



**SERVICES IN JANUARY  
PLEASE NOTE NEW SERVICE PATTERN**

- Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January
  - 10.30am Joint Holy Communion – Mistley
- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January
  - 9.15am Holy Communion – Lawford
  - 11.00am Morning Worship – Lawford
  - 9.30am Holy Communion Bradfield
  - 10.15am Morning Prayer – Mistley
- Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January
  - 11.00am contemporary Worship – Lawford
  - 9.30am Morning Prayer – Bradfield
  - 10.15am Holy Communion– Mistley
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January
  - 11.00am Contemporary Communion – Lawford
  - 9.30am Holy Communion – Bradfield
  - 10.15am Morning Prayer– Mistley
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> January
  - 10.30am Joint Holy Communion – Mistley

**Covid Rules**

- The wearing of masks is no longer mandatory, but by personal preference.
- Communion will continue to be offered in one kind only i.e. just receiving the bread
- We will continue to ask you to sanitise your hands on entering the building
- If you know that you have Covid, we would ask

**Happy Birthday to anyone who is celebrating birthdays in January**

**THANK YOU**

To all those who contribute articles, items, photos,

**Issue 61 JANUARY  
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**CHURCH CONTACTS**

- OFFICE 01206 392301  
office@lawfordchurch.co.uk
- PRAYER REQUESTS  
prayer@lawfordchurch.co.uk
- WEBSITE:  
<https://www.lawfordchurch.co.uk>
- EDITOR [sue.acc@sky.com](mailto:sue.acc@sky.com)

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**OTHER EVENTS AT ST MARY’S  
LAWFORD IN JANUARY**

- ❖ Every Monday of Term Time 9.30am to 11.30am – Edward Bear
- ❖ Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> Janaury - 10.30am Support In Loss Group
- ❖ 21<sup>st</sup> January 7.30pm – Flower Club Quiz Night in aid of 2023 Flower Festival
- ❖ Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 7.30pm LIFT
- ❖ Alternate Thursdays – Art Club
- ❖ Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 10.30am – Coffee and Chat
- ❖ **MORE DETAILS ON NEXT PAGES AND AVAILABLE FROM CHURCH OFFICE**



## NOTICES

### EDWARD BEAR

The Edward Bear Group meets every Monday in Term Time

between 9.30 -11.30am at St Mary's Church

The Group is for babies and pre-school age children plus parent / carer

There is no longer a need to book and we are now able to serve refreshments.

We hope you can join us for fun, play and friendship



### FOODBANK

Thank you to everyone, who have made donations to the Foodbank throughout 2022 and to everyone, who donated gifts at the Toy Service, which were also given to families receiving support from the foodbank.

We know that the cost of living crisis is continuing to impact many in our community and so thank you for your on-going support in the coming year. Please leave donations in Co-Op Fiveways or at the back of the church.

If you know of anyone who may need help please encourage them to call 07870967353 or 01206 391435.

### FLOWER CLUB QUIZ NIGHT SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup> JANUARY



Doors open 7.00pm. Quiz starts 7.30pm  
Maximum Team size 8.

Bring your own drinks and nibbles  
Proceeds in aid of St Mary's Flower  
Festival (8 -11 June 2023)

To reserve a table or be added to a team  
contact Lisa Watsham 07922791247

### SUPPORT IN LOSS GROUP



We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of Each Month (10<sup>th</sup> January at 10.30am at St Mary's Church.

If you have experienced bereavement and would value being with others for some mutual support, a chance to chat if you want to or perhaps just experience a safe place to journey with your grief then please do join us.

### Giving to St Mary's

As much as it is difficult to mention, especially at these times of financial pressure for so many, St Mary's, like all other organisations does need to have funds to serve & keep going.

The pandemic and the resulting closure of the church significantly impacted the church finances.

If you would like to make a gift to the church it would be greatly appreciated and especially if you could make a regular monthly gift, as this helps us plan, but there are other ways to give at any point:

- Using the donate button on the website - <https://www.lawfordchurch.co.uk>
- Making a bank transfer: **Sort Code - 20-22-67**  
**Account Number - 10065803**  
**Account Name: Parochial Church Council of Lawford.**
- A Cheque made payable to **Parochial Church Council of Lawford and delivered to 7 Meadway, CO11 2ER**

Thank You so much for your support

### FOR PRAYER

Please pray for those who are ill at this time – Abby, Liddy, Trevor Edwards, Kim Jones, Kevin, Joan Barbara & John Brown-Sawyer, Dick, Wimtea Junge, Grace, & Liz Thomson

Please pray for family and friends of those, who have died recently Emma Parker's Dad, Gill Butcher's Mum and Nina Deasey.



