

Night Prayer

January 2022: Epiphany

Christ is shown to the world.



This season celebrates the showing forth of Christ's presence to the world. It is known as Epiphany in the Western Church and Theophany in the Eastern Church.

It is an extension of Christmas and begins twelve days after Christmas – 6 January in the Western Church.

Its themes are:

The wise men taking knowledge of the infant Christ back to their countries
(week one).

The baptism (immersion) of Christ into the human life-stream and the world into Christ
(week two).

The transformation of everyday life and creation, symbolised by the changing of water into wine
(week three).

The unifying of the whole created world with Christ
(week four for Christian unity).

The light spreading across the world underlies it all.

The service sheet will take us through these four weeks with a reading and short liturgy for each week.

But first let us enter the New Year with all our hopes and fears.

Opening words

O Star-flinging God,
whose light dances across eternity,
dazzle us into your presence
this new year.

Open our hearts to the mystery of your love.

Awaken us to your presence,
knit to the ordinary.

Reveal to us what is possible, but not yet present.

Heal us, that we might be healers.

Reconcile us to you and to ourselves,
that our living might be reconciling.

Stop us often, we pray
with news that is good
with hope that holds
with truth that transforms with a Word
tailored to this trail we're on.

May the word of your grace guide our steps
like the sun by day
and the north star by night,
as we travel into the gift of a new year. Amen.

(written by Glenn Mitchell, and posted on MINemergent's Daily Communique.)

Week 1 The wise men

Reading Matthew 2: 9-12

⁹After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Worship song

As with gladness men of old... Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRiAz-u6lco>

The wise men came to worship and to offer their gifts.

Presenting gifts

As gold is purified in fire,
purify us that we may be royal priests to you.

We offer ourselves to you as gold.

As the rising incense speaks of your Presence,
may our hearts always rise to you in adoration.

We offer ourselves to you as incense.

As myrrh spreads the fragrance of perfume,
may our beautiful deeds be fragrant to you.

We offer ourselves to you as myrrh

Reflection

The magi were told to return home by a different way. Their encounter with the divine was already changing their life for them. Life would never quite be the same again. Do you have things you wish to change?

We Pray

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 are led from darkness into his marvellous light.

Week 2

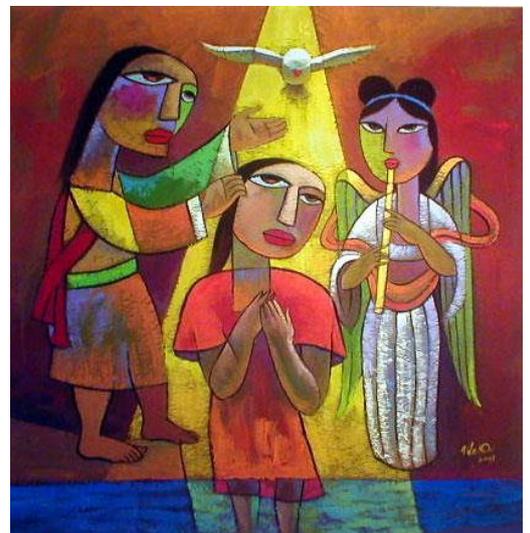
The Baptism of Christ

Reading Matthew 3: 13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."



God of the waters

God of the waters. Water of birth,
moving us from safety into the world.

God of the waters. Water of connection,
engaging the playful Spirit,
the passionate Christ,
the challenging God.

God of the waters. Water of life,
sustaining,
quenching,
cleansing.

God of the waters. Water of trouble,
journeying us from here to there,
from the known to the unknown.

God of the waters.
Birth us.
Connect us.
Live in us.
Trouble us.

(written by Scott A. Ressman in Immerse Yourself: Elements for a Liturgy on Baptism of Christ Sunday. Posted on the United Church of Christ website.)

A time of praise

The Immortal who bowed the heavens bows his head before a mortal.
Glory!

The Uncreated enters the stream of created life.
Glory!

God becomes one with us, and we are made one with God.
Glory!

Our lost innocence is restored and the world is charged with the grandeur of God.
Glory!

Father love cascades over the Son; the Spirit pours upon him;
God in Trinity is revealed.
Glory! Glory, ever and everywhere!

