

Reflection Sunday 8th January 2023 – Epiphany

The Feast of Epiphany which we mark this Sunday, celebrates the visit of the three wise men to the Christ-child in the stable.

Their arrival, as gentiles, suddenly includes us in what had until then, been an exclusively Jewish story. We and all, are drawn in and included.

This poem by Malcolm Guite, entitled The Magi, sets the scene and gives us food for reflection:

*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 elsewhere but still they found;
In palaces, found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To see, to find, to worship, to rejoice.*

Reading the poem, I'm drawn to the notion of seeing 'beyond the stars', and wonder - what might that mean for me?

I pray that as we enter 2023, God may give us each 'A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars', that we may grow in wisdom and insight, and be drawn deeper into relationship with God; to truly see, find, worship and rejoice in what God has done and is doing for us, in sending his Son to earth.

I wish you a peaceful and happy New Year.

Revd Alison

Happy
New Year

NEXT SUNDAY 15.01.2023 Epiphany 2

SERVICES: 10.30am Sung Eucharist in the Hall.

READINGS: OT Isaiah 49: 1-7
NT 1 Corinthians 1: 1-9
GOSPEL John 1: 29-42



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St Thomas, Exeter

8th January 2023

Epiphany

10.30am in the Hall

Today

10.30am Sung Eucharist.

Hymn Numbers

537 We three kings of Orient are.

41 As with gladness men of old.

394 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

12.30pm Baptism of Hallie Mary Jane Baker

Tuesday 10th January

7.30 House Group. 'A Song of Hope'.

Wednesday 11th January

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 12th January

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots.

10.30am-12noon Knit & Natter

Friday 13th January

9.30am Morning Prayer.

10am Staff Meeting.

Saturday 14th January

9am Men's Breakfast in the Sawyers.

3-5pm Craft Hub in the Hall.



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; 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**

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.

Ephesians 3: 1-12

This is the reason that 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 to 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 to 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.

Matthew 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.

Post Communion

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**

NOTICES

For our services, **mask wearing** is not now compulsory but we would still advise it while infection numbers remain high.

Knit and Natter. On Thursdays from 12th January 2023 onwards at 19 Maple Road as usual. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

Community Larder is receiving donations on Tuesdays from 10-11am and at the 10:30 service on Sundays. Thanks to everyone who has contributed this year.

House Group Starts again on 10th January continuing with looking at the songs sung by Zechariah, the Angels, Mary and Simeon. New people are always welcome; see Ian for zoom details.

Our proposal is to stay in the Hall until Palm Sunday.

In the interests of safety we suggest that people should **not work alone in the Church.**

Food Fight (Food for Sundays) are looking for donations of warm clothing, such as hats, gloves, jackets and socks. They are also happy to receive individual-serving bottles/tetra packs of water or juices. **Volunteers are outside Nat West bank on Sunday mornings from 11am-1pm** so any donations can be dropped off there.

St Thomas Tots Group will resume on Thursday 5th January between 9.30 and 11am. The first session is free, then £1 per family including refreshments.