

# News from the Pews

## What Made The Wise Men Wise?

The question was once posed: “What would have happened if there had been Three Wise Women instead of Three Wise Men?” The answer that was given was that they would have asked directions immediately upon commencing their trip, which would have allowed them to arrive on time; they would have helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole and brought cute little outfits that baby Jesus could have worn on his trip home.

As it happened, they were wise men (not wise women) – and while we think of these men as part of the Christmas story, they were not present on that first Christmas. They didn’t arrive on the scene until well over a year later, and there are a number of things that we don’t know.

1. How many were there? Most assume three because of the number of gifts – but there may have been more.
2. Who were they? They were called “Magi” (our word magician). As such, they were devoted to the study of the stars, but more than that.
3. Where were they from? Some have suggested Arabia, Babylon or Persia.

There is so much about these men that remains a mystery even to this day. All that we really know about these men is that they were called wise men. The question I would like to be what makes these wise men so wise? And even more to the point, how can we be just as wise today?

The wise men, these men of science and the stars were brought to a decision to seek out and find “the King of the Jews”. They didn’t have all the facts when they started, but they had enough to know they needed to search. Not every man of science has been led to acknowledge God; many in pride have turned away from the Lord, but these men were brought to a conviction not only of God’s existence but also of God’s active dealing in the affairs of people.

They were determined in their search; it is possible these men will have travelled up to 1000 miles on their trek. In Matthew 2:16 we are told that Herod decided to kill all boy children 2 years old and younger so apparently from the time the

# Who's Who at Roeburndale & Wray

Minister:	<b>Rev Roy Burley</b> 173 Brookhouse Rd, Brookhouse	01524 771230
Wray Leaders:	Judith Sanderson Edmund Park Charlie Preece Andrew Wright	01524 811139 21753 (in New Zealand) 21652
Wray Treasurer:	Andrew Wright	21652
Wray Stewards:	David Huddleston George Longton Michael Preece Andrew Wallbank Alan & Andrew Wright Thomas Whitfield	62170 22026 07946 209086 37720 21652 61230
Roeburndale Steward:	George Preece	21618
Fellowship:	George/Ruth Longton	22026
Wray Sunday School:	David & Dawn Huddleston	62170
Drop-In:	Andrew Wright	21652
Youth Fellowship:	Richard & Hazel Preece	21285
Wray Pastoral:	Margaret Wright	21652
Wray notices:	Kath Fawcett	01524 811193
News from the Pews:	Peter Gorst	22303

## Uganda

Thank you to everyone who gave towards the medical equipment the CRMI team are taking to Uganda in January at the soup lunch in November. £730 was donated towards the £6000 target.



I will be travelling with the local team going to Uganda between 11-26 January.

**Sarah Gorst**

star first appeared it took them almost two years to locate where Christ was.

Their search was a long and diligent one that just means they were determined to search until they found the answer. This wasn't a religious fad, nor was it a whim of the moment; they would see their search through to the end.

Were they the objects of ridicule (chasing a star, are you)? Perhaps they were ridiculed, but if so, it didn't deter them from their purpose. Was this journey costly? No doubt it was; they would need to provide food and lodging for that entire period of time. Did they ever grow tired? Were there times of sickness? Did they ever get discouraged? Did they ever feel like quitting? I suspect the answer to all these questions is "yes" – but they persevered.

They were dependent in their search; God did indeed direct these men but what a surprising place they were led to! It is one thing to start the search; it is something else to accept where the search leads. When at last they had found the Christ, they bowed down and worshipped him. They presented him with gifts. Gold is a gift worthy of His Lordship, gold has obvious worth, it is a gift fit for royalty.

Frankincense is a gift worthy of His holiness; frankincense is mentioned 17 times in the Bible. It was used as one of four sweet scents compounded together to make the ceremonial incense of the Jews. It was used in both sacrifices and prayer. Its aroma was always present in the Temple grounds.

Myrrh is a gift worthy of His sacrifice; myrrh is an aromatic gum resin obtained from several trees and shrubs found in both northern Africa and throughout the entire East. Myrrh was used in Egypt in the embalming process of mummification. There are 22 references to myrrh in the Bible. Myrrh was used to anoint every part of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Myrrh was poured out on the feet of Jesus just a week before his death.

