



Your local churches

St Andrew's United Church, Kirton in Lindsey
www.standrewsunitedchurch.org.uk
St Radegund's Church, Grayingham
www.achurchnearyou.com/grayingham-st-radegund



Ministry Contacts: Jan 2026 - KIRTON

- ☎ 01724 647789 The Revd David Swannack (Anglican Vicar)
- ☎ 07395 453246 The Revd Robert Roberts (Methodist Minister)
- ☎ 01652 648846 The Revd Preb Dr Michael Sheard (Anglican, retired)
- ☎ 01652 649365 Dr Pat Frankish (Baptist Deacon; Anglican Lay Reader)

Ministry Contact: Jan 2016 - GRAYINGHAM

- ☎ 07738 356048 The Revd Charles Thody (Anglican Priest in Charge)

Other enquiries

Church Council Secretary, Kirton, 01652 648846
Church hall bookings, Kirton, 01652 648573
Church Warden, Kirton, Dr Pat Frankish, 01652 649365
Church Council Secretary, Grayingham, 01652 640157
Church Warden, Grayingham, Mr Clive Marshall, 01652 648125

SAFEGUARDING (Kirton) 01652 640740
SAFEGUARDING (Gray'm) 01652 640157

Baptism bookings (Kirton) - 07776 487791
Wedding bookings (Kirton) - 01652 648846
Funerals (Kirton) - 01652 648573

Worship in our buildings in January 2026

- St Andrew's United Church, Kirton, 11am Sunday; 9.30 every Wednesday
- St Radegund's, Grayingham, 9.30 1st Sun HC; other Sundays 9am

Please visit our websites/Facebook or phone one of the contact numbers above for other information about our churches and activities.

Join us for **Worship on Zoom:**
every Sunday at 9.30am

* To join - on computer, tablet or phone - contact heather.bunker@btinternet.com

St Andrew's United Church
4th SUNDAY every month,
FAMILY SERVICE 11am

PUZZLE ANSWERS (p.S5)

Word Ladder: BOOT, BOLT, DOLT, DOLL, DILL, MILL, MALL, MALE, SALE

Help the Wise Man:

1. It was day time (morning)
2. Two 3. Jerusalem;
4. Kings or Magi 5. Persia (Iran)

Magic Square:

Many solutions are possible. Here is one: You must always have the zero in the centre.

-3	2	1
4	0	-4
-1	-2	3

Brain teasers:

- Q1. The letter R
- Q2. Look at a clock. Six hours after 11am is 5pm.



Hot cross buns and Good Friday Walk from St Andrew's 10.30 am, 3 April



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Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the editorial group

Editor: Michael Sheard (01652-648846)

editor.nutshell@btinternet.com
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in a NUTSHELL

news, views, ideas from your local church 2026 Jan/Feb

Santa pause?

It's over! Christmas, that is - at least until the adverts start in September. Looking back, however, which was your favourite Christmas movie? Many people still choose *Miracle on 34th Street*, where thousands of New Yorkers mass-march to declare that they believe in Santa Claus.

Of course it's fantasy, but isn't it preferable to the Bible version of Christmas, about a teenage girl giving birth in a smelly stable? After all, many people regard that story too as 'myth'. So which do you prefer - the tale of a 'Son of God', born in a cowshed, or that of a chap flying around the world like ET to deliver toys to good girls and boys?

Which of the two makes the best Christmas movie? And yet, if the 'Mind' that flung the stars across the heavens

13.5 billion years ago and then created our world wanted to show what he is *really* like, would a display of wealth and power, a magic trick, be the most effective way to convince ordinary people that he understands and cares about their heart-aches, their struggles, their failures and their suffering? The birth in Bethlehem, hard reality, followed by

a life of uncompromising love, ends - apparently snuffed out - nailed to a cross at Easter: in real time, in our history. Who would believe that that would hold peoples' imagination and change lives for 2000 years? But it did. It has done. So how will you make your life choice in 2026? The cheesy fairytale or the amazing historic truth: the *real* Easter story?



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'Love in a Cup' Community Café
Every Thursday, 2-5pm:
St Andrew's United Church Halls



Puzzles pS5; Sebastian pS4 ▶

It's never too late!
Make a fresh start in 2026
Ash Wednesday Service
St Andrew's United Church
18 February at 9.30am

Advent highlights at St Andrew's United Church

Christingle with a difference



On 6 December families enjoyed fun and food in the Church Halls; then they made Christingles, before crossing to church for the traditional (short) Christingle service.

