

Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush



The Feast of the Epiphany

Welcome-do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready

HYMN

OPENING PRAYER

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all
and also with you.

**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.**

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.**

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**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of
your name.
Amen.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

**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.**

THE COLLECT

**O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the
peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we,
who know you now by faith,
may at last behold your glory face to face;**

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through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
 who is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

READINGS : Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2. 1-12

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

(Please read Ephesians 3.1-12 at home)

REFLECTION:

We celebrate the Feast of Epiphany, the story of wise men from the East searching out and finding the Christ Child. The word 'epiphany' simply means 'showing' or 'shining forth.' He is our epiphany. God is at the heart of it.

Light-so important in the dark winter months. The light of stars-showing the way. A story about finding light way beyond the boundaries of what was familiar to the wise men, looking beyond our own boundaries perhaps.

We are all part of this beautiful Light of God, that you and I are called to shine for the world. We can think of the angels of glistening.

Sparks of beauty in the snow and the beauty of the earth. The glow of firelight on the evening. The sun's rising, the moon rising.

Quite often, a star is at the very top of the tree—at home and at our churches. The star brought these wise men to Herod.

"When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him."

The gold represents purity and the royal crown. It is a gift fit for a king.

Frankincense is from the gum resin of a tree that grows in Arabia - and was used to make special incense which was then burned in the temple by the priests as a sweet-smelling offering to God.

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The Frankincense reminds us that Jesus is both a priest and an offering to God on our behalf.

Myrrh also comes from Arabia – from a small bush rather than a tree - and it was used to make perfume and anointing oil. Myrrh was used by the Egyptians in their embalming fluids and as a perfume and an oil was used by many nations as part of preparing a body for burial. So, the Myrrh is a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The gifts that the wise men gave Jesus then remind us that Jesus is a special kind of King - and a special kind of Priest - one who would offer his life for us to God.

Jesus is in fact God's Christmas gift to us. He is the gift of God's love and presence with us. As the wise men worshipped him and gave him gifts for his work in the world - so do we - the followers of Jesus.

Herod had every reason to be disturbed. Every reason to be concerned. A real king, born to David's lineage, would have more religious support than Herod could ever dream of.

And so the part of the story we are most familiar with continues on by telling us that after the chief priests and teachers of the law tell Herod that the Christ - the anointed one promised of old - was to be born in Bethlehem, that Herod calls the wise men to him in secret - finds out when they first saw the star in the East - and then instructs the wise men to go to Bethlehem, locate the child, and then immediately report back to him so that he too may go and worship him."

Well, we know the wise men don't do that.

They are warned in a dream not to return to Jerusalem, and they depart for home from the side of the infant Jesus by a different route than they had arrived.

Later, Mary and Joseph - and the infant Jesus – become refugees. As a family forced to flee from their home and their country because of the injustice and inhumanity of their government.

Yet, in these awful circumstances in which Mary and Jesus and Joseph found themselves the scripture is fulfilled that says "Out of Egypt I have called my son", and through those terrible circumstances the life of Jesus is saved.

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

When Herod saw that star, all he could manage to see was bad news. But the point is that it's good news. Truth be told, it's the greatest news there is.

So, as a new year begins, as we move from a season of taking stock and move into the Epiphany season of this new year, we are invited to name our hopes for our lives, even when they are small hopes, a new beginning.

The first steps toward a future after such a world-wide uncertain year. Let's trust that we have the strength to see them through, trust that it will get easier, trust that setbacks aren't the end of all our good intentions.

We're invited to acknowledge our fears; and indeed, it's important that we do--but we're invited even more urgently to push past them and to imagine what it might mean to live in the light of that new star.

All our brokenness, pain and worry--the light of that new star can reveal a path of light and hope.

For those who are afraid, ill, fearful. Whatever our fears may be, Epiphany reminds us that we can live our lives in a new light. Epiphany reminds us that Jesus, the light of the world, has arrived in all his rule-breaking, table-turning glory, helping us to see all things, and even ourselves, in new ways.

It is the greatest news that ever was, is, or shall be.

God meets us in the midst of every situation and transforms that which is meant for evil into something that works for the good.

"Take heart," Jesus says, "It is I; have no fear."

May you and I always seek to live in the light of his promise. **Amen.**

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Please ask for any additional prayers

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done ;
in 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.**

THE PEACE

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.
He is Christ the Saviour and his name shall be called 'The Prince of Peace'. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.

**The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.**

THE APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting.
 Amen.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation: through your goodness we
 have this bread to set before you, 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 set before you, fruit of the vine and work of human
 hands.
 It will become for us the cup of salvation.
Blessed be God for ever.

THE 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 thanks and praise.

Here is the table set for a special meal.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who for love of our fallen race humbled himself, was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit, and lived as one of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh you have caused his light to shine in our hearts, to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven
we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name
and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**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.**

Father of all, we give you thanks for every gift that comes from heaven.

To the darkness Jesus came as your light.
With signs of faith and words of hope
he touched untouchables with love
and washed the guilty clean.

The crowds came out to see your Son,
yet at the end they turned on him.

On the night he was betrayed he came to table with his friends to
celebrate the freedom of your people.
Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food;
he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:
This is my body, given for you all.

Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;
he took the cup, gave it and said:
This is my blood, shed for you all for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate the cross on which he died to set us free.
Defying death he rose again and is alive with you to plead for us and all
the world.

Send your Spirit on us now that by these gifts we may feed on Christ
with opened eyes and hearts on fire.
May we and all who share this food offer ourselves to live for you and be
welcomed at your feast in heaven where all creation worships you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast

(consume)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord God,
the bright splendour whom the nations seek:
may we, who with the wise men have been drawn by your light,
discern the glory of your presence in your Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

**We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this physical and
spiritual sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste
of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples.
Amen.**

HYMN

THE BLESSING

Christ our Lord, to whom kings bowed down in worship and offered gifts,
reveal to you his glory and pour upon you the riches of his grace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen