

**Regular Events in the Benefice of Linton, Coxheath, Hunton, East and West Farleigh**

Every Monday	4.20 for 4.30pm	Wellsprings silent prayer – The Vestry, St. Nicholas Linton.
Every Wednesday	10.00 to 11.30am	'PSST'- Fellowship Group (Children welcome). For weekly venue, phone Ruth 743866
Every second Wednesday in the month	12 noon	Service of 'Prayers for the Parish' at St. Nicholas, Linton
Every last Wednesday in the month <b><i>N.B. In December</i></b>	12 noon	A said Communion Service at St. Nicholas Linton. <b><i>this will be on 19<sup>th</sup> (not 26<sup>th</sup> Boxing Day)</i></b>
Every Thursday	10.00am	Holy Communion (1662) Holy Trinity Coxheath
	1.30 to 3.00pm	"Up and Running" Toddler Group, Holy Trinity, Coxheath. Contact David 741474 for details
Term-time Thursdays	7.30pm	LOGOS Youth Group, West Farleigh Church Details from Ruth 743866

The Rector: Revd Peter Walker  
747570 - Marriages, Thanksgivings and Baptisms (Not available Mondays)  
Associate Rector: Revd Ruth Bierbaum - 743866 (Not available Fridays)  
Revd David Jones - 741474 (Not available Fridays)

Churchwardens  
Mr Roger Bettle 743278  
Mr John McKenzie 741318  
Pastoral Care Link  
Mrs Vera Figgins 745950  
Items for January Parish News  
By 14<sup>th</sup> December to Harold Pounds 745303  
[h.p.pounds@btinternet.com](mailto:h.p.pounds@btinternet.com)

**5 Parishes Men's Group.** Our last get-together of 2007 is on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 7.30pm – Christmas social and Quiz night at The Victoria Pub, Heath Road. For details of this group's meetings please contact Mike on 745702. A programme of functions and talks is being planned for 2008. If you are interested in such events and would like to be kept informed please get in touch with Mike.

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# St Nicholas Parish News

Issue 59    December 2007

Dear Friends,

***'The star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was...'* (St. Matthew 2:9)**

A number of explanations have been given for the appearance of the star, each with its own difficulties. Amongst these are that the star was a supernova or a comet or a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. Because Scripture does not explain or identify the star, we cannot state categorically what it was. It may simply have been the glory of the Lord - the same experience which the shepherds saw when the angels appeared to them. The Bible often equates the manifestation of God's glory with some sort of light (e.g. the book of Numbers 24:17 'a star shall come forth from the house of Jacob' or Revelation 22:16 Jesus is the 'Bright Morning Star'). So we may well identify the light of the star as the glory of God.

The Magi or 'Wise Men' were not following the star for their entire journey because they had to ask where Jesus was born. It wasn't until the Jews told them of the prophesied place of Christ's birth that the star reappeared and guided them on to Bethlehem and the exact spot where the baby lay. These wise men, being learned men and acquainted with the literature of their time including parts of the Jewish writings, had correctly made the assumption that a star which they would see would be the herald of the coming of the long-awaited Messiah.

The wise men made their long journey with one purpose in mind, to find the saviour and worship Him. They were true seekers after God, and though they had limited spiritual light, they immediately heard God's voice and they responded in faith and obedience.

*Peter's letter continues inside....*

Centre Pages: Children's Service; M'stone Symph. Orch.; Wed. Prayers; Christmas Cards;  
Back Page: Regular Events; Who's Who; 5Parishes Men's Group.    Wed. date change; Stars.

## Services in Linton Church in December

Sunday	2 <sup>nd</sup> December	9.15am	Holy Communion
Sunday	9 <sup>th</sup> December	8.00am	Holy Communion (1662)
		4.00pm	St. Nicholas Day Service
Sunday	16 <sup>th</sup> December	9.15am	Holy Communion
		4.00pm	Carol Service
Sunday	23 <sup>rd</sup> December	9.15am	Holy Communion
Monday	24 <sup>th</sup> December	11.30pm	Holy Communion

*Peter's letter continued from previous page*

These wise men had the type of genuine seeking hearts that God promises always to reward ('You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart' Jeremiah 29:13).

