

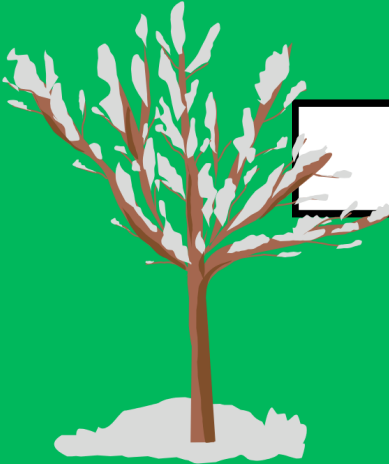


St. Alban's Earsdon

CHURCH VIEWS

**January
2025**

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St. John's Backworth



**Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea**

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

January 2025

Congratulate yourselves on your first lucky escape of 2025, you just missed a Close Encounter of the First Kind. I wrote my first draft of Thought for the Month yesterday and I was pleased with it, or, more honestly, relieved with it, because like all of us I had at least two other things to do and time was running out. I have just read it again and gosh it was dismal. Not just not-very-good dismal, but real gloomy-wet-day dismal. So, "Please, Miss, the shredder ate my homework."

We all know our world had more than its usual share of head-shakingly distressing natural and man-made disasters in 2024, but just as it would be unfeeling and unwise to ignore them, it would be just as unwise to see only them and forget that there were inspiring events too. I'm happy that the shredder was hungry; I had forgotten Belle's gentle warning to Scrooge, "You fear the world too much".

I now intend to hold onto how much I have always enjoyed Christmas; the first bright dinky cars - especially the green bin lorry with the side opening; the glorious lead soldiers - especially the ones on horses; the first red two wheeler with the white mudguards bought from Lionel Clark's in North Shields. Even more so I can recall the joys of Santa Claus with our children, listening carefully for those reindeer bells on Christmas Eve, all of us being amazed next morning when we found that the reindeers really had eaten the carrots. As the children grew up we remember their first books and bikes, their first watches and cameras and all the other 'firsts'.

Even at school I remember laughing out loud at some responses when every year I asked pupils to write and complete the single sentence "Christmas is ...". Apart from the expected responses about food and drink there were the special ones: "Christmas is hiding my Dad's Slade album so he can't Dad Dance to Noddy Holder in front of my friends", and "Christmas is getting my mother's 'What time do you call this, Madam?' speech when I'm back late." And perhaps the most heart-felt of all, "Christmas is not yelling TALL at my auntie when she always says to my mam, "Isn't she getting BIG".

But 2024 was a whole year and not just Christmas, and there were some delightfully woke warnings. My real favourite was the audience being warned at the premiere of ‘Wicked’ that the film contains discriminatory comments that they might find distressing. Although the comments discriminate against the green witch, there are no reports of offended green witches leaving before the end of the film.

The 2024 parish event with the potential to be most upsetting was the closure of Our Lady and St Edmund’s church, but it truly did not cause total gloom and doom. There was an inevitable sense of loss, but it also prompted memories of family events there; couples recalled their weddings, others remembered christenings and first communions. Even the school photographs pinned up at the back of church with who-was-that-one gaps, had those gaps quickly filled in until every face had a name. There was a feeling of continuity, that the past wouldn’t be forgotten and it was time to move on; a realisation that whatever might happen to its bricks and mortar, a church really embodies the spirit of a community and that can’t be touched.

So once again standing on this bridge between the end of one year and the beginning of another it’s time to pause before moving forward. 2025 is the Jubilee Year ‘Pilgrims of Hope’, the latest Jubilee in a tradition stretching back to the 14th Century, recognising that hope is essential. In the words of Pope Francis:

Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Look to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far sighted vision.

