

The Vicar Writes...

January 2009



Dear Friends,

Have you noticed how common it is nowadays to use the *superlative* form of a word when in reality a lesser *comparative* would suffice? The motive is of course to impress or give special emphasis.

CHRISTMAS
TIME

After a recent downfall of snow in Scotland, *Scottish Power* said that they would consider compensation for loss of electricity "*because of the unique conditions*"! Can snow in Scotland in mid-December really be described accurately as a "*unique*" occurrence?

The birth of God's Son! Now, there *is* a "unique" event! If you believe that such *is* what happened when the boy Jesus was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, then you really do enjoy a *unique* reassurance: one that sets you apart from others who have no such understanding.

Those who seek to live out the consequences of the Christmas events reap a truly *unique* harvest, the fruits of which we enjoy as we progress through life. We appreciate things others might take for granted.

We see purpose in things others see as point/less; and we see meaning in mortal life itself as preparation for the next stage of God's revelation to us.

There is often a lull after the Christmas festivities. Perhaps this is the real opportunity we need: to let the true *uniqueness* of this Christmas message soak into our being. Now - in the lull after the storm - we can be quiet, and take the *uniqueness* of God's *Incarnation* truly to heart.



The New Year always holds promise in more general ways as well; and though it is not always fulfilled, there is an element of excitement as the New Year dawns. *Will the effects of recession be overtaken by renewed growth? Will President Obama fulfil all the hope and expectation placed upon him and his Administration? And what will happen personally...to this, that or the other preoccupation that we will all have in mind?*

The assumption is that the outcome to all these weighty matter is left up to mere *chance*. Surely, nothing **we** can do will make any difference! Perhaps the best resolution we could all make this New Year, is to embrace the aspects of daily life that we **can** do something about. Have confidence in yourself. Take one opportunity to help a neighbour and see it through. Support a new and worthy cause that touches your heart.

May we all enter 2009 bearing the armour of our faith...and with a resolve to make things better thereby. My family joins me in wishing you all a blessed New Year! Remember: You **CAN** change the world!

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Verenny Oakes." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "With best wishes,".

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN EAST POOLE



WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
18TH - 25TH JANUARY 2009
Theme: "Reconcile Your People"



Churches Together in Poole Annual Service

This takes place at **Longfleet Baptist Church Wimborne Road Poole** at 6.30pm on Sunday 18th January. Do come and join Christians from across Poole.

18th - 25th January 2009 12.30pm each day.
*Prayer followed by soup and rolls lunch
(offering to Christian Aid)*

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|------------------------------|--|
| Mon 19th | St Joseph's Bournemouth Rd
Face to Face with Violence |
| Tues 20th | All Saints Western Road
Face to Face with Poverty |
| Weds 21st | St Aldhelm's St Aldhelm's Road
Face to Face with Creation |
| Thurs 22nd | Parkstone Christian Centre Commercial Road
Face to Face with Prejudice |
| Fri 23rd | Transfiguration Chaddesley Glen
Face to Face with Pain |
| Sat 24th | St Luke's Wellington Road
Face to Face with Difference and Hope |
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WAS JESUS BORN IN JUNE?

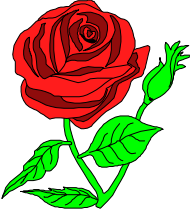


Astronomers have calculated that Christmas should be in June, by charting the appearance of the 'Christmas star' which the Bible says led the three Wise Men to Jesus. They found that a bright star which appeared over Bethlehem 2,000 years ago pinpointed the date of Christ's birth as June 17th rather than December 25th. The researchers claim the 'Christmas star' was most likely a magnificent conjunction of the planets Venus and Jupiter, which were so close together they would have shone unusually brightly as a single *"beacon of light"* which appeared suddenly.

Australian astronomer Dave Reneke used complex computer software to chart the exact positions of all celestial bodies and map the night sky as it would have appeared over the Holy Land more than 2,000 years ago. It revealed a spectacular astronomical event around the time of Jesus' birth which the wise men probably interpreted as the sign they had been waiting for, and they followed the 'star' to Christ's birthplace in a stable in Bethlehem. Generally accepted research has placed the nativity to somewhere between 3 BC and 1 AD.

