

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

2 January 2022

Welcome: Happy New Year!

Song: The first Noel

Reading: Psalm 95 (moving from standing to kneeling) from engageworship.com

[Stand upright]

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

[Put hand on one knee]

For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

[Put hands on both knees]

In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.

[Open one hand]

The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

[Open both hands]

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Song: Light of the world

Active Apostles Creed

ALL: We believe in God,

(Point up)

the Father

(Cross two fingers from both hands)

almighty,

(Raise two fists)

who sent

(Point a finger)

Jesus

(Touch each palm)

into

(praying hands)

the world.

(raise hands to side)

He came as a baby

(rock a baby)

Born of the holy spirit

Was crucified,

(Lift arms to side)

died

(Drop head)

And was buried.

(Curl up)

On the third day

(Hold 3 fingers up)

He rose again from the dead

(Raise arm up)

He ascended into heaven

(Lift both arms above head)

Where he prays for us continually.

(Praying hands)

Praise the lord

(Lift hands up high)

Halleluia!

All age activity: Epiphany Star prayer boxes

<https://reflectionary.org/2019/12/23/useless-gifts/>

Print, cut and create an epiphany box. Write your name in the middle square and then on each side

I can ... (things you can do)

I am ... (things about you)

I have ... (things you have)

I will ... (things you want to do to please God)

Prayer: O God who painted the stars in the sky, your light shines brightly all around us. May we, like the wise ones, follow the warmth of your world- changing love as it leads us into humble and unexpected places. Amen.

Song: In the bleak mid winter

Sermon: Kneeling before the King

Image: British museum



Lullingstone Roman Villa is in the tiny village of Eynsford in Kent. It's sort of round the back of Bluewater shopping centre. How do you feel about visiting ancient places? As a child I loathed school visits to Roman sites 'just a bunch of dusty rocks' I wrote in my diary. My teacher at the time said: 'I might think differently when I'm older'. From the outside, Lullingstone Villa is no different, a metal barn shaped building, with a stone layout of a house – a bunch of dusty old rocks. But what makes this villa more special than any other villa I think in the UK is that this villa also had a house church. How do we know it had a church? A brave and determined archaeologist pieced together a whole wall that had fallen down and discovered these paintings on the wall of a chapel. At one end there was a crucifix in a circle, an old Christian symbol and on each wall were these paintings of people worshipping God.

This church was founded roughly in 385AD. It is the earliest church in the UK that I can find reference to and is about 200 years before St Martins church, Canterbury built in 597.

Look at the posture of these worshippers. And this is what got me, they are raising their hands in prayer. Maybe they were the first charismatics. It struck me though that somehow the faith we share in Jesus is passed on through the generations, through the posture of worship. When we share communion, we lift up the cup in the same way, when we pray a blessing, we lift up our hands.

So what posture do we see in Matthew 2? The wise men come from afar and kneel and worship the child Jesus. So in the same way, as lifting our hands like the Roman Christians here in the UK. When we kneel in worship, we join with some of the earliest worshippers in the world – the wise men.

Somehow our faith in Christ is embodied in our worship and it connects us most dearly to the worldwide church and brings us to Bethlehem too. For when we kneel, we are worshipping Jesus the King just as much as the wise men. When we lift our hands, we join with millions of Christians throughout the ages who have sung thankful praises to God for sending Jesus to this world.

What can we learn from the posture of worship from the wise men? It signified their intention, respect and honour of Jesus. It reminds us that real power is given by God to even a child for his purpose of salvation.

Throughout the gospels when then find plenty of people falling to their knees as Jesus heals, teaches, and demonstrates his power. When Simon Peter saw the miraculous catch of fish in Luke 5, he falls to his knees and in humility recognises his sin. From this physical and spiritual position, Jesus calls Peter into

ministry and service of God as a disciple on whom he would build his church.

Kneeling lowers us so we are weaker, so we are at the others mercy. Kneeing is what we do when we can do nothing else, when we recognise the greatest of the other and can do nothing but fall to our knees.

2022 is going to be a significant year in the life of our church, community, and our world. My hope for Christ Church is that we might draw closer to God in worship – whether we lift our hands, kneel or neither.

Knowing Jesus is about developing a worshipping body for Jesus. We open our hands to receive from him and to acknowledge his love, we kneel to say that he is greater than I and I want to follow him. We kneel to learn his humility, we kneel to learn his love, we kneel to be made whole again and we kneel as we yearn for others to know his healing power in body, mind and soul too.

If we commissioned a mural for our redevelopment, how would we as a church be painted? May our lives as individuals worship God with every fibre of our being. May our life as a church; as Christ's body here on earth honour his name, glorify him and have a posture of praise and worship.

Song: King of kings, majesty

Communion

Intercession

Jesus, Humble King,
we remember that your family had nowhere to stay when you were born.
Please be with the homeless, the refugees and those who are struggling to make ends meet this Christmas.
Humble King we long for your Kingdom here,

on earth as it is in heaven:
Let your Kingdom come,
let your will be done.

Jesus, King of Kings,
we remember that powerful leaders visited you when you were born.
Give your wisdom, boldness and grace to our world leaders,
to politicians, business people and those with influence.
King of Kings, establish your Kingdom here,
on earth as it is in heaven:
Let your Kingdom come,
let your will be done.

Jesus, King of Peace,
we remember Herod's jealousy, lies and violence when you were born.
Bring your peace in places of conflict, anger and hatred,
across the world and right here in our communities.
King of peace, we pray for your Kingdom here,
on earth as it is in heaven:
Let your Kingdom come,
let your will be done.

Song: As with gladness

Blessing