Gerry Latimer
Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

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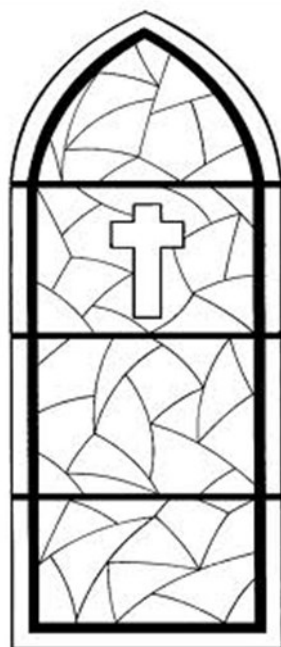
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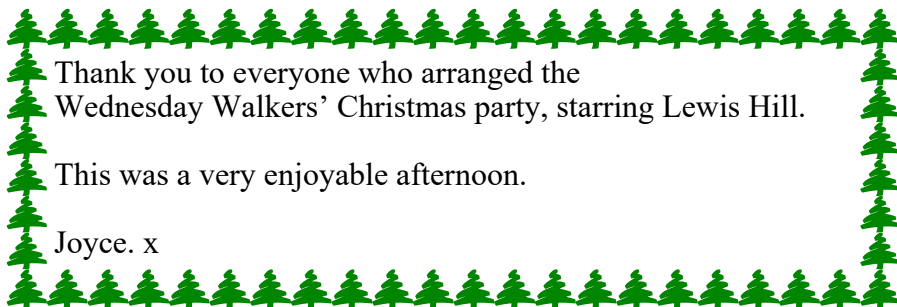
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A message from Joyce Whitehouse:

 Thank you to everyone who arranged the
Wednesday Walkers' Christmas party, starring Lewis Hill.
This was a very enjoyable afternoon.
Joyce. x

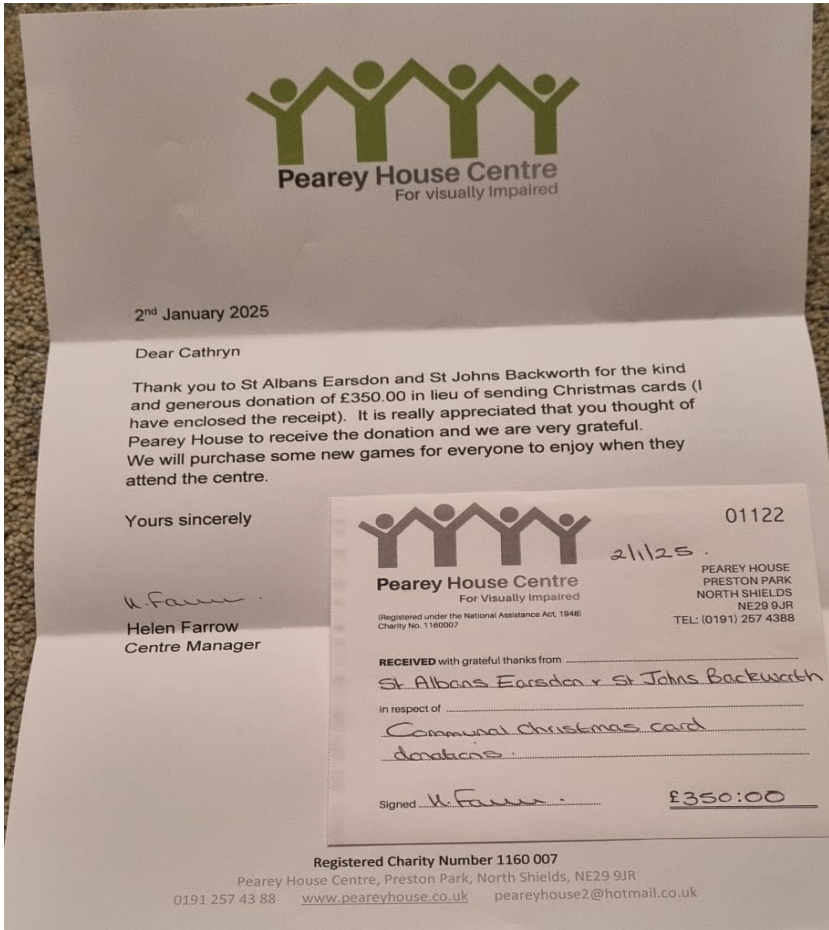
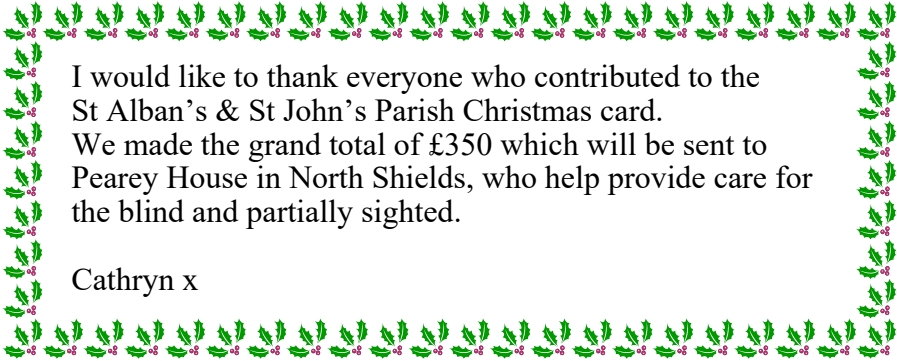
And a little note from your editor ... I thoroughly enjoyed it, too.
Thank you!