Using St Matthew's Gospel as a reference point, Reneke pinpointed the planetary conjunction, which appeared in the constellation of *Leo*, to the exact date of June 17th in the year 2 BC. *"December is an arbitrary date we have accepted but it doesn't really mean that is when it happened. This is not an attempt to decry religion. It's really backing it up as it shows there really was a bright object appearing in the East at the right time."* Previous theories have speculated the star was a supernova - an exploding star - or even a comet but Reneke says by narrowing the date down, the technology has provided the most compelling explanation yet.

A NEW YEAR'S WISH



When Stanley Baldwin was Prime Minister, he was visited one day at *Chequers* by a friend who told him about his experiences in South-Eastern Europe – a story of plots and counter-plots, oppression and vice.

At the end of the conversation both men sat for several moments in a silence of depression and horror. Then Baldwin pointed out a bowl of roses on his desk, and said to his friend: "*Plunge your face into those roses and thank God.*"

This was not escapism – it was recognition that lasting values such as beauty can give us faith which helps us combat the things of ugliness and violence and evil. May we look for beauty throughout the New Year and always thank God.



GOOD TO REMEMBER

At the start of another year it is good to remember "*The Gate of the Year*" by Minnie Louise Hoskins. King George VI quoted it in his Christmas message to the nation and it is still as reassuringly valid today.

"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand in the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."



I watched the Horse Trials...they were all found not guilty.

COOKING IS IMPORTANT



The people who live in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Dutch, as they are called, are famous for their good cooking. When George Washington became commander-in-chief of the American Army during the War of Independence, he chose a Pennsylvania Dutchman as his army cook, because he knew how much good food mattered to his men.

However, when the troops were at Valley Forge (during the most critical period of the war) not only was the winter bitter, but the food was not good, and the men began to desert. In great distress, Washington sent for his cook. *"The food is not good enough",* he said, *"and so the men are deserting. You must find something new and different for them to eat."* *"But how can I,"* protested the cook, *"there is no food to be had!"* *"You must do the best you can",* Washington insisted.

So the cook went round all the farms in the district picking up anything he could, a little here and a little there; and when he had collected it, it was a great mixture of meat, vegetables and herbs. He put it all together and made a delicious soup of it, which put new heart into the men, so that they won the battle of Valley Forge. This soup is still made today in the USA, and is known as "Philadelphia pepper pot soup". When people eat it, they remember the wisdom of George Washington, who knew that good cooking is important.



Sergeant: *Why is it important not to lose your head in an attack?*

Recruit: *Because that would leave me with no place to put my helmet.*

ANTONY OF EGYPT



If your Christmas and New Year break included just too many people and even a bout of indigestion, then St Antony may be the saint for you. He was a hermit-monk with a reputation for making poorly people feel better.

Antony was born in Coma (Upper Egypt) in 251, and at 20 became an ascetic. He settled down in the complete solitude of a deserted fort in *Pispir*, where he spent the next 20 years busy fighting the whole range of usual hermit temptations, such as having queenly devils approach you for marriage, and other hazards like that.

In 306 Antony felt able to face the world again, and so he began visiting with some other hermits. One was Paul, and the story goes that the day they met, a raven provided lunch for them by dropping a loaf of bread nearby.

Antony was a godly man, and would pray for people. Stories went round that those he prayed for were healed, and so he became known as a miracle-worker. He was certainly brave: when in 311 the Roman Emperor Maximinus was persecuting the Christians, Antony went to Alexandria to encourage the church there to stand firm. Years later he was stoutly defending the Christian faith in disputes with heretics.

Antony died in 356, but even hundreds of years later he was not forgotten. A medical band of people adopted his name: The Order of Hospitallers of Saint Antony was founded (c.1100, in La Motte) which became a pilgrimage centre for those suffering from *ergotism* (called St Antony's Fire - a serious form of fungi poisoning). Antony was seen as the patriarch of monks, and a healer of both men and animals. He even gave us the word 'tantony', a diminutive applied to the smallest pig in a litter, and to the smallest bell in a peal of bells.

