

Stainton, Hilton and Brookfield
Epiphany 2021 – 3rd January

WELCOME. to Worship at home.



Thought for the day

It was God's delight to reveal his baby son to searching pagan travellers. To enter the spirit of Epiphany we need to understand that

God has no outsiders, and no person or group is excluded. *Susan Sayer*

COLLECT (the special prayer for today)

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; 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.

The book of the prophet 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.

PSALM 72.1–7, 10–14

**Kings bow down before him;
all the nations do him service.**

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the king's son; That he may rule your people righteously and the poor with justice; That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, and the little hills bring righteousness He shall defend the needy among the people; he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor. He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another. He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth. In his time shall the righteous flourish; there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute, and the kings of Arabia and Saba offer gifts. All kings shall bow down before him, and all the nations do him service. For he shall deliver the poor who cry out in distress, and the oppressed who have no helper. He shall have pity on the lowly and poor; he shall preserve the lives of the needy. He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, and dear shall their blood be in his sight.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians Ch 3.1–12.

I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles – for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. Ch 2.1-12

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.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYERS

Almighty God, as you sent a star to guide the Wise men, we pray that you will send, your Holy Spirit to guide our Church as we begin a New Year in difficult times. Be with us as we take one more step along the journey of faith.

Lord God, we pray for your world. May those who are in authority strive for peace and justice. Let all nations recognise the sanctity of every human life in their care. Most especially we pray that this year will see the end of the pandemic as the programme of vaccination continues worldwide.

Father God, Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Nazareth: we give thanks for his presence with us in our homes and in our lives. Guide us in our relationships with family and neighbours, especially those in trouble or need and bless those who have guided and enriched our own lives.

Loving God, we pray for all those who have lost their way or have been led astray. For those whose lives are restricted by illness; those in constant pain, the depressed and the despairing, we ask your healing.

Merciful Lord, we pray for all who are coming to the end of their journey here on earth and pray that they may come into your presence and kingdom. We pray for those we have loved and miss who have come to be with you and now rejoice in the fullness of life eternal.

Eternal God, as we go out into this New Year we ask for your loving presence with us to share in its joys and to strengthen us in its sorrows.

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

LET US JOIN WITH CHRISTIANS THE WORLD OVER TO SAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

By the standards of the time, Herod was a good king who had maintained peace in Palestine for a number of years and made himself very useful to the Roman authorities. His personal power depended on keeping them happy. So, especially as he grew older, he was suspicious of everything and everyone who might challenge his grip on power. But power often corrupts. He even murdered his own wife and his sons. So the death of a few infants was a small price to pay.

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