

Opening verse on screen:

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. Matthew 2:10

Gathering, Greeting and Call to Worship

Saide

Welcome, please find a seat and thank you for continuing to wear your mask.
Let's welcome the word and the light.

Christine carries in the Bible, Daniel follows to light the Christ Candle

Today we journey with the Wise Ones to the cradle
So come let us worship God
inexplicably born as a precious baby boy
Come with the voices of angels ringing in our ears
Come in anticipation of the gifts to be given
Come let's sing together of the birth of Jesus.

Song - Infant Holy, TiS 292

*1. Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all;
swift are winging angels singing,
nowells ringing, tidings bringing,
Christ the babe is Lord of all,
Christ the babe is Lord of all.*

*2. Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true;
thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow,
Christ the babe was born for you,
Christ the babe was born for you.*

SONG: [Infant Holy](#), from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*, Reproduced with permission under ONE LICENCE # 604502. ALSO Reproduced with permission by CCLI license no. 247623

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect
the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation,
the traditional custodians of this land
since time immemorial.

We are learning that the land
is not ours to own, but to look after;
and that if we listen,
we may hear in it the calling of the eternal Spirit.

**Responding to this call, we commit ourselves
to work for justice, reconciliation,
and care of the earth.**

Welcome and Introduction

Saide

Welcome to worship here in this space and joining us online. I'm Saide, the liturgist this morning joined by Christine, Kenna, Ray, Helen leading the musicians and Daniel as our preacher while Ian is on leave. Daniel is a member of our congregation. We are privileged to have Daniel offering his first ever reflection with us today.

Today we celebrate Epiphany remembering the journey taken by the Magi to visit the Christ Child. Daniel will invite us to reflect on the adventure of faith, the journey into the unknown of a new year as we follow Jesus on the path of discipleship.

We share morning tea in the hall after worship. If you are worshipping online now or at another time you might like to take the opportunity to ring a friend or family member for a chat after worship.

Song - We Three Kings

Let's sing of the wise one's journey and of the gifts they offered. The Three King's verses will be offered as solos. We will sing the first and fifth verses and the refrain.

*1. We three Kings of Orient are:
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star:*

*O - Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to your perfect light!*

*2. (Melichor)
Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again -
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign:*

*3. (Caspar)
Frankincense to offer have I:
Incense owns a Deity nigh.
Prayer and praising all folk raising,
Worship him, God most high:*

*4. (Balthazar)
Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in a stone-cold tomb:*

*O - Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to your perfect light!*

*5. Glorious now, behold him arise,
King and God and sacrifice!
Heaven's singing 'Alleluya!'
Earth to heaven replies:*

O - Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to your perfect light!

SONG: [We Three Kings](#), © Council for Christian Education in Schools, Used with permission

Prayers of Adoration and Confession including Word of Grace

Saide

Let's breathe deep together as we prepare to offer our prayers of adoration & confession.

Let us pray

God of the prophets you call us home to you
You set signs and wonders before us
to guide us on our way, on the journey of faith.
Your great love enfolds us, flows through us.
We are your people.
Forgive us when we stumble, when we get stuck.
Lift our hearts once more and again
to embrace the hope and joy that shape our living.

Christ child, laid in a manger, God incarnate
You are the embodiment of wonder,
your journey to the cross guides us on our way.
Your great love reveals God to us, opening our eyes.
We are your disciples.
Forgive us when we focus only on the difficulties.
Lift our eyes once more and again
to the everyday wonders that shape our living.

Holy Spirit, dream whisperer, guiding light
You challenge us to embrace the wonder,
the adventure of faith, the delight of the unknown.
Your great love challenges us to open our hearts.
We are children of the light.
Forgive us when darkness consumes us.
Lift our spirits once more and again
to embrace new adventures on the journey of faith. Amen

Word of grace

God comes to us, a child in the manger,
herald of good news, of hope, peace, joy and love.
Know that in the name of this child, Jesus, Son of God
our sin is forgiven.

Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading - Matthew 2:1-12

Christine

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.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

With the Children

Daniel

A conversation about quotes that Daniel has in his classroom

'The time is always right to do what is right.'

- Martin Luther King

'How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.'

- Anne Frank

'Some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again.'

- C.S Lewis

'When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me''.

