

The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice of

St Saviour
Mortimer West End

St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



Epiphany

The Parish Eucharist for Epiphany Sunday

7th January 2024 at 10 a.m. at St John's church, Mortimer

and online at Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

At last year's Mortimer St Mary's School beginning of term Epiphany Eucharist some pupils were asked why they enjoyed the Harry Potter novels and films so much. The popular answer seemed to be, 'Because you never know what's going to happen next.' I suppose it's that same thrill of suspense and surprise which prompts us to watch films as varied as Star Wars and James Bond. And perhaps there was something of that eagerness for 'epiphany' – a Greek word, which means appearance or manifestation – which encouraged great explorers like Marco Polo to risk journeying to India, and Christopher Columbus to risk the journey which took him to America, and the Apollo 11 astronauts, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, who, on 20th July 1969, became the first people to set foot on the Moon. Adventurers can excite us, win our admiration, intrigue us and awaken our curiosity. Perhaps it was that spirit of curiosity which led the Magi to follow the star. Anyway, their journey was certainly marked by suspense. Today's Gospel story invites us, of course, to embrace that same spirit of curiosity and adventure and to seek out our own epiphanies.

Of course, sometimes adventurers have not so much aroused admiration, but scepticism. The attitudes of some bystanders were no different at the time of the Magi. To the cynical the Magi must have seemed foolish to go following a star, to leave the security of home to venture into a country ruled over by a madman like Herod. Nevertheless, the Magi came to believe that they had been rewarded with a profound epiphany. And the Gospel story reminds us that if such Gentile and foreigners as these Magi are permitted to recognize and give respect to him then no one is excluded. Indeed, in another reading set for this Sunday (today's epistle) we hear St. Paul affirm that Christ is for all peoples and therefore there can be no such thing as second-class members of humankind or of Christ's 'Church.'

Of course, the simplest symbolism of the gifts the Magi brought to the infant is that gold symbolizes his kingship; frankincense symbolizes his divinity, and myrrh – used for embalment and burial – symbolizes his humanity. And this story invites us to see ourselves as images of the Magi and, like them, to be people on such a journey. Today's Gospel story also tells of different reactions to the infant Jesus, which already foreshadow his passion and death. There were, perhaps, three groups of people who 'reacted' in this Epiphany story and they represent, perhaps, three reactions to him: of hatred, of indifference; and of adoration.

The first group, headed by Herod, tried to eliminate the Christ child. This controlling and destructive group, headed by a mean-spirited and cruel man, considered Jesus a potential threat to them and to their understanding of 'power.'

A second group was made up of the scribes, the Pharisees and the Jewish priests. They tried at first to ignore Christ. Yes, they knew there were nearly 500 prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures concerning the promised Messiah. And, yes, they concluded their reading from the prophets on the Sabbath day by saying, 'We shall now pray for the speedy arrival of the Messiah.' But, the reality was that they were more interested in making their own selfish gains than in discovering the truth of this child. This is a reminder, of course, to beware of selfish motives such as the wanting of power, prestige and recognition, which distract us from a better way.

A third group was made up by the shepherds and Magi. They came to adore him and to offer themselves and their gifts to him and to his care and to his service. The shepherds offered the only gifts they had: their love, their tears of joy, and, perhaps, who knows, woollen clothes and milk from their sheep. The Magi offered gold in recognition of his kingship, incense in acknowledgment of his divinity, and myrrh as a symbol of his human nature.

The simple 'life message' is, obviously, that we should aim to belong to the third group: with the gold of our love, the incense of our adoration, and the myrrh of our humility and humanity. And, of course, as the Magi chose another route to return home, we might do well to think about whether we could choose a better 'way' – even the 'Way' of Jesus Christ.