The newly completed Media room at St Alban's, here showing Rob and Jean after live-streaming the beautiful Carols by Candlelight service.

We both found it very comfortable to work from!



Another message - this time from Cathryn Richardson:



A message from Helen Jackman:

What a lovely 'get-together' we had at my Christmas Coffee Morning. Thank you all for coming and making it such a success.

A few 'Thank You's' must go to the kitchen staff, Joan, Janet and my daughter Sara (they never stopped) and Pam and Barbara looking after the Tombola and Raffle. It was so good to see Jack.



Weather Outlook for the month of January 2025.

Direct from the Captain's Charts.

Wishing a Happy and Prosperous New Year to all readers.

Sunday 5th January to Wednesday 15th January 2025.

A cold start to this period, with a mix of snow, sleet and rain showers in our region.

Milder air may project from the south during the first Sunday and into Monday, bringing snow and rain and perhaps strong winds are likely, however the northern extent of this is unclear and it may be that most or all of the UK remains in the colder air. Beyond this, the weather looks rather varied, with high pressure controlling the weather bringing cold air and wintry showers from the northerly air flow across the north and northeast. Further spells of rain, sleet, snow and strong winds are more likely in the south and southwest of the country. There is an imbalance between these two regimes that may interact to give variations.

Generally, the temperatures are more likely to be below normal for this time of the year although day-to-day regional variations are likely.

