

Other events and notices.

- Tuesday 2000 Meeting of the Vicar and Churchwardens.
Wednesday 1030-1200 The Wednesday morning Coffee Morning resumes in the Church Hall. Everyone welcome for coffee (or tea) and biscuits and *conversazione*.
1930 External Affairs Committee.
2000 Meeting of the Parish Funding Group.
Saturday The Royal British Legion County Committee for Surrey meets in the parish Room during the morning.

Advance notice for next week. On Tuesday, 11 January, at 2000 there will be the first planning meeting for this year's **Village Fair**. Ian and Kathie Burgess have kindly agreed to succeed Mike and Rosemarie Henson, and will be looking for all the usual support. All are welcome, and so are any new ideas.

Very many thanks to all those who so kindly remembered us at the Vicarage over Christmas, and to all who helped in so many ways to make the Christmas services so lovely, devotional and memorable. **W.R.H.**

Christmas Mail. There is still quite a bit of mail awaiting collection in the Welcome Area. Might it all be cleared today, please? *We do not deliver.*

I am grateful to all those who helped to distribute the **Christmas leaflets**. Although some twenty streets remained uncovered, the greater part of the parish was notified of what we were doing at the parish church. It is an annual exercise of some considerable importance, because the leaflets give details of much more than just the Christmas services, and we cannot really expect to do this exercise of covering the whole parish more than once a year. Perhaps next year we might think of refining the distribution in some way, so that not only is the entire parish covered, but that some of our very willing volunteers are not overworked.

Once again the **Christmas services** were well-attended, with a congregation of over three hundred at 1600 on Christmas Eve. The Midnight Mass was slightly down this year, not all that much, but it was noticeable. The interesting thing is that the 10 o'clock service, the Eucharist at the Crib, was considerably up on the equivalent service at 0930 in the previous year. Also, the number of visitors at this particular service was significant, they were, in the main, clearly 'church people' and at home with what was going on here. Allowing for the fact that many of our own folk are generally away over Christmas this is a point to bear in mind for the future. The presence of the choristers for the first time for some years also gave something of a new look to the service. Two or three people turned up for the non-existent Choral Mattins, in spite of all our publicity; they were also visitors.

Next Sunday. It is the festival of **The Baptism of Our Lord**. Services are at the usual times, and there is Holy Baptism at Mattins.

Sharing the love of Christ, the Light of the world, with the people of Ewell.

St Mary the Virgin
EWELL PARISH CHURCH
020 8393 2643
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WEEKLY NOTES

2 January 2005

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

For those who wish to contribute towards the Aid Appeal in connexion with the tsunami disaster in South-east Asia, there is a large plate available today in the Welcome Area for donations.

Although the Epiphany is a major festival of the Christian calendar, it normally occurs on a weekday (6 January) and these days it is generally observed on the nearest Sunday. However, because Christmas was on a Saturday in 2004, the choristers were with us on St Stephen's Day, and so they are having their post-Christmas break today. So there will not be the *Procession of the Three Kings* again this year, and the services will be fairly basic in style today.

Epiphany is an attractive festival, because it reminds us that in Christ the closed door of the faith of Israel was to be flung open to admit to a new and reconstituted Israel all peoples and nations. In other words Epiphany is 'our' festival; it proclaims that in Christ the saving love of God is now available to the likes of us. In the lovely story of the Wise Men we see the beginning of the universal Procession of the Gentiles to Christ: they are the forerunners of those from every land who in their own day (like the Greeks later on in the Gospel story) say 'we would see Jesus.' The Magi make their brief appearance on the stage of history, and disappear again, but they are the first non-Jews to seek out the infant Christ, and to the eye of faith they are therefore a pointer to the Gentile mission of the Christian Church. The primitive apostolic Church was made up of Jews (naturally), and the earliest leaders of the Church agonized over this point, as we can discover from the Acts of the Apostles; but in the end it became abundantly clear that the days of confining the knowledge of God to a Chosen People had come to an end, and in Christ there was no longer an institutionalized form of spiritual discrimination. 'In Christ shall *all* be made alive' – not just some. That is why so many of the Epiphany hymns are not actually about the Wise Men at all, but about the spreading of the Gospel, as the accurate, if cumbersome, explanatory title of today's festival in the Book of Common Prayer makes clear: 'The Epiphany, or the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.'

Parish Funding Prayer:
*Lord, bless our parish church,
and bless what we seek to do:
for the good of your Church,
and to your greater glory;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Welcome to any visitors or newcomers to St Mary's today. Please make yourselves known, and join us for coffee in the church hall across the road between the 0930 and 1100 services.

