

# January 2024

## New Year

As you read this, the new year will have begun and I'm sure resolutions are being undertaken (and perhaps broken already!). 2024 could be a significant year for several reasons and there are some important things happening nationally and internationally. We will be having a General Election this year which could see a change of government. The Paris Olympics are being held in the summer and two less well-known events are also occurring in 2024. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, a total solar eclipse will take place, with visibility across central Mexico, the contiguous United States and parts of Canada and in November –Artemis II, the second mission of the Artemis program and first crewed mission beyond low Earth orbit since 1972, is planned to launch.



New Year is not quite as significant for the church as the church's year begins with the first Sunday of Advent in late November or early December; although New Year's Day is a feast day in the church with the rather unwieldy name of the Naming and Circumcision of Jesus.

The festival is traditionally called the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ and marks the circumcision of Jesus in accordance with Jewish tradition, eight days (according to the Semitic and southern European calculation of intervals of days) after his birth, the occasion on which the child was formally given his name.

The circumcision of Jesus has traditionally been seen, as in the popular 14th-century work the Golden Legend, as the first time the blood of Christ was shed, and thus the beginning of the process of the redemption of humankind, and a demonstration that Christ is fully human, and of his (parents') obedience to Biblical law. This makes 1<sup>st</sup> January an appropriate day to celebrate this as hopefully we look on the coming new year with optimism for the new opportunities it will bring and one of those opportunities is to

discover for yourself the wonderful gift that God has given us in Jesus who came to redeem us at Christmas time.

I wish you all a happy and prosperous new year.

*Rev Michael*

### **Colours, Readings and Saints Days**

Have you ever wondered what the different colours on the altar mean or puzzled as to how the readings are chosen for services? How well do you know your Saints days? If you would like to find out the answer to these and other questions then please come along to our teaching session on Liturgy in February.

Following our successful session on welcoming in church last autumn we are going to hold another teaching session, this time on Liturgy, on **Tuesday 6th February at 7.30pm in the Brass Crosby Room**. Rev Michael will be leading and he hopes to make it fun with some interaction and an opportunity to test your current knowledge as well as giving the opportunity for questions at the end. You do not need to book for the session but it would be helpful to know numbers so please let Suzanne in the office know if you intend to come. Hope to see a good number of you there.

*Rev Michael*