

Christ Church, Ipswich
Sunday 5th January 2025
Epiphany Sunday Worship
with Holy Communion and the Commissioning of our Deacons

Minister: Revd Neil Coulson

Organist: Mr Stephen Hogger

Happy New Year to you and your loved ones! I hope you are well.

Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

Arise, shine for your light has come!
 As the magi followed the star to a new place,
 a place where dreams became reality,
 let us follow our Lord and saviour
 to a place of renewed hope.
 Not looking back, but always moving forward,
 let us seek and find the king.

A gathering prayer

Almighty God, king of creation,
 You are our Day Star in the murk of a winter's
 morn,
 and our guiding light at all times.
 We set our faltering feet upon the path of the
 New Year,
 raising our eyes in faith to the light of your love;
 lead us onwards with hope and strength. **Amen.**

A prayer of approach

We come to praise you, Lord, God of Israel and all the nations.
 We come to you who set your people free.
 We come to you who guides us into the way of peace.
 We come to you as we journey through Advent
 and prepare to welcome, once again, the Christ child. **Amen.**

R&S 67 Immortal, invisible, God only wise

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
 in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
 most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
 almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
 nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
 thy justice like mountains high soaring above
 thy clouds which are fountains
 of goodness and love.

3 To all life Thou givest, to both great and small;
 in all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
 we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
 And wither and perish; but naught changeth Thee.

4 Great Father of glory: O help us to see
 'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.
 And so let thy glory, Almighty, impart,
 through Christ in the story, thy Christ to the heart.

Walter Chalmers Smith. (1824-1908)

A prayer of adoration

God the Father, who calls us to set forth:
 We worship and adore you.
 Christ the Son who journeys with us:
 We worship and adore you.
 Holy Spirit who inspires us for the road ahead:
 We worship and adore you. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Forgive us, O Most High,
when we fail to see you in Creation,
and so exploit and misuse the abundance of life
with which we share the planet.
Help us to learn, soon, O God,
how to live in harmony with nature.

Forgive us Lord Jesus,
when we seek fulfilment in other things and turn away from You.
Teach us, quickly, O Christ
that our restless hearts will only find their rest in You.

Forgive us, Most Holy Spirit,
when we look for warmth and purpose
in strange places instead of in Your all-powerful love.
Forgive us, and give us time to change! Amen.

Hear good news: God's love seeks us out at great cost.
When we turn back to God we find that, like a father,
God runs towards us with arms open wide in welcome.
Like a mother, God surrounds us with fierce love.
Like a rock upon which we stand,
God gives us a secure foundation for life.
So accept the forgiveness on offer, learn to forgive others,
and find the strength to forgive yourself. Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

By a heavenly sign you called them,
those seekers who crossed sands and rivers and rocky places to find you.
We praise you for the example of their perseverance
in their pilgrimage to prove the truth of their observations.
So, Lord, we thank you for calling us to the pilgrimage of this New Year;
for the journey we must make through it, no turning back,
and for the inner journeys into our faith and spirituality
and the epiphanies they will bring.
We set forth in faith. **Amen.**

R&S 183 Brightest and best of the Sons of the Morning

1 Brightest and best of the Sons of the Morning,
dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid,
star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid!

2 Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining,
low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;
angels adore him, in slumber reclining,
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all.

3 Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
odours of Edom and offerings divine;
gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,
myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

4 Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
vainly with gifts would his favour secure;
richer by far is the heart's adoration,
dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

5 Brightest and best of the Sons of the Morning,
dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid,
star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant Redeemer is laid!

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

Old Testament Reading**Isaiah 60:1-6****(OT page 628)***The ingathering of the dispersed*

60 Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
²For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
³Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
⁴Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,

and your daughters shall be carried on their
nurses' arms.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be
brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Gospel Reading**Matthew 2:1-12****(NT page 1)***The Visit of the Wise Men*

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

R&S 187 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

1 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
bring and adore him; the Lord is his name.

2 Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,
comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

3 Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth thou would'st reckon as thine;
truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to lay on his shrine.

4 These, though we bring them in trembling
and fearfulness,
he will accept for the name that is dear;
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear.

5 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
bring and adore him: the Lord is his name.

John S. B. Monsell. 1811-1875 altd.

Reflection

A talk reflecting on today's readings will be shared.

A moment for reflection

Our prayers of intercession

Light of the World we bring You our prayers for our world dwelling in gloom and despondency.
Lighten our darkness, Lord we pray.

