

Holy Communion
for the Feast of the Epiphany
(The Second Sunday of Christmas)



The Stour Valley Benefice
*The Parishes of Cavendish, Clare, Hundon, Poslingford,
Stoke-by-Clare & Wixoe*

- A short introduction to the Season –

The season of joyful celebration that begins at Christmas now continues through the successive Sundays of Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends only with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas).

The child who has been manifested to the magi at his birth is now recognized by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel.

He is both 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and 'the glory of God's people Israel'. But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.



Spiritual Communion

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

In joining with Revd Mark & Revd Karen today as they celebrate the Eucharist from the Vicarage, you too are able to join with them in communion. The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

Welcome and Introduction

Hymn - As with gladness men of old

- 1 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 Lord, may we
 evermore be led to thee.
- 2 As with joyful steps they sped,
 to that lowly manger-bed,
 there to bend the knee before
 him whom heaven and earth adore;
 so may we with willing feet
 ever seek thy mercy-seat.
- 3 As they offered gifts most rare
 at that manger rude and bare,
 so may we with holy joy,
 pure and free from sin's alloy,
 all our costliest treasures bring,
 Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.
- 4 Holy Jesu, every day
 keep us in the narrow way,
 and, when earthly things are past,
 bring our ransomed souls at last
 where they need no star to guide,
 where no clouds thy glory hide.
- 5 In the heavenly country bright
 need they no created light;
 thou its light, its joy, its crown,
 thou its sun which goes not down;
 there for ever may we sing
 alleluias to our King.

William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)

The Gathering

Minister: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

The Greeting

Minister: The Lord be with you.

All: and also with you.

Prayer of Preparation

All: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from who no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Invitation to Confession

Minister: The grace of God has dawned upon the world through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own.
Let us confess our sins.

(cf Titus 2.11-14)

Kyrie Confession

Minister: Lord Jesus, illuminate the darkness in our hearts:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Minister: Lord Jesus, open our eyes to your saving love:
Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Minister: Lord Jesus, unstop our ears to hear your living word:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

Minister: Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all
your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

All: *Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the
highest.*

**Glory to God, in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

*Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the
highest.*

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

*Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the
highest.*

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.**

*Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the
highest.*

The Collect

Minister: 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.

All: Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

The Old Testament Lesson (Isaiah 60:1-6 NRSV)

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Minister: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

The New Testament Lesson (Ephesians 3:1-12 NRSV)

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles - for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-

heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Minister: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading (Matthew 2:1-12 NRSV)

Minister: Alleluia, alleluia. We have seen his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage. Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they

had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Minister: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

The Creed

**All: We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from
heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin
Mary and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Intercessor: Let us worship the Saviour with joy and make our prayers to our heavenly Father.

The magi came from the east to worship your Son: Father, grant to Christians everywhere the spirit of adoration. Lord of glory,

All: hear our prayer.

Intercessor: The infant Christ received gifts of gold, incense and myrrh: Father, accept the offering of our hearts and minds. Lord of glory,

All: hear our prayer.

Intercessor: The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: Father, grant an abundance of peace to your world. Lord of glory,

All: hear our prayer.

Intercessor: The Holy Family lived in exile and in the shadow of death: Father, look in mercy on all who are poor and powerless, and all who suffer. Lord of glory,

All: hear our prayer.

Intercessor: Your Son shared the life of his home and family at Nazareth: Father, protect in your love our neighbours, our families and this community of which we are a part. Lord of glory,

All: hear our prayer.

Intercessor: Father, we rejoice in our fellowship with the shepherds, the angels, the magi, the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph and all the faithful departed. In your unfailing love for us and for all people, hear and answer our prayers through your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Minister: Christ is our peace. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away: behold, everything has become new. *(2 Corinthians 5.17)*

All: The peace of the Lord be always with you and also with you.

Preparation of the Altar

Minister: Lord, accept your people's gifts, not gold, frankincense or myrrh, but hearts and voices raised in praise of Jesus Christ, our light and our salvation.

All: Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Minister: The Lord be with you

All: and also with you.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: it is right to give thanks and praise.

Minister: All honour and praise be yours always and everywhere mighty creator, ever-living God, through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord: for at this time we celebrate your glory made present in our midst.

In the coming of the magi the King of all the world was revealed to the nations.

In the waters of baptism Jesus was revealed as the Christ, the Saviour sent to redeem us.

In the water made wine the new creation was revealed at the wedding feast.

Poverty was turned to riches, sorrow into joy.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.**

Minister: Accept our praises, heavenly Father, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and as we follow his example and obey his command, grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be to us

his body and his blood; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross; we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; we look for the coming of your kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All:
Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

Minister: Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, Father almighty,

in songs of everlasting praise:

**All: Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Minister: Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All: 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

Minister: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All: Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.

The Agnus Dei

All: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Giving of Communion

Minister: Draw near with faith.
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you, and his blood which he shed for you.
Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

All: We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Minister: Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek: may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All: Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

The Dismissal

Minister: Christ our Lord, to whom kings bowed down in worship and offered gifts, reveal to you his glory and pour upon you the riches of his grace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

Minister: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn – We three kings

- 1 We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star:
*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*
- 2 Born a king on Bethlehem plain,
gold I bring, to crown him again-
King for ever, ceasing never,
over us all to reign:
*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*
- 3 Frankincense to offer have I;
incense owns a deity nigh:
prayer and praising, all men raising,
worship him, God most high:
*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,*

*westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

4 Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb:
*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

5 Glorious now, behold him arise,
King and God, and sacrifice!
heaven sings alleluia,
alleluia the earth replies:
*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

John Henry Hopkins (1820-1891)

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