

News and Prayer Update for 3rd January - Epiphany

Rostherne with Bollington, St John High Legh and St Paul Over Tabley

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Do You Need to Talk To Someone? Call any of the above, we have other people who are also experienced in listening who are willing to help, so **please do call, we are here for you.** All conversations are in strict confidence.



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Link for this week's Service: <https://youtu.be/y-LiIR-LWsk>

HYMN: As with gladness Men of Old (William Chatterton Dix 1837-1898)

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 God, may we
evermore be led to thee.

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

As they offered gifts most rare,
at thy cradle 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 Jesus, every day
keep is in the narrow way;
and when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star o 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.

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Collect for Epiphany:

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.

Psalm: Psalm 72 (72:10 – 15)

- 1 Give the king your judgements, O God, ♦
and your righteousness to the son of a king.
- 2 Then shall he judge your people righteously ♦
and your poor with justice.
- 3 May the mountains bring forth peace, ♦
and the little hills righteousness for the people.
- 4 May he defend the poor among the people, ♦
deliver the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.
- 5 May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, ♦
from one generation to another.
- 6 May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, ♦
like the showers that water the earth.
- 7 In his time shall righteousness flourish, ♦
and abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
- 8 May his dominion extend from sea to sea ♦
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- 9 May his foes kneel before him ♦
and his enemies lick the dust.
- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute; ♦
the kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring gifts.
- 11 All kings shall fall down before him; ♦
all nations shall do him service.
- 12 For he shall deliver the poor that cry out, ♦
the needy and those who have no helper.
- 13 He shall have pity on the weak and poor; ♦
he shall preserve the lives of the needy.
- 14 He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, ♦
and dear shall their blood be in his sight.
- 15 Long may he live; unto him may be given gold from Sheba; ♦
may prayer be made for him continually and may they bless him all the day long.
- 16 May there be abundance of grain on the earth, standing thick upon the hilltops; ♦
may its fruit flourish like Lebanon and its grain grow like the grass of the field.
- 17 May his name remain for ever and be established as long as the sun endures; ♦
may all nations be blest in him and call him blessed.
- 18 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, ♦
who alone does wonderful things.
- 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever. ♦
May all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen.

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First reading: Isaiah: 60: 1 – 6

- 1 Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

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- ² 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.
- ³ Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- ⁴ 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.
- ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,^[a]
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- ⁶ 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.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2: 1- 12

- ¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,
² 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.'
- ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him;
⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.
- ⁵They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:
⁶"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.'"
⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.
- ⁸ 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.'
- ⁹When 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.
- ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.
- ¹¹ 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.
- ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)

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REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Revd Philip:

Today we are celebrating the feast of the Epiphany. However, the wise men, like many of the characters in the New Testament, only have a walk on part. They appear following a star, make a false assumption about where the king will be born, eventually find the right place, present their gifts and head home 'by another way', so that Herod will not know where to find the child. We do not know exactly where they came from, how many there were, what they were called or how long their journey took. Apart from Matthew's description of them as beside themselves with joy and excitement when they discovered the house where the holy family were staying, we know nothing about whether the encounter with the infant Jesus transformed them in any way. The shepherds encounter with the angels and the infant Jesus also filled them with wonder and excitement but they told everyone they met about it. The wise men simply went home.

For Matthew, the visit wise men with their expensive gifts are an important part of the account of the birth of Jesus. Not in their own right but because of what they signify. In the Book of Common Prayer the Feast of the Epiphany is subtitled, or the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. They are a sign pointing towards the fact that the mission of God to redeem his people also included those who were not Jews. The encounter of Jesus and the wise men is the first of a series of occasions when Gentiles intrude into the story of his ministry. Greeks come to the disciples asking to see Jesus, a centurion seeks healing for his servant, a Canaanite woman begs him to drive an evil spirit from her daughter and so on. Jesus came as a light to banish the darkness from the spiritual lives of all, Jew and Gentile alike. He came to transform all who take the time to listen to what he says and accept his invitation of forgiveness of sins and inclusion in God's family.