- Erna Bombeck

'Unfurl the sails, and let God steer us where God will.'

-The Venerable Bede

Song of praise - The Virgin Mary had a baby boy, TiS 307

*1. The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
the Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
and they say that his name was Jesus.*

*He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom,
He come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom,
O yes, believer, O yes, believer, he come from the glory,
he come from the glorious kingdom.*

*2. The angels sang when the baby born,
the angels sang when the baby born,
the angels sang when the baby born,
and proclaim him the baby Jesus.*

*3. The wise men saw where the baby born,
the wise men saw where the baby born,
the wise men saw where the baby born,
and they say that his name was Jesus.*

SONG: [The Virgin Mary](#), West Indies spiritual, from [Together in Song](#), Harper Collins *Religious*,
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From the prophets - Isaiah 60:1-6

Kenna

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.

For these words of witness and for Christ the Word

Thanks be to God

Reflection - Unfurl the sails

Daniel

It is the mark of a good church, as it is of a good classroom, that it is designed in the expectation that its occupants will occasionally be bored.

It is one of Christianity's most humane and rewarding features that it recognises boredom to be an incurable human condition. For that reason, it has constructed its churches for two thousand years with stained glass and ceramic murals, so that its congregation's absent-mindedness might at least be edifying. How often have you passed an idle moment in this church of, I'm certain, very well-intentioned boredom, and allowed your eye to pass over the sunlit images in our glass? And has your imagination thereby touched upon foot-washing, service, and charity, and their divine purpose? Instead, perhaps, of the footy scores. Or the tragic misadventure of your neighbour's new haircut. That's how we get you.

It's for the same reason that I chose the quotations for the wall of my classroom so carefully. So that, whenever my students decide that my current lecture on, say, the Globe Theatre, is of no consequence, their learning might not at least come to a complete halt.

For a good educator knows that it's not the words in front of our eye, but rather the words at the back of our mind that shape us. The ones that sink into our soul, and live there forever.

The time is always right to do right.

*How wonderful it is that no-one need wait even a single moment
before starting to improve the world.*

Unfurl the sails, and let God steer us where God wills.

These are words for sinking into the soul. What words live at the bottom of your soul? And where did you come by them?

For me, it's the last of those quotes that brings me again to the Magi in this time of Epiphany. *Unfurl the sails, and let God steer us where God wills.* For it is that sense of heady adventure

that is stirred in me when I think of these travelers that tradition calls Magi. Weighing anchor upon a shifting ocean of sand and grassland, in search of a distant object. Navigating not by the nautical constellations, but by one star. One star so luminous and compelling that it drove them to abandon their contemplations and drives them out into the hazard and the possibility of the unknown earth.

And with these Magi, it is the journey that matters. It is the courage of taking the first step out of doors. For we have some good reason to think that these Wise Ones do not yet grasp the character of the King to whom they go to give homage. The first brings gold, but they do not yet understand that this king will not bear a royal sceptre, but the bread of memory, and the cup of sacrifice. The second does not realise that the perfume of the Messiah will not be myrrh, but rather the odour of the poor and scrabbling streets wherein dwell the alienated and dispossessed who hover at the boundary of the clean and the respectable. And it is beyond the imagining of the third, that this Christ will not wash himself with frankincense, but rather the hard wind of the road, and the sea, and the gusty hill of Calvary.

But that it is what we do in stepping the road of faith. It is the leaving the certain for the uncertain, the visible for the invisible, exchanging fatalism for hope, and safety for jeopardy. It is no accident that many of the first great fantasy writers were folk of great faith. For Tolkien and for Lewis, faith was not a matter of credulous bewilderment. For them, it was more like that brisk momentum of striding through the wheat fields of the Shire with only a rucksack on your back and a sound walking stick in your hand. Or like pushing your way wonderingly through the door of a wardrobe only to find that it enfolds not only your winter coats, but the entire world.

It is theologically important that the season of Advent and Christmas is not the ending of the year but rather the beginning. Just as it is important that Sunday is not the conclusion of the week but its first flower. And that when we receive our final blessing today it does not place a holy seal upon the week that has passed, but rather it is the first embers of a morning fire on the beach with Christ.

So friends, here we stand with the Magi, at the beginning of the week. At the beginning of the year. Are you feeling adventurous?