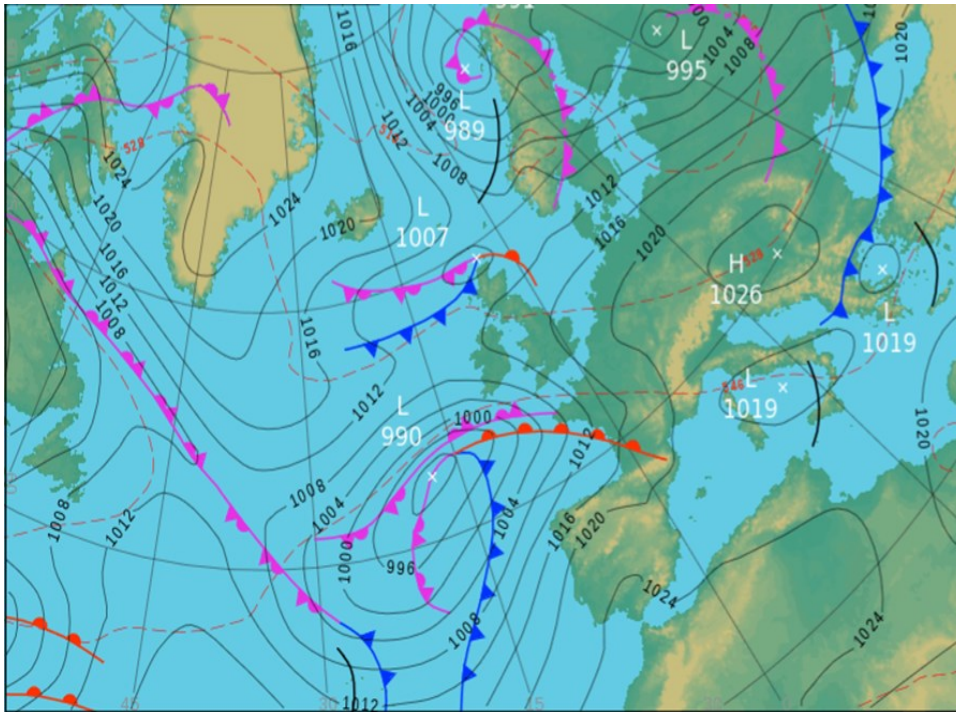
Thursday 16th to Friday 31st January 2025.

The evolving weather patterns will be slow to develop through the second half of January, with high pressure often within the vicinity of the UK.

The type of weather we may experience depends on where the high and low-pressure centres are relative to the UK.

There appears to be no strong signals for prolonged cold weather, although spells of cold weather are likely containing frost, fog and wintry showers. Due to the complexity of interaction between the north and south there may be milder conditions to our region for a time.

**North Atlantic Surface Pressure Chart Prediction for 12:00 hrs
(UTC) on Saturday 5th January 2025.**



David Gibson

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CHURCH VIEWS FOR JANUARY 2025 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA

2024 was a good year.....



The annual picture-boards at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church show some of the high points of what really was a year to celebrate. In January Bishop Wright made ours his first visit to any parish after his July 2023 installation. Celebrating Masses in Immaculate Heart of Mary and St Edward's in January 2024, he could not have found any parish where the constituent buildings are so different.

Our third church, Our Lady and St Edmund's in Backworth, had not re-opened after COVID, and in mid-2024 a parish meeting decided unanimously that it was time to bow to the inevitable.

In June Bishop Wright paid his second visit, this time for the Mass of Closure, concelebrated with Bishop Paul Mason, Bishop of the Forces who had been baptised there, made his First Communion there and in 1998 been ordained there. This Mass, concelebrated by two Bishops, brought its long history to a dignified close.

More happily, on 20 July, Fr Joseph O'Brien was ordained in St Mary's Cathedral and celebrated his first Masses here, in his home parish,

attended by many of his family and some of his fellow-students from the English College in Rome.

In this year also vital parish housekeeping was not ignored. The St Edward's building was weatherproofed and new toilet facilities opened. The grounds of Immaculate Heart of Mary were carefully improved by extensive pruning and shaping and even the beautiful stonework of the grotto was uncovered; the apple trees and flower beds came into their own. A Buildings and Grounds sub-committee of the Parish Council is to be formed in 2025 to ensure the continuation of such care.

As Advent opened the new Lectionaries came into use and now we begin a Jubilee Year, Pilgrims of Hope, which promises to be equally eventful.



Have a Happy New Year and enjoy 2025.

Gerry Latimer, Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

After the service on Sunday 29th December (the closest Sunday to the actual day) St Alban's church celebrated a very special birthday for Joan. The balloons were sneaked in by Jill and show, when the second balloon faced the right way, the wonderful age of 80.



We all enjoyed a glass of sparkly wine and a piece of Joan's delicious birthday cake.