Revd Patricia:

Our Old Testament reading for today is one of encouragement for 6th Century BC Jewish people in a post-exilic world. It is part of a piece of poetic writing looking forward to a time of future glory for Jerusalem - a time which hasn't yet come about. The poem describes a situation of total contrast to the one in which the people of that day found themselves. It's promise would have given them a goal and a boost stimulating them to envisage a different future when restoration would take place.

The country had been devastated, not many people had yet returned from exile and there was much poverty. Yet the prophetic voice speaks to them - Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord provides slight in the darkness of their situation.

It occurs to me that at the beginning of this New Year the world is shrouded in many kinds of darkness not least the darkness brought about by the pandemic. There is much suffering through fear, through illness, through loneliness, through loss of livelihoods and poverty. The picture is bleak. But there is hope, there is light as we step into 2021. As we trust God for the future let us arise and shine. Jesus is our light in the darkness of this world let us lift our gaze to him trusting him for the immediate future and looking forward to the time when the 6th Century prophecy will finally come to fruition.

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HYMN: God is our Strength and Refuge

(Richard Bewes 1934 - 2019)

God is our strength and refuge,
our present help in trouble,
and we therefore will not fear,
though the earth should change!
Though mountains shake and tremble,
though swirling floods are raging,
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

There is a flowing river
within God's holy city;
God is in the midst of her-
she shall not be moved!
God's help is swiftly given,
thrones vanish at his presence-
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

Come, see the works of our maker,
learn of his deeds all-powerful:
wars will cease across the world
when he shatters the spear!
Be still and know your creator,
uplift him in the nations-
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

PRAYER in the coming week:

Comfort and Joy activity for Saturday 2nd January to Epiphany

What brings joy today? *That Jesus is for the whole world*

How many countries can you and your family name? Jesus came to be God's Good News for all the countries of the world. Jump for joy that Jesus is God's Good News for you too.

Who needs comfort today? *Those in the Middle East*

Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth. He came to bring peace but today there are many conflicts in that part of the world. Find the two towns on a map. Place your fingers on them and pray for the people who live there.

Intercessions (coronavirus) from Church of England website – SET A

Let us pray to God,
who alone makes us dwell in safety:
For all who are affected by coronavirus,
through illness or isolation or anxiety,
that they may find relief and recovery:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

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For those who are guiding our nation at this time,
and shaping national policies,
that they may make wise decisions:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,
that through their skill and insights
many will be restored to health:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For the vulnerable and the fearful,
for the gravely ill and the dying,
that they may know your comfort and peace:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

NOTICES

❖ **Services are currently able to be held, although further restrictions may be required in the future!**

FACE COVERINGS – These are still mandatory in places of worship. Please come prepared. (Please inform the clergy if you are exempt from wearing a face covering and do let the service leader know if you lip read).

Sunday 3rd January:

10.00 Holy Communion at St John High Legh

10.30 Holy Communion at St Mary Rostherne

Sunday 10th January:

10.00 Holy Communion at St John High Legh

11.00 Holy Communion at Holy Trinity Little Bollington

11.00 Plough Service at St Paul Over Tabley (**Booking Essential**)

To book for the annual Plough Service, please contact Revd Patricia Robinson to ensure that you have places reserved for you. Phone: 01565 830 595; Text: 07854 418 488; Email: pmrobinson51@gmail.com

Wednesday Mornings

09.00 Celtic Morning Prayer at St John High Legh

**It is important that no one feels they must come to services
if they are reluctant to.**

We will continue to stream a service each Sunday

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❖ **Coffee and Chat Wednesday 6th January:** We are having a Zoom Coffee and Chat meeting on Wednesday morning from 11.00 am to 12.00 noon.
Just click on the link below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89014498190?pwd=WXJWU0JySGNqR05VRU1qOE1jbGwxQT09>

If you need the meeting ID and Password for this meeting please contact Patricia.
Email: pmrobinson51@gmail.com or Tel: 01565 830 595

❖ **Christingle Service in the United Benefice:**



Our final Christingle Service is on:
Sunday 24 January at St Paul Over Tabley.
Please book for this with Revd Patricia.