2,000 years ago, Jesus was born the God-man. Have you searched for Him and found Him yet? If so, what are you giving Him this Christmas that is worthy of His Lordship, Holiness and Sacrifice? If you have not yet found Him, then now is the best time to go and seek Him out, just as the wise men did.



**Rev Roy Burley**

# Special Dates

**Over-60s Christmas Meal** – Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec at the Village Institute from midday.

**Circuit Meeting** – Tue 5<sup>th</sup> Dec at Dolphinholme.

**Lancashire Sings Christmas** – 7-8pm Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> Dec – see opposite.

**Wray Village Carol Service** – 6.30pm Sun 17<sup>th</sup> Dec at the Parish Church.

**Carols by Candlelight** – Wed 20<sup>th</sup> Dec at 7pm in the Institute.

**Christmas morning** – an informal 10am service at Wray Chapel to celebrate the birth of a Saviour.

**Covenant services** – Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Jan at Roeburndale and 21<sup>st</sup> Jan at Wray to renew our commitment to God's service.

**Wray Sunday School Anniversary** – Sun 11<sup>th</sup> Feb (no Sat event) with the Sunday School taking the morning service and Wray/Roeburndale young people leading the evening service.

# Regular Activities

- Sunday      10.30 **services** at both Wray and Roeburndale  
                 10.30 **Sunday school** – weekly at Wray, fortnightly at Roeburndale  
                 6.30 **service** at Wray.  
                 8.00 **After Eight** young peoples' meeting at Wray, second Sunday of the month.
- Monday      **Come for Coffee**, first Mon each month 10-12 in Wray schoolroom.
- Thursday    **Ladies Meeting** - 2pm second Thursday of the month  
                 7.30pm **Prayer Meeting** or 7pm Prayer Meeting and 7.30 **Fellowship** on alternate weeks from October.
- Fri/Sat      7.00-9.30pm **Drop-In**, monthly in Wray schoolroom. Age 9 upwards. Games, tuck shop, etc. Contact Andrew Wright.  
                 7.30pm **Youth Fellowship**, monthly as announced. Year 9 upwards. Contact Richard & Hazel Preece.

**You are invited to join in with**



**Lancashire Sings  
Christmas**

In place of carol singing round the village, the chapel and Wray Scouts will be joining with other groups from around the county to sing carols outside the Institute on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December between 7 and 8pm. Radio Lancashire broadcasts live from a number of the sites around the county – it could be our turn this year!

## **Ladies Meetings**

All starting at 2pm in the Wray schoolrooms with refreshments to follow:

Thurs Dec 14	Mary Longton & Kathryn Gorst – Christmas tea to follow
Thurs Jan 11	Tina Woof
Thurs Feb 8	Gladys Burley demonstrating card-making
Thurs Mar 8	Margaret Townley & Elsie Carter
Thurs Apr 12	Les & Christine Kelsall

## **Circuit Appointments**

With Rev Eddie Sykes leaving a year early in 2018, the Circuit went through the Stationing process again in November along with 144 other minister vacancies with only 95 available presbyters. To the great relief and delight of everyone concerned, there was a match and Rev David Philo will be joining the ministerial team next September.

With Paul France stepping down as a Circuit Steward in 2018, the December Circuit Meeting is being brought the name of David Midwinter to replace him. David worships at Brookhouse and is well known to many for his role in Mission Albania and Teach Beyond.

# Reformation 500

2017 marks the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, effectively the beginning of the Protestant Church. The date in October marks the supposed day on which Martin Luther pinned his 95 theses to the door of the main church in Wittenburg in Germany.