## NOTICES

### Mistley Village Hall – Warm Spaces

Mistley Village Hall is planning to welcome people in on two mornings a week (from 10am -1 pm as presently planned) to provide a safe warm space for people who may be needing some extra warmth this winter.

We've chosen the two mornings that the Library isn't open, that's Mondays and Thursdays, and intend to run the project from December 12<sup>th</sup> to the end of March.

We can't open the hall in school holidays or half-terms because the hall is booked in the mornings then, and there are a couple more Mondays that are already booked.

Altogether there are 25 mornings between mid-December and the end of March when the Hall can open, but in order to do this we need the help of volunteers.

We intend to provide tea, coffee, soft drinks, and probably some snack food ... nothing perishable. We hope to have toys for children, board games, maybe some books.

We have been advised to have at least three volunteers stewarding the hall for each session.

Please could you volunteer? Just one session would be marvellous.

Members of the Village Hall Committee will be volunteering, but we can't do it alone.

If you feel you could help, contact one of these people:

Rosemary Smith [rosemary@smith99.co.uk](mailto:rosemary@smith99.co.uk)

Harry Quilter [lockwood-s@sky.com](mailto:lockwood-s@sky.com)

Suzanne Strunkey [suzanneparker-strunkey@live.com](mailto:suzanneparker-strunkey@live.com)

### WHAT IS ALPHA?

#### ○ A chance to connect and explore

A series of sessions exploring the Christian faith, run weekly. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. Alpha is run all around the globe, and everyone is welcome.

Alpha is designed to engage and inspire conversation, to explore the big issues around faith and unpack the basics of Christianity, addressing questions such as Who is Jesus?, How can we have faith? and How does God guide us?

#### ○ Space to share your thoughts

Probably the most important part of any Alpha: the chance to share thoughts and ideas on the topic, and simply discuss it in a small group. There's no obligation to say anything and there's nothing you can't say (seriously). It's an opportunity to hear from others and contribute your own perspective in an honest, friendly and open environment.

## PASTORAL CARE DEVELOPMENTS

### ○ HOME COMMUNION

It is hoped that anyone, who may be housebound or unable to attend church and would like to receive home communion will be able to do so. Across the three parishes, we are building up a team of people who would like to be involved in taking communion to people in their homes.

If you are interested in joining the team (you do not need to have done this before) or you know of someone who would like to receive home communion would you please contact Dee O'Reilly [dchildoreilly@aol.com](mailto:dchildoreilly@aol.com)

### ○ PATORAL CARE TEAM

Work is also underway to set up a Pastoral Team across the three parishes so that we can show the love of Jesus to our congregations and community through caring well.

For a pastoral care team to work well and safely, it has to be planned well and so we will keep you informed of progress.

If you are interested in being involved in some way in pastoral care, then again please contact Dee.

### WHO CAN ATTEND?

Everyone is welcome- so perhaps you would like to explore for yourself or share the information with others.

### WHERE CAN I FIND AN ALPHA COURSE?

Weekly on Wednesdays  
from 11 January 2023 (for 10 weeks),  
7.30pm at The Red Lion  
in the Pump Room,  
South St, Manningtree.

Taster Sessions (with pizza!):  
7.30pm at The Red Lion  
in the Pump Room  
23 Nov & 21 Dec 2022.

For more info contact Nicky  
on 07967 625036.





## CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

Thank you to ALL those who decorated the church and the trees, who helped during the festival, sold raffle tickets beforehand, cleared up afterwards and attended the festival. The church looked beautiful, the trees were very creative and inspiring. We are also delighted to say that your support for the festival and raffle raised £2,527.

