



January 9th 2022
HAPPY NEW YEAR
In this time of uncertainty,
we declare: **Jesus is Lord!**

Another Way

Last Sunday we celebrated Epiphany, the coming of the Magi to Jesus. And although we will be returning over the coming weeks to our series of talks on Mark's gospel, we remain in the season of Epiphany – the season of revelation, of recognising and responding to Jesus and his significance for the world. It reminds us that God's presence is to be found in unexpected places and surprising, even shocking ways.

The story of the Magi is testimony to that. They weren't just foreigners, which for some would be shocking enough. They were also people whose religious practices were far removed from those of Israel. They were the last people anyone would have expected to turn up to worship Jesus. God's blessings are seen to be for the most unlikely of people in the most unlikely ways.

And the significance of that is huge. Michael Mitton writes in his book "A Handful of Light": *The fact that God chose to speak to the Magi in the language they could understand is one of the most wonderful aspects of these nativity stories. It tells us something very important about God: he wishes to communicate the good news of his Son Jesus to all people, regardless of their faith and beliefs.*

It is often assumed that the good news about Jesus is really only relevant to church people and that if God is going to speak, then only church people will understand the language. The story about the Magi and Herod tells us that this is far from true. Herod, who is the one who should have heard the news about the Messiah, misses it completely, whereas the pagan Magi hear it perfectly.

For those of us who are churchgoing Christians, this is rather a disturbing story. It implies that we in the church can quite easily miss what God is telling us about his Son, whereas those outside the church who have hearts that long for all that is good, peaceful and healing for this world may actually understand what we are too deaf to hear. But then, how many modern 'Magi' do hear the good news, make a long journey to church to worship him, but find they are rejected because they don't fit in culturally? It is a curious thing, but in this story it is the pagan astrologers who are telling the religious leaders about their Messiah.

Epiphany blows apart the tidy boxes that religion creates of who's in and who's out; of how we do things in the church; of what's the 'proper' language to use. It calls us to have a much bigger worldview and be engaged in the wider world. I love the phrase at the end of the story: "they went home by a different way." As we begin this new year, where are called to be surprised, to see things differently, to be constantly willing to go by another way?

With my prayers and love, *Anita*

A New Year Prayer

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'

The Methodist Covenant Prayer

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins;
to find the lost, to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the peoples,
to make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman

Christmas Lunch on Jesus

Once again, huge thanks to you all for supporting Christmas Lunch on Jesus, whether by praying, donating money, addressing and filling envelopes, or helping to deliver cards and vouchers – we are so grateful! As ever we have been touched by the messages of thanks we've received. Here's one message which was left on our Google review page. *"In these difficult and unprecedented times, just when you think no one cares, the system which you had paid into lets you down and your whole world comes crashing down in the blink of an eye. With no fault of your own! Friends and family turn their backs and cut off ties. St. Peter's Church came to my rescue. A natural ray of light from God's Kingdom. I simply cannot express my gratitude to you all. May you stay blessed and safe in these dark times."* Please pray for all who received vouchers, that they would know the love of those around them, but also the love of God.

Gift Day

Thank you so much for your generosity in supporting our Gift Day – we have raised £3500 including Gift Aid, which will enable us to purchase new equipment for our Worship Group and help to support our Inside Out project.

New Year Afternoon Tea at St. Peter's: Tuesday 11th January

Tea, sandwiches and cakes will be served in the church at 2.15pm, followed by a short service of Evening Prayer. All are welcome – please call Margaret on 01332 239134 if you're planning to come for catering purposes. Hope to see you there!

Praying for the Persecuted Church: Nepal

In Nepal, Christians from a Hindu background are put under the most pressure. They are viewed as deviating from the faith of the ancestors, and therefore breaking with their culture and national identity. Converts experience pressure from family, friends, community and local authorities, as do members of Protestant churches.

Nepal has a great deal of political instability, driven by governmental infighting as well as a constant push-and-pull between powerful neighbours China and India. Hindu extremists occasionally take advantage of this by attacking Christians.

There is also an anti-conversion law in place in Nepal, which has been used to expel foreign citizens recently. This law can be broadly applied and, since it says that anyone who causes an individual to convert to a different religion can be imprisoned, fined or deported, it has been used to target Christians. In some areas, believers have been left out of government Covid-19 relief, reinforcing their status as second-class citizens.

Bhumika (not her real name) from Nepal has been prevented by her Hindu neighbours from fetching water from the pump because of her Christian faith. "In my village they do not allow me to fetch water from the village well, and we are not allowed to even touch the handle of the water pump," she shares. "Often I went secretly at night to fetch water."

Whenever there was a prayer or worship meeting at Bhumika's house, neighbours would try to cause disruption. Bhumika also faced persecution from her in-laws. Whenever someone from the family was ill, they blamed Bhumika and her husband Deepak's faith.

But praise God for His work! Through your prayers and support, Open Doors local partners were able to provide a water pump outside Bhumika's house, as well as a few goats to help the family support themselves. (Open Doors website)

Prayer Meeting

Don't forget our weekly prayer meeting every Tuesday at 11am via Zoom! Please do come along if you can. For more details, please contact Geoff.

Prayer ...

In this testing time, do not hesitate to ask for prayer for any concern you have. We all face difficulties and challenges, but prayer makes a difference. In an emergency, call Bren (07967 183601), and she will ask those on the prayer chain to pray for you.

Zoom Joining Details for the 10.45am Service:

On a Computer, Laptop, Smart Phone or Tablet: Click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/450891605?pwd=czNCTTJuaUJpQ3VlOVlnUm1zS0tKQT09>

Alternatively:

1. Open Zoom and select 'Join' or 'Join a Meeting'
2. Enter the Meeting ID: **450 891 605**
3. Select 'Join'
4. When prompted for the Meeting Password, enter **73837**
5. Select 'Continue' or 'Join Meeting' and you will be connected

By Phone – these are the numbers you must now use:

1. Pick any one of the numbers below (doesn't matter which), if one doesn't work, pick another: 0330 088 5830; 0131 460 1196; 0203 481 5237; 0203 481 5240; 0203 901 7895; 0208 080 6591; 0208 080 6592
 2. Dial the number and when prompted for the Meeting ID press: **450 891 605#**
 3. You will then be prompted for a Participant ID, just press **#**
 4. Finally, you will be prompted for the Meeting Password, press: **73837#**
- You will be connected and able to hear everything that is happening.

St. Peter's in the City Staff

Acting Vicar/Associate Priest: Revd. Anita Matthews anita@stpetersderby.org.uk

Curate: Revd. Nick Parish nick@stpetersderby.org.uk

Vicar's PA and Church Administrator: Hilary Streek office@stpetersderby.org.uk

Inside Out Project Workers:

Wayne Summers wayne@insideoutderby.org.uk Revd Jo Honour jo@insideoutderby.org.uk
Revd Alan Griggs alan@insideoutderby.org.uk

Building Manager: Melvyn Wood

Church Wardens:
Tim Benson, Liz Runcorn

Kitchen Supervisor: Gillian Wood

We are a community of faith, hope and love in the heart of the city
Follow us on Twitter: @stpetersderby; www.stpetersderby.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Officer: 07828 280455

Please note that copies of the Safeguarding Policy are available in the Church Office or at www.derby.anglican.org/safeguarding

The church office is currently open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday between 9.30am and 1.30pm. Telephone: 01332 360790,
office@stpetersderby.org.uk