Thank you very much Joan. We hope you enjoyed your day. Xx

(See also page 20)

Joan's special celebration was a perfect opportunity to try out the brand new kitchen facilities. Cheers, Barbara and Marilyn, and thank you for serving us with our Prosecco and birthday cake provided by Joan.



And on the actual day...

Mother and daughter Joan and Jill looking gorgeous!



(Thanks go to Cathryn and Jill for the pictures.)

The group shot . All celebrating Joan's 80th birthday!



(Thank you to Ruth Stradling for the picture, and for taking the morning service!)

How to make the most of your New Year resolutions

What are your New Year resolutions for 2025?

Sadly, one in four of us will give ours up by Epiphany, on 6th January.

Why so soon? According to behavioural scientists at University College London, we make our goals both too big and too vague. So, instead of resolving to ‘lose a lot of weight’, decide to ‘lose three pounds in the next month’. With ‘success’ not far off, you will be motivated to keep going.

Another way to keep your New Year’s Resolution is to involve a friend to aim for the same thing. As one scientist puts it: “the involvement of a partner has a sustained effect.”

As for the time involved in reaching your New Year’s Resolution, new habits are hard to build. Behavioural scientists say that on average, it takes 66 days to form and imbed a new healthy habit into your life. So be patient, keep going, and look for some success in mid-March.

Remember what one scientist says: “Your vision is your destination, and small, manageable goals are the motor that will get you there.”



Canon Paul Hardingham considers 2025 ...

At the Start of the Year

2025 is a year of Jubilee in the Roman Catholic Church, a year which takes place every 25 years. It's a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which people are invited to come back into right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. This acts as a challenge for all of us:

How can we spend more time talking and listening to God through reading the Bible and prayer?

How can we grow our love for our family and friends?

How can we make more impact at work, by demonstrating an attractive faith to colleagues?

When Joshua led God's people to the banks of the Jordan, ready to cross over into the Promised Land, he said: *'you have never been this way before'* (Joshua 3:4). At the beginning of a New Year, when we don't know what the future holds, how can we grow in our relationship with God?

Keep our focus on God: The people were told to follow the Ark, symbolising God's presence, as they crossed the river. Let's keep our focus on God and His Word throughout this year and keep in step with where He is leading us.

Consecrate ourselves: Joshua said, *'Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.'* (3:5). God has exciting opportunities ahead for us in this coming year! Let us dedicate our lives afresh to Him, as we let go of known sin and keep our eyes open on seeing God at work in all of our lives.

Will 2025 be a good year for us? *'In the end, it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years.'* Abraham Lincoln

One of the good things about being editor of this magazine is that I have the privilege of including random articles that have taken my attention. I hope you forgive my indulgence. Maybe you will even appreciate it.

Monty Don, Chelsea Flower Show and dogs

This coming Spring Monty Don is going to design a garden for dogs for the Chelsea Flower Show.

Monty Don's garden will include a well-kept lawn for doggie comfort, and a large tree for shade. For the dogs' human friends, there will be spring-flowering bulbs.

The garden is the result of a collaboration of Radio 2 and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). It will also include a brick path inscribed with the names of the dogs belonging to the Queen (Jack Russell terriers Beth and Bluebell), the channel's presenters RHS ambassadors and Monty Don's retriever, Ned.

Mr Don says: "This is an irresistible opportunity to join with the RHS and Radio 2 to share my love of gardens and dogs at the world's greatest horticultural event."