There is a story about how after the 1969 spaceflight to the Moon the three astronauts made a good will tour visiting countries around the world. Astronaut Ed Aldrin said for him one of the most striking moments of that tour was their visit to Pope Paul VI who gave them three porcelain statues of the Three Wise Men. The Pope told them that the three statues depicted the Magi who were directed to the Christ by the light of an heavenly star and that that they had also reached their destination by the light of an heavenly star.

God bless,

Paul

THE PARISH EUCHARIST FOR EPIPHANY SUNDAY

7th JANUARY 2024

A very warm welcome to the Parish Sunday Eucharist.

An induction loop is provided. To use, please turn your hearing aid to T.

Gluten free wafers are available for those who need them. Please inform one of the vergers who will pass the information on to the clergy.

Online: If you are not able to come to St John's you are warmly invited to share in the Parish's Christmas Day Eucharist online. And may God bless and renew us as we join together to worship. **Thank you.**

THIS 'HOLY MEMORIAL' is known by various names: 1) 'The Eucharist' - which means 'Thanksgiving' - because Jesus offered himself in love; 2) 'The Lord's Supper' - or 'Breaking of the Bread' - because we celebrate it as a shared meal; 3) 'Holy Communion,' - because we become one with Christ by receiving him; and 4) 'Holy Mass' - holy sending - because it gives us a mission: to go in peace to serve the Lord.

The 'objectives' of the Eucharist: The community gathers for the public celebration of the Eucharist in order to worship God; ask his forgiveness for sins; thank him for blessings received; listen to his voice in the Scriptures; present the needs of the world and our own needs too; offer our lives to him and his loving service; gain spiritual nourishment and recharge our weakened spiritual batteries by sharing life with him in Holy Communion. The simple structure of the Eucharistic celebration is organized around achieving these goals.

THE GATHERING CAROL

From the eastern mountains
pressing on they come,
wise men in their wisdom,
to his humble home;
stirred by deep devotion,
hasting from afar,
ever journeying onward,
guided by a star.

There their Lord and Saviour
meek and lowly lay,
wondrous light that led them
onward on their way,
ever now to lighten
nations from afar,
as they journey homeward
by that guiding star.

Thou who in a manger
once hast lowly lain,
who dost now in glory
o'er all kingdoms reign,
gather in the peoples,
who in lands afar
ne'er have seen the brightness
of thy guiding star.

THE GATHERING

Priest + In the name of God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

THE GREETING - Words of Welcome and Introduction.

The greeting proclaims the presence of the Lord with us.

The Penitential Rite, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer follow. The purpose of these preliminary rites is to help the people, gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, to join with each other as a worshipping community, and to prepare to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist - the Great Thanksgiving.

Priest The Lord be with you.
All **And also with you.**

The priest may introduce the Eucharist.

THE PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

The Invitation to Confession - we call to mind our sins that we may repent of them / turn from them and ask forgiveness of God and each other.

Priest My brothers and sisters, as we come together
to celebrate the mystery of God's love,
revealed to us in Word and Sacrament,
let us call to mind our sins.

A pause for quiet reflection follows.

*The grace of God has dawned upon the world cf Titus 2.11.
through our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Lord, illuminate the darkness of our hearts and minds:

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, open our eyes to your saving love:

Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, unstop our ears to hear your living Word:

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

The Absolution

+ Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All **Amen.**

THE GLORIA

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

**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 on 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 Lord,

you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,

with the Holy Spirit,

in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT

Priest Let us pray.

Together we spend a few moments in silence, realising, and giving thanks, that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The prayer 'collects' our thoughts.

Creator of the heavens,
who led the Magi by a star
to the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us,
that we may find our journey's end
in the grace and truth
of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind and all creation.

In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his 'word.' We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts' (The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).

THE FIRST READING – EPHESIANS 3: 8, 2 – 3, 5 – 6. To be read by Gwen Adshead.

Reader A reading from The Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians.

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace that he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown in past generations; it means that Gentiles now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

At the end of the reading:

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Now we prepare to hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Cantor Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

All **Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

We saw his star as it rose
and have come to do the Lord homage.