Collect

Eternal Father,
at the baptism of Jesus
you revealed him to be your Son,
and anointed him with the Holy Spirit,
Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit
faithful to their calling as your people;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

(Posted on the Church of Scotland's Starters for Sunday website.)

Week 3 Water into Wine: the everyday is transformed.

Reading John 2: 1-11

² On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Lord we need a miracle

Lord, we need a miracle today.
Like Jesus changing water into wine
at the wedding feast in Cana,
we need a miracle today.
We are tired, Lord, of the hurts of this world.
We are discouraged
in the face of injustice, war, poverty, and indifference.
We need a miracle today, Lord.

Your steadfast love, like a mighty mountain,
will not be moved.
Your gifts, as many as the mighty winds,
cannot be counted.
Your glory, like a mighty torch,
will not be put out.

Lord, crown us with your love.
Show us your glory,
that in you we may be moved
to acts of kindness, love, justice, and mercy.
Lord, we need a miracle today. Amen.

(written by Erik Alsgaard, and posted on the Worship Elements page of the Ministry Matters website.)

Going beyond the previous prayer

Dear Lord,
Help me to expect miracles.
Help me to get past the borders of my eyes,
the roadblocks of my mind,
the narrow door of my heart.

May my soul embrace
the mystery of Your magnificent love!
May my heart rejoice
over the unexpected and undefined!
May my mind and body sigh
with the sheer awe of it all. Amen.

(written by Leonard Sweet, posted on Preach the Story.)



**Marriage at
Cana (detail)**

Veronese 1563
Louvre, Paris

Week 4 Christian Unity

Reading Psalm 122

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

¹ I was glad when they said to me,
‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’

² Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

³ Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together.

⁴ To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

⁵ For there the thrones for judgement were set up,
the thrones of the house of David.

⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
'May they prosper who love you.

⁷ Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.'

⁸ For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, 'Peace be within you.'

⁹ For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your good.

A gathering prayer

O God, you are the gathering one
who calls us into community
with each other
to love and work,
to support and heal.

You are the gathering one
who calls us into community
with all people;
to bring justice and hope,
freedom and truth.

You are the gathering one
who calls us into community
with the whole creation;
to live in harmony,
to cherish and renew.

Let us worship the God
who makes us one.

(posted on the Monthly Prayers page of the Christian Aid website.)

A prayer for Unity

God of all creation
who called every being into life
who is mindful of humankind in all its diversity
who embodies us with dignity,
granting different gifts and talents to shape life in this world
we ask for your Spirit to unite us
where we face lack of understanding and disunity

in our churches, in our communities, in our countries.
And in silence we lay before you the burdens of our hearts.

(Silence)

We ask for your Spirit to unite us
in the face of the conflicts, hatred and violation of life
experienced in so many regions of the earth
and in silence we bring to you the pain of the victims.

(Silence)

We ask for your Spirit to unite us
wherever fear prevents us from caring for our neighbour,
from meeting people of different ethnicities, cultures
and faith communities with respect
and in silence we bring to you the brokenness of human relationships.

(Silence)

God of all creation,
in Christ we are reconciled,
and so we ask for your uniting Spirit
to help us to overcome all our divisions
that we may live in peace.

(posted on the Monthly Prayers page of the Christian Aid website.)

Final prayer

Lord, the sight of the guiding star
brought hope, courage and joy
to those who had journeyed to find you.
When our journey seems long,
when hope seems far away,
when our courage is failing,
fill us with faith and trust;
shine your light on our fears,
lift our hearts with your joy.
Help us to recognise you
in our brothers and sisters throughout the world;
show us how we can work together,
so that we may all come to share in the life
promised to us by Jesus,
the Saviour of us all.

Amen.

(CAFOD)

Blessing

May the blessing of the God of peace and justice
be with us;

May the blessing of the Son
who weeps the tears of the world's suffering
be with us;

And may the blessing of the Spirit
who inspires us to reconciliation and hope
be with us
from now into eternity.
Amen.

(Posted on the World Council of Churches website.)

Closing music

Christ be our Light. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIDPd8d3oQE>

Where there has been no attribution, the words used have been taken from Liturgies form Lindisfarne.

