

## WELCOME AND NOTICES

### CALL TO WORSHIP:

'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn...to you the riches of the nations will come' (Isaiah 60:3, 5).

### SONG(S):

The splendour of the King (how great is our God)

The splendour of the King,  
clothed in majesty;  
let all the earth rejoice, all the earth  
rejoice.  
He wraps himself in light  
and darkness tries to hide,  
and trembles at his voice, and trembles at  
his voice.

How great is our God,  
sing with me: how great is our God.  
And all will see how great, how great is  
our God.

And age to age He stands,  
and time is in His hands;  
beginning and the end, beginning and the  
end.

The Godhead, Three in One,  
Father, Spirit, Son,  
the Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the  
Lamb,  
How great is our God...

Name above all names, worthy of all  
praise;  
my heart will sing: how great is our God.  
How great is our God...

There's no lack in all You've given (My  
soul is well)

There's no lack in all You've given  
I am richer than a king  
In the gift of Christ our portion  
My soul is well

There's no promise I am missing  
All I need has been supplied  
You're the strong and firm foundation  
My soul is well  
My soul is well

Praise the Lord oh my soul cry out  
Praise the Lord, oh my soul  
Praise the Lord oh my soul cry out  
For in You my soul is well

Though the struggles have been many  
And the flesh inside me weak  
Lord, Your grace and truth have taught me  
My soul is well

Though I've wandered in confusion  
I have seen enough to know  
Where I tread Your goodness follows  
My soul is well  
My soul is well

Praise the Lord oh my soul cry out  
Praise the Lord, oh my soul  
Praise the Lord oh my soul cry out  
For in You my soul is well

To the praise of all Your glory and Your  
grace (x 2)

In the wonder of Your goodness I will sing,  
'Great is the Lord'

Praise the Lord oh my soul cry out  
Praise the Lord, oh my soul  
Praise the Lord oh my soul cry out  
For in You my soul is well

There is a Redeemer

There is a redeemer  
Jesus, God's own son  
Precious lamb of God, Messiah  
Holy one

Jesus my redeemer  
Name above all names  
Precious lamb of God, Messiah  
Oh, for sinners slain.

Thank you oh my father  
For giving us your son  
And leaving your spirit  
'til the work on earth is done.

When I stand in glory  
I will see his face  
And there I'll serve my king forever  
In that holy place.

Thank you oh my father  
For giving us your son  
And leaving your spirit  
'til the work on earth is done.

There is a redeemer  
Jesus, God's own son  
Precious lamb of God, Messiah  
Holy one

Thank you oh my father  
For giving us your son  
And leaving your spirit  
'til the work on earth is done.  
And leaving your spirit  
'till the work on earth is done.

#### OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, we come with thanks and  
praise for John the Baptist  
preparing the way by calling people to  
repent and be baptised

**We thank and praise you, Lord**  
for Jesus our Saviour  
proclaimed your Son by water and Spirit  
**We thank and praise you, Lord**  
for the good news  
that salvation has come to earth in Jesus  
**We thank and praise you, Lord**  
for wisdom  
seen in the visit of the Magi with gifts of  
worship  
**We thank and praise you, Lord**  
for your love  
undeserved and lavishly given  
**We thank and praise you, Lord**  
for your Holy Spirit  
transforming and empowering lives  
**We thank and praise you, Lord**  
for your promise  
of an eternity in which to praise you  
**We thank and praise you, Lord**

#### CONFESSION

One of the ways in which we are hindered  
from praising the Lord for all he has given  
is by continuing to sin, whereby we fall  
short of the glory of God (Rom. 3.23). Let  
us confess our sins, seek God's forgiveness  
and be released from the tyranny of sin.

**Forgive the smallness of our faith and the  
depth of our sin. Release us from the  
burdens of the past, and raise us to new  
life and new ways of service through  
Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.**

#### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

'If anyone does sin, we have one who  
speaks with the Father in our defence –  
Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the  
atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only  
for ours but also for the sins of the whole  
world' (1 John 2:1-2).  
Through him your sins are forgiven.  
**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### PRAYER FOR SUNDAY CLUB

Gracious Lord, just as you were a blessing to both Wise Men and little children, so now we ask your blessing on the Sunday Club, leaders and children; for your glory's sake. **Amen.**

### READING: Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem<sup>2</sup> 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.'

<sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup>"'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.'"

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>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.'

<sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup>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.<sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### REFLECTION:

Recently on YouTube I came across some wise sayings from around the world; for example there are the wise sayings of Albert Einstein, who said 'Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one learned in school,' and 'Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.' There are many such wise sayings attributed to all kinds of people including Einstein, Plato, Confucius, and all manner of wise people who have ever lived. In Proverbs 8:11 we read, 'wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.' However, wisdom is not just wise thinking, but in Scripture wisdom is personified. In Proverbs 8:27, 30, Wisdom says, 'I was there when he set the heavens in place...I was the craftsman at his side.' Wisdom had an eternal existence and a creative power.

