



St Mark's Church, Reigate

January 2026

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends

How long does your Christmas last, I wonder? Are you a decorations down by Boxing Day, can't wait to get it all over kind of person? Is the New Year the time for moving on from Christmas, or perhaps you pack Christmas away the day before you have to go back to work? Maybe you hold on to the glitter and baubles until Epiphany on the 6th of January? Or – do you wait till Candlemas on 2nd of February – at the end of 40 days of Christmas?

Of course, the story of Christmas doesn't end with the birth of a baby. Christians commemorate the visit of the Wise Men/Kings/Magi at Epiphany, and the presentation of Jesus at the Temple, as was required by Jewish Law – and then the rest of the Gospel story as we have it in the Bible unwinds through the year once again.

Jesus came to be "God with us", born as a baby, "day by day, like us he grew", until he became a man, taught about God, healed people, was executed, rose again from the dead and ascended to heaven. The message of the deep love of God for creation, including us human beings, that was brought into the world by that baby was confirmed by how he lived, died and is wonderfully with us still. The message of Christmas remains with us always.

Do I keep my decorations up all year then? Well no. The decorations would drive me mad – and spoil the season next time – so for us the decorations come down at Epiphany, the 6th of January. I do leave the Nativity Scene, one we bought in Bethlehem carved from Olive wood up for a while longer to remind us that God is with us, even in the dark, damp, cold of the rest of our winter. I try to hold on to some of the feeling of peace and hope for the world that the season of Christmas reminds us of.

Whenever you take your decorations down, don't pack the life-giving, wonderful message into the boxes and put it in the loft till next year. I pray for each of you a Christmas that brings the love of God nearer to your hearts and your lives – and that you will take God with you into the New Year and transform your life.

Every blessing this New Year.