Thank you all very much





**PRAYER DIARY FOR JANUARY**

<b>Date</b>		<b>Prayer Topic</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>Pray for all those attending and leading services today</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>Pray for the residents of Garden City</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>Pray for the organisations that meet at Ogilvie Hall</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Pray for the residents of Stourdale Close</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>Pray for the pupils and staff of Lawford Primary, Highfields and Manningtree High schools as term starts</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>6th</b>	<b>Ephiphany - as we think about the gifts of the Magi - think about what we can bring to God</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>Pray for the residents of Parrington Way</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>8th</b>	<b>Pray for all those attending and leading services today</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>Pray for the residents of School Lane</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>Pray for those attending the Support in Loss meeting today</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>11th</b>	<b>Pray for the residents of Grange Road</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Pray for the residents of Bromley Road</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>13th</b>	<b>Pray for the residents of Claude Oliver Close</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>14th</b>	<b>Pray for the residents of Dead Lane</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>15th</b>	<b>Pray for all those attending and leading services today</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>16th</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future residents of The Avenue, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>17th</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident Sienna Grove, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>18th</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident Lennox Drive, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>19th</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident Somerset Gardens, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>20th</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident The Hollies, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>21st</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident Tavistock Place, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>22nd</b>	<b>Pray for all those attending and leading services today</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>23rd</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident The Ramblings, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>24th</b>	<b>Pray for all those leading and attending the service and Coffee and Chat today</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>25th</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident Hebe Gardens, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>26th</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident Amelia Drive, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>27th</b>	<b>International Holocaust Memorial Day - pray for all those who lives and families have been impacted by the holocaust</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>28th</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident William Way, Lawford Green</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>29th</b>	<b>Pray for all those attending and leading services today</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>30th</b>	<b>Yesterday was World Leprosy Day - pray for all those who continue to work to fight this disease.</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>31st</b>	<b>Pray for the residence and future resident Rose Fields, Lawford Green</b>



## Reflection - Epiphany

6<sup>th</sup> January marks Epiphany - a Greek word which means “*appearance or manifestation*” and this was the first recorded appearance of Jesus’ to the Gentiles, as represented by the Magi. Often the story of the visit of the Magi gets wrapped up into the Christmas story and so we spend little time looking at in any depth.

**We are not told in the gospel exactly who the Magi were and where they were from, much mystery and myth surrounds them.**

Let’s start with some of the myths that we see in our “traditional nativity”:

- they were not Kings, but this probably stems from a very literal translation of a psalm verse: ‘The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts’ (Ps 72:10).
- there were not necessarily three of them – this came from a sixth century Italian tradition naming them as Casper, Balthazar, and Melchior. It is most probably based on the fact that three gifts are named in Matthew’s gospel

The word “Magi” however may give us some clues about them. The term magoi in Greek refers to a wide variety of people, including fortune-tellers, priestly augurs, magicians and astrologers. Because of their connection with the star in the story, it is safe to conclude that Matthew identified them mostly with the last group. Possibly they came from Babylonia, or Persia, where the word magus originated. In this part of the world Magi were a priestly class of nobles who served as members of the government.



These possibilities could lead us to several important facts:

- They had travelled a long way, through dangerous territory to worship this new King. (If we assume that the decision by Herod to kill all boys under two was based on the time that the Magi said the star had appeared, they had been travelling for up to two years). Their perseverance was immense and they must have believed this king to be very important.
- They would not be from Israel and so the visit of the Magi is the first sign that Jesus came for all people, for all nations, for all races and that the work of God in the world would not be limited to a few.
- It is most likely that they would have been Zoroastrians and so there is an indication of God reaching out to and guiding people of other faiths and beliefs. Jesus came to bring “a light to the Gentiles”
- They were people who themselves had political power, as advisors to the king and members of something like a parliament so their motives for making the journey may have been a mixture of religion believing this king to be sent by God and political believing that if this was to be a great king then it may be in the interest of their country form a political alliance

To us it may seem as though the magi were a little crazy leaving the security of their homeland to venture forth into a strange country presided over by a mad king like Herod, in search of a divine child. But their great faith, curiosity, and adventurous spirit enabled them to discover the secret of the whole universe – the secret of God’s incredible love for His people in the incarnation of Jesus. **Whatever their reasons for making the journey, they were guided by the star and God throughout – they were led to Israel, then remarkably although Herod’s intentions are evil, he seems to be used by God to direct the Magi to Bethlehem and then they follow the same star to find Jesus in Bethlehem and finally their journey home is directed by God through a dream.**

**We are not told what they did after they returned to the East, but we can only ponder on how this encounter with Jesus may have enriched the rest of their lives.**



**At Epiphany in 2014 Pope Francis** said “The destiny of every person is symbolized in the journey of the Magi of the East. Our life is a journey, illuminated by the lights which brighten our way, to find the fullness of truth and of love which we Christians recognize in Jesus, the Light of the World.”

Like the Magi we may also be able to see that people, events, place, natural phenomena, etc. have been stars that have guided us to encounters with Jesus and that these encounters have deepened the treasures that we can offer to others.