SEE MORE
For a full
colour page
of Christingle
pictures see
February's
NUTSHELL
A bargain
at only £1



And wonderful bell ringers

The Christingle service was brought to a thrilling climax by our bell ringers, who had already given a great display of their talent just two weeks earlier when they rang a quarter peal for St Andrew's Day (30 Nov). As explained in August's *Nutshell*, it takes just under an hour to ring a 'quarter peal' and requires great concentration from the ringers. It involves 1260 'changes' – that is, 1260 rows, with the bells sounding in a different order each time. When the quarter peal is rung on seven or more bells (St Andrew's has eight), no row is repeated. Work that out!



Pictured: The band for St Andrew's Day included ringers from Broughton, Hibaldstow, Kirton, Messingham and Scotter. All but one regularly attend Monday practices at Kirton.

Where did the baby go?



For many years the ceramic figures in the nativity tableau have been a feature of Christmas celebrations at St Andrew's church. It has become a tradition that, once set up, the cradle remains empty* until the baby is placed there on Christmas Eve. Then, on the Feast of the Epiphany (6 Jan), the Wise Men complete the tableau. Until then, they are displayed (with their camel) on the window sill nearest the altar in the Lady Chapel. Come and see them all. (* except for special services like the Christingle and the Happy Days Play.)

Happy Days Nativity Play

On Thursday 11 December, parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters gathered to watch the children of Happy Days Nursery perform their nativity play. In lovely action songs and looking great in their costumes, they retold the story of Jesus's birth. Afterwards the audience enjoyed refreshments prepared by the staff. Thank you, Happy Days, for a wonderful evening.

Wave for the World

Have you ever been at a sporting event where people took part in a 'Mexican Wave'? If you haven't experienced one, you must have seen the 'Wave' on television. It depends on everybody following the actions of the person next to them and all co-operating to make the final impressive spectacle.



On Friday 6 March, there is an opportunity to take part in a similar wave – this time an impressive 'wave of prayer' that travels right around the world on the first Friday in March each year.

It's a sign of hope in a world that seems to be growing ever more threatening. It reminds us that there *is* still good in the world and there are millions of people willing to work together to make their voices heard.

Will you come and be part of the wave? Can you spare just a few minutes to join millions of Christians (mainly women) in over 170 countries to pray for the world and its peoples?

Starting at sunrise in Samoa, in the Pacific Ocean, the prayers travel around the world in a westerly direction, reaching us in St Andrew's United Church in Kirton in Lindsey at 2.30pm on 6 March.

This year's service has been prepared by Christian women in Nigeria, who call us to come and find rest from all that weighs us down, as we reflect on some words of Jesus, 'I will give you rest, come.' (*Matthew 11.28*)

**Please join us in
St Andrew's Church
at 2.30pm on
Friday 6 March**

*The service will last
about 45 minutes*

Looking ahead at St Andrew's United Church

* **6 January 11 am**
Covenant for 2026

* **1 February 11 am**
Service for Candlemas

* **18 Feb Ash Wednesday**
Service of Ashing, 9.30 am

* **6 March 2.30 pm**
Wave of Prayer
(Details in the article above)

* **15 March 11 am**
Mothering Sunday

* **3 April, Good Friday**
Walk of Witness 10.30 am

* **Easter Day:**
• *Sunrise Service 6.30 am*
• *Church Breakfast 9 am*
• *Easter Communion 11 am*

The Wise Men look for a King

The Feast of Epiphany (6 Jan) marks the visit of the Wise Men to see Jesus. This is their story:

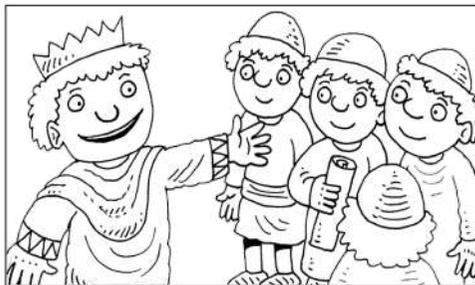


The Bible doesn't actually tell us if they used camels. That is a tradition.