POINTS TO PONDER



Bernard M. Baruch: *"One of the secrets of a long and fruitful life is to forgive everybody, everything, every night before you go to bed."*

Yiddish Proverb: *"If I try to be like him, who will be like me?"*

Unknown: *"What is beautiful is not always good, but what is good is always beautiful."*

Lucretius: *"The drops of rain make a hole in the stone not by violence, but by oft falling."*

Henry James: *"The aim of life is to live, and to live means to be aware, joyously, drunkenly, serenely, divinely, aware."*

Mother Teresa: *"I know God promises not to give me more than I can handle. I just wish he didn't trust me so much."*

Oscar Ameringer: *"Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other."*

Aldous Huxley: *"On no account brood over your wrongdoing. Rolling in the muck is not the best way of getting clean."*

Confucius: *"The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell."*

Will Rogers: *"Why not go out on a limb? That's where the fruit is."*

Anon: *"A wise bride is one who loses her temper permanently."*

Anon: *"Happy people are those who know how to be tough with themselves and tender with others."*

MOTHERS' OVERSEAS FUND



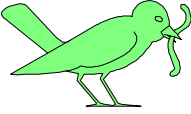
At the end of 2008, the church made a generous donation to the work of the Mothers' Union Overseas Fund and I thought that it would be appropriate to write a short article about how this fund operates. The fund is split into three parts - general overseas, emergency relief and literacy.

Money donated to the general **Overseas Fund** goes to help MU workers who are active in over 30 areas of the world. The MU aims to create positive change for families in society, to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves and to enable those who can to be heard. It works with families, friends, colleagues, faith communities and other groups, bringing the voice of the Christian faith to the debate, insisting that basic needs such as clean water, food, healthcare, education and respect are everyone's right and responsibility.

The **Relief Fund** provides emergency help for communities hit by natural disaster or conflict and, because of its widespread grass-roots nature, the Mothers' Union is well-placed in the community to rapidly access and quickly distribute emergency rations and medicines. This year alone, it has supported displaced families in Kenya following political violence, brought relief to Myanmar after the cyclone, responded to crop failure in Mozambique and Malawi and continues to respond to the needs and challenges in Iraq.

The **Literacy Fund** supports the Literacy and Development Programme, initiated in 2000 in Burundi, Malawi and Sudan. Literacy skills were needed to enable illiterate members of the communities, especially women, to find solutions to tackle their poverty. Through the literacy programme, women gain knowledge of food and nutrition, medicines and their use, illness and prevention, so benefiting their families and the community. *(Wendy Bales)*

GARDEN BIRDWATCH 2009



If you love wild birds, here is your chance to join the RSPB's 30th Big Garden Birdwatch, which will be held on 24th and 25th January. The RSPB is hoping to make it the biggest

Garden Birdwatch yet.

Taking part is very simple - simply spend an hour that weekend counting the birds that you see in your garden or in a local park. Record the highest number of each species seen (not flying over) at any one time. It's important you don't count all the birds you see because some birds will return to your garden many times in the hour. For example, seeing the same blue tit come back ten times does not make for ten blue tits!

The RSPB provides a downloadable counting sheet, and offer an online form to help you send in your results easily. Please visit: www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/2009/index.asp for details.



HELP BIRDS TO FIND A HOME



Sparrows and starlings begin house-hunting this month - can you help them? Their numbers have fallen drastically in recent years. If you are handy with a hammer and nails, here is what every sparrow and starling is looking for: sparrow nest box: about 200 mm tall on a 130 mm square base with an entrance hole about 32 mm in diameter.

Sparrows like to nest communally, so why not provide several, all cosily together? That way you'll get an extended family moving in. Starling nest box: about 400 mm tall on a 180 mm square base, with a 45 mm entrance hole.

NEWSROUND



CHURCHES GEAR UP FOR YEAR OF THE CHILD - To mark the 30th anniversary of the UN International Year of the Child, many churches are planning to make 2009 'a year to remember' for young people.

It is an ideal opportunity for local churches everywhere to review and celebrate the work they do with children and young people. The Revd Mary Hawes, National Children's Adviser for the Church of England, stresses that Year of the Child is not a prescriptive project or even a centrally driven programme: *"It is simply an open invitation to the Christian church in the UK to join in by making 2009 a special year for children and young people. There are no plans for big national events, but rather to create a spotlight to help churches focus on their work with children"*.

