

**The Parish Church of St Mary's  
Hilton with Marston-on-Dove**

**January 2019**



**NOTICES AND  
SERVICES**

# Services in January

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January

11.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

With 'Good News Crew'

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January

11.00am Holy Communion at Percy Wood Close

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January

10.30am United Service at Hilton Methodist

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January

9.30am Holy Communion

11.30am Morning Prayer

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> January

11.00am Family Communion



Currently we are awaiting a new vicar as Reverend Andy Murphie has relocated to a parish in the Lake District. All services, baptisms and wedding bookings are proceeding as normal.

For up to date information on services please see

**[www.stmaryshilton.org](http://www.stmaryshilton.org)**

email: [admin@stmaryshilton.org](mailto:admin@stmaryshilton.org)

phone: **01283 808408**

facebook: [@stmaryshiltonandmarston](https://www.facebook.com/stmaryshiltonandmarston)

## **CHURCH NOTICES:**



**Flowers in Church** You would be very welcome to put flowers in Church or give a donation for flowers to remember a special occasion or anniversary. If you would like to do this please speak to Sue Hibbert.

Thank you.



Raise free funds for the Church via the [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) website/app and search for St Mary's Hilton with Marston-on-Dove

**Stamp collection** There is a collecting box for used postage stamps in the Church porch for 'Oxfam'.

## **Parochial Church Council**

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7.30pm, in the Schoolroom

**PCC Members:** Mrs. S. Aiton; Mrs. E. Barber (Churchwarden); Mrs. H. Brown (Hon. Treasurer); Mr. A. Hibbert (Churchwarden); Mr. S. Johnson; Mr. B. Keane; Mrs W. Morris; Mr. J. Murphie (Hon. Secretary); Miss C. Owen; Mrs. L. Rees-Jones; Mrs. P. Roberts; Mrs. H. Stone; Mr. P. Walton-Knight; Mr N Brown

## DIY Bible Study

In our DIY Bible Study this month, we look at Zoroastrians. The thoughts and questions are adapted from the book '100 Stand-Alone Bible Studies' by Penelope Wilcock.

### Zoroastrians

#### **Matthew 2: 1-2, 7-12**

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him"...

... Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the King, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

#### **Thinking about it...**

As well as Jewish worshippers, Matthew's congregation seems to have included Gentiles, and clues from his Gospel suggest a significant number of Zoroastrians. His church was probably Syrian, and Zoroastrianism began in Iraq but was a huge and powerful world religion in Bible times – later decimated by Muslim persecution.

Matthew seems to have been writing to both affirm and challenge the different cultural elements within his congregation. The Magi were Zoroastrians, and their homage to Jesus, inspired by their own traditions, is welcomed and accepted. Some of their other teachings – such as the broad and flowery way of righteousness – are challenged. Other beliefs – such as that the world was once smooth, and turbulent spiritual struggle made its mountains and ravines, and once righteousness is attained it will be made smooth again – are seen as fulfilled in the person and power of Jesus.

#### **Questions**

- Is your congregation mainly one type of person, or does it hold in balance clearly defined sections of cultural types, or is it an eclectic mix of all kinds? Is the balance between all the people harmonious? How is this harmony maintained, or how could it be improved?
- If you had Matthew's job of writing the gospel of Jesus for your church congregation, what aspects of the life of Jesus would you like to emphasize and bring out, and why? The Zoroastrian Gentiles must have been really pleased to see their Magi given an important part in the opening chapters. To whom would you like to give a special part, to affirm people in your congregation? Matthew gives the scribes and the Pharisees a very hard time because of their hypocrisy. Are there any shortcomings in your own church culture that you would like to critique and highlight in your gospel?

#### **Prayer**

O God the Father of all, in Jesus you draw together the people of every time and culture into one household of faith and love. Forgive us when we have been prejudiced or suspicious of our neighbours and fellow believers because of their cultural differences. Open our eyes to the value and beauty of their humanity and their faith. We give thanks for the great work of reconciliation wrought for us and all creation in Jesus' saving death on the cross. May we set the power of his cross at the heart of our lives and faith, and live every day in the light of his mercy, humility, and grace. We ask it for his love's sake. Amen.