

Benefice of Heyford with Stowe-Nine-Churches  
and Flore with Brockhall

Our Mission Statement

## SERVICES SCHEDULE AND NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2025



Rector: Revd Stephen Burrow 01327 344436

### Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany

10:00am	Holy Communion Service	Church Stowe
11:00am	United First Sunday Service	Flore Church
6:00pm	Evening Prayer	Heyford Church

### Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany 1

10.00am	Benefice Holy Communion Service	Heyford Church
10.00am	Morning Worship	Flore Chapel

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany 2

10.00am	Holy Communion	Heyford Church
10.00am	United Service	Flore Chapel
6.00pm	Holy Communion	Upper Stowe

### Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany 3

10.00am	Holy Communion	Flore Church
10.00am	Family Service	Upper Stowe
10.00am	Morning Worship	Flore Chapel
4:00pm	Café Church	Heyford Church

### Thursdays

10.00am	Holy Communion	Flore Church
2.30pm - 3.30pm	Private prayer	Flore Church

### Fridays

9.00am Morning Prayer via Zoom. All Welcome  
Contact the Rector by [email: s\\_p\\_burrow@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:s_p_burrow@yahoo.co.uk) to get an invitation that will enable you to connect.

## PRAYING FOR OUR VILLAGES BY STREET

During January we pray for people living in Church Lane and Weedon Rd in Heyford, Spring Lane and Russell Rise in Flore, Francis Row in Upper Stowe and the Stables and Coach House in Brockhall.

## LETTER FROM OUR RECTOR

Dear Friends.

The Epiphany falls on the first Sunday of January in the new year. This is the day when we celebrate the visit of the wise men, bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ Child. Have you ever wondered who the wise men were, or where they came from? The dominant theory is that they came from Persia, but one commentator has suggested they might have come from the Arabian kingdom of Nabatea. Using irrigation, the Nabateans farmed the desert for two important cash crops – frankincense and myrrh – and controlled trade routes across the Arabian Peninsula. The wealth they generated was used to build their capital city, Petra, the world-famous valley city of rock-face monuments. King Herod's mother was a Nabatean princess, so the Nabateans would have been interested in any news of the King of the Jews, and probably aware of the prophecies of Daniel and Isaiah.

Of course, barring some spectacular Indiana-Jones-style archaeological discovery, we're unlikely to learn any more about the origins of these fascinating and mysterious visitors from the east, who appear to devote their wisdom and wealth in divine service. We might think that the magi have employed their learning and astronomical skills to crack some cosmic code, dodge a despot, and visit the Christ child at the end of a divine treasure hunt. However, the magi's knowledge was probably a weird mix of occultism, astrology, astronomy and mathematics, alongside an obsession with the royalty of countries nearby. Our learning and knowledge are imperfect too, but God uses the foolish things to confound the wise. Inside the mishmash of knowledge, horoscopes and divination, God leaves the magi an invitation. It's a risky invitation, no doubt, involving a long journey, the anger of a tyrant, and even the risk of being wrong. But maybe, as they undertook their journey, the wise men came to realize that it was an invitation from God himself.

This year, I have a poem/prayer that picks up the adventures of the wise men as they begin their journey home. It also mirrors, perhaps, the new roads we might take as individuals, families and churches as we enter the new year. This is called 'New Roads' by Ruth Burgess (published in 'Winter' by Ruth Burgess [Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, 2016]):

*When the star had stopped, and they had seen the baby, they took a new road.  
When the decorations come down, and we have heard the story, we can take a new road.*

*New roads can be scary.  
New roads are exciting.  
New roads are risky.  
It's time to go!*

*Star maker,  
Light-bringer,  
Holy Spirit of adventure,  
come with us this new year on our road.  
Amen.*

But before we reach the new year, I'm conscious that for many in the benefice – myself included – this will be a first Christmas without dear friends and loved ones. Please be assured of my prayers for you over the festive season. May we all know God's presence, peace and comfort this Christmastime.

As always, Deborah and I thank you for all the cards, good wishes and encouragement offered to us over the Advent and Christmas period – and throughout the year. They are all very much appreciated. We wish you all a very safe and peaceful new year.

With every blessing,

Stephen (Tel 01327 344436)