METHODISTS WELCOME CALL FOR RESPONSIBLE PRICING OF ALCOHOL - The Methodist Church has welcomed calls from MPs to set minimum prices on alcoholic drinks. It has a long tradition of promoting abstinence and moderate drinking as a way of tackling the problems alcohol causes. A spokesman said: *'John Wesley railed against cheap gin in the 18th century because of its devastating impact on the lives of the most vulnerable people. The Methodist Church today is urging the Government to move towards imposing minimum prices for alcohol and ending irresponsible promotions by retailers.'*

THOUSANDS TURN TO COFE FOR CREDIT CRUNCH ADVICE & PRAYER - As the financial situation across the globe worsens, people are continuing to turn to online prayer and advice provided by the Church of England. The credit crunch was the biggest news story of 2008 - often the main item in television and newspapers reports. For how to get help, visit www.cofe.anglican.org/debt/ & for prayers for the crisis, visit www.cofe.anglican.org/prayers/.

CALENDAR FOR JANUARY

Sun	4	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Parish Communion (<i>Sun Club in church</i>)
		6.00 pm	Evening Prayer
Tue	6	10.00 am	Gardening Group
Wed	7	10.30 am	Holy Communion (<i>at St Nicolas</i>)
Sun	11	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.15 am	Holy Communion (<i>at St Nicolas</i>)
		10.30 am	Matins (<i>Sun Club in church room</i>)
		6.00 pm	Evening Prayer
Tue	13	10.00 am	Gardening Group
Wed	14	10.30 am	Holy Communion (<i>at St Nicolas</i>)
Thu	15	10.00 am	Parish Art Group
Sat	17	10-12 noon	Mothers' Union Table Top Sale
Sun	18	WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY	
		8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.30 am	Family Service
		10.30 am	Parish Communion (<i>No Sun Club</i>)
		6. 30 pm	UNITED SERVICE @ Longfleet Baptist
Tue	20	10.00 am	Gardening Group
Wed	21	10.30 am	Holy Communion (<i>at St Nicolas</i>)
Thu	22	4.00 pm	Magazine Collation
Fri	23	12.30 pm	" <i>Face to Face With Pain</i> " (<i>see page 3</i>)
Sun	25	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.15 am	Holy Communion (<i>at St Nicolas</i>)
		10.30 am	Matins (<i>Sun Club in church room</i>)
		6.00 pm	Evening Prayer
Tue	27	10.00 am	Gardening Group
Wed	28	10.30 am	Holy Communion (<i>at St Nicolas</i>)
Thu	29	10.00 am	Parish Art Group
		2.45 pm	Mothers' Union
Fri	30	4.15 pm	" <i>Reflections</i> " Prayer Group



Jan

MOTHERS' UNION TABLE TOP SALE – We will be having a *Table-Top Sale* in aid of Mothers' Union funds on *Saturday 17th January* from 10 am - 12 noon in the Church Hall. If anyone would like to have a table, please speak to Alison Oakes. *Please put the date in your diary.*

MOTHERS' UNION – The monthly meeting is on Thursday, 29th January at 2.45 pm in the church rooms. All are welcome.

OPERA & BALLET GROUP – No meeting this month but the next one will be on Wednesday, 4th February with Brenda Bond, Flat 1, 2 Maxwell Road, Canford Cliffs. Please let her know if you are coming.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY – This year's *Wee of Prayer* is from 18th to 25th January. The schedule of lunchtime gatherings around the local churches is on Page 3 of this magazine. Please note the Poole-wide service on January 18th at Longfleet Baptist Church on Wimborne Rd.



...I wonder if I could have a quick word with the flower arrangers at the end of this service...?

PARISH ART GROUP – The spring term starts on Thursday, 15th January and there are a few spaces left in the group. If you know of anyone who would like to join please encourage them to contact either Tony Ogg on 700058 or Marion Fox on 700949.

STRICTLY COME DANCING?



Do you know someone who would benefit from getting out of the house and meeting new people? Borough of Poole Arts Development are organising a Grand Tea Dance on Thursday, 8th January 2009, 2-4 pm at Lighthouse, Poole's Centre for the Arts.

Regular Tea Dances were set up at Lighthouse a year ago to encourage older residents, such as Len Briers, to keep fit and active. *"It's good exercise and wonderful for making friendships"* said Len, *"a lot of people come on their own but we don't let them sit on their own for long! And you can't beat live music!"*

For this special event there will be a marvellous six piece band, cream teas at the bar and, for those who like to dance, a spacious dance floor. A team of staff and volunteers will be on hand to ensure that people who come on their own are made to feel welcome. Tickets are £5 (Access to Leisure cardholders £3.50 and carers/supporters are entitled to a free ticket).

