

**ST CUTHBERT'S
SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH
COLINTON**

**The Epiphany
Wednesday 30 December 2020
Sunday 3 January 2021**



**COVID-19
Services Online on our YouTube Channel**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

We meet in Christ's name. **Let us share his peace.**

We offer one another a sign of God's peace with a smile, bow or wave.

HYMN 46 – As with gladness men of old

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 to thee.

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

As their precious gifts they laid,
at thy manger roughly made,
so may we with holy joy,
pure, and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee our heavenly King.

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 for ever may we sing
alleluias to our King.

William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898) alt.
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COLLECT FOR PURITY

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.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

God is love and we are God's children. There is no room for fear in love. We love because God loved us first.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

God our Father, we confess to you and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. Forgive us our sins, and deliver us from the power of evil, for the sake of your Son who died for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God, who is both power and love, forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

GLORIA (*Said*)

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Eternal God, who by a star led wise men to the worship of your Son, guide by your light the nations of the earth, that the whole world may know your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 60.1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift 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. Then 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. A 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL HYMN – 650 – See him lying on a bed of straw

See him lying on a bed of straw:
a draughty stable with an open door.
Mary cradling the babe she bore:
the Prince of Glory is his name.

*O now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord of love again:
just as poor as was the stable then,
the Prince of Glory when he came!*

Star of silver, sweep across the skies,
show where Jesus in the manger lies;
shepherds, swiftly from your stupor rise
to see the Saviour of the world!

Angels, sing again the song you sang,
sing the glory of God's gracious plan;
sing that Beth'lem's little baby can
be the Saviour of us all.

Mine are riches, from your poverty;
from your innocence, eternity;
mine, forgiveness by your death for me,
child of sorrow for my joy.

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GOSPEL: Matthew 2.1-12

Hear the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, '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.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"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." '

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then 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.' When 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. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On 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. And having been warned in a dream not to

return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

SERMON

When we decide to go on a journey, we think nothing of jumping into a car, switching on the ignition and driving for as long as it takes until we reach our destination. Or, walking to the railway station, hopping on a train and within a few hours disembarking safely at the other end. (Well, at least before the pandemic, we would). But just occasionally there are circumstances when we have to think about our journey rather more carefully. You've probably all heard the advice during bad weather to "*only travel when it is absolutely essential*".

Now despite the lyrics of some well-known carols, we can almost be certain that the journey of the three wise men did not take place *in the bleak midwinter or amid the winter's snow*. As Matthew's gospel tells us they came from the east, and if you know anything about the geography of the Middle East, you will be aware that to the east of Israel lies not *field and fountain, moor and mountain* but desert. Lots of hot, dry desert that stretches for miles and miles, as far as the eye can see. However, having spent time in Saudi Arabia and camped in the desert, it does get below freezing at night.

So what relevance does this story have to our life as a church here, at the beginning of a New Year over 2000 years later?

Well, first of all, I believe many people who live around us are on the whole looking for meaning and purpose in their lives – and I also believe this desire has increased during COVID. But like the wise men they are not necessarily looking to find it in the established religion of the day.

For most of them, Jesus is the answer to questions they aren't ,as yet, asking. But we can pray and ask God to open the eyes of some, so that like the wise men, they too will decide to start looking in the right direction.

And when we begin to see that they are serious about finding out more about the Christian faith; they turn up at church, or ask us to pray about some concern in their life, it's then, like the teachers of the law, we need to be ready to offer hospitality and explain to them a little bit more about what they're looking for.

After all, the story of the wise men tells us that people won't find Jesus on their own. They might get close, just like the wise men got close to Bethlehem when they wound up in Jerusalem. But they need someone to actually lead and direct them towards their destination. It doesn't mean necessarily that we give them the whole gospel message in one go. But we may have to be ready to move out of our

comfort zones, to be prepared to invest time and effort to listen to their stories, to answer their questions, and above all to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit prompting and leading us, in how best we help them learn more about Christ, the baby born in poverty.