Martin Luther was a monk and a student of theology who had been struggling with some of the practices of the Catholic Church at that time and particularly the selling of indulgences. Effectively, this was a way for people to buy their way into heaven (and for the church to raise money) and Luther had decided to challenge the practise. The 95 theses were a set of biblically-based statements which he hoped would spark some reasonable debate among his theological colleagues. However, it became much more serious than that and ended up with him being excommunicated – thrown out of the church. However, it wasn't these theses that really shook the Catholic Church but some of Luther's other ideas:



- **Salvation by faith, not works** – being saved from the consequences of our sin can only be done by God, not through the Church and certainly not by paying for indulgences or by doing good works.
- **Scripture alone** – an understanding of God comes through the Bible, so people should have access to those words in their own language (not just Latin or Greek), a principle which kick-started the translation of the Bible into the commonly spoken languages across Europe in the face of great persecution.
- **The priesthood of all believers** – every Christian has a direct and personal contact with God and does not have to go through a priest and there was no need for a large church organisation to administer the grace of God.

After the curiously named Diet of Worms (effectively a court session of the Holy Roman Empire in the German town of Worms in 1521), Luther had to go into hiding. Whilst holed up in Wartburg Castle (photo) in 1521, he translated the whole of the New Testament from Greek into German in the space of 11 weeks.

Luther lived until he was 62, married and had children. He also wrote numerous Christian books which were widely read and his thoughts and ideas were spread across Europe. The ideas of the Reformation changed the face of Europe socially, politically and religiously, not least in Great Britain.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church was converted after reading some words of Luther. Wesley wrote in his journal the now famous words:

'In the evening (of 24 May 1737) I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, when he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.'

What Luther started and others like Calvin and Wesley continued, has been a source of great good and great blessing over these last 500 years. And so it has been right to learn about and celebrate what begun with Martin Luther in 1517.

**Peter Gorst**

<b>More Wray Rotas</b>					
<b>Morning Coffee</b>			<b>Cleaning Fortnight</b>		
Dec	3	Imogen, Seth & Dora	Dec	4	Anne P
	10	Liz & Michael		11	Anne - chapel, After 8 – SS
	17	James, Rachel & Chris		18	Kath F
	24	Jan & Annie		25	
	31	Ruth & George	Jan	1	Judith S
Jan	7	Sam & Andrew		8	
	14	Thomas, Maurice & Alan		15	Janet T
	21	Joan & Andy		22	
	28	Sarah & Peter		29	Ruth L
Feb	4	Luke, Ben, Martin & Laura	Nov	5	
	11	Judith & Malcolm		12	Joyce L
	18	Kath, Mark & Edward		19	
	25	Charlie, Will & Steven		26	Joan W
<p><b>Please bring milk, squash and biscuits. Tea and coffee are provided.</b></p>			<p><b>Cleaning fortnights start on Mondays thro' to Saturdays</b></p>		

2017	Wray preachers	Wray welcome	Wray flowers	R'dale preachers	R'dale flowers/cleaning
Dec 3	B Carter R Aldren	Dora & Ellie George L	Susan S + Advent wreath	JR Gorst	Hazel E
10	PJ Gorst W Mashiter	Franc & Carol Judith	Joan W + Advent wreath	Rev K Clapham	
17	J Widdess Parish Church	Jan C of E carols	Christmas tree	Rev R Burley C	Barbara H
24	Rev R Burley M Longton	Laura Thomas	Christmas tree	W Mashiter	
31	W Mashiter I Ellershaw	Rachel Edmund	Christmas tree	J Fox	Hazel P
Jan 7	J Hutchinson Rev R Burley	Seth & Ted Sarah	Christmas tree	Rev R Burley Cov	
14	D Whitfield Gideons	Malcolm Anne	Mary W	PJ Gorst	Ellen
21	Rev Burley Cov LA YS	Kath Will P	Linda W	M Smith	
28	M Longton Rev R Burley	Sam Steven	Dorothy W	D Whitfield	Grace
Feb 4	D Tyrer PJ Gorst	Luke George L	Margaret W	Rev P Turner	
11	SSA Wray/Roeb YP	Dorothy Michael	Diane A	Rev R Burley	Margaret
18	Rev D North LA YS	Andy Lois	Kath F	J Hutchinson	
25	D Yates G Whitaker	Chris Andrew	Jan F	Rev A Champley	Hazel E

C - Communion

Cov - Covenant Service

FS - Family Service

LA - Local arrangement

SSA - Sunday School Anniversary

YS - Youth Service