Dear friend
Happy New Year! In the Benefice we are pleased to welcome Rev Guy Martin-Scott and his family as he starts his ministry with us and a pioneer role in the wider community later this month.

Many thanks to Judith who has compiled the enclosed virtual service, looking forward to the Feast of Epiphany.

Judith has suggested Reginald Heber's hymn, 'Brightest and best of the sons of the morning', here sung to the tune Epiphany by choristers from St Luke's Chelsea; lyrics provided to sing along!
https://youtu.be/Zmtb3DJMa3Y

An alternative version, sung to the tune Spean, by the Harmonious chorale, Ghana:
https://youtu.be/zLwAcjuHZ_w

Here is yet another. more folksy, version sung by Keith and Kristyn Getty with Ricky Skaggs:
https://youtu.be/VK53qQWSd2E

Judith has also suggested 'Three Kings from Persian lands afar', by Peter Cornelius; here sung in the familiar arrangement by Ivor Atkins by Bath Abbey Choir:
https://youtu.be/w877hFTXmZ0

Benjamin Britten's simple setting of 'A New year Carol' sung by the Cambridge Singers under John Rutter:
https://youtu.be/bWUUbPFAf4U

'A Carol for Epiphany' with typically challenging words by John Bell, of the Iona community, sung by choristers from Lavenham and Long Melford:
https://youtu.be/G7NMVqv-iOs

Finally, as a closing voluntary, an extract from Messiaen's Nativité du Seigneur, the exuberant 'Dieu Parmi Nous (God among us)', played by Richard Gowers on the organ at King's College:
https://youtu.be/rA8vJspvCuw

May 2022 bring every blessing.
Chris

Service for Sunday 2nd January
The Feast of the Epiphany



Journey of the Magi: *Jacques Tissot 1894*

Be a bright flame before us, O God, a guiding star above us, a smooth path below us and a loving shepherd behind us, each day and each night, now and for ever. *(Columba of Iona, 521-597)*

CONFESSION

God of glory, who sent Jesus among us as the light of the world to reveal your love for all people; we confess that our sin and pride hide the brightness of your light. We turn away from the poor; we ignore cries for justice; we do not strive for peace. In your mercy, cleanse us of our sin, and pour out the gifts of your spirit, that forgiven and renewed, we may show forth your glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ. *(Austin Hill)*

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Saviour forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Common Worship)

COLLECT

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; 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 for ever. Amen.

READINGS

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-15; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

REFLECTION

From the Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning appearance or manifestation, the word Epiphany has come to refer to the manifestation, the showing, of Jesus Christ to the world. The details of the story, as prophesied in the readings from Isaiah and Psalm 72 tell of the homage of equals, of other kings, coming to pay their respects to the Jewish Messiah. Paul, writing to the church in Ephesus, emphasises the broadening of God's purpose. He, Paul, is instrumental in the further manifestation of Christ's glory, to the wider Gentile world. Maybe we have narrowed our vision of the story of the Magi. Christmas cards showing three lonely camels and their riders crossing vast plains lit by just one star do not do justice to the huge wealth of religious expectation at the time of Jesus's birth. That such a journey, 'such a long journey', (to quote T.S. Eliot), was made at all, gives us a glimpse of the excited longing for such an event throughout the known world. As our world expands, may our own excitement help to spread the news ever further and further.

PRAYERS

Jesus, many people rejoice because they have sought you and found you; but I rejoice because you have sought and found me. (Johnson Gnanabaranam, India)

Lord, we pray for the world and its people; for all who worship you, in whatever country, in whatever time-zone, looking out at whatever scenery. We give thanks for all those who have travelled far and wide to bring the good news of your love to all whom they have met, and for the people who have helped us on our own journey to faith. We pray for all who will preach and teach in your name today.

We give thanks for the life and example of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who himself travelled far and wide, attracting many people to you through his infectious, cheerful enthusiasm, with you as his own guiding principle. May we be as enthusiastic in the sharing of our love for you.

We pray for all who suffer, whether through sickness or because of natural or man-made disaster. We give thanks for all those who work tirelessly for the well-being of others.

We take a quiet moment to pray for those we love……

WE SAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

WE SHARE THE GRACE

As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold, as with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright; so, most gracious God, may we evermore be led to thee.

(William Chatterton Dix 1837-1898)

