

ARCH Group's aim: "To show our love for God and You"

Weekly Notices

5th January 2025

Epiphany

Today's Collect

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

Today's Post Communion Prayer

Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek: may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Next Week's Services

Sunday 12th January 2025: Baptism of Christ

9.30 am	Harvington	Holy Communion+
11.00 am	Abbots Morton	Holy Communion+
11.00 am	Church Lench	Morning Service

Happy New Year and thank you...

to everyone who made Christmas so special.

Thank you to the decorators of trees and window sills; the cleaners, singers, organists, service leaders and intercessors; those who provided and served refreshments and everyone who took part and organised our services. You made it reflect the joy and generosity of the season.

Thank you for the support for Caring Hands which is so appreciated.

For Prayer

A star shines overhead: across the empty manger; along the road that leads to unknown lands; among the travellers, weary and afraid. We pray for all who are a long way from home; for the displaced and dispossessed peoples of the Middle East; for peoples uprooted from home because of climate change; for the lost children, damaged by adult wars. May we, by the light of a star, find fresh hope that the world can be made new beginning with us and starting today.

Lighten our darkness and lead us to you. **Teach us to walk in your light.**

A star shines overhead from the reaches of space and the edges of time reminding us of the mystery at the heart of your wonderful creation. May this be the year for ending our destructive patterns of consumption and fossil fuel burning. We pray for those who work on the boundary of new scientific developments, that they would innovate with wisdom; for researchers, developers of new drugs and vaccines; for those trying to find cures for currently incurable diseases; and for people whose work relies on the processes and principles of science. May we always use the gifts of scientific discovery for good and not for harm.

Lighten our darkness and lead us to you. **Teach us to walk in your light.**

A star shines overhead calling us to move towards new horizons. We give thanks for the example of those who have followed you singleheartedly; for the questioners and searchers; for those who teach us to look beyond the now to see what you will create among us. May we allow ourselves to be disturbed and challenged as we look for you to do a new thing.

Lighten our darkness and lead us to you. **Teach us to walk in your light.**

A star shines overhead showing us the route but not the answers. We pray for persistence and courage as we look to the needs of our troubled world; for the work yet to do to limit climate breakdown; for the political will to enable aid supplies into Sudan and Gaza; for shelter to be provided from the cold in Gaza as temperatures plummet; for the long-term peace that needs to be found across the Middle East and especially in Gaza and in Syria; for sacrificial action to match the urgency of the gospel as we address the inequalities that mar our society and seek to create a world where no child goes hungry; for the work of building a church that offers safe space to all, and truly protects the vulnerable.

Lighten our darkness and lead us to you. **Teach us to walk in your light.**

For Prayer (continued)

A star shines overhead reminding us that we are not alone. We remember today all who are suffering. We pray for the families of the dead in the Jeju plane crash in South Korea and for the work of the investigation. We pray for people we know whose lives are restricted because of long-term illness; those struggling with financial worries and all who live in fear of violence. *(brief pause as we remember individuals and situations)*. Surround them and all who are struggling in mind or body with the bright hope of your presence and help us all to be light for others in dark times.

Lighten our darkness and lead us to you. **Teach us to walk in your light.**

A star shines overhead in a fragile and uncertain world. May we not look for easy answers but follow you more humbly. May we not trust false promises but look for your often uncomfortable truth. May we not settle for cheap solutions but pay the price of genuine peace and true change. Walking by faith and looking to Jesus, our bright Morning Star, we place our trust in you for all that lies ahead.

Lighten our darkness and lead us to you. **Teach us to walk in your light.**

This Week's First Reading: *Isaiah 60:1-6*

¹Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. ³Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴Lift 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. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. ⁶A 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 Week's Psalm: *Psalm 72:10-15*

- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring gifts.
- 11 All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall do him service.
- 12 For he shall deliver the poor that cry out, the needy and those who have no helper.
- 13 He shall have pity on the weak and poor; he shall preserve the lives of the needy.
- 14 He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, and dear shall their blood be in his sight.
- 15 Long may he live; unto him may be given gold from Sheba; may prayer be made for him continually and may they bless him all the day long.

This Week's Second Reading: *Ephesians 3:1-12*

¹I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles - ²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In 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: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power.

Ephesians 3:1-12 continued

⁸Although 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, ⁹and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so 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. ¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

This Week's Gospel Reading: *Matthew 2:1-12*

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ²'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.' ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶"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.'" ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then 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

Matthew 2:1-12 continued

him homage.’⁹When 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.

¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On 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. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Next Week’s First Reading: *Isaiah 43:1-7*

¹Thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

⁴Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. ⁵Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶I will say to the north, ‘Give them up’, and to the south, ‘Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth – ⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.’

Next Week's Psalm: *Psalm 29:1-10*

- 1 Ascribe to the Lord, you powers of heaven, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
- 3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is upon the mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation; the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice.
- 5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
- 6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young wild ox.
- 7 The voice of the Lord splits the flash of lightning; the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 8 The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare; in his temple all cry, 'Glory!'
- 9 The Lord sits enthroned above the water flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king for evermore.
- 10 The Lord shall give strength to his people; the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Next Week's Second Reading: *Acts 8:14-17*

¹⁴When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit ¹⁶(for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). ¹⁷Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Next Week's Gospel Reading: *Luke 3:15-17, 21-22*

(In the wilderness John proclaimed a baptism of repentance.)¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.¹⁷ His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened,²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'