Matthew 2: 2

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL READING – ST MATTHEW'S GOSPEL 2: 1 – 12.

The Lord be with you.
All **And also with you .**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Luke.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The Visit of the Magi.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some magi came to Jerusalem from the east asking, 'Where is the infant king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, 'At Bethlehem in Judaea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

*And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means the least among the leaders of Judah,
for from you will come a leader
who will shepherd my people Israel.'*

Then Herod summoned the magi to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared and sent them on to Bethlehem with the words, 'Go and find out all about the child, and when you have found him bring me word so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were given a warning in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

At the end of the Gospel:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE TRADITIONAL GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH MAY NOW BE OFFERED AT THE CRIB.

AT THE OFFERING OF GOLD

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As gold in the furnace is tried
and purified seven times in the fire,
so purify our hearts and minds
that we may be a royal priesthood
acceptable in the service of your kingdom.

All Blessed be God for ever.

AT THE OFFERING OF INCENSE

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As our prayer rises up before you as incense,
so may we be presented before you
with penitent hearts and uplifted hands
to offer ourselves in your priestly service.

All Blessed be God for ever.

AT THE OFFERING OF MYRRH

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe:
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As you give medicine to heal our sickness
and the leaves of the tree of life
for the healing of the nations,
so anoint us with your healing power
that we may be the first-fruits of your new creation.

All Blessed be God for ever.

THE SERMON

We are a Eucharistic community - united around word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. The sermon reflects on our readings and relates them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary daily life.

After the sermon there may be a short period of silent reflection.

THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH - THE CREED

We make the profession of faith in response to the word of God written in the Gospels and spoken in the sermon. We testify that God is our Father who gives us new life through his Son and who calls us together in the power of his Spirit to be a Eucharistic people, a 'thanksgiving people', a living community of his abiding self-giving love.

**All I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

**I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

We are invited to pray for all people and for all creation and for the needs of the Church's mission in bringing Christ's Gospel to the world. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his prayer before the Father for the needs of the Church's mission to the world and for of people. Our prayer flows from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.

This Prayer of the Faithful, or General Intercession, is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes and our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities, families and friends; for the sick and suffering and for all in pain; and we remember those who have died. And in communion with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people and all creation to God's saving love.

Priest: My brothers and sisters, let us pray to our heavenly Father in the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Jesus Christ our Lord.

The deacon or minister continues:

Heavenly Father, the Magi came from the east to worship your Son and to offer their gifts of gold, incense and myrrh: grant that Christians everywhere may find unity in that same spirit of adoration and likewise help and encourage one another to share our gifts. We pray to you for the Church throughout the world; for Justin our Archbishop; for Steven our bishop; for Olivia our area bishop; for our benefice and our Church schools of St Mary's and St John's and for all our missions and ministries...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless and guide Charles our King, our Government, the Leaders of the Opposition, our District and Village Councils and all in authority that they may govern with justice and wisdom and seek the common good...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, your Son shared the life of a family: bless our families, our friends and our neighbours and all those given us to care for... May our love for one another bear witness to the compassion of Christ.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, the Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death: we pray for all who face persecution and seek refuge and for all who are poor and powerless... We pray for all who are suffering today in body, mind or spirit... May the love of Christ bring them comfort and the hope of the resurrection bring them peace.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we remember before you all who died recently and all who have gone before us... We pray that we may be united for ever in the joy of heaven.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, in communion with Mary, the Blessed Mother of our Lord, St Joseph, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist, the Magi and all your saints, we commend all creation to your unfailing love. In communion with the Mary and Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist and all the company of heaven, we offer these our prayers.

Priest Merciful Father,
All Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine - we take our own gifts to the Altar, such as our time and talents and our money for the poor and for ministry. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) - in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful – a sign of the unity which comes through sharing in Christ. 4) And in Holy Communion we receive Christ. In this way, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, the Church tries to carry out what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

THE PEACE

We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another in Christ and pray for peace and unity (cf Luke 1.78,79).

