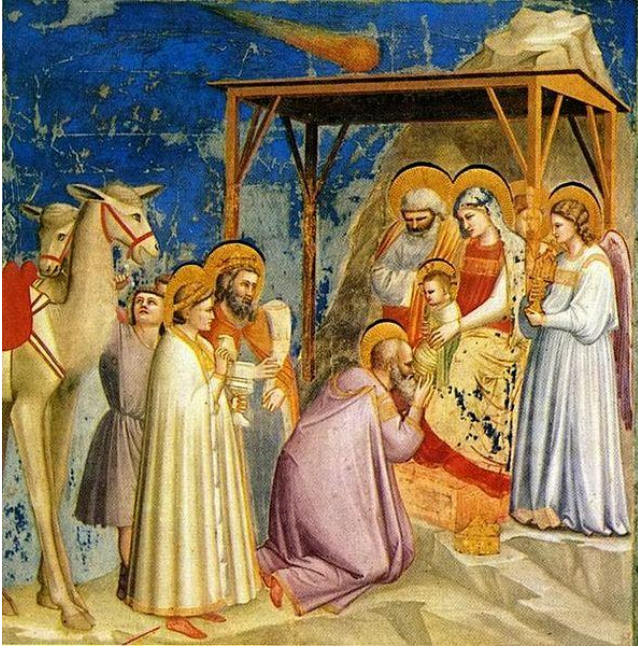


Service for Week 23<sup>rd</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> December  
2024 By Chaplain Andy



**Opening Prayer**

Loving God, we are reminded of the journey of the Magi: how they stepped out into the unknown, persevering despite adversity, searching diligently until their quest was rewarded.

Lord God we also come seeking looking to learn from their experience, to worship the one before whom they knelt in homage, and to understand what his birth, life, death and resurrection means for us. Help us to discover each day a little more of your love and gracious purpose.

**Amen**

**The Lord's Prayer-** Our Father ...

**Amen**

***Bible Reading Matt2:1-12***

*The Visit of the Magi*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?"

We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

***Thanks be to God***

***Reflection***

After all our celebrations of Christ's birth at Christmas what will we do next week? - well we should take our Christmas decorations down as on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January we celebrate the day that we call Epiphany-which is the start of this period in the Church year in January.

Epiphany means 'coming into light' or 'a manifestation of a divine being' and at this time we celebrate the time when the three Magi or wise men guided by the star, they had seen in the East found the baby Jesus in Bethlehem in the manger. We particularly remember Epiphany because this was the first time that Jesus, was revealed as the Messiah to the world. Although we often depict the Magi being there in the stable with the shepherds in our nativity scenes they came later after the birth of Jesus.

The Magi had followed the bright light of the star in the sky that guided them to Jesus the Messiah. We sung about it in our carols over Christmas and have been reminded that the Magi, the three men who had studied the stars, had brought with them some very expensive gifts – gold, frankincense and myrrh – gifts fit for a king. They went first to Jerusalem as they were expecting a much grander setting than the one they eventually found. I think they may have expected to be paying homage in a palace or a great house but certainly not in a humble stable. But Jesus as we know came not to live in a great palace with servants but to be one of us, to live a human life.

Just as the bright star guided the way for the Magi, Jesus is the bright light that guides us in our lives. Jesus' himself talked about being the 'light' In

John 8:12 He says 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' and later in John's gospel when people are starting to plot against him, He says 'The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of the light.'

And through the Holy Spirit, he not only encourages us but gives us the strength- as Paul encouraged those early Christians to 'shine the light' to others in times of darkness. Someone once put it like this 'Christians try to light a candle rather than wasting time cursing the darkness'

And this is what we do when we have faith, we follow like the Magi followed the light of God- we seek the one who is all goodness, all that is right in our world. And when we finding that light, that truth of God we want to share it with others.

The Magi followed that light to Jesus  
Jesus brought light into our world  
We share that light –  
Bringing light when there is darkness.

**Amen**

**Closing prayer**

Loving God

My I kneel before you and offer you  
each day more of my life, in joyful  
thanks through Jesus Christ my Lord.

**Amen**