Our regular tea dances are held in Poole every two months, and are friendly intimate events that are open to all, whether you like to dance, sway or simply sit and listen to the music. They are very popular and always sell out so if you would like to come along do remember to book in advance.

Tickets for any of the tea dance events in Poole are available from The Lighthouse, Tel 0844 406 8666. Advance booking is essential. For further information, or to receive flyers in the post, telephone Anna on 01202 633971.



WEIGH ME, WEIGH MY DOG



Does your dog's waistline reflect your own? Nearly two million dogs in Britain are now overweight, according to recent research by PDSA, the veterinary charity.

A map of canine obesity across the country reveals that areas with the most overweight people tend to have the most overweight pets. The north-west of England is the worst, with 31% of dogs overweight. London has the slimmest dogs, with just 19% overweight.

It seems owners give treats when their dogs want attention, rather than play with them. Yet vets recommend that dogs should be walked at least twice a day for two to ten miles, depending on the breed.

A long 'walkies' will do you both good: overweight people, like overweight dogs, suffer from heart disease, breathing difficulties, diabetes and arthritis.



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION FOR YOUR CAR



Do you have plans for 2009? Better begin with something really basic: how are your car tyres? If your tyres are low or worn out, you may not get very far this year!

Between 40 and 50% of drivers do not know that the minimum legal tread depth for car tyres is 1.6 mm. Among female drivers, this rises to 60% but the good news is that the National Tyre Distribution Association offers free tyre health checks by trained technicians at more than 2,700 member centres across the UK. To find your nearest centre, visit www.ntda.co.uk and enter the name of the place where you live in the depot look-up box.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH MAGAZINE



This year may mark the 150th anniversary of the first church magazine ever published. While religious magazines have proliferated for centuries, it was not until January 1859 that there seems to be any clear evidence of a local church getting in on the act. The lively young vicar of St. Michael's, Derby, the Rev J Erskine Clarke, had a brilliant idea...why not a magazine aimed at a parish? So *Parish Magazine* was born, with Erskine Clarke as editor and he was still editing it at its demise 37 years later.

Parish Magazine wasn't yet a fully local production. But it was an important first step. It offered parishes a monthly 'kernel' of 16 pages to clad in a 'shell' of their own material. There might be only four local pages, but it was distributed under the local church's name. The idea caught on. Sixty churches joined that first year alone, and were thereby encouraged to start publishing even just a few pages of their own each month.

In its heyday, *Parish Magazine* was to be found in some 200 parish churches in England and it spawned competitors, two of which survive today: *Home Words* and *The Sign*. It was written not for the committed church member, but for parishioners who didn't attend regular worship. It was evangelistic, yes, but most of all it promoted the values of temperance and family life. The first article in the first issue, *'Evenings at Home'*, evokes in five pages the attractions of the domestic fireside over the public tavern.

Today, our church magazine looks quite different to *'Parish Magazine'*, and rightly so - for one thing, parish life has changed in the last 150 years! Even so, our magazine might not be here today if it had not been for Erskine Clarke and his *Parish Magazine*, way back in 1859.

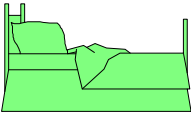
THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR



It is almost inevitable, as we stand at the beginning of a New Year, that we should wonder what the future has in store for us. Some people face that unknown future with fear and foreboding. Yet how greatly that fear could be reduced if we remembered the words of an unknown writer who said reassuringly: *"The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time."* To learn to live one day at a time is one of the deepest secrets of serenity. As Jesus said: *"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."*



TRUE MARRIAGE



A priest and a nun are on their way back home from a trip when their car breaks down. They are unable to get it fixed, so they decide to spend the night in a hotel. The only hotel in the town has one room available. Being a practical person, the priest says, *"Sister, I don't think the Lord would have a problem, under the circumstances, if we spent the night together in this one room. I'll sleep on the lounge and you have the bed"* and the nun agrees.

They prepare for bed and take their agreed places in the room. Ten minutes later...the nun is terribly cold and the priest gets her a blanket. After twenty minutes, the nun is still cold and the priest gets her another blanket.

Half an hour passes and the nun, still terribly cold, somewhat boldly suggests, *"I don't think the Lord would mind if we acted as man and wife just for this one night."* The priest replies, *"You're probably right...get up and get your own blanket"*.