An online Christingle Service is available at: <https://youtu.be/1CHlvU77fAg>

We also have our own Christingle giving page with the Children's Society so if you would like to make a donation to the Children's Society go to:

<https://thyg.uk/CUS047758> **Please note there was a digit missing from the link so if you tried and didn't get through to it please try again.**

❖ **Join the Prayer Chain:**

Our Reader, Chris Stanisstreet has organised a **Prayer Chain** which is done by email and telephone. The idea behind this, is that when a specific prayer request is made, it is passed on by group e-mail to the people on the list who then pray for the particular situation.

If you would like to receive prayer requests or would like to make a prayer request, please let Chris Stanisstreet know:

Tel: 01925 755559; Mob 07918 981 723; stanbess2003@yahoo.co.uk

❖ **Offering and Fund Raising** – Please continue to give if you can

❖ **Knutsford Food Bank**

Now the New Year is here please help us support the Knutsford Food Bank by bringing items to church or asking us to collect them for The Welcome - the New Year is a time when families and people in need can find themselves in difficulty. Contact Revd Patricia for more information or collection of items.

❖ **Homemade Jams For Sale:**

There are various Jams and Marmalade available at prices between £2.00 / £3.00 per jar depending on size, either from St Mary's or by telephoning the Vicarage- we will deliver them to you.

St Paul's are offering: Strawberry, Gooseberry, Damson or Strawberry, Greengage and Gooseberry jams.

St Mary's are offering: Strawberry, Rhubarb & Ginger, Rhubarb Jelly, Redcurrant Jelly, Marmalade and Yellow Raspberry.

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❖ Morning and Night Prayer

If anyone does not yet have access to the "Worship at Home" booklet containing the Order of Service for Morning Prayer or Night Prayer, please contact the Vicarage, as there are large print copies and ordinary size ones that can be posted out or versions that can be e-mailed.

Bible Readings and Psalms for the Coming Week from the Lectionary.

Here are some suggestions for more Psalms and Bible readings to use with Morning and Night Prayer:

Readings for Morning Prayer: These readings usually follow on from each other so you get a bit more of the story each day (except on special Saints Days).

Mon 4th Jan – Psalm 89: 1-37; Isaiah 60: 13-end; John 1: 43-end

Tues 5th Jan – Psalm 48; Isaiah Chapter 61; John 2: 1-12

Wed 6th Jan – Psalm 127; Isaiah 62; John 2: 13-end

Thurs 7th Jan – Psalm 99; Isaiah 63: 7-end; 1 John Chapter 3

Fri 8th Jan – Psalm 46; Isaiah Chapter 64; 1 John 4: 7-end

Sat 9th Jan – Psalm 148; Isaiah 65: 1-16; 1 John 5: 1-12

Readings for Night Prayer (for Epiphany)

Short Reading:

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. (Titus 2.11)

Psalm 16

- 1 Preserve me, O God, for in you have I taken refuge; ♦
I have said to the Lord, 'You are my lord, all my good depends on you.'
- 2 All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land, ♦
upon those who are noble in heart.
- 3 Though the idols are legion that many run after, ♦
their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, neither make mention of their names
upon my lips.
- 4 The Lord himself is my portion and my cup; ♦
in your hands alone is my fortune.
- 5 My share has fallen in a fair land; ♦
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.
- 6 I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel, ♦
and in the night watches he instructs my heart.
- 7 I have set the Lord always before me; ♦
he is at my right hand; I shall not fall.
- 8 Wherefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices; ♦
my flesh also shall rest secure.
- 9 For you will not abandon my soul to Death, ♦
nor suffer your faithful one to see the Pit.
- 10 You will show me the path of life; in your presence is the fullness of joy ♦
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Collect:

King of kings and Lord of lords,
making the true light to shine:
lighten our darkness now and evermore

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that with our lips and in our lives
we may praise you;
for you are our God, now and for ever.

Blessing:

May the living waters of Christ cleanse us,
may the Spirit descend upon us,
and the blessing of God be with us
this night and always.