

Sunday 7th January 2024: Sunday after Epiphany & First Sunday in Ordinary Time
For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or other suitable time.



StF 227 H&P 123 'Brightest and best' by Reginald Heber (1783 – 1826)

Opening Prayer

Think of the past week and say both 'thank you' and 'sorry' to our loving God.

Psalm set for Epiphany: Psalm 72 v 1 – 7

To think about

The last hymn is based on this Psalm – look at StF 228 and see how Psalm 72 is used.

Gospel reading set for Epiphany: Matthew 2 v 1 – 12

StF 224 H&P 121 'As with gladness men of old' by William Chatterton Dix (1837 – 1898)

Message from a Circuit Friend

There are many thousands of people, from early civilisations to now, who have observed the night sky. Nowadays, with the aid of powerful telescopes, astronomers can draw our attention to rare cosmic events. A few years ago, Jupiter and Saturn came closer together. (The next time this should happen will be in 2040) There have been suggestions that this was what happened when the Magi saw the bright star and followed it until they found the Christ-child. The Gospel writer is not interested in astronomy nor in stargazing, but in showing the realization of God's love, demonstrated in the gift of His son, not just to the chosen few but for all humankind. Sometimes this is difficult for people to believe, especially in our world which is so divided and broken. God wants barriers of age, skin colour, gender and social status broken down, no matter who we are or what we have done or failed to do. God's love in Jesus Christ is for us all. This is what we celebrate at Epiphany, the revelation of His all-encompassing love beyond any barriers we may impose. If we ponder for a moment that meeting of the Magi and the Christ-child. These prosperous wealthy men kneeling and offering their gifts to Him, a child born in humble circumstances, but they fell to their knees in awe and wonder and worshipped Him. It was the only response they could make, confronted with the reality of God's immense love. Their stay ends and they go home. Have you, like me, wondered what they talked about, getting the better of Herod and the brightness of the star? You can imagine them speaking in hushed whispers recalling their joy and awe as they knelt before the Christ-child. It was all we could do they said. He was a child and yet a king and it is to Him, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that we too bow down in worship and offer our thanks and praise.

Avril Temple (Local Preacher and member of Sculthorpe & Fakenham Methodist Church)

StF 169 H&P 81 'Come, thou long-expected Jesus' by Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)
"Born a child and yet a king, born to reign in us for ever, now thy gracious kingdom bring."

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for our world... for the church... for our communities... for our families & friends...

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

StF 228 H&P 125 'Hail to the Lord's Anointed' by James Montgomery (1771 – 1854)

May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.

Circuit News: Covenant Services are taking place in the Circuit throughout January. The Worship at Home sheet next week - which is our 200th! – will contain the Covenant prayer and other parts of the Methodist Covenant Service.