

3 January 2021

*Christ Church New Southgate &
Friern Barnet*

Please join with us at 11am to read this service together either in printed form, whatapp or via the youtube link on our website www.christchurchnsfb.org

Each person in the church is assigned a deacon who will call you to see if you are alright in these times and to pray for you.

Welcome to Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet today. Happy New Year!

We begin in prayer:

Lord of all light,
Shine your light into our lives today,
that we may walk in your light.

Lord of all light, we praise you

Reading: Isaiah 60.1-6 read by Sally Greenwood

“Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

²See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the Lord rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.

³Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴“Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the hip.

⁵Then you will look and be radiant,
your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to
you,

to you the riches of the nations will come.

⁶Herds of camels will cover your land,

young camels of Midian and Ephah.
And all from Sheba will come,
bearing gold and incense
and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.

Carol: The first noel

<https://youtu.be/7pH29CKXhhc>

1 The first nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor 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.

2 They lookèd 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.

3 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 wherever it went.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

4 This 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.

5 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.

Prayer

God of all light,
through whose Son Jesus Christ
our lives have been rescued
from the power of darkness
and transferred into
the kingdom of your beloved Son,
Lord of all light, we praise you

We give you thanks
for the hope you have set in our hearts
Lord of all light, we praise you

We give you thanks
for giving us the way to live
upon which you have set our feet dancing.
Lord of all light, we praise you

**Help us this day
to walk in the light of your Spirit
as we seek to live for your glory.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

God beyond our imagining,
who dwells in unapproachable light,
we confess that your glory
has not been shown through our lives,
but your image has been marred in us.
**Lord, shine your light in the depths of
our hearts and forgive us.**

We confess that your truth
has not been heard upon our lips,
but rather we have spoken words
of compromise and cheap grace.
**Lord, shine your light in the depths of
our hearts and forgive us.**

We confess that your compassionate love
has not been expressed through our hands,
but they have hung limp with indifference.
**Lord, shine your light in the depths of
our hearts and forgive us.**

(Silence)

So fill our hearts this day
with your Spirit's light
**that we might speak truth, act
compassionately
and in all things show forth your glory.
Amen.**

*Reading: Matthew 2.1-12 read by Mikey, John and
Edward Moriarty*

(Mikey)
Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in
Judea, during the time when Herod was
king.

Then some men who studied the stars came
from the East to Jerusalem and asked,
“Where is the baby born to be the king of
the Jews? We saw his star when it came up
in the east, and we have come to worship
him.”

(John)

³When King Herod heard about this, he was
very upset, and so was everyone else in
Jerusalem. ⁴He called together all the chief
priests and the teachers of the Law and
asked them, “Where will the Messiah be
born?”

⁵“In the town of Bethlehem in Judea,” they
answered. “For this is what the prophet
wrote:

⁶‘Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
you are by no means the least of the
leading cities of Judah;
for from you will come a leader
who will guide my people Israel.’”

⁷So Herod called the visitors from the East
to a secret meeting and found out from
them the exact time the star had

appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: “Go and make a careful search for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him.”

(Edward)

On the way, the men saw the same star again. They were very happy!
The star led them until it stopped over the place where Jesus was.

All age activity – Make an epiphany star

You can make an epiphany star wand, please download the star pattern from our website, or draw a simple star, decorate and stick it on a straw or lolly stick. Use it to remind you of this wonderful story. As you make it, think about what it might mean to follow a star.

Let’s pray:

Thank you God that you lead us when we don’t know where to go. Help us to look for your light always. Amen.

Sermon : Stopping with Jesus

I guess our servants block booking the top floor of the Jerusalem plaza was not discreet. But we’d had a long journey across deserts, farmland and rivers. We’re were not gonna turn up to the palace looking scruffy and tired.

I guess our appearance and our language, and our entourage of camels, servants, luggage and supplies marked us out as different to your average visitor to the great city. But I hadn’t realised our quest to worship the new king would send the whole city into a frenzy. On the lips of stall trader to trader down the narrow-stepped lanes of the market we heard

them say – a new Jewish king? A real one? Could it be? Could the messiah be here?

When we had started out all those many months ago, we had expected to find a city in celebration mode, we though there would be commemorative mugs and tea-towels announcing the new royal baby. But no, all we heard were the pomegranate juicer boys whispering about us, and who we had come to see.

We heard from the hotel manager the reality of the situation with Herod. He was not the people’s king. He’d been given the position by Rome. Kings had been from the line of David or from the Maccabees, but now the Jewish people were living under a puppet king from Rome.

I remember when we asked him about the baby, his eyebrow twitched in a slightly despotic way. I realised later that we had been in the presence of a truly awful man who had suspected half of his family of trying to dethrone him. Anyone he didn’t trust, he killed. Even his own wife and children. It still makes me shudder to think that I was near him.

We’d be raised in a very different place. In fact nobody in Jerusalem seemed to know where we were from – they just called us outsiders. Each of us come from wealthy families, families that have held land for centuries, we’re rich in minerals, spices and influence.

