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| **EPIPHANY**3 January 2021 |
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*Light a candle as a symbol of Christ’s presence with you, and to remind us that we are praying as a church family.*

**POEM** – read by John Bryden

It might have been just someone else’s story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don’t belong, it doesn’t mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A  pilgrim’s eye that sees beyond the stars.
They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from otherwhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.

*Malcolm Guite*

**HYMN** – sung by Francis Bostrom

**Bethlehem, of noblest cities,**

None can once with thee compare;
thou alone the Lord from heaven
didst for us incarnate bear.

Fairer than the sun at morning
was the start that told his birth;
to the lands their God announcing,
seen in fleshly form on earth.

By its lambent presence guided
see the eastern kings appear;
see them bend, their gifts to offer,
gifts of incense, gold and myrrh.

Solemn things of mystic meaning:

Incense doth the God disclose,
gold a royal child proclaimeth,
myrrh a future tomb foreshows.

Holy Jesu in thy brightness
to the gentile world displayed,
with the Father and the Spirit
endless praise to thee be paid. Amen.

**WELCOME** – Simon TaylorThe Lord be with you
**and also with you.**

**CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION** - led by Romie Ridley

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.

**Most merciful God,**

**Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**we confess that we have sinned**

**in though, word and deed.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart.**

**We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.**

**In your mercy**

**forgive what we have been,**

**help us to amend what we are,**

**and direct what we shall be;**

**that we may do justly,**

**love mercy,**

**and walk humbly with you, our God.**

**Amen**.

May the God of love and power

Forgive us and free us from our sins,

heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,

and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**ANTHEM**

**My soul, there is a country** – *Words:* Henry Vaughan; *Music:* Hubert Parry – sung by the St Andrew’s Choir

My soul, there is a country

far beyond the stars,

where stands a wingèd sentry

all skilful in the wars:

There, above noise and danger,

sweet Peace sits crown'd with smiles,

and One born in a manger

commands the beauteous files.

He is thy gracious Friend,

and—O my soul, awake!—

did in pure love descend

to die here for thy sake.

If thou canst get but thither,

there grows the flower of Peace,

the Rose that cannot wither,

thy fortress, and thy ease.

Leave then thy foolish ranges;

for none can thee secure

but One who never changes—

thy God, thy life, thy cure.

**READINGS** – read by Alastair MacGregor

***Isaiah 60.1-6***60 ‘Arise, shine, for your light has come,
    and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
2 See, darkness covers the earth
    and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the Lord rises upon you
    and his glory appears over you.
3 Nations will come to your light,
    and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

4 ‘Lift up your eyes and look about you:
    all assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
    and your daughters are carried on the hip.
5 Then you will look and be radiant,
    your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,
    to you the riches of the nations will come.
6 Herds of camels will cover your land,
    young camels of Midian and Ephah.
And all from Sheba will come,
    bearing gold and incense
    and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.

***Matthew 2.1-12***
2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.’

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 ‘In Bethlehem in Judea,’ they replied, ‘for this is what the prophet has written:

6 ‘“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 shepherd my people Israel.”’

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, ‘Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.’

**9**After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. **10**When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. **11**On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. **12**And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

**SERMON** – Simon Taylor

**PRAYERS** – led by Sophi Berridge

*During the prayers, this response will be used*

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**COLLECT**

God of the dispossessed,
defender of the helpless,
you grieve with all the women who weep
because their children are no more:

may we also refuse to be comforted
until the violence of the strong
has been confounded,
and the broken victims have been set free
in the name of Jesus Christ,

**Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

**HYMN** – sung by the choir of St Martin in the Fields

**As with gladness men of old**
did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright;
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped,
to that lowly manger-bed,
there to bend the knee before
him whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet
ever seek thy mercy-seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
at that manger rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

Holy Jesu, every day
keep us in the narrow way,
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright
need they no created light;
thou its light, its joy, its crown,
thou its sun which goes not down;
there for ever may we sing
alleluias to our King.

**CONCLUSION**

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.**