Priest Christ is the Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace *cf Isaiah 9.*
there shall be no end.

All The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

THE OFFERTORY CAROL

**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.**

**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.**

THE PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. The offerings of money is made and promised to support the wider ministry and work of the Church. Taking the Gifts: We give thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.

BREAD

Priest Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

WINE

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our
time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our
gratitude and our dedication to your service.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts.

The priest washes hands as an act of cleanliness and as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Priest Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God,
the Almighty Father.

**All May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Priest Amen.

Priest Lord, accept the offering of our gifts,
not gold, frankincense and myrrh,
but the sacrifice of love they symbolise:
through Jesus Christ, who is our Lord for ever and ever.

All Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

In the Preface we praise God for his mighty acts:

Father, we give you thanks because through Christ
a light has dawned upon our world,
that all the nations may be brought out of darkness
to behold the radiant glory of your goodness.

Therefore we join with all the choirs of heaven
to sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**All 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.**

We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.

Priest We thank you, loving Father, because when we turned away
you sent to us your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

He gave his life for us upon the cross. He shows us now the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks,
broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

‘This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.’

After they had eaten he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples,
saying:

‘This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this to remember me.’

So, Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.

As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit upon us and change us more and more
to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with the Blessed Mother, St Joseph, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist,
and all your saints, we glorify your goodness, through Jesus Christ
and in the strength of your Holy Spirit,
today and for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by the love of God manifest in Christ. We can all be confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We bless God and pray for our world, our communities and our lives to be shaped by God's will; we pray for daily needs to be met, for forgiveness for wrongdoings, strength to resist temptation and protection from danger.

Priest Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly: 'May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.' 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17)

Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread.'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread becomes a sign of unity and charity as the one bread is distributed to the family of God's people.

Priest We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.**

The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Priest Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *cf. John 1: 29*

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The sign of communion is more complete when given under both 'kinds' since then the 'sign' of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when, if you think right, communion may be received in one 'kind.'

The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ. When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:

+ Amen.

DURING HOLY COMMUNION *the Choir may sing anthems, hymns and songs.*

EPIPHANY CAROL

**The first Nowell the angel did say
was to Bethlehem's shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep:**

*Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel!*

**Then wise men from a country far
looked up and saw a guiding star;
they travelled on by night and day
to reach the place where Jesus lay:**

**At Bethlehem they entered in
on bended knee they worshipped him;
they offered there in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense:**

**Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
for Christ has our salvation wrought
and with his blood our life has brought:**

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Let us pray.

*The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us all to God's kingdom.
We pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.*

Lord God, may we who with the magi have been drawn by the light of your goodness
discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word incarnate,
and recognise him in the breaking of the bread and in the faces of all people,
and welcome him always with love.

All Amen.

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

Priest The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

THE BLESSING

Priest May the Father, who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed the light of that love upon you his children.

All Amen.

May Christ, who by his incarnation
gathered into one things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with joy and peace and goodwill towards all.

All Amen.

May the Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing
Mary bore Christ into our world,
give you grace to bear his Gospel to all people.

All Amen.

**+ And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you for ever.**

All Amen.

Let us go in the peace of Christ.

All Thanks be to God.

THE RECESSIONAL OR SENDING OUT CAROL

**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 thy perfect light.*

**Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again,
king for ever, ceasing never
over us all to reign:**

**Frankincense to offer have I,
incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising, all men raising,
worship Him, God most high:**

**Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb:**

**Glorious now behold him arise,
king and God and Sacrifice.
Heaven sings: 'Alleluia';
'Alleluia,' the earth replies:**

Please donate regularly to support the Church's mission and work. The church here needs your help in order to serve our villages, our diocese, our nation and our world in the future. Our doors were closed due to Covid 19 and with no regular Government or Church of England funding the parish lost significant income. Please see the website to see how to give efficiently. Thank you.