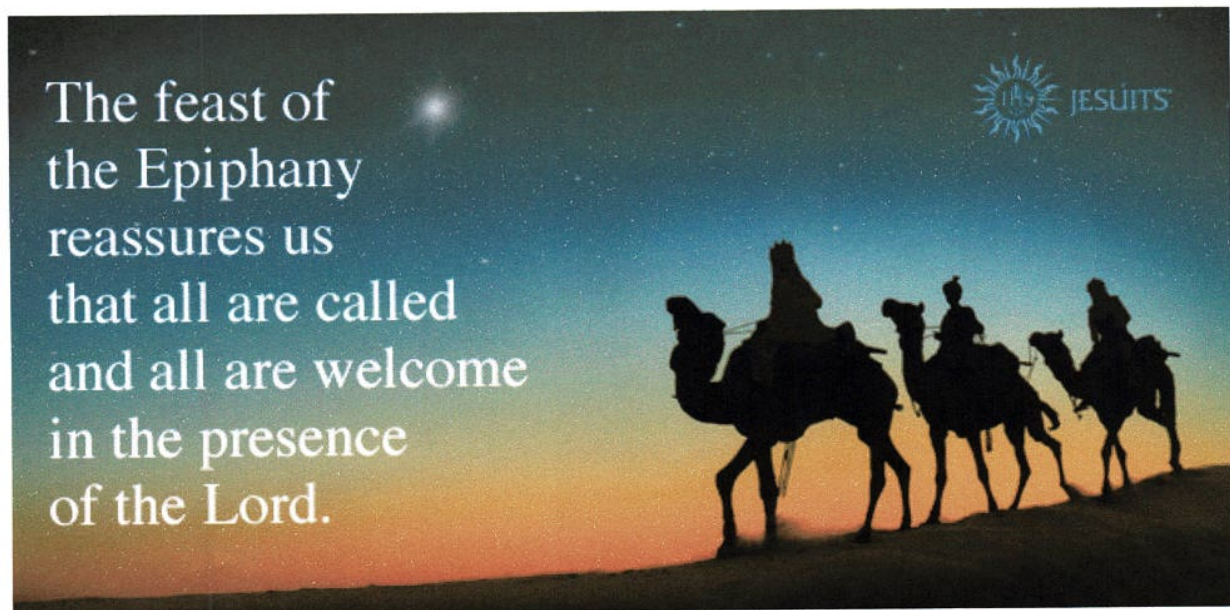
Similarly, we may have been stars for others. God dwelling in us means that he uses us to bring Him into lives of others, to help others on their journey, to bring them into an encounter with Jesus,

As we start this new year, we may want to thank God for all those people who have led us on our Christian journey, to pray for all those for whom we have been part of their Christian journey and to ask God for the courage and perseverance of the Magi to continue journeying with Him, wherever He may lead us.

**PRAYER**

Lord help us to see that all of our life is a journey back to God and that we can stop and celebrate the signs of your creation in the wonders that we see, in the familiar events of our lives and in the people we meet. Thank you that at the end of our journey we will be able to see and know you fully – as we too are fully known.

Amen





## ***Life in Greater Snorage***



The New Year eased quietly in for the inhabitants of Greater Snorage. Jo and Tilly Coppleton, mine hosts of the Happy Sheep, reckoned that they had got back into proper profit for the first time since before the lockdown.

Even Mrs. Bittle, that doyenne of the moan and traditional way of life, had broken with a lifetime of home Christmas dinners to attend the Happy Sheep where Tilly was doing lunch at an affordable price.

George Hanson had organised a football Match of "Young'uns 'gainst Oldies" for Boxing Day, which had been well attended by one and all. It took a bit of sorting teams out as some folk felt that

they were not old yet, but common sense finally prevailed helped on by a barrel from the Happy Sheep.

Albert and Millie Tuttle, churchwardens, had a busy time up to lunchtime on Christmas day. The church boiler had to be stoked up at 5 am in order to ensure that the Church was warm enough for the services. With Albert only having locked up after the midnight communion at 1am, he had a short night.

Fred and Millie Arkwright had also broken their habits of a lifetime by going to their daughters in Wolverhampton for Christmas. They would talk about this adventure by National Express for some time.

For the Reverend Tony Balderston it had been an extra busy Christmas as he had taken on the additional parish shortly before. He now looked into the New Year with anticipation, and not a little consternation, as his new order of services moved into place. He knew that there would be murmuring and discussion at the changes that he was bringing about, but it had to be done. He needed to be a minister to two parishes now, and he needed to serve his community, not just provide hatching, matching and dispatching services. Mrs. Bittle had already announced that she would no longer attend church if the services changed. This, In Tony's opinion, said more about her feeling inconvenienced than the true nature of her faith. But he bit his tongue rather than argue the point.