HOLTON LEE



Holton Lee at East Holton near Wareham, covers an area of 350 acres and contains habitats which include heathland, saltmarsh, reedbed and woodland. The majority of the site is recognised and protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

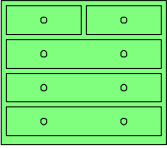
Holton Lee strives to provide access for all to the environment, as well as maintaining and conserving the natural interest of the SSSI. Accessible pathways interconnect the varying habitats, with interpretation panels, resting places and waymarkers. We also run a programme of guided walks open to all.

The environmental aspect of Holton Lee strives to be as sustainable as possible. We therefore utilise the products obtained from woodland management to make charcoal, provide food to our respite care centre via our horticultural units as well as sell our own honey and venison sausages.

To maintain the habitats at Holton Lee requires a significant amount of conservation work, through staff and loyal volunteers such as the Green Team which is a volunteer group working on conservation tasks on SSSIs around Dorset for Natural England. Richard Frost, Leader of the Green Team at Holton Lee, says, *"We have developed new skills from erecting marquees to digging septic tanks and thatching round houses and yet still find time to carry on with the continuing work of heathland restoration."*

New volunteers are always welcome so if you are interested in working in the wider countryside or horticultural unit or attending one of the guided walks which run through the year please get in touch at environment@holtonlee.co.uk.

TIME IS A GIFT



Time is a gift. It may be said to come in a wooden chest which has three drawers. The bottom drawer is deep and full, a bit of a clutter, but it contains the stored up memories of all our yesterdays.

The middle drawer is sealed tight, for it holds who knows what? The secrets of tomorrow.

The top drawer contains the coinage of today. Each pennyworth of time to be spent with wisdom, generosity and love; for the way we use these precious coins determines the contents of the other two drawers. These three drawers are then linked by the chest surrounding them. Without any one – it would be incomplete. (*Francis Gay*)



GOD AND THE MORSE CODE

"What hath God wrought?" These were the first words ever sent by telegraph. But why? As the inventor of the telegraph and Morse code you might think Samuel Morse would have every reason to feel proud of himself.

He, however, saw it differently. "*When I was given acclaim for my invention,*" he said, "*I knew I never deserved it. I had made a valuable contribution to mankind, not because I was so brilliant, but because God needed someone to convey this gift to the world, and He was good enough to choose me.*"



Did you hear about the thief who stole a calendar and got twelve months?

I WISH I'D NEVER SAID THAT



Forty-nine years after the tomb of the Egyptian boy-pharaoh, Tutankhamun, was opened for the first time in 3000 years, the Tutankhamun Exhibition was held in London. Artefacts found in the tomb and housed in the antiquities department of Cairo Museum were sent to London along with the Pharaoh's magnificent gold-covered death mask.

As organiser of the exhibition, Dr Gamal Mehrez was well aware of the story of the curse that threatened everyone reckless enough to 'disturb the sleep of the Pharaohs'. Lord Carnarvon, leader of the 1923 expedition, died suddenly in Cairo two months after the tomb had been opened. A mosquito bite was blamed and observers noted that the bite which apparently carried off his Lordship was in the same place as a similar lesion on Tutankhamun's mummified corpse. Other mysterious deaths followed and within seven years of the celebrated discovery only two of the original expedition team were still alive.

Nevertheless Dr Mehrez adopted a scholarly detachment when assessing the risk he faced in sending the Pharaoh's belongings to London. His predecessor may have died only a matter of hours after signing the agreement to send the death mask to the exhibition, but Dr Mehrez told reporters, *"I more than anyone else in the world have been involved with the mummies of the Pharaohs. Yet I am still alive. I am living proof that the tragedies associated with the Pharaohs are just coincidence. I don't believe in the curse for one moment"*.

The day that Tutankhamun's gold mask was packed for shipment to London, the Cairo Museum announced that Dr Gamal Mehrez had suddenly died!

SUNDAY READINGS IN JANUARY

Sunday 4th January – The Epiphany

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 60.1-6

The new Jerusalem is the nucleus of a family made up of all nations who will come together and draw from Jerusalem her light and sustenance.

NEW TESTAMENT: Ephesians 3.1-12

Paul emphasises the accessibility of God's promise to the gentile community through his own special calling as apostle.