Each us of had studied at the most prestigious universities in Babylonian and were experts in mathematics, science and languages but our passion was the night sky. We’re from a priestly line of men, who have been experts in psychology, in understanding dreams and the world beyond the earth. We are magi – wise men, men to whom others turn to in a crisis, just like Herod’s wise men – chief priests, law experts.

Let me tell you about the star. We have settled on calling it a star, but there is some difference of opinion as to what kind of star we saw rising. Some of us insist that it was a comet, maybe Halley's comet. Others said it must be a supernova. I said it was Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces. All of us agreed that the star we saw was like nothing else we had ever seen.

In these parts we believe that the earth and the sky are connected. We navigate by the stars, we study them, we live by them, and so when something new happens we seek to understand it.

Ultimately, we believe that God lives in heaven, so the stars are his carpet. When we follow his lights, we follow him. We believe that when a star like the one we saw appears, it is connected to our earth and we thought it meant a new king had been born. In our world, who you know and who is your ally is more important than anything else. So we set off, to visit the new king, to make sure we could rely on them as a potential ally and partner.

The star appeared and we set our maps to it, we trekked for a long time to reach Jerusalem.

But then something truly strange happened. After we had had our awkward conversation with Herod, we had been told to head to Bethlehem. When we set out, we saw the star again. But it started to move.

Before it was just in the sky, then it moved. It was as if the lord was holding out a torch light for us to follow. Bethlehem is tiny, just a few houses and some shops. We could have knocked on a few doors and found out where a new baby was. But that star kept moving, it led us and guided us to the place where Jesus was and then it stopped.

It stopped where Jesus was. His home was bathed in starlight. We had come along way, we'd had the toughest of years, there was tension in the streets, we were quite conscious that we were foreigners far away from home and yet this star had led us to Jesus and stopped where he was.

It was as if creation was connected to him. As if the stars knew him and he knew them.

Before we went in, I took a breath.

My life had seemed so certain before this year, our journey had left me tired and excited all at once.

As the star stopped, I did. I paused and lingered there where Jesus was.

I knew meeting him would change my life. I realised from all the scriptures and prophecies that we'd heard at the palace that our visit was about to mark his family out, and perhaps change the fate of a nation.

As I knelt before the child, he smiled.

As I offered the gifts, his family were grateful but bemused.

As I stopped where Jesus was, my heart was changed.

How helpful it was just to stop, to stop as the star led us, to stop as heaven itself showed us, to stop where Jesus was.

In this new year, I'm trying to stop with Jesus more. Just to allow God to lead me to him, to allow nature and God's glorious creation to cause me to stop and wonder. I've found that stopping where Jesus is, refreshes my soul. Stopping in his presence allows me to take on the next challenge, and don't they seem endless?!

We had been looking for a new king, a leader to influence, but when I stopped, when we

allowed the star to truly lead us, we found ourselves in the presence of the king of all kings, the son of God himself.

As we stopped, starlight bathed us in God's warmth and restorative power. To stop and pause where Jesus was, gave me strength for the journey ahead. I realised life was not going to return to normal but I knew that his light would continue to lead me on if only I might remember to stop with Jesus.

Communion

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All and also with you.

Look upon us in mercy, not in judgement;
draw us from hatred to love;
make the frailty of our praise
a dwelling place for your glory.

All Amen.

The Lord is with us.

All His Spirit is with us.

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.

Thank you for sending Jesus to us
Thank you for leading your people by light,
fire and your word
Thank you for your beautiful world where
the stars proclaim your glory
Thank you that your love and hope is for
all people, in all places
So we join together and say:

All Holy, holy, holy Lord,

**God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessing and honour and glory and
power
be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

**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.**

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

**All Though we are many, we are one
body,
because we all eat together.**

We drink this cup
to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one
body,
because we all drink together.**

Silence

God of glory,
you nourish us with your Word
who is the bread of life.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit,
that through us the light of your glory
may shine in all the world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our
Lord.

All Amen.

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son
Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls
and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
May we seek your light leading us
in the power of your Spirit
to live for your praise and glory.
Amen.

Intercession

We remember Steph who is unwell with
Covid, we remember those working in care
homes and in hospitals in our congregation
and across the NHS, we remember those
who suffer from poor mental health in our
church, we remember those who are recently
bereaved.

Revealing Lord,
wherever there is darkness
Lord shine your light

In homes overshadowed by violence,
poverty, illness or grief
Lord shine your light

In communities overshadowed by
oppression, fear, hatred of the other, or
injustice

Lord shine your light

In our world overshadowed by greed, war,
hunger and global warming

Lord shine your light

God of glory,
your splendour shines
from a manger in Bethlehem,
where the Light of the world
is humbly born
into the darkness of human night.
Open our eyes to Christ's presence
in the shadows of our world,
so that we, like him,
may become beacons of your justice,
and defenders of all for whom there is no
room. Amen.

Blessing

May Christ draw us to humility and
worship,
and bring us to see God at work;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

All Amen.

Let us go in peace.

All We go into the world
to walk in God's light,
to rejoice in God's love
and to reflect God's glory.
Amen.

The Baptist Union have produced a series of
videos this year, and this is one that is an
encouragement for the new year ahead to all
of us. May God guide and bless us in 2021.

<https://youtu.be/1CAUNpR8oVI>