George and Jean Thorpe and family had been largely supportive of the moves. Being younger they were more used to the changing nature of the world.

Jim Carse said that a bit of change was a challenge for sure, but if he had stuck to all his old ways the farm wouldn't have survived and would probably be a housing estate by now. He certainly wouldn't want to see the church die for lack of faith.

Tony Balderston didn't want to be contentious. He wanted to administer to his parishioners. That had to include all ages and all people. He did not want to only work to the aged, to people looking for stylish church marriages or baptisms that were the last time anyone would see the family concerned in church. He wanted to have a truly inclusive following. To cater to the different needs of all people regardless of age, gender, gender bias or ethnic heritage, and any other difference. To be a part of God's love and fellowship. This was the year that he had decided he had to follow his star and to take anyone wishing to be a part of the joy of his faith with him. It would not be easy he knew.

On New Year's Eve. Tony was sitting at the top of the church tower, wrapped up warm, looking over the village. He asked God for help to take his work forward, and to take his parishioners with him, and he adapted the grace to his needs.

May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
And the love of God  
Be in the hearts of all my parishioners, increasingly  
And forever more. Amen



## Have You Made a New Year's Resolution?

By the time you read this, some of you may have made your new year's resolutions and be keeping them well so far, some of you may have made them and already fallen at the first hurdle and some of you may have given up on the practice years ago.

Nowadays we have slogans and campaigns to encourage us to change our behaviour "Dry January", "Veganuary", etc. but where do it all start?

The ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make New Year's resolutions, some 4,000 years ago. They were also the first to hold recorded celebrations in honour of the new year—though for them the year began not in January but in mid-March, when the crops were planted. During a massive 12-day religious festival known as Akitu, the Babylonians crowned a new king or reaffirmed their loyalty to the reigning king and made promises to the gods to pay their debts and return any objects they had borrowed. These promises could be considered the forerunners of our New Year's resolutions. If the Babylonians kept to their word, their (pagan) gods would bestow favour on them for the coming year. If not, they would fall out of the gods' favour—a place no one wanted to be.

A similar practice occurred in ancient Rome, after Julius Caesar tinkered with the calendar and established January 1 as the beginning of the new year circa 46 B.C. Named after Janus, the two-faced god whose spirit inhabited doorways and arches, January had special significance for the Romans. Believing that Janus symbolically looked backwards into the previous year and ahead into the future, the Romans offered sacrifices to the deity and made promises of good conduct for the coming year.

For early Christians, the first day of the new year became the traditional occasion for thinking about one's past mistakes and resolving to do and be better in the future. In 1740, the English clergyman John Wesley, founder of Methodism, created the Covenant Renewal Service, most commonly held on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. Also known as watch night services, they included readings from Scriptures and hymn singing, and served as a spiritual alternative to the "raucous celebrations" for the new year. Some churches still observe this tradition of watch night services and in the Methodist Church a service of Covenant Renewal is still held each year, either at the start of January or the start of September (the beginning of the Methodist Church year).

Despite the tradition's religious roots, New Year's resolutions today are a mostly secular practice.

Instead of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions only to themselves, and focus purely on self-improvement, which may explain why such resolutions seem so hard to follow through on and why they are less commonly made. At the end of 2021 16% of Britons say they would make a New Year's resolution with nearly a third (32%) of those aged between 18 and 24 doing so compared to 10% of those aged 55 and over, perhaps cynicism and a sense of past failure have their impact.

But how good are we at keeping them? 31% of those who made New Year resolutions for 2021 claimed to have kept all their resolutions for the whole year and another 44% of people say they kept at least some of their resolutions, but 19% owned up and say they did not keep any of the resolutions they made

Perhaps rather than make resolutions, we may think that it would be more meaningful to start the new year with the Conenant Prayer that Methodists are encouraged to say to commit the year to God.

### **METHODIST COVENANT PRAYER**

*I am no longer my own but yours.*

*Your will, not mine, be done in all things,  
wherever you may place me,  
in all that I do and in all that I may endure;  
when there is work for me and when there is  
none;*

*when I am troubled and when I am at peace.*

*Your will be done*

*when I am valued and when I am disregarded;  
when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking;  
when I have all things, and when I have  
nothing.*

*I willingly offer all I have and am to serve you,  
as and where you choose.*

*Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and  
Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours.*

*May it be so for ever.*

*Let this covenant now made on earth be  
fulfilled in heaven.*

*Amen*