



SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

CHRISTMAS 2 - SUNDAY 3rd JANUARY 2021

Sadly, once again we are unable to join together for worship. After much discussion and careful thought, a team decision has been made that our churches will be closed for services this week, Sunday 3rd and Wednesday 6th, while clarification and further information is gathered about the new strain of the virus and the effectiveness of our risk assessments.

So you'll need your worship space again. Today you'll need your Nativity scene, Bible and cross to remember the visit of the wise men and the gifts they brought to the baby.



INTRODUCTION

We are now officially in Interregnum, we had a lovely last service for Rev Jan last week and gifts were given from the congregation, choir and Mother's Union. It was a lovely send off and thank you to everyone who contributed to her leaving gift, your generosity was overwhelming.

Rev Jan has asked to pass on her thanks to you all. So now, the team clergy will do the services but we will continue with the service at home as long as it is needed, this will mostly be done by myself, but some of the clergy have offered to help out once or twice a month, so watch this space.

If there are any omissions this week then it's my fault I usually send the service to Rev Jan to check and add her introduction.

Jan B

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

CONFESSION

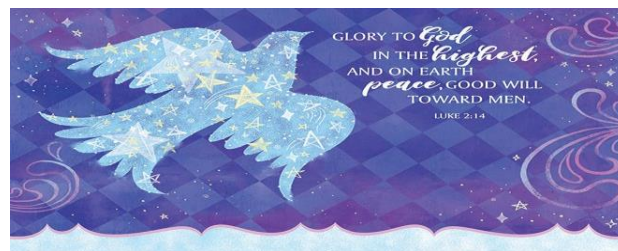
Let us say sorry to God for the things we have done wrongly or for the things we have not done.



Almighty God our heavenly Father we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth. Lord god heavenly King almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ only Son of the Father, Lord God Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world; have mercy upon us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit. In the glory of God the Father. Amen.



THE COLLECT

God our Father, in love you sent your Son that the world may have life: lead us to seek him among the outcast and to find him in those in need, for Jesus Christ's sake.

OLD TESTAMENT READING - Jeremiah 31 7-14

For thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, 'Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel.' See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labour, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

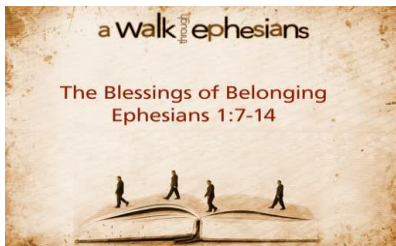
Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a

flock.' For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

This is the word of the Lord - **Thanks be to God**

NEW TESTAMENT READING - Ephesians 1, 3-14



Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good

pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

GOSPEL READING - JOHN 1 10-18



Hear the Gospel of the Lord according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord**

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me." ') From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

This is the Gospel of the Lord – **Praise to you O Christ.**

REFLECTION

We are coming up to the time of Epiphany in the Christmas story, when the Wise Men brought gifts for the baby Jesus. The Wise Men also known as Kings shared their wealth, their knowledge and their love to honour the Holy child.

We were to be celebrating this time in the children's service on Wednesday and looking at the gifts that were brought. The children were asked to make themselves a crown so they can feel part of the celebration.

So why then do the readings not reflect this, because next week celebrates the baptism of Christ? All three readings talk about giving, sharing and love. Jeremiah talks about saving the people and being a father to them by showing them that they belong and celebrating with them bringing joy, comfort and gladness to replace the sorrow they have been in.

In the epistle it talks of the blessing of belonging to God's family and how he shares his riches with us by sending us his son so we have an inheritance with him, he brings forgiveness and the riches of his grace. The Gospel shows us that God loved us so much he sent his son to help us and lead us. He created the earth for us and shared his love, sending Jesus helped us to understand that love.

So how do we look at those readings now? The wise men shared their wealth and gave expensive gifts fit for a king, a sign to share and give love and kindness. It is so lovely to give a gift and watch people's delight opening it, the pleasure is in giving rather than receiving and we are very generous as a church when someone is in need, this is doing God's work. It's not about wealth it's about caring and taking some time out to check someone is alright. On our own, we are nothing but when we have people, who care about us and let us feel that we belong it is priceless.

Take care and stay safe.

Jan B

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I believe in God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



During the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use your own prayers or if you *prefer here are some on today's theme.*

God we give thanks to you for your love towards all people of the world. You have chosen to give yourself to us all and invite us to give ourselves to you. Blessed are you, Lord our god, for all things come from you and of your own do we give you. We come in our poverty to your riches, in our foolishness to your wisdom, in our sorrows to your healing and joy.

As we remember the wise men, we pray for the rich and the comfortable, all who have plenty of this world's good things. May they know that all the things come from you. May the riches of the world be put to good use. We remember the world's poor, the homeless and the hungry.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who are seekers, who search for the truth, who look for meaning and who desire to know you. We pray for pilgrim people especially those on their way to Bethlehem or Jerusalem. We pray for our own church here at St. Maxentius as we go into Interregnum once again and hope for someone to lead us again in the future. We pray for our Turton Moorland team our churches, clergy and Lay ministry teams

who help us through our spiritual journey and teach us more about doing your work.
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We come with all who are in pain or sorrow. We remember those whose sickness finds no cure, those who are permanently ill and those with a short time to live. We pray for doctors and nurses and all who are involved in healing. (and especially at this time – *Dave Wilson, Phyllis Hamer add anyone else known to you here.....*)
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Lord, we worship and adore you. We offer you our joys and sorrows, our sickness and health, our riches and our poverty. We remember all who have enriched our lives by their goodness. We pray for loved ones who are now in the fullness of your kingdom.
Lord in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

Merciful Father – **Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER



**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in
heaven. Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against
us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now
and forever. Amen.**

THE BLESSING

Now the Lord of peace himself give us peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with us all and the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us always. **Amen**

