over the centuries is that this powerfully symbolic story, which makes a point about the nature of the Christ-child, has had its symbolism imaginatively heightened, so that the initial 'epiphany' or 'manifestation' of the Christ-child is represented visually in Christian art as being to gentiles from around the world (the magi) as well as to Jews (the shepherds), to rich (the magi) as well as to poor (the shepherds), and to young and old (often shown in the portrayal of the shepherds as well as the magi). So the Christmas cards work well, if you know the symbolism, despite the fact that the details are mostly non-biblical. What is 'wrong' with the standard depictions is that the visit is shown as taking place in a stable very soon after the birth. In Matthew the *magoi* enter a house; and if Herod ordered all children under two in Bethlehem to be killed, that implies a considerable time-delay before the magi arrived at Herod's court to ask about the new child-king. But we should not worry too much about these discrepancies since the story functions not as a piece of historical rapportage but rather as a narrative intended to convey symbolic meaning. It is this important symbolic dimension that has been strengthened, very effectively, by the artistic imagination.

*Joyce Hill*

**Your prayers are asked for:**  
**those who are sick:** Barbara Pomfret.  
**the recently departed:** Geoffrey Barlow, Thelma Abbotson, Don Houston and Lawrence Abram.  
**in memorium:** Elspeth Towler and Donald Rothwell.  
**and for those who have requested our ongoing prayer support:** George Rochester, Sarah Welch, Elizabeth Frater, Dennis Quinlan, Catherine Stacey, Margaret Wiggans, Carine Rawnsley, Patricia Morris, Peter and Mary Willis, Reg and Val Turvill, Sally Whalley, Ann Turner, Irene Shawcross, Beryl Wilkinson, Edna Berry, Viv Poulton, Joyce Sumner, Muriel Newall and Simon Baker.

### **Sponsorship of the Parish Communion service sheet and flowers in church**

These sponsorships continue to be available and are always most welcome. It may, for example, be considered appropriate to do this in memory of a loved one or at the time of a special event within the family. Name/s and suitable wording chosen by the donor will feature on the service sheet. The cost of each sponsorship is £25.00; for the sponsorship of both together, the cost is £40.00. Arrangements should be made via the Parish Office.

For those who are taxpayers, there is a reminder that gift-aiding the money will provide even greater financial benefit to the Church. In order to do this, please complete the details on the front of the envelope.

**Deanery Evening Prayer for Epiphany** - this evening at Christ Church' Wesham , expect Epiphany Carols & more. Christ Church is on Garstang rd., Wesham, PR4 3DE. All are welcome.

**Mothers' Union** - We meet on Thursday 9th January at 2.30 pm In the Victory Hall when our speaker will be Mr. Barry Band who will talk to us about 'Blackpool Theatres'. All welcome.