We pray for the world at war,
or if not at war busy preparing for it.
We pray for the people of Ukraine wondering what the New Year brings,
for the people of Gaza living ever in fear,
for the people of Israel dreaming of security,
for the people of Lebanon living on a knife edge,
for the people of Syria living in a season of transition,
and for all who live with bellicose leaders,
insecurity, and crushing poverty.

Lighten our darkness, Lord we pray.

We pray for the world in turmoil,
Creation itself overheating due to human excess;
we pray for nations plagued by plastic,
for the rich who won't change their ways,
for the poor who can't change theirs.
We pray for those who lead our world
that your light will transform their hearts and minds,
that we may flourish and not perish.

Lighten our darkness, Lord we pray.

We pray for the nations,
for people looking to blame the poor for the problems of the rich,
for those who idolise despots and dictators,
for those who defend democracy and our institutions,
and for all who seek to make the world kinder and gentler.

Lighten our darkness, Lord we pray.

We pray for the Church, a place where light is supposed to shine,
where people are supposed to be safe,
and where the Gospel is supposed to be shared with all.
Forgive us where we have failed, Good Lord,
give us the energy to reform,
to choose leaders who work with not over others,
and who will call us back to Your light.

Lighten our darkness, Lord we pray.

We pray for those we know and love who are in any kind of need....

And we pray for those we don't know and those we find it hard to love....

Lighten our darkness, Lord we pray.

In Jesus name, Amen.

R&S 184 As with gladness men of old

1 As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright,
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore be led by thee.

2 As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour, to thy lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
thee whom heaven and earth adore,
so may we with willing feet
ever seek thy mercy-seat.

3 As they offered gifts most rare
at thy cradle rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure, and free from sin's alloy,

all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

4 Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way;
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.

5 In the heavenly country bright
need they no created light;
thou its light, its joy, its crown,
thou its sun, which goes not down.
There forever may we sing
alleluias to our King.

W. C. Dix. (1837-98)

Our children and young people will return from Café Church**The Commissioning of the Deacons****Holy Communion****Gospel Words**

Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6:35

Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking;
if you hear my voice and open the door,
I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.

Revelation 3:20

God proves his love for us in
that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

Invitation to the Table

Come to this table, not because you must but because you may,
not because you are strong, but because you are weak.
Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come,
but because you need mercy and help.
Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more.
Come, because he loved you and gave himself for you.
Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body.

We pray together:

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Institution

The apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord's Supper:

For I received from the Lord
what I also handed on to you,
that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed
took a loaf of bread,
and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said,
'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying,
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11.23–26

Thanksgiving

Loving God,
we praise and thank you
for your love shown to us in Jesus Christ.

We thank you for his life and ministry,
announcing the good news of your kingdom
and demonstrating its power
in the lifting of the downtrodden,
and the healing of the sick,
and the loving of the loveless.

We thank you for his sacrificial death upon the cross
for the redemption of the world,
and for your raising him to life again,
as a foretaste of the glory we shall share.

We give you thanks for this bread and wine,
symbols of our world
and signs of your transforming love.
Send your Holy Spirit, we pray,
that we may be renewed
into the likeness of Jesus Christ
and formed into his Body.
This we pray in his name and for his sake. Amen.

The Breaking of Bread

Jesus said, 'This is my body which is for you;
do this in memory of me'.

Sharing the Bread

Take this in remembrance that Christ died for you
and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The Lifting of the Cup

In the same way,
he took the cup after supper, and said:
'This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood.
Whenever you drink it,
do this in memory of me.' 1 Corinthians 11:25

Sharing the Wine

Drink this and remember that Christ's blood was shed for you
and be thankful.

Words of Acclamation and Prayer

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate.
Your resurrection we confess.
Your final coming we await.
Glory be to you, O Christ.
**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

**Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen**

A Prayer of Dedication for all our giving

*Giving God,
we return to You something of what You have given us.
Help us to use these gifts wisely;
knowing that, in all things,
You desire us to reveal Your generous love that reaches all. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer (with music)

BPW 347 Lord, the light of your love is shining

1 Lord, the light of Your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining:
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us;
set us free by the truth You now bring us –
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and mercy;
send forth Your word, Lord,
and let there be light!*

The Blessing

Now the song of the angels is stilled,
the star in the sky is gone,
the magi are home,
the shepherds are back with their flock,
so now the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among others,
and to make music in the heart.

Go now and attend to Christmas' work
and may the blessing of Almighty God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you and those whom you love,
now and always. Amen.

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

2 Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,
from the shadows into Your radiance;
by Your blood I may enter Your brightness:
search me, try me, consume all my darkness –
shine on me, shine on me.

3 As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
so our faces display Your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory:
mirrored here, may our lives tell Your story –
shine on me, shine on me.

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