Dear Friend,
I am pleased to enclose this week's virtual service.

The first hymn is Breathe on me, breath of God, with lyrics, obviously sung by an American group.

https://youtu.be/M5keJHZdWYM

A different, meditative take on Breathe on me, breath of God, by the Australian based Hillsong.

https://youtu.be/GHnomHnH51A

An Epiphany hymn, As with Gladness, sung by Chet Valley churches.

https://youtu.be/UB8rKNrlpDQ

The Sixteen sing Lassus' joyful motet, Videntes Stellam (Seeing the star, the magi rejoiced…).

https://youtu.be/pjMQZZPpi2A

Here is a reflective setting of the same text by Poulenc, with rolling score.

https://youtu.be/V341Gpo9UI4

Cuando los Reyes, a Spanish villancico (folk carol) about the three Magi, is given a South American treatment.

https://youtu.be/N2_d3H0_E-w

Haydn's Oratorio, The Creation, starts with an orchestral representation of chaos, admittedly rather demure and periwigged, followed by a setting of today's text from Genesis. Haydn's setting of "And there was light" is glorious.

https://youtu.be/IXijFfheCbg

The Orthodox tradition celebrates Epiphany in style. In Gondar, an ancient capital of Ethiopia, the pool in the 17th century castle of Fasilidas is filled with brackish water from a stream, and hundreds of participants cast off their white robes and re-enact Jesus' baptism. As always in Ethiopia, there is plenty of celebratory dancing ; I haven't been there at the right time but the enclosed video gives a bit of an idea.

https://youtu.be/cp01T6HahEY

All the best
Chris

SERVICE FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY (BAPTISM OF CHRIST) 10th. JANUARY 2021

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what thou dost love,
And do what thou wouldst do. *(Edwin Hatch)*

CONFESSION Save us from
The folly that is deaf to conscience;
The arrogance which will not accept advice;
The self-conceit which resents all rebuke;
The shut mind that bars the door to the entry of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth. *(William Barclay)* *May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!* *(Psalm 29 v11)*

COLLECT Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit; grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READINGS Genesis 1.1-5, Psalm 29, Acts 19.1-7, Mark 1.4-11.

REFLECTION In the passage from Acts we hear of the dozen or so people who encountered Paul on one of his visits to Ephesus. They had received John's baptism, one of repentance anticipating the coming of the Messiah. However, they were unaware that John had foretold that Jesus was the Messiah, and when they were baptized again in Jesus' name, the Holy Spirit "came upon them". Their response was to "speak in tongues", perhaps ecstatic speech, and to prophesy.

In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for spirit is the same as breath, or wind. In the poetic language of Genesis we read that the wind from God swept over the waters and, later, that he breathed life into the nostrils of man, created from the dust of the ground. Similarly, at our baptism, God breathes his Holy Spirit into us, giving us new life in him. Most of us will not feel moved to respond with ecstatic utterances, but, if we are receptive, the Spirit will transform our lives. We will face challenges and temptations, just as the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness soon after his baptism by John. It may be a bumpy ride, but the Spirit is an inexhaustible source of strength and, if we are open to him, he can enable us to live generous and sacrificial lives, reflecting something of Jesus' own example.

PRAYERS Holy Spirit, think through me till your ideas are my ideas. *(Amy Carmichael)*

We pray for your church here on earth. Forgive us when we fail to reflect your glory, when we have not enabled the work of your Spirit. Guide us as we seek to serve our communities. Help us to witness to Jesus our Saviour in our prayers and our actions, to allow your Holy Spirit to work in us.

We pray for the peoples of the world, for areas torn apart by conflict. We pray for peaceful dialogue between nations and between differing factions. Especially we pray for the people of the United States, that they may uphold the principles of fair democracy.

We bring before those who are sick or suffering in mind, body or spirit, the victims of natural disaster and man's inhumanity, those who are undergoing surgery or chemotherapy. We pray for those suffering from Covid and other infectious disease. Enfold those who mourn in your loving arms. Comfort those who are distressed or fearful. Especially we pray for those known to us…….

We say the **LORD'S PRAYER**
We share **THE GRACE**

FINAL PRAYER Help me, O Lord, to descend into the depths of my being, below my conscious and sub-conscious life until I discover my real self, that which is given me from you, the divine likeness in which I am made and into which I am to grow, the place where your Spirit communes with mine, the spring from which all my life rises. *(George Appleton)*