

**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



*The mural 'The Adoration of the Magi' by George Duffie.
The church of Our Lady of Loretto, Musselburgh, Scotland.*

The Parish Eucharist
for
The Epiphany

2nd January 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

Transferred from 6th January.

at St John's Mortimer and online at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Prayer Thoughts: *At Epiphany we are called upon to be wise like the Magi in allowing ourselves to be led by the light of goodness and love wherever it shines in our world. We are called also to follow their example in giving thanks for our own blessings through the offerings of our own gifts. This is the essential wisdom of 'thanks-giving' - of 'Eucharist' - which is at the heart of the Christian message. All the sights and sounds of Christmas and Epiphany are there to help us see by that same light how, when we are prepared to journey together, we really can help and encourage one another to be 'good stewards' through the sharing of our gifts - our time, talents and treasure. And, as this beautiful story of the Magi leads us to see how much better we can share life, so we come to see how this makes all the difference to how we see ourselves and others.*

Happy New Year.
God bless, Paul

The Epiphany

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 faith 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 Scripture; present the needs of the world and our own needs too; offer our lives to him; gain spiritual nourishment and recharge our weakened spiritual batteries by sharing with him in Holy Communion. The simple structure of the Eucharistic celebration is organized to achieve all these goals.

If you are not able to come to St John's please do share in the weekly service online. May God bless us as we join together to worship. The present guidelines about cleaning, attendance, distancing, singing & speaking and receiving Holy Communion in churches will be followed carefully.

THE GATHERING SONG

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!**

**They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east, beyond them far:
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!**

**And by the light of that same star,
Three Wise Men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star whersoever it went:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!**

THE GATHERING

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

The priest may introduce the Eucharist.

THE GREETING

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.

All The Lord be with you
 And also with you.

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

My dear brothers and sisters, as we come together as God's family
and prepare to celebrate the Eucharist, let us confess our sins
and seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus our Saviour.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

Lord Jesus, illuminate the darkness of our hearts and minds:

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to your saving love:

Christ, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, 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 your sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All Amen.

THE GLORIA

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

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.**

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

**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.**

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

**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.**

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

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.

Priest Creator of the heavens,
who led the Magi by a heavenly light
to come to worship the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us,
that we may find our journey's end
in 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: 2 – 3. 5 – 6.17. - Read by Roger Jones.

Reader A reading from The Letter of 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 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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

We saw his star as it rose *Matthew 2: 2*
and have come to do the Lord homage.

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 Matthew.

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

Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men 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 wise men 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, let me know, 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.**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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: **Let us pray to God our Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in union with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, the Prince of Peace.**

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 come to find unity in that same spirit of adoration and likewise help and encourage one another to journey together and share our gifts. We pray to you for the Church throughout the world, and for Justin our Archbishop, for Steven our bishop and Olivia our area bishop. Bless our benefice, our Church schools of St Mary's and St John's, and all our missions and ministries...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for peace and for good will in the hearts of all people; for our Queen; for our Government; for our Parliament; for our District and Village Councils; that they may strive for justice and the common good and seek the well-being of all peoples...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, the Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death: look in mercy on all refugees; and on all who are homeless; and on all who are poor and powerless...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, your Son shared the life of a family: protect in your love our families, our friends, our neighbours, and this community of which we are a part ...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father, we remember before you all who have died recently ... and all our loved ones gone before us; may we be reunited in heaven.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

In a moment of silence let each of us offer our own prayer.

Rejoicing in our fellowship with the Magi, the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist and all the host 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 *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, cf Isaiah 9: 6
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.*

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All And also with you.

THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

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.

Priest **BREAD**

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 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.

Lord, accept our 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 by the priest 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 for, by the leading of a star,
you have revealed your only Son to the world,
that in following him we may be led from darkness into his marvellous light.
Therefore in our joy we sing to your glory with all the choirs of angels:

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 Lord God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light,
yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love
made perfect in our human frailty and weakness.
Embracing our broken humanity, Jesus showed us the way, the way of salvation;
loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own,
that we might rise and reign with him in glory.
As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your Holy Spirit
let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.
On the night he gave up himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
+Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:

+Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting forth from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory. Form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight. Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts.

Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high to do your will. Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with Blessed Mary, St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist and all your Saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, 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

Priest Looking for the coming of his kingdom, as our Saviour taught us, so let us pray:

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.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY 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 communion can only be given 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 an anthem and/or this carol.

**The star drew nigh to the north-west;
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay:
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!***

**Then entered in those Wise Men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense:
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!***

**Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,
And with his blood mankind hath bought:
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel!***

After Holy Communion we may keep a further period of silence.

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.*

Priest Lord God, may we, who with the wise men have been drawn by your light,
discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ our Lord.
All Amen.

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

All The Lord be with you.
and also with you.

THE BLESSING

Priest May the Father, who led the wise men by the shining of a star to find the Christ,
the Light from light, lead you in your pilgrimage to find the Lord.
All Amen.

All May Christ, who by his incarnation has delivered you from the dominion of darkness,
give you a place with the saints in the light of his grace and truth.
All Amen.

All May the Holy Spirit, by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer, give you grace,
that the light of Christ may so shine in your hearts and fill your lives with joy and peace,
that you may bear his Gospel to the world.
All Amen.

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

All Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

CAROL

As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright;
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore be led to thee.

As they offered gifts most rare
at thy cradle rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the better way,
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.

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 have been closed due to Covid 19 and with no regular Government or Church of England funding we have lost significant income. Please see the website to see how to give efficiently.*

