

In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to you for the stability and comfort we will need.

Lord in your mercy: **Be with us now**

In the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need.

Lord in your mercy: **Be with us now**

We pray for our nation and its leaders and scientists during these difficult times as they juggle decisions that affect the lives of us all

Lord in your mercy: **Be with us now**

We pray for our schools, for the safety of the staff and pupils and ask that you be with parents facing the dilemma of work commitments and childcare.

Lord in your mercy: **Be with us now**

Loving Father during your Ministry on earth Your sign was the healing you shared with us, and Your promise to take away our anxieties the symbol of your eternal presence. Be present with those who suffer and allow them to feel your healing touch through the compassionate care of our Doctors, nurses and caregivers.

Lord in your mercy: **Be with us now**

Let us start and end each day in prayer to our loving God, to a new commitment to make Him the foundation and centre of our lives. May we look forward this New Year with hope, expectancy and faith. This we ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour, who by His death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn: As with gladness men of old

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us.

The Lord look kindly on us and give us peace.

and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Christ is the first and the last, the beginning and the end

Let us welcome him into our homes and our lives this coming year

The Benefice of St Benedict

Ashmanhaugh, Barton Turf, Beeston St Lawrence, Horning, Irstead, & Neatishead

10th January 2021

Morning Worship for the New Year

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
may the light and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you.
and also with you.

Confession

As we come to the Lord in this New Year, let us seek
his grace that we may apply our hearts to God's wisdom.

God our Father,
you sent your Son full of grace and truth:
forgive our failure to receive him.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus our Saviour,
you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:
forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit of Love,
your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:
forgive the hardness of our hearts.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

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.**

Hymn: All my hope on God is founded

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

whose years never fail and whose mercies are new each returning day:

let the radiance of your Spirit renew our lives,

warming our hearts and giving light to our minds;

that we may pass the coming year in joyful obedience and firm faith;

through him who is the beginning and the end,

your Son Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

The Blessing

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Hymn: It came upon a midnight clear

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-5

Poem: Three Kings and the Star of Hope

Reflection
In an email from Bishop Graham just a few days ago to clergy and church wardens he started by saying: "On this eve of the Epiphany, I was drawn during my morning prayers to travel alongside the Magi on their long journey of hope".

This got me thinking about how amazing it was that these men were willing to travel thousands of miles to worship a king that wasn't even their own? But it was the fulfilment of a personal quest, a pilgrimage for truth, a journey that would change their lives forever. A long journey of hope. Along the way they faced many challenges and sought answers to their many questions.

We have faced challenges that began in 2019 and intensified through 2020 and look set to continue in 2021. Our job is to figure out how to hold onto hope, how to heal, how to endure the heaviness of grief and loss, how to help our neighbours who may not be fairing as well as we are in this pandemic.

The wise men were hoping to find the king who would bring an end to war and suffering and injustice. They were hoping to find the king who would bring everlasting love and joy and peace to this world. Some speculate that their travels took more than two years - how hard that journey must have been. What kept them going on that long and arduous path? What hopes kept their feet trudging on day after day? And, after encountering Christ, how did they find the strength to return home by yet another road?

So, what can we learn from the experience of the magi and, perhaps, put into practise throughout this coming year?

Firstly, the magi packed for the journey and included gifts for the Child they were going to visit. We can do this. We can closely examine our lives for the gifts we can bring on the journey into 2021. Perhaps we have reconnected with family or friends and strengthened relationships. Perhaps we've re-evaluated how we spend our time. Maybe we've been more intentional about sharing our resources.

The magi were committed to the journey, not knowing what they would encounter. This seems like a good idea as we continue into a New Year. We are hopeful that 2021 will mean an end to pandemic conditions but we have no idea if this will happen. The journey into 2021 may be just as challenging as 2020 or even more so, however it could just be full of blessings and joys and easier days. Either way, we must commit to the journey and to all who travel with us that we are in it no matter what unfolds

Something to remember is that the magi did not travel alone, and neither should we. We know that there will be more losses, more stress, more sadness in the days to come. Many of us are at or have exceeded the amount of stress we can handle on our own.

Exhaustion and grief and injustice make the journey especially hard. We need to share the journey with those who are traveling a similar road, and we need to make sure we are able to help those who stumble along the way.

In spite of all the awfulness that 2020 leaves in its wake, there have been moments to wonder at - babies continue to be born, just consider the achievements of Captain Tom at the age of 100. Generosity has been witnessed.

It is important to remember that we journey for a purpose. The magi went to Bethlehem and offered their gifts to honour the new born king just as we, as Christians, can offer our gifts to those who travel with us and live our lives to honour God in much the same way. Hope, is one of the most important gifts God gives to us. And nothing brings hope back to life like the Christmas story and the journey of the wise men. Whatever gifts we've uncovered or rediscovered in 2020, let us pack them for the journey into 2021; they will most certainly be needed.

Bishop Graham ended his message:

"Their guiding light led them forward until it stopped over a house in Bethlehem and they were 'overwhelmed with joy'".

My prayer is that we will be guided through what may feel like a long Epiphany journey, travelling hopefully, and holding the overwhelming joy of Christ in our hearts".

May each of us find Hope in God's Guidance, Hope in God's Word and Hope in Jesus in the year, and years, that lie ahead

Happy New Year

The Creed

We say this simple Creed, the faith we share with Christians everywhere.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn: Lord for the years

Prayers

Loving God, as we stand at the beginning of this New Year, we confess our need of your presence, strength, and guidance as we face the many challenges in the months ahead. Our current situation needs us to be steadfast and persistent in our response to COVID-19; as this is a marathon, not a sprint. Help us to humbly put our hands into your hand, and to trust you and to seek your will for our lives during this coming year.
Lord in your mercy: **Be with us now**

We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us. In the midst of life's uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of your unchanging love.
Lord in your mercy: **Be with us now**