Wisdom sees in the visitors from the east the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies. In Isaiah 60 we read of a rising light in Israel and the gathering of gentiles to worship with gifts; Psalm 72 tells of Israel's ideal king, to whom the nations will offer worship and gifts; and in Micah 5:2, which Matthew quotes here in v6, we have Jesus presented as a shepherd king for God's people, a royal theme that is important throughout Matthew's gospel. Matthew tells his story by the light of the scriptures,

a story of tyrants trembling, of nations and creation worshipping the new king, a story of light and worship, and the glory of the Lord rising upon his people.

Matthew tells us that the Magi, the Wise Men, were from the east (v1). Scholars differ in their views regarding the home of the Magi. Most suggest they came from Persia. Well wherever they came from, one thing is clear, they journeyed far and, as Matthew tells us, they travelled by the light of 'his star' (v2). Having reached their destination, they offered their worship and their prophetic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They are Wise Men because they sought Jesus. Wisdom's journey is seeking Jesus, seeking him with all our might, following the leading of his Spirit, letting him shine his warmth and light into our heart. That encounter with him has the power to transform us, enlighten us, inspire us.

I once had a dream in which I was travelling, not to Bethlehem but to the artic on a polar expedition. Arriving at the port I noticed I was wearing socks and sandals instead of walking boots. In the terminus of the port I came across a pair of spiked walking shoes and was given them to wear instead of the sandals. I was also given a helmet and another contraption to wear, plus various items given by the expedition leader, but as I made my way through the terminus these items disappeared one by one. As I boarded the artic ship the leader asked me two questions. These are two questions I want to ask you this morning. What is your destination? And are you equipped for the journey?

As we begin this new year, what is your destination? Is it wealth? Is it health? Is it security? Is it adventure? What is your

destination? What do you want for yourself this year? Whatever you think it might be, I can tell you that the best destination is Christ. The Magi's destination was Christ and they travelled to find the King of the Jews and honour him with gifts. In the same way we are to honour Jesus with the gift of our wealth, our time, and our abilities; three gifts we can offer. Wealth, time and abilities.

What does this mean in reality? It means we don't just go to church because we are on the rota to serve coffee or be on the welcome team, as though fulfilling our duty is all that matters. We are seeking to serve Christ by proclaiming the gospel and serving the neighbourhood. "Wisdom is proved right by her actions," said Jesus (Matt. 11:19). What are you going to do this year to seek and serve Jesus?

I sense that this year we need to look outwards more and more, to seek ways in which the good news of Jesus can be shared with others. That requires financing, it requires time, and it requires people with a whole variety of gifts and skills. As we begin this New Year, what's your destination? Our destination is Christ, to serve him in whatever way he wishes.

The second question in my dream was this: Are you equipped for the journey? In order to serve Christ we need to use the skills and gifts he has given us already. For example, if your gift is mercy, you will feel compassion for and empathy with those suffering from distressing physical, mental or emotional problems and seek to show that compassion in ways which reflect Christ's love for that person. If your gift is hospitality, then you will desire to have an open house and welcome people in need. Whatever our gift, we use it for Christ's glory.

If you don't know what gifts you have, then it's time to discover what God desires for you. A good starting point is doing a gifts survey. Another thing we can do is to have a spiritual gifts day in which you can discover more the ways God wants to work through you. Discovering your gifts is a starting point for being equipped for the journey ahead. You are the people with the gifts and skills we need. And if we need others with gifts we don't have, we need to pray for those people to come.

So are you aware of what he has given you and do you need to develop that gift? What is your area of ministry? Are you fulfilling God's gifts given to you? Gifts of pastoral care, gifts among children and youth, among families or those who have been divorced or those who are addicted or those who have been bereaved or those who are in the latter years of their life, gifts of organisation or gifts of supporting others. There are so many gifts and God gives all his children gifts in which they can serve the purpose of his kingdom.

There is good news for the wise, for the wise will seek Jesus and serve and worship him with whatever gifts they have.

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Lord of the ages

**Lead us and guide us**

Let us pray for the world, and for the witness and service of all God's people.

Generous God, we pray for governments and rulers:

that those who hold political office and exercise authority may show purity of intention in their life and work, and may lead with truth and integrity in their dealings and decisions.

Lord of the ages

**Lead us and guide us**

Generous God, we pray for relations between countries, cultures and faiths: that wealth may be more justly shared, diversity of cultures more widely valued and appreciated and people of faith willing to speak with one another and love your truth.

We especially pray for the tensions between Ukraine and Russia.

