

EPIPHANY – 1ST SUNDAY OF 2021

OPENING RESPONSES

A thousand years in God's sight are like a single day.
Like an evening that has already gone.

Christ is the first and the last,
the beginning and the end.

Jesus stands at the door and knocks.
Lord Jesus, enter our homes and our lives.

You hold the key to God's way of justice.
Open to us your kingdom of peace.

PRAYER AT THE CRIB

The kings, Lord,
brought myrrh, frankincense and gold.
Lord, we have nothing of our own to bring;
we bring you what you have given:
our lives for your life.
Amen.

WE THREE KINGS

 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.

 BIBLE 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 and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

“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 be the shepherd of my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 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 and of incense and of myrrh. 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



IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER



NEW YEAR COVENANT

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to his steadfast love by finding delight in the law.

The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ our Lord, in his life, work, death and resurrection. In him all people may be set free from sin and its power, and united in love and obedience.

In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God.

We meet, therefore, as generations have met before us, to renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God.

Let us then seek forgiveness for the sin by which we have denied God's claim upon us.

God of mercy, hear us as we confess our sins.

For the sin that has made us slow to learn from Christ,
reluctant to follow him
and afraid to bear the cross:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has caused the poverty of our worship,
the formality and selfishness of our prayers,
our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace,
and our hesitating witness for Christ:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has led us to misuse your gifts,
evade our responsibilities
and fail to be good stewards of your creation:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has made us unwilling to overcome evil with good,
tolerant of injustice,
quick to condemn
and selfish in sharing your love with others:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

**Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness;
according to the abundance of your compassion
blot out my offences.**

**Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness
and cleanse me from my sin.**

**Make in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.**

**Give me again the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your gracious spirit.**

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw *us* to himself,
and cleanse *us* from all our sins
that we may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,
let us again claim for ourselves
this covenant which God has made with his people,
and take upon us the yoke of Christ.
This means that we are content
that he appoint us our place and work,
and that he himself be our reward.
Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;
some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests,
others are contrary to both;
in some we may please Christ and please ourselves;
in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.
Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ,
who strengthens us.
Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own.
Let us give ourselves to him,
trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Lord God, holy Father,
since you have called us through Christ
to share in this gracious covenant,
we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience
and, for love of you,
engage ourselves to seek and do your perfect will.
We are no longer our own but yours.
I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

 **KING OF KINGS**

 **A TIME OF PRAYER**

 THE LORD'S PRAYER

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**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.

 BE THOU MY VISION

 THE CONCLUSION

To a troubled world,
peace from Christ.

To a searching world,
love from Christ.

To a waiting world,
hope from Christ.

 BLESSING

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you
and give you peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen