Christmas has given way to the season of Epiphany in which we celebrate the revelation of Jesus as fully human, fully divine. We rejoice and rest in his glory.

By it we remember 'The Nativity story is no fairy tale. Jesus is born in **a lean-to**, lies in a food trough, and is hounded by Herod's troops. The Massacre of the Innocents follows the Magi's visit. The infant Jesus and his family live at the centre of oppression and suffering. Managing a homebirth in a refuge, they end up as refugees to Egypt. In short, Emmanuel, 'God with Us', is with us in every oppression. **If you feel trapped today, know He is with you and His grace is sufficient'.**

It is in Epiphany we find the visit of the Magi: they show us that the revelation of Jesus coming to all peoples and the vision of a community from across the nations and ethnicities coming together to worship Jesus. I remember Jesus words 'My house shall be a House of prayer for all Nations" We long for a time where we can all meet again in-person, clustering around Jesus in our worship without social distancing. But until then we know Jesus is with us in our midst, and we can comfort one another and give and receive loving support from each other.

During the weeks ahead we will be able to meet by Zoom to pray on 4 days each week Monday to Thursday, Zoom Codes to follow

We come to pray for our parish, for those who do not yet know God, I want to see a profound turning to God in our community and in our nation. We need to pray for that to come into being as we intercede. We want to pray for those who are sick and for the needs of our church family. We want to come before God ourselves and give our hearts and heartbreaks to him.

After the Magi's visit, Herod's troops wreak havoc and 'weeping and great mourning' fill the air. But Matthew reiterates again and again in his Epiphany account - 'So was fulfilled' the longed-for shining forth of our Saviour -. We continue in dark times but God's light is unquenchable. Lean into the manger today. **In any lean-to situation, lean on our Lord. He is good, He is with us, and His mercies never fail.**

With love Amanda

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