GOSPEL: Matthew 2.1-12

The Magi deliver their gifts to the baby Jesus and return home by another route as they had been warned in a dream not to return to King Herod.

Sunday 11th January – The Baptism of Christ

OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis 1.1-5

The beginning of Genesis describes the first day of the creation of the world when God separated light from darkness.

NEW TESTAMENT: Mark 1.4-11

John the Baptist prepares the way for the coming of Jesus. Jesus is baptised by John and hears the voice of God.

Sunday 18th January – Epiphany 2

OLD TESTAMENT: 1 Samuel 3.1-10

God reveals himself to Samuel through the medium of a dream and its interpretation by Eli.

NEW TESTAMENT: Revelation 5.1-10

Jesus was worthy of breaking the seals and opening the scroll because by his sacrifice he became God's representative on earth.

GOSPEL: John 1.43-end

Jesus calls his first group of disciples and it is clear that these men are instantly aware of Jesus' identity from their first moment of contact with him.

Sunday 25th January – Conversion of St Paul

OLD TESTAMENT: Jeremiah 1.4-10

Jeremiah's reluctance to serve is useless in the face of God's determination to appoint him as his prophet and spokesman.

NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew 19.27-end

Jesus explains that eternal life will be granted to those such as Peter who have left their families behind in order to follow him.



RULING THE ROOST



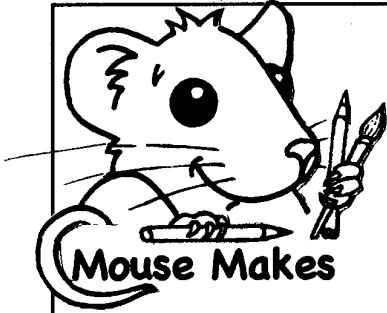
Ruling the roost is a phrase used to suggest a person is in charge and demonstrating their authority. The obvious allusion is to a chicken run, where the cockerel rules over all the hens.

However, the phrase has been in use since the sixteenth century and was popularised by Shakespeare when he wrote in *Henry VI Part II* (1590): "*Suffolk, that new made man that rules the roast*". Indeed, tradition has it that the master of the house carves and serves the roast meat and in 1637 Thomas Nabbes wrote in *Microcosmus*, "*I am my lady's cook, and king of the kitchen where I rule the roast*".

This origin is further supported by the fact that in Anglo-Saxon English the word roast was pronounced with a long 'o', so it sounded like roost. So it seems that in days gone by, ruling the roast was indeed a demonstration of authority.



Two goldfish were in their tank. One turns to the other and says, '*You man the guns, I'll drive.*'



Mouse Makes

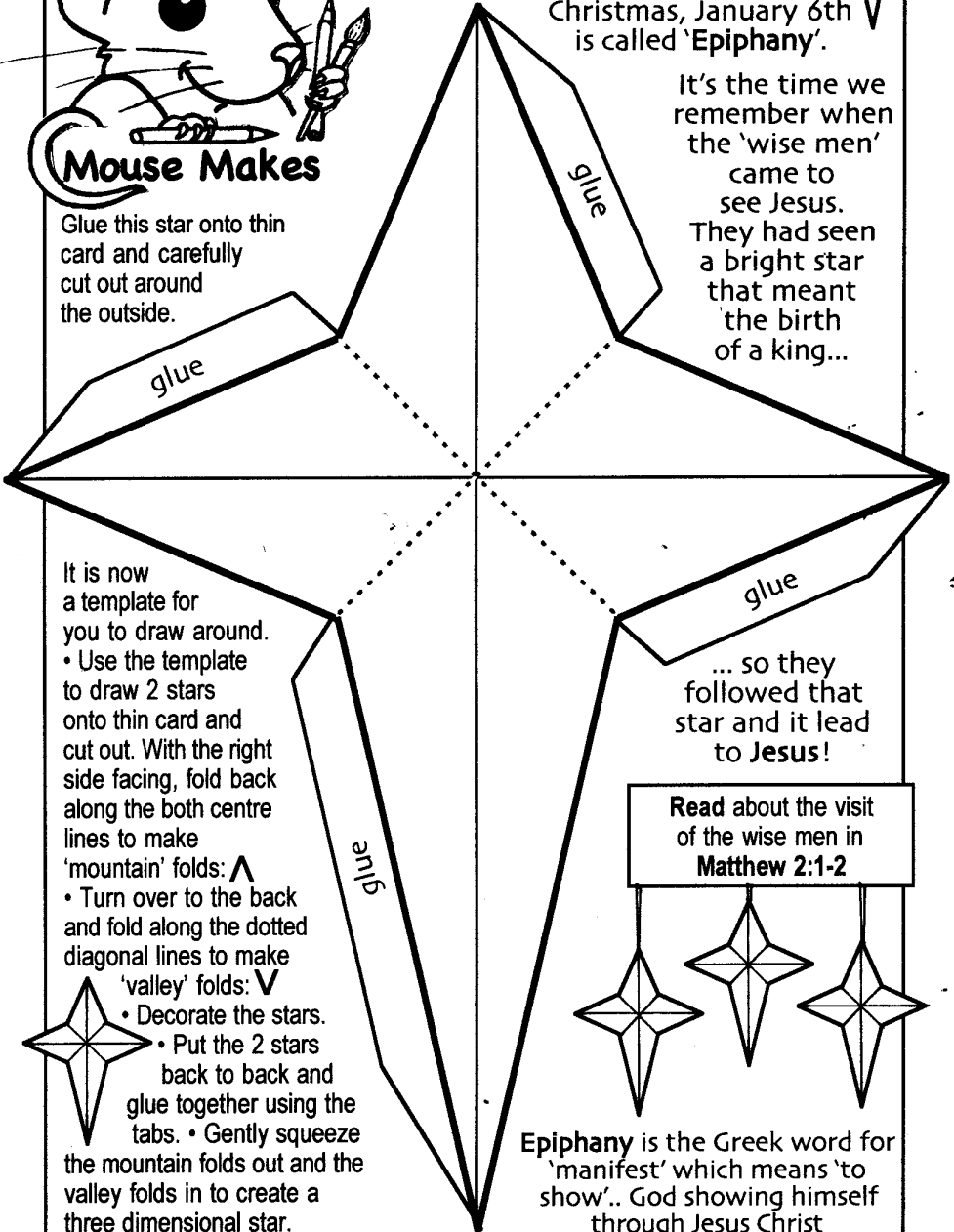
Glue this star onto thin card and carefully cut out around the outside.

FOLLOW THE STAR

The twelfth day after Christmas, January 6th is called 'Epiphany'.



It's the time we remember when the 'wise men' came to see Jesus. They had seen a bright star that meant the birth of a king...



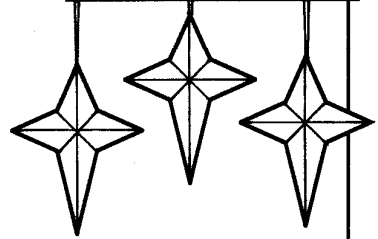
It is now a template for you to draw around.

- Use the template to draw 2 stars onto thin card and cut out. With the right side facing, fold back along the both centre lines to make 'mountain' folds: **^**
- Turn over to the back and fold along the dotted diagonal lines to make 'valley' folds: **v**



- Decorate the stars.
- Put the 2 stars back to back and glue together using the tabs.
- Gently squeeze the mountain folds out and the valley folds in to create a three dimensional star.

Read about the visit of the wise men in **Matthew 2:1-2**



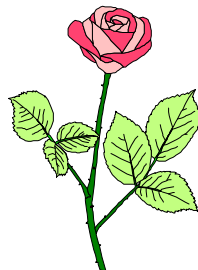
Epiphany is the Greek word for 'manifest' which means 'to show'.. God showing himself through Jesus Christ

FROM THE REGISTERS

NO OCCASIONAL OFFICES IN DECEMBER



ALTAR FLOWERS



	Transfiguration	St Nicolas
January 4 th	The Guild	The Guild
January 11 th	Mrs V Roy	Mrs D Watts
January 18 th	Mrs V Roy	Mrs D Watts
January 25 th	Mrs S King	Mrs P Thompson



*I do dislike the winter dark,
A creature of warmth am I;
Yet winter's brown and gold
Hold charm I can't deny.
The all-embracing warmth of home
Makes up for skies of grey,
And hearts can look ahead
To a brighter, sunny day.*



DEADLINE

The deadline for the **February** edition of
the Church Magazine is 10.00 am on
Wednesday, **14th January 2009**