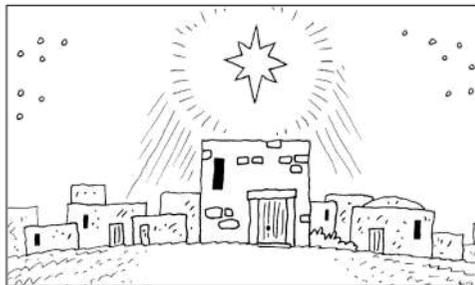
They took gifts of gold, frankincense and a scented ointment called myrrh.

Some very clever men from an eastern country studied the stars. They were excited when they saw a bright new one. 'It means a new king has been born,' they said, 'We must go and find him.'

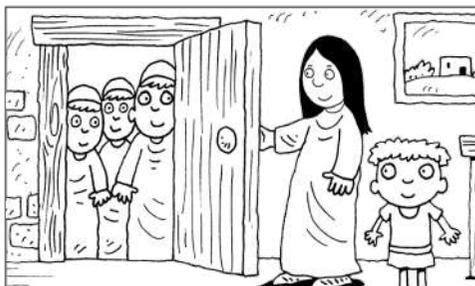
The Wise Men packed the things they needed for the journey, along with valuable presents for the new-born King. They set out to follow the star, which shone brightly every night.



They went to look for the child at King Herod's palace in Jerusalem. His advisers said the Christ would be born in Bethlehem. 'Come back and tell me when you find him,' said Herod slyly.



So the Wise Men set out again. They saw the star shining in the east and went towards it, until it was right above the house in Bethlehem where Jesus and his parents were living.



When Mary opened the door she was surprised to see such important strangers from a far off land. They told her they had even been to King Herod's palace to try to find this special child! *



An angel warned the Wise Men not to go back and tell Herod they had found God's promised king, because he would try to kill the child, so the Wise Men went home another way.

© Jill Kemp & Richard Gunther / Free Bible Images

* A puzzle to solve . . .

Q. Why do these cartoons show Jesus as a small boy, not a baby?
A. In Luke 2.16 the word in the

language of the New Testament (Greek) used for 'babe' when the shepherds come is *brepchos*, which means new-born child or infant.

In Matthew 2.11 the word used for 'young child' when the wise men come is *paidion*, meaning a little boy/little girl, that is – a toddler.

What's the point?



Do you still make New Year resolutions? Jane Sheard takes a fresh look at them.

Our three-year-old granddaughter had been busy preparing for her nursery's Christmas concert. She mastered the words (or most of them!) to several songs, including *Frosty the Snowman*, *When Santa got stuck up the chimney* and *Jingle Bells*. When it came to *We wish you a merry Christmas*, however, the last line had become, '*We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new you*'.

'A happy new you!' – that's not a bad thing to wish someone at the beginning of a new year, the traditional time for making those dreaded Resolutions which, in most cases, will be broken by the end of January.

Why bother to make them? Perhaps it's because, deep down, people are often dissatisfied with the 'old you'. We all know that we could be better people than we are – in so many ways.

Things we regret?

As we look back on the past year (or even further), there are things we regret – things of which we are ashamed, that cause us deep embarrassment and discomfort when they pop up in our minds. Maybe we've been unkind to someone, failed to visit a friend, posted something hurtful on *Facebook*, or joined in the current piece of gossip that passes instant judgement based on minimum facts?

As we reflect, we determine to do better in the coming year.

We make a good start – and then the doom and gloom and general negativity



that seems to pervade our society drag us down. What's the point, we think?

Totally filled

We are just emerging from the season of remembering the birth of a tiny baby over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. We enjoy thinking about the baby Jesus, but sometimes we forget that the little baby grew up to be a man – a man who was totally filled with God's spirit, a man who held out the possibility of real transformation and forgiveness of the past to those he met, if they would turn away from their old lives and follow him – to become 'a new you'.

A transformed life

God still offers us the same opportunity of a transformed life, without having to struggle for it just by our own efforts, unaided. Jesus promised his followers that God would send them his spirit to be with them through all life's difficulties.

Countless millions of people since then have trusted that promise and experienced God's presence in their lives – and so can we.

A '*happy new you*' to everyone!

Sebastian's 'Christmas'

Hi Friends!