For all the research shows that beyond whatever courses and teaching programmes and anything else a church offers, it is the personal contact that helps people come to a living faith. And that shouldn't surprise us because there is a real sense in which, if people are to come to know Christ for themselves, they need to be able to see Christ at work in us, and they need to see the difference our faith makes for themselves.

And if God is merciful - and let's not forget everything that we do depends not on us getting it right but on the grace of God - and our friend comes to know the Lord, what then? Quite rightly we rejoice and give thanks, and hopefully not just because there is one more member of the congregation.

So, to sum up, I believe there is much indeed in the story of the wise men, that is very relevant to us as we face a New Year and seek to answer a question, as to how our church, in fact The Church, can grow. It reminds us that people are looking in all kinds of places for spiritual answers and most have never really considered Jesus.

It reminds us that we need to pray, nonetheless, for God to call people to look in our direction and discover more of the Christian faith. It reminds us not simply to give people information about the Christian faith but to walk alongside them and share in their lives.

All this sounds like hard work, doesn't it? But then it all depends whether we are looking at ourselves - at the fact that we are currently worshipping differently and being community differently, or whether we are looking at the one who has given us all things in Christ. Because if God can work in the lives of a group of pagan astrologers, and if God can use the words of the chief priests who had no intention of doing His will, then we can be confident that no matter how well we manage to walk in His ways (or not), God will still take and use us for His glory.

Our calling is not to worry or fret about how we can achieve our goals, but to focus on Him and to respond with joy to those words that began our reading from Isaiah: "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you". So as we look forward to the New Year let us have the courage to step forward and do whatever the Lord asks of us, knowing that He can, and will, use even us for His purposes and His glory. Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love. We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high. We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

Gracious God, who guided the wise men by the light of a star as they sought your Son and who inspired them to kneel in adoration before him, lead us to an awareness of your presence so that we too may worship him, our Lord and Saviour, and take him into our hearts and lives.

In the light of your presence. **We offer you ourselves.**
Loving God, as a star brought the wise men to your Son, may your Church be a beacon shining out over this troubled world. Grant all Christian communities everywhere the wisdom to work together in unity and openness, undertaking your work on earth more faithfully. As we offer ourselves to you, we pray for your church family here at St. Cuthbert's, for Bishop John, for Nicki, Margaret, Caroline and Bishop Bob, giving thanks for the work of Marie and Philip and the ministry of each one of us.

In the light of your presence. **We offer you ourselves.**

Gracious God, may your light shine over every corner of this world, transforming the hearts and minds of those in positions of power, authority and influence. May they be guided to use the resources they control more responsibly, so none may be in need. We give thanks for all individuals and organisations who reflect your love by seeking peace between peoples or giving their time and skills to help those in deepest need, especially during this pandemic. We pray that these glimmers of your Kingdom may increase, leading to a just and accepting world where violence ceases and where no one is rejected, despised or ill treated.

In the light of your presence. **We offer you ourselves.**

Loving God, whose Son was born into an earthly family, may your light shine on our homes and our loved ones, and your blessing rest on all those we love and on all with whom we share joy and laughter, pains and sorrows. May we be guided to reach out in compassion and friendship to those in our community suffering loneliness or distress during this pandemic. And we ask you, Lord, to be with those who are homeless or living in homes where there is discord or abuse.

In the light of your presence. **We offer you ourselves.**

Gracious and compassionate God, we pray that the light of your love may bring comfort and support to those who are in physical, emotional or mental pain and distress. We give thanks for all who seek to relieve pain, for all doctors, nurses and carers looking after the suffering, particularly those risking their lives and well-being as they care for those ill

with Covid19. We pray for healing and wholeness, peace of mind and a sense of hope in these troubled times.

In the light of your presence. **We offer you ourselves.**

Loving God, as we rejoice in the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ the Light of the world, we pray for loved ones and friends who have passed into the eternal light of your heavenly kingdom. We ask for your support and comfort for those who mourn their passing from this world.

