

Sunday Morning Worship
Readings & Prayers for 5th January



Isaiah 60.1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,^[a]
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord

Ephesians 3.1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Matthew 2.1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Prayers

To the bidding: Lord, in your mercy
please respond: **Hear our prayer**

Lord, we pray for the Church worldwide, for its leaders and its people remembering particularly those being persecuted for their faith. We ask that our national church leadership crisis is quickly resolved. Just as you sent your son to guide your people and a star to guide the Wise Men to worship him, we ask for the gift of your Holy Spirit to guide our Church as we begin a new year in our life together. Remind us of the things that are truly important and worthwhile, help us to live in the goodness that comes from doing what you want us to do, and help us to put aside anxiety about the future and the past, so that we might live in peace with you now as members of your Church, one day at a time.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Creator God, as we face the unknown in the coming year at a difficult and painful time for the world, let the star of your justice always shine in the hearts of those who are in authority. Give wisdom to those who govern and a sense of justice to those who wield power that they may work for peace. We pray particularly for the victims of the conflicts in Ukraine, the Middle East and Syria. And we pray that a compassionate solution be found for refugees and migrants. Father, renew in all of us a thirst for justice and give us a deep desire for the common good.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Father we pray for our own community and give thanks that you are present in our homes and in our lives. We pray for our neighbours, especially those in trouble or need, and for those whom we love. We pray for those returning to school or college this week and for Health workers and those who worked over the Christmas period to keep us safe and supported. We pray for the homeless and lonely amongst us and ask that we offer light to those in need, and graciously accept when light is offered to us in turn.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for all those who are in sorrow, pain or distress, particularly at this time of the year when the very happiness of others can make pain and loneliness harder to bear. Be with them, Lord, and help us to bear one another's burdens in your name. We pray especially in our church community for: Christine Dunne, Bill Jones, Leon and Valda Bailey, Ken and Joyce Pringle, Ann Hunt, Anuwat Wanggane, Alan Coe, Jack Tubby, Gloria, Roger Jones, Patricia Ash, Ryan Day, Brenda Hulland, David New, Sue Wright, Meriel Orton and Adrina and Alan Price. We bring all those who suffer to you, confident that you love them, know their every need and that your healing power will prevail. And in the silence of our hearts we bring before you all those known to us in need of our prayers.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Father, we remember before you all those who have died and thank you for their lives and what you have taught us through them. In particular we remember the recently departed June Hume and Jean Hopwood. We remember with love and gratitude those whose anniversary falls at this time: Coila Clarke, Tom Roberts, Jill Hughes, Jon Gerrard, Bron

Layton, Gordon Watkins, Matthew Graham, Richard Bolton, Michael Francis, Ron Phillips, Ann Quiney and Di Richards. We pray for all those who mourn, whether their loss is recent or longer term, and ask that you sustain them in their grief. May we not fear death but welcome it as the final fulfilment of all you offer us, and we thank you for the promise of eternal life.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

At this time of great uncertainty, we place our hope and trust in you, Father, knowing that your love never fails.

Merciful Father,

**ALL: Accept these prayers for the sake of your son,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**