Happy Christmas, everyone! Well, Cedric just looked over my shoulder and laughed! 'You've got the wrong month, Sebastian!' he said. 'It's not Christmas any more.'

'That's where you're wrong!' I replied.

'It's Christmas all the way to 6 January - and some people think even until 2 February.' (I like it when I'm right and Cedric is wrong!)

'Explain!' Cedric demanded. So I did... 'It's history, you see. Many hundreds of years ago, the people in charge of the church said that Christians should celebrate on all the days between Christmas Day (when we remember Jesus being born) and Epiphany (6 January, when we remember the visit of the Wise Men to Jesus, when he was a toddler). This is the time for singing carols and having lots to eat - and visiting our friends, and generally enjoying ourselves. But, sadly, many people stop singing carols the moment Christmas Day is over. I hope that my friends in church go on singing them: I really like carols, especially jolly ones.

But some people also go on celebrating until 2 February. That's when we think about Mary and Joseph taking the baby



Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to thank God for his birth. (I might tell you a bit more about that next time.) So, you see, it's quite OK to go on wishing people a happy Christmas until well into January. I think it's great to keep remembering how Jesus came to live as an ordinary person and that he began life here as a tiny helpless baby, just like the rest of my human friends. It means that he can understand them, even when they do wrong things and let him down.'

And, while we're talking about letting God down and doing wrong things, have you remembered to make a New Year's Resolution? Don't try to make it too difficult. Just choose one way in which you are going to improve and be more like Jesus, or even make someone else's life better.

Happy New Year, everyone!

Your friend,
Sebastian

If you enjoyed the Chingle party, look out on Facebook for our other family events

Bring Mum (and Gran) to church on Mothering Sunday (Mother's Day)

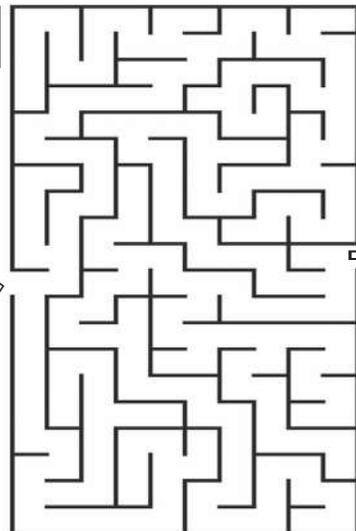
St Andrew's United Church 15 March at 11am



Sebastian Spider's Puzzle Corner for all ages

Help this one of the Wise Men

It's early morning in Bethlehem. This Wise Man has got lost. Can you help him find his way through the streets to the house where his friends are going to meet the child, Jesus?



1. Why didn't he follow the star back?
2. How many friends was he going to meet?
3. Which city did the Wise Men visit first?



4. The Wise Men are sometimes called: ... or ...
5. Which country are they thought to have come from?

Answers on p58

New Word Ladder

Climb from BOOT to SALE changing just one letter at a time, without disturbing the order of the remaining letters. But the clues for the steps are not in the right order.

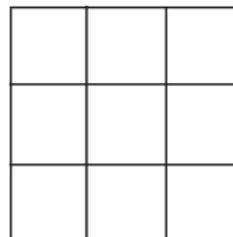
SALE

CLUES

- Where corn is ground
- Child's toy
- Man
- Lock
- Herb used with fish
- Shopping precinct
- Idiot

BOOT

A Magic Square



Put these numbers into the square above so that each row across, down and diagonally adds up to zero.

-4 -3 -2 -1 0 1

2 3 4 For a solution see page 58

Two Brain Teasers

Q1. What is seen in the middle of March and April but can't be seen at the start or end of either month?

Q2. I add six to eleven, and get five. How?

Answers on page p58

THE WISE MEN WORD SEARCH



Find these words in the puzzle box. Words are hidden → and ↓

ASTROLOGER	EAST	JESUS	MYRRH
BETHLEHEM	EPIPHANY	JOURNEY	PALACE
CAMEL	FRANKINCENSE	KINGS	STAR
CHILD	GOLD	KNEEL	TRAVEL
DESERT	HEROD	MAGI	WORSHIP

New Year Groaners

- Q. How do you talk to giants? A. Use big words!
- Q. How do you make an octopus laugh? A. With ten-tickles.