Our prayers today. As we make our regular Sunday prayer for this church and parish, today we make a special prayer for all the many thousands of those who have been directly affected, one way or another, by the tidal wave in South-east Asia. In the wider Church we pray today in our scheme of prayer for the Church in Mexico; and in our diocese we pray for our Archdeacon, the Venerable Mark Wilson, as he nears the end of his time as Archdeacon of Dorking. In the parish we pray today for our preparations for the launch of the Parish Funding Programme, and for the people who live in The Mount and in Mongers Lane.

SUNDAY SERVICES

0800 HOLY COMMUNION

Order 1: page 167. Collect of the Day: page 383

Eucharistic Prayer E: page 196. Other Epiphany texts: page 304

Common Worship rite

0930 SUNG EUCHARIST

Common Worship rite

Nave Altar service today. Crèche provided.
 Order 1: page 167. Collect of the Day: page 383.
 Other Epiphany texts: page 304.
 Eucharistic Prayer B: page 188.
 Setting of the Eucharist: *Shaw*; Folk Mass [The *Sanctus* is said.]
 The Parish Choir and 'Children's Hour' are on holiday today.
 All the singing is congregational, and all today's familiar tunes should really be 'in the blood'; so *small* hymn-books today (by exception).
 The Vicar is doubling-up at the organ today.

Introit hymn: 52

Introduction and the Prayers of Penitence

Gloria in excelsis: traditional language text on page 211

Collect of the Day: page 383

Old Testament reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. (*Readings on separate paper*)

Gradual Hymn: 48

The Holy Gospel reading from St Matthew.

Epiphany reading* by *the Vicar*.

Nicene Creed (sung today): traditional language text on page 213

Presentation by the Vicar on behalf of the External Affairs Committee.

Intercession; then all stand for the Greeting of Peace.

Offertory Hymn: 50 [tune 338] Collection

Eucharistic Prayer B: page 188; Proper Preface: page 304

Turn back to page 178 for the Lord's Prayer, etc.

(There is no hymn at the Invitation to Communion today.)

Holy Communion today is at the front of the nave only. Please return to your seats *via* the side aisles, after receiving the chalice on your 'own' side.

All stand after 'Let us pray' for the Post-Communion Prayer: page 383,

followed by the Parish Funding Prayer (*said together*):

The Blessing and Dismissal.

Hymn 47

* A reminder that during the run-up to the launch of the Parish Funding Programme there will be either a *short* sermon or a devotional reading at the Eucharist to allow time for a Presentation of some aspect of our parish activity

1100 MATTINS

'Village Mattins' today. *The service is 'said with hymns.'*

Responses: page 8. Metrical Venite: HCE 8

Psalms 67 'Let all the nations praise the Lord.' Page 213

First Lesson from the Book of the prophet Isaiah: blue book, page 460.

Benedictus: HCE 2

Second Lesson from the Letter to the Ephesians: blue book, page 461.

Hymn: HCE 17

The Creed and the Greeting (page 12); then all kneel for the Lord's Prayer, the Responses and the three Collects (the first Collect on page 56).

Hymn: HCE 55 Prayers. Sermon by *The Vicar*

Hymn: HCE 31 Collection). The Blessing

1800 Evening Prayer

Note: For the time being the evening service will be at 1800, except when the service is choral, when the 1830 start will be retained.

In church this week

Now that the post-Christmas 'slack' is over, our additional prayer-time in connexion with the Parish Funding Programme resumes this week. Although there are those who have been regularly taking part in this, the majority of the congregation does not seem to have taken to heart the need to lay this enterprise before God in this particular way: a corporate act of silent prayer. (No doubt much is also going on at home.) The scheme of prayer was devised in time for Advent, and more copies can be made available. It is up to people to use this time as they feel inclined: whether as an opportunity for some spiritual reading, or reflection on the scriptures, or some formal prayer (like the Stations of the Cross), or for one's own personal intercessions and prayers. There is always some formal prayer each day; the form varies. It is a case of giving some quality time to God, saying our prayers for one particular 'intention' or reason: in this case that God will bless and guide us in what we are seeking to do for the good of his Church and to his greater glory, as the countdown continues towards the launch of the Parish Funding Programme on 6 February.

Monday 1200 Parish Prayer with short Mid-day Office

Tuesday 1000 Holy Communion

1200 Parish Prayer with some structured prayer-time

1200 Parish Prayer with the *Common Worship* Litany

1200 Parish Prayer with short Mid-day Office

1200 for 1220 Parish Prayer with Holy Communion

(The Eucharist should last no more than twenty minutes.)