Perhaps you have made a New Year's resolution? They've fallen somewhat into disfavor, haven't they? Preoccupied as they often are with unhelpful notions of body image and unsustainable cycles of ambition and regret.

It seems to me that the problem with the New Year's resolution is that, as a means of movement, it is most like the bicycle. It gains its forward momentum only by the sweat and work of its rider. And with New Year's resolutions, our road at first takes us downhill, and with the wind in our hair, it feels as though we could ride forever. But soon enough, our path takes a turn, and eventually, we simply tire of pedaling.

There are times when our faith feels like riding that bicycle. Running our race, pruning the vine, gathering from the vineyard, planting the seed and reaping the harvest, an unceasing toil. But the Venerable Bede reminds me that faith is less like a bicycle than it is like a ship. For a ship exerts no energy whatsoever. It does not move upon its own command, but rather sits still and complacent, at rest and in peace, cupped in the hands of the swelling ocean and the great voice of the sky, and it is turned wherever those great forces should send it.

How does that metaphor sit with you?

Sometimes it seems to me that this wide and historical church of which we are part, is like one great ship. In my imagining, it is a broad vessel, dancing with the many colours and flags of every land. It's crew speak with every language and tongue, and though great waves come and crash against its bow, it keeps its course true.

But, before I lose myself to this enchanting image, I remember – there are times when this great ship upon which we all sail has been a slave ship, and has turned its sails to subjugation and oppression. At times it has been a warship, and taken its place in the battle-line for King and

Country. At other times it has been a merchant ship, plundering the seas for treasure and gain. Certainly, it's a much mis-governed vessel, for it has a great many officers and captains, all of whom give contradictory orders, and engage in much heated debate as to its course and navigation. Some of its crew dress finely, whereas others are clothed in rags and turn their face to the salt spray. And too often it sails waters that it would do better to avoid.

So why do we remain?

I remain on that great ship, because for all the folly and error of its crew, I believe that the great headwind that fills our sails – that wind that rises up from the first solitary voice of creation, that ruffles the robes of the Prophets and stiffens the back of Esther, that whistles over the head of the Magi, that grazes the hill of Golgotha, and hums in the empty tomb, that goes still for the martyrs in the Coliseum, that inspires the abolitionists, and rises up with the liberation songs of conquered and colonised peoples – that that wind is good. And always when that ship threatens to founder on the rock, there are good folk who rise up to seize the helm and turn it again toward distant horizons of justice.

So where is that good wind tugging you in this New Year? Are you ready to exchange the pedalling bicycle for the wide sails of the open sea? Are you ready to forgive yourself for being still? For being at rest? For lapses of diligence and superhuman efforts at being the best that you can be? To trust that the wind is good, and that with the Christ-star for guiding you, vistas of righteousness reconciliation rise up around you at every corner of the compass. Are you ready to continue the mysterious journey with the Magi, in the faith that the Christ child lies at the end of it?

In this New Year, let us unfurl our sails, and may the good wind of God blow us and our great, foolish Church where God wills.

Offering with Song - Wise men came journeying

We offer our gifts to God. If you have brought an offering please place it in the bowls near the baptismal bowl in the Gathering Space. The welcomers will bring the offering bowls forward as we sing. Let's stand now and sing of the Wise Ones.

*Wise men came journeying, once, long ago,
camel hooves swirling the sand dune and snow,
gold in the saddlebag, myrrh in the jar,
incense to honour the Child of the star.*

*Wise are the travellers led to move on
following signs where the Christ light has shone,
facing the deserts and crossing the lines,
heeding no limits that culture defines.*

*Wise are each one of us looking for change,
stargazer people, respecting the strange,
inner and outer worlds open to light,
centred on seeing the real and the right.*

*Wise ones keep journeying all through their days
bringing their gifts to the source of their praise,
risking the Promise with all they hold dear,
seeking God's peace at the door of the year.*

SONG: [Wise men came journeying](#), by Shirley Erena Murray
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Let us pray

God who journeys with us

Just as the wise ones offered gifts at the birth of Jesus

We also offer our gifts - our time, money, love and passion

Bless them that they may be used to reveal God's Christmas gifts

- hope, peace, joy and love - to all in need.

May we embrace the joy and wonder of faith

in all our living as we follow you.

Amen.

