

Service for Week 5th -11th Jan 2026 by

Chaplain Andy

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, as we look for meaning in our troubled world, there is much that puzzles and perplexes us.

Give us the determination of the wise men to keep on looking, until we glimpse your glory, and come before you in joyful worship.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.....

Amen

Bible Reading

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. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'"

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 do we do? - Well we should have taken our Christmas decorations down on Tuesday this week as we celebrated 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 we celebrate the time when the three Magi or wise men guided by the star, 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 wider 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. It is thought that the Magi could have been Zoroastrians from what became Persia now Jordan. Zoroastrianism is an ancient religion based on the teachings of the prophet Zoroaster. They studied the stars, with a particular focus on their celestial movements and assigning them symbolic meanings. So, they followed the star, which they first saw when they were in the east and followed it westward.

The Magi set out determined to find this particular new born baby. They found and came to worship Jesus who they had -from their scriptures- determined was one sent from God. The significance of their journey was the return to their own country which is what Epiphany is all about -because they went back to their own people to tell them that the promised one from God had come in this small baby. It was to bring the knowledge that God had come to our world through a tiny baby called Jesus. Jesus had come to reveal the true nature of God's love and forgiveness to everyone -not just to those that were in the stable, not just to those in Judea -but to start

bringing the truth – the light to everyone.

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 he said 'I am the light of the world.' In our world today there are many dark clouds. On our TV, radio, computers and phones is the constant news of wars in many places around the world and the crime and troubles closer to home. It is therefore understandable that we sometimes get downhearted about the world we live in.

But if we go into this New Year 2026 – and we are open to God's way through God's Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, God not only encourages us but gives us the strength- as Jesus said
'Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'

Let us share that light – Bringing light when there is darkness.

Amen

Closing Prayer

Loving God, I also come seeking, to worship the one before whom the Magi knelt in homage, to understand what his birth, life, death and resurrection mean for me.

Help me to discover more of your purpose for my life through Jesus Christ my Lord.

Amen

Prayers inspired by 'Prayerfully Yours' by Nick Fawcett