



*St Thomas of
Canterbury, the
Parish Church for
Brentwood*

Carol Service for the Epiphany
Season



Sunday 25th January 2026

Please stand when the bell rings and sing the opening hymn as the choir and sacred ministers enter, reverence the altar, and make their way to their places.

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

**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.**

**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
Alleluyas to our King.**

W. Chatterton Dix (1837-98)

The Gathering

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Greeting

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Words of welcome or introduction may be said before we share this response.

Three wonders mark this holy day as the Church is joined to her heavenly Bridegroom. This day a star leads the wise men to the Christ-child. **Alleluia.**

This day water is made wine at the wedding feast. **Alleluia.**

This day Jesus is revealed as the Christ in the waters of baptism.
Alleluia. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Grant us, Lord, who behold your glory, to drink from the waters of the new creation flowing from the river of life at your baptism. Give us the wings of the Spirit, that we may hasten to meet you at your coming, and praise you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The King of all the World is Revealed to the Magi

This day a star leads the wise men to the Christ-child.

Arise, shine out, for your light has come;
the glory of the Lord is rising upon you.

The nations will come to your light,
and kings to your dawning brightness.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Your gates will lie open continually,
shut neither by day nor by night.

No more will the sun give you daylight,
nor moonlight shine upon you.

But the Lord will be your everlasting light,
your God will be your splendour.

Representations of the Magi's gifts are brought to the front of the church. As they are held up, this acclamation is made

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe: you receive our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. May our prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, and the lifting up of our hands be an evening sacrifice.

Blessed be God for ever.

The procession, with the gifts, moves to the crib as the choir sings.

'The Three Kings' by Peter Cornelius

On the arrival at the crib, we hear the first reading.

Matthew 2.1,2,8-11

A reading from the Gospel according to St Matthew.

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.' 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.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The gifts are placed before the crib and then this prayer is said.

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who by the shining of a star led the wise men to the worship of your Son: guide by his light the nations of the earth, that the whole world may behold your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

As the procession returns to the front of church we sing.

**Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesu, Lord, to thee we raise,
Manifested by the star
To the sages from afar;
Branch of royal David's stem
In thy birth at Bethlehem;
Anthems be to thee address,
God in Man made manifest.**

**Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
And at Cana wedding-guest
In thy Godhead manifest;
Manifest in power divine,
Changing water into wine;
Anthems be to Thee address,
God in Man made manifest.**

**Manifest in making whole
Palsied limbs and fainting soul;
Manifest in valiant fight,
Quelling all the devil's might;
Manifest in gracious will,
Ever bringing good from ill;
Anthems be to Thee address,
God in Man made manifest.**

***Sun and moon shall darkened be,
Stars shall fall, the heavens shall flee;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
All will see his glorious sign;
All will then the trumpet hear,
All will see the Judge appear;**

**Thou by all wilt be confest,
God in Man made manifest.**

**Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
Mirrored in thy holy word;
May we imitate thee now,
And be pure, as pure art thou;
That we like to thee may be
At thy great Epiphany,
And may praise thee, ever blest,
God in Man made manifest.**

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-85)

The New Creation is Revealed in the Water made Wine.

This day water is made wine at the wedding feast. I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying,
Behold, the dwelling of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them and they shall be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them.

Behold, I make all things new:
I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
To the thirsty I will give water as a gift
from the spring of the water of life.'

cf Revelation 21

As a flagon of wine is brought, this acclamation is made

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe: for the marriage of the Lamb has come. Make your Church ready, and clothe her with the righteous deeds of the saints, to join the praises of your new creation.
Blessed be God for ever.

The procession, with the flagon of wine, moves to the High Altar the choir sing.

'And I saw a new heaven' by Malcolm Archer

On the arrival at the High Altar, we hear the second reading.

John 2.1-11

A reading from the Gospel according to St John.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The flagon of wine is placed on the High Altar and then this prayer is said.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Amen.

As the procession returns to the front of church we sing.

**When Jesus came to Jordan
To be baptized by John,
He did not come for pardon,**

**But as the sinless One.
He came to share repentance
With all who mourn their sins,
To speak the vital sentence
With which good news begins.**

**He came to share temptation,
Our utmost woe and loss,
For us and our salvation
To die upon the cross.
So when the Dove descended
On him, the Son of Man,
The hidden years had ended,
The age of grace began.**

**Come, Holy Spirit, aid us
To keep the vows we make;
This very day invade us,
And ev'ry bondage break.
Come, give our lives direction,
The gift we covet most:
To share the resurrection
That leads to Pentecost.**

The Christ is Revealed in the Waters of Baptism

This day Jesus is revealed as the Christ in the waters of baptism. I will take you from the nations,

and gather you from all the countries.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you,

and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness.

A new heart I will give you,

and put a new spirit within you.

You shall be my people,

and I will be your God.

As water is brought, this acclamation is made.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe: you bring waters out of the stony rock. For with you is the well of life, and in your light shall we see light. **Blessed be God for ever.**

The procession, with the water, moves to the font the choir sing.

‘Tomorrow shall be my dancing’ by John Gardner

On the arrival at the Font, we hear the third reading.

Mark 1.1-11

A reading from the Gospel according