Lord of the ages

**Lead us and guide us**

Generous God, we pray for all in need of the peace which Christ brings: that all who are in conflict may be reconciled, and all who are gripped by evil and falsehood may turn to your goodness and truth.

Lord of the ages

**Lead us and guide us**

Generous God, as we remember the gifts of the Magi, we ask for grace to offer our gifts to you:

the gold of our obedience and service,  
the incense of our love and prayer,  
the myrrh of our faithfulness and care.  
We especially pray that we may know the gifts you have given and have opportunities to serve you using all you have given.

Lord of the ages

**Lead us and guide us**

Generous God, we pray for the renewal of your people and the refreshment of all who hear the good news: that the

bereaved may find comfort and hope, that those who lack purpose and direction in life may discover the reason why they are here, that all in need may know your presence and power to change lives. We especially pray for Linda, Carol and Pam and all those known to us who are grieving.

Lord of the ages  
**Lead us and guide us**

All these things we pray in the name 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 for ever. Amen.**

#### **SONG: Brightest and Best of the Sons of the morning**

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,  
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining,  
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall:  
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,

Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,  
Odours of Edom and offerings divine?  
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,  
Myrrh from the forest or gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure;  
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,  
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

#### **OFFERTORY**

**Almighty God, out of the fulness of your gifts we bring before you this bread and wine, our gifts and our lives. Blessed be your holy name forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

#### **THE PEACE:**

Glory to God is the highest, and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

#### **HOLY COMMUNION**

The Lord is here  
**His Spirit is with us.**  
Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

EPIPHANY HOLY COMMUNION  
Good news for the wise – Matthew 2:1-12  
9<sup>th</sup> January 2022



It is right, and a good and joyful thing,  
always and everywhere to give thanks to  
you,  
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and  
earth.

Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or you had formed the earth,  
from everlasting to everlasting, you alone  
are God.

You created light out of darkness and  
brought forth life on the earth.

You formed us in your image and  
breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love  
failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made  
covenant to be our sovereign God,  
and spoke to us through your prophets.

And so, with your people in heaven and  
on earth,  
we praise your name and join their  
unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and  
might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of  
the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son  
Jesus Christ, in whom you have revealed  
yourself, our light and our salvation.  
You sent a star to guide wise men to  
where the Christ was born;  
and in your signs and witnesses, in every  
age and through all the world,  
you have led your people from far places  
to his light.

On the night in which he gave himself up  
for us, he took bread,

gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave  
it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given  
for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the  
cup,

gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples,  
and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my  
blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for many for the  
forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in  
remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your  
mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves in praise and  
thanksgiving  
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with  
Christ's offering for us,  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will  
come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered  
here, and on these gifts of bread and  
wine. May they be for us the body and  
blood of Christ, that we may be for the  
world the body of Christ, redeemed by his  
blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other, and one in ministry  
to all the world, until Christ comes in final  
victory, and we feast at his heavenly  
banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,  
all honour and glory is yours, almighty  
Father, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

*We wait until everyone has received the bread and then eat together as a sign of our unity in Christ.*

The Body of Christ broken for you.

*We wait until everyone has received the wine and then drink together as a sign of our unity in Christ.*

The Blood of Christ shed for you.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God of a love stronger than death, you have given us new birth into a living hope through the gift of your Son. God with us, like a mother you have fed us with yourself and strengthened us for the journey ahead. God of truth and power, you take our weakness and our sin and refashion us by your grace.

**Gracious God, may the love which bids us welcome at this table gather all your children into one, in your eternal presence, whole and free at last. Amen.**

### **SONG: Jesus my King, my Wonderful Saviour**

Jesus my King, my Wonderful Saviour  
All of my life is given to Thee  
Now I am living in your great salvation  
Your precious blood is making me free

Wonderful Saviour, Wonderful Saviour  
You are so near, so precious to me  
Wonderful Saviour, wonderful Saviour  
My heart is filled with praises to Thee

Freedom from sin, O wonderful story  
All of it's stains washed whiter than snow  
Jesus has come to live in this temple  
All of my days His love I will show

Jesus my Lord, I'll ever adore Thee  
Lay at Your feet, my treasures of love

Lead me in ways to show forth Your Glory  
Ways that will end in Heaven above

When in that bright and beautiful city  
There I will see Your glories untold  
I will be like You, my wonderful Saviour  
I will sing praise while ages unfold

### **CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING**

Father God, the star that led the Magi to the world's true King announced to the world that its Saviour was born. Today we live in a world that is still covered by darkness, and still needing to make that journey to Saviour's side. May our lives reflect your light day by day, as we seek to serve where you have placed us, that we might be the means through which others can encounter your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

May he, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill your lives with his light and joy and peace.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**