In the light of your presence. **We offer you ourselves.**

Gracious and faithful God, may we experience the joy of your light shining on us as we travel onwards in our faith. We thank you that you keep calling us and guiding us, however tortuous our journey, however many obstacles we encounter or wrong paths we take, knowing that you will continue to lead us until our journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the Light of the World. **Amen.**

Rev Dr Margaret Dineley

OFFERTORY HYMN – 805 – We three kings of Orient are

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar;
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

Born a King on Bethlehem plain,
gold I bring, to crown him again,
King for ever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I,
incense owns a Deity nigh,
prayer and praising, gladly raising,
worship him, God most high.

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and sacrifice;
alleluia, alleluia,
earth to heaven replies.

John Henry Hopkins (1820-1891) alt
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Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
which earth has given and human hands have made;
it will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
Through your goodness we have this wine to offer,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands;
it will become the cup of our salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Worship and praise belong to you, Father, in every place and
at all times. All power is yours. You created the heavens
and established the earth; you sustain in being all that is.

In Christ, your Son, our life and yours are brought together
in a wonderful exchange. He made his home among us that
we might for ever dwell in you. Through your Holy Spirit you
call us to new birth in a creation restored by love.

As children of your redeeming purpose, who have seen the radiance of your glory revealed to all the nations in your Son, we offer you our praise, with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven singing the hymn of your unending glory:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Please sit or kneel

Glory and thanksgiving be to you, most loving Father, for the gift of your Son born in human flesh. He is the Word existing beyond time, both source and final purpose, bringing to wholeness all that is made. Obedient to your will he died upon the Cross. By your power you raised him from the dead. He broke the bonds of evil and set your people free to be his Body in the world.

On the night when he was given up to death, knowing that his hour had come, having loved his own, he loved them to the end. At supper with his disciples he took bread and offered you thanks.

He broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying:

"Take, eat. This is my Body: it is broken for you."

After supper, he took the cup, he offered you thanks, and gave it to them saying:

"Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new covenant; it is poured out for you, and for all, that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me."

We now obey your Son's command. We recall his blessed passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension; and we look for the coming of his Kingdom. Made one with him, we offer you these gifts and with them ourselves, a single, holy living sacrifice.

Hear us, most merciful Father, and send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this bread and this wine, that, overshadowed by his life-giving power, they may be the Body and Blood of your Son, and we may be kindled with the fire of your love and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's Body to live and work to your praise and glory; may we grow together in unity and love until at last, in your new creation, we enter into our heritage in the company of the Virgin Mary, the apostles and prophets, St Cuthbert and of all our brothers and sisters living and departed.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be to you, Lord of all ages, world without end.

Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.

Lord, unite us in this sign.

LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has commanded and taught us, we are bold to say:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

COMMUNION

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God; you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.**

A PRAYER FOR US TO PRAY AT HOME:

**God of infinite mercy, we thank you for Jesus our Saviour,
who feeds his people and gives them eternal life.**

**Though we cannot consume the gifts of bread and wine,
we thank you that we do receive Christ's saving presence,
the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of his
passion. Grant that we may continue for ever
in the Risen Life of our Saviour. Amen.**

THANKSGIVING AND SENDING OUT

Give thanks to our gracious God
Whose mercy endures for ever.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**God of all the nations of the earth, guide us with your light.
Help us to recognise Christ as he comes to us in this
eucharist and in our neighbours. May we welcome him
with love, for he is Lord now and for ever. Amen.**

BLESSING

Christ the Son of God gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ.

Amen.

VOLUNTARY

St Cuthbert's Notes

30 December 2020 and 3 January 2021

YouTube:

Join the full service each week online, including readings, intercessions, and the hymns played by Philip using this link to our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3iPQOkQiVERjeHZbj2OnBQ>

The Sign:

The deadline for articles and information for the February issue of 'The Sign' is Sunday 17 January 2021. Please send to stcuthbertscolinton@gmail.com. Thank you.

Weekly Prayer:

O God, who, by the guidance of a star, revealed your only-begotten Son to the nations: Grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at the last be led to see your glory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.