



Worship for Epiphany 2021

Welcome

Good morning and welcome to our service today as we celebrate Epiphany. It is lovely to have you with us this morning whether you are joining us in church, on Zoom or following the service at home. As we prepare for worship let us take a moment to be still in the presence of God.

Call to worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
The Lord be with you **and also with you.**

Glorious Lord, we your sons and daughters come together into your kingly presence. We lift our eyes to you, seeking your guiding light and offering up our gifts of worship and praise. **Amen**

Hymn: Angels from the realms of glory

A prayer

Radiant God, light for all people and all places, by the guidance of a star you led the Magi to worship the Christ Child. By the light of faith lead us to worship you in peace and love and guide us in your way. We pray in the name of Christ, light of the world. **Amen**

Prayers of penitence

The grace of God has dawned upon the world through our saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own. Let us confess our sins. *Silence.*

Christ came in humility to share our lives: Forgive us our pride. Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ came with good news for all people: Forgive our silence. Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Christ came in love to a world of suffering: forgive our self-centredness. Lord, have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

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**

Collect for Epiphany

Creator of the heavens, who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child: guide and sustain us, that we may find our journey's end in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Reading: Isaiah 60: 1-6

A poem: Star of Bethlehem by John Johansen-Berg

The sky is deep velvet black
yet myriad points of scattered light,
and one sparkles brighter than all,
the resplendent star of Bethlehem.

This is the light that guided
three travels from the east,
journeying towards the Great sea,
until the star stopped, hovering above the village.

What is it that would guide
three men of wisdom on a spiritual quest?
What but the hand of God,
drawing them by his created star.

The star was simply a sign
of a brighter burning light.
The birth of a child was the beginning
of a light for a darkened world.

Shine on, then, star of Bethlehem
for we too live in deep darkness;
led us, spiritual thirsting seekers,
to find the light in Jesus, prince of peace.

Hymn: We three kings

A prayer

Gold

The wise men brought gold to Jesus. Jesus, we bring you the gold of our obedience and our gifts. Help us to live by your values and to use our gifts for in the service of you and of one another.

Frankincense

The wise men brought frankincense to Jesus. Jesus, we bring you the incense of our worship. You are God and we worship you.

Myrrh

The wise men brought myrrh to Jesus. Jesus, we bring you the myrrh of the of the word's sadness. Bring comfort and peace to all and help us to look after one another better.

Reading: Matthew 2: 1-12

Meditation: We knew it would be worth is by Nick Fawcett

We knew it would be worth it the moment we saw the star, worth the hassle, worth the effort, worth the sacrifice.

But there were times when we wondered, I can tell you!

As we laboured over those dusty barren tracks, as we watched fearfully for bandits in the mountains, as the sun beat down without a break, and still no sign of an end to it, we wondered, all too often.

We asked ourselves if we had got it wrong, misread the signs. We argued over whether we'd taken the wrong turning somewhere along the way. We questioned the wisdom of carrying on as the days dragged by.

And when finally, we got to Jerusalem only to find that his own people had no idea what was going on, then we really became worried.

Quite astonishing – the biggest event in their history, and they didn't even realise that it was happening! Thankfully, they looked it up, eventually, somewhere in one of their old prophets, and we knew where to go then.

Anyway, we made it at last, tired, ore and hungry but we made it.

And it was worth it, more than we had ever imagined, for in that child was a different sort of king, a different sort of kingdom, from any we'd ever encountered before. As much our ruler as theirs, as much our kingdom as anyone's.

So, we didn't just present our gifts to him, we didn't just make the customary gestures of acknowledgement. We fell down and worship him.

Can you imagine that?

Grown men, respected, wealthy, important, kneeling before a toddler.

Yet it seemed so natural, the most natural response we could make, the only response that would do!

PAUSE

Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and 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

Hymn: As with gladness men of old

Prayers

Let us pray. Blessed are you, Lord our God, for you have called us to seek you, to know you and to love you. You have revealed yourself in Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and our God. We come to worship you. Blessed are you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

We give thanks for the wise men and the leading of the star. We ask your blessing upon all who are seekers and all who dedicate their lives to you. We remember all those who lead worship and teach of your love and salvation. Guide and strengthen your church to shine out your love and hope. *Silence.* Lord, we seek you and call upon you: **hear us and help us.**

As the wise men sought a king, we rejoice that you are the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. May your love and your will rule in our hearts. We ask your blessing upon all leaders of people and all who make important decisions for our world. We pray today for all research scientists, giving thanks for their hard work and dedication. *Silence.* Lord, we seek you and call upon you: **hear us and help us.**

As the Holy Family shared in an ordinary home, we ask your blessing upon our homes. May our homes reveal your presence, and our relationships increase our love for you. We remember all homeless peoples, all refugees and those who belong to a home where there is violence and lack of love. We pray for our local community especially those among us who are finding life difficult and challenging at this time, surround them with friendship, love and light. *Silence.* Lord, we seek you and call upon you: **hear us and help us.**

With the gift of myrrh there was an offering of the sorrows for the world. We remember all who long for freedom and redemption. We pray for all suffering people, all who are distressed and all who feel that no one cares for them. In a moment of silence, we name before you any know to us who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit. *Silence.*

Surround them with your comfort and love. We pray for the work of doctors, nurses, and paramedics and all who are involved in healing. *Silence.* Lord, we seek you and call upon you: **hear us and help us.**

In a moment of silence, we offer our own prayers to God. *Silence.* Lord, we seek you and call upon you: **hear us and help us.**

We rejoice with Mary and Joseph, with the shepherds and the angels, with the wise men, with the Church in heaven and on earth. We commend ourselves. All people and the whole world to your unfailing love. Merciful Father **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our saviour Jesu Christ. Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

The Peace

We are the body of Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life. The peace of the Lord be always with you **and also with you.** Let us offer one another a sign of God's peace.

I know that we are not together physically today and not able to share the peace in our normal way. However, this does not mean that we are not able to share the peace. Bring to mind members of our church family and as you do wish them God's peace. "..... (the name of a member of our church family) God's peace be with you.

Hymn: O Worship the Lord

We go out

Thank you, Lord, for the light, guiding to Bethlehem, shining on the mountain, pouring from the empty tomb, and sparkling in our hearts. Thank you for the knowledge that, whatever life brings, you will give light to our path, this, and every day. **Amen**

God our Father has called us from darkness into his wonderful light; may he shine on our path **and guide our footsteps.**

Jesus Christ his Son is the Light of the World; may he bring light to our lives **and banish all darkness.**

God the Holy Spirit enlightens our minds and fills us with his love; may he shine through our lives. **and draw others to the love of God.**

The blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us today and always. **Amen**

Material for this service is taken from Common Worship: Services and prayers for the Church of England and New Patterns for Worship © The Archbishops' Council 2000, 2002, The Bumper Book of Resources: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, Edited by John Cox Kevin Mayhew 2015, Shine on, star of Bethlehem: A worship resource for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, Compiled by Geoffrey Duncan for Christian Aid, Canterbury Press 2020 and © ROOTS for Churches Ltd (www.rootsontheweb.com) 2002-2020. Reproduced with permission.