St. Alban's and St. John's

Diary Page for January 2025

Sunday	5th		<u>2nd Sunday of Christmas</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	9th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	12th		<u>1st Sunday after Epiphany</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	The First Flush - dedicating the new facilities.	St Alban's
Wednesday	15th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	19th		<u>2nd Sunday after Epiphany</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	23rd	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	26th		<u>3rd Sunday after Epiphany</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wednesday	29th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	2nd Feb		<u>Candlemas</u>	
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	6th Feb	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for January 2025 :

5th

Matthew 2. 1-12

12th

John 2. 1-11

19th

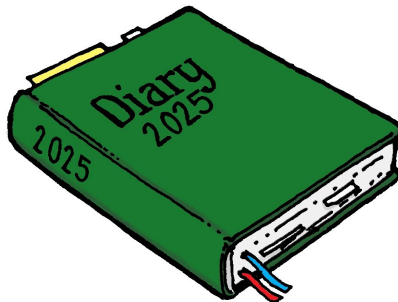
Luke 3. 15-17; 21-22

26th

2 Corinthians 8. 1-15

2nd Feb

Luke 2. 22-40



* If you have any suggestions, comments or requests *
* regarding the magazine, or for anyone thinking of *
* sending in their contribution for publication, please *
* email it to magazine@StAlbansEarsdon.org.uk *
* or call **Jean** on **0191 2377273**. *

Church Views magazine email: magazine@stalbansearsdon.org.uk



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		7			3	5		
3					7		4	
					2	6		
8	5						1	7
		9	3					
	9		5					3
		4	1			8		
	2				9			

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (February 2025) will need to be in before Wednesday 29th January . Thank you, *Jean*.

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All in the month of January

It was ...

150 years ago, on 14th Jan 1875 that Albert Schweitzer, German theologian, philosopher, physician, musicologist, writer and humanitarian, was born. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952.

125 years ago, on 14th Jan 1900 that the premiere of Italian composer Giacomo Puccini's opera *Tosca*, took place in Rome.

100 years ago, on 3rd Jan 1925 that Benito Mussolini declared himself dictator of Italy.

90 years ago, on 8th Jan 1935 that Elvis Presley ('The King') was born. The famous American rock and roll singer, guitarist and actor, died in 1977.

80 years ago, on 27th Jan 1945 that the Soviet Red Army liberated Auschwitz Concentration Camp in southern Poland. It was the largest Nazi concentration camp and at least 1.1 million prisoners died there.

75 years ago, on 23rd Jan 1950 that Israel declared Jerusalem was its capital city. Palestine also claims it as its capital.

60 years ago, on 24th Jan 1965 that Winston Churchill died. He was Prime Minister 1940 - 45 and again in 1955. He won the 1953 Nobel Prize for Literature "for his mastery

of historical and biographical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values."

50 years ago, on 20th Jan 1975 that Bob Dylan's album *Blood on the Tracks* was released.

40 years ago, on 23rd Jan 1985 that a debate from the House of Lords was televised live for the first time.

30 years ago, on 3rd Jan 1995 that the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that the cumulative total reported AIDS cases had passed the one million mark, with cases in 192 countries. (Including unreported cases, the total was estimated to be about 4.5 million.)

15 years ago, on 12th Jan 2010 that the Haiti earthquake took place. The capital, Port-au-Prince, was devastated and at least 100,000 people were killed and buried in mass graves.

10 years ago, on 7th Jan 2015 that the Charlie Hebdo shooting in Paris took place. Two Muslim brothers forced their way into the offices of the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine and opened fire.

12 people were killed and 11 injured. The brothers were shot dead on 9th Jan. The magazine had published images of the Islamic prophet Muhammad in 2011 and 2012, and its offices had been firebombed in Nov 2011.

WORDSEARCH

January 2025

Word Search - Gifts of the Wise Men

What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? One Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote the much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'.

Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine, and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people. The Wise Men were the very first Gentiles ever to worship Jesus. What faith they had!

- Gifts
 - Gold
 - Frankincense
 - Myrrh
 - Henry
 - Hopkins
 - Carol
 - Three
 - Kings
 - Orient
 - Worship
 - Temple
 - Spice
 - Ancients
 - Bodies
 - Burial
 - Honoured
- Divine
 - Sacrifice
 - Die
 - Gentile
 - Faith



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