The coming of the Messiah was also the beginning of the New Age. St. Matthew, who is the only Gospel writer to report the journey of the wise men, uses a word in its original text meaning, 'genesis'. He begins his Gospel, 'The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham'. If we look further in chapter one at verse 18 we read, 'Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way...'. Here was beginning that which the prophets foretold. Here was the new book of Genesis being written - here was the arrival of the new Adam!

Rivals to power are not welcome. So it was with Herod, a cruel man who ruled Judea as king by grant of the Roman senate from 37 to 4 B.C. An aging and failing tyrant, he ordered the slaughter of the innocent children of Bethlehem in the hope of killing the Messiah.

The religious leaders of the day were indifferent. They advised Herod on the prophetic words of Micah 'but you, O Bethlehem, who are little among the tribes of Judah from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel' - Micah 5:2. Sadly they rejected Jesus as the one they looked for - not even when He was born, not when He ministered among them and not when He suffered and died and rose from the grave.

Here we are once again on the threshold of the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Saviour. History shows us three responses to this unrivalled act of God. Hostility, Indifference and Worship: *Hostility* from Herod, *Indifference* of the religious leaders and the *Worship* of the three wise men. These three characteristics of people's view of Christianity in the twenty-first century are alive and well!

What may our response be to He who was made known to the world by the witness of the wise men who followed a star to discover the Saviour?

Christmas is a time when wise men and women see beyond the turkey and tinsel (as happy and enjoyable as those parts of the Christmas celebration are) to that which brings meaning to our existence.

*'O God,  
Who by the leading of a star  
Manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth:  
Mercifully grant that we,  
Who know you now by faith,  
May at last behold your glory face to face;  
Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.....' (Collect for the  
Epiphany)*

With every blessing for a Happy and Holy Christmas from us both,  
Peter and Diana.

### A good service for the children...

On Sunday 9th December at 4pm St. Nicholas, Linton is to hold a very special service, 'specially geared to children. It is a St. Nicholas Day Service and as St. Nicholas is also known as Santa Claus or Father Christmas, you never know - he might put in an early appearance.



We will also be collecting new and nearly new toys at this service for needy families in and around Maidstone. All welcome!

**Maidstone Symphony Orchestra Concert** – Maidstone Leisure Centre, Mote Park - Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2008 at 7.30pm. Bizet – Carmen Suite; Weber – Clarinet Concerto No. 2, Soloist Mark Simpson; and Rachmaninov – Symphony No. 2.  
Tickets from £10 to £20, children/students £5 from Membership Secretaries 736392 or Leisure Centre 0845 1552277

On every second Wednesday of the month, at 12 noon, a short service of '**Prayers for the Parish**' will be held at St. Nicholas, Linton to which all are welcome. The next such service will be held on **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December**.

*Christmas Cards* - Reminder that Vee Gibbard has produced a range of Christmas cards, in aid of St Nicholas Church, Linton. 6 different packs of 5 cards with Linton views and flowers in the Church, a greeting and acknowledgment that the proceeds will go to St Nicholas Church. Cost per pack - £2.50 including envelopes. The greeting on the card can be worded to whatever you require. Samples of the cards are displayed in St Nicholas Church and the Bull Inn, Linton or please contact Kath Cooper 741494, [cooperkathryn@btopenworld.com](mailto:cooperkathryn@btopenworld.com)

**N.B. The said Communion Service** usually held at St. Nicholas Church on the last Wednesday in the month will, in **December**, be held on the **19<sup>th</sup>** and not the 26<sup>th</sup> (Boxing Day).

**Watch out for the stars** because a number of houses in the benefice will be displaying a single rope star during December. Each of these houses has within it someone who wants to let you know that they believe in the true message of Christmas: that God has come to us in Jesus: that he is our Saviour and our one true hope. As you see the stars around the houses this month, remember why they are there: a call to all who are far off to come and worship and adore God in Jesus Christ. He has conquered sin and death and is alive and reigning today, tomorrow and for ever and ever and ever.....

*If you would like to join us in displaying a star contact David Jones 741474 and one will be on its way. They cost £15.*