Prayers of the People

Ray

Good morning I'm Ray. Let's offer our prayers for the world, church and community. At the conclusion of the prayers I'll take the Christ Candle to the Chapel Space. You are welcome to light a taper for your own prayers during the final song or after the service. Let us pray.

God of the prophets we pray for the world.

As we begin another year facing the ongoing uncertainty of the pandemic

we pray for developing countries and communities not yet vaccinated

and give thanks for the work being done to ensure that vaccination is possible.

We pray for all who have lost loved ones, all are who suffering illness

and give thanks for health workers throughout the world, praying for them also.

God of the prophets we pray for healing.

May our hands be healing hands, shaping the world with love.

Christ Child, God incarnate we pray for the church.

As church communities around the world continue to embrace new ways of worshipping

we pray for church leaders and in particular our President - Sharon, and Moderator - Denise and give thanks for their inspiration, passion, commitment and care.

We pray for our ministry team, church council and congregation leaders

and give thanks for the many ways in which we can all offer and share our gifts.

Christ Child, God incarnate we pray for inspiration.

May our hearts be open to new adventures, shaping the church with love

Holy Spirit, dream whisperer we pray for our community.

As we continue to offer love, care and support in diverse and creative ways

we pray and give thanks for the many ministries that we offer and support -

Olive Way, Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre, Pastoral Care and more

We pray for those among us who are sick, grieving, lonely, seeking work, waiting

and give thanks for your gentle breath at work through our actions

Holy Spirit, dream whisperer we pray for guidance.

May our work be faithful, shaping our community with love.

Amen

Notices

Saide

It's time now to share the news of our community. Please come, line up, remove your mask and share your notice in a sentence or two.

In response to rising numbers the BUC COVID working group and Pastoral Care committee have decided to pause offering morning tea during January. We do this out of an abundance of caution and strong desire to protect our community. You are welcome to stay on after worship to chat whilst continuing to wear masks and maintaining social distance. It is especially lovely to do this out in the open when the weather permits.

Next Sunday we welcome Rev. Graeme Garrett as our preacher. Graeme is a member of our congregation and one of our regular preachers.

Sending Song - Lead me On, NCYC07

*Though I walk through the valley
Of the shadow of death
I will fear no evil
While I feel your breath
Though I may stumble
And fall in disgrace
Shine your light and lead me on*

*Chorus (echoes in brackets)
(Lead me on)
Like a child (Lead me on)
Walkin' down (Lead me on)
Through the dark and shadows
Lead (Lead me on)
Lead me on (Lead me on)
Lead me to the other side*

*Surely goodness and mercy
Shall follow me
And I will live in your house
As long as life can be
Though I may stumble
And fall in disgrace
Shine your light and lead me on*

Chorus

SONG: Lead Me On, by Paul Gioia, from NCYC 07 Songbook,
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Blessing and Sending

Saide

God comes to us as a precious baby, laid in a manger.
God comes to us revealed in the life of this baby, our Saviour.
God comes to us in our ordinary, wonder filled lives.

As we look towards the year ahead,
to the next chapter in the adventure of faith
May you know God's love enfolding you.
May you be guided by Christ Jesus' compassionate living.
May you be swept up in the joy of journeying
with the Holy Spirit within and around you. Amen

Kenna carries out the Bible followed by Daniel and Saide

Closing verse on screen:

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord. Isaiah 60:6b

Thank you

Liturgist:
Saide Cameron

Bible readers:
Christine Hornby
Kenna Morrison

Children's time:
Daniel Broadstock

Reflection:
Daniel Broadstock

Prayers of the People:
Ray Cameron

Musicians:
Helen Burnham
(co-ordinator)
Michael Cameron
Anthony Hinds
Leigh Johnston
Catherine Leslie
Nicole Lowe

Songs:
Postlude - O Come all ye faithful, from Together in Song, (304) Harper Collins
Religious, PUBLIC
DOMAIN

Musicians: Shawn Whelan
(co-ordinator), Natalie Sims,
Simone Alesich, Helen
Burnham, Saide Cameron, Brad
Coath, Stephanie Dykes, Ian
Ferguson, Jessica Kvensakul,
Catherine Leslie, Annie Quail,
Daniel Whelan

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Journey of the Magi: Tissot,
James, 1836-1902. Journey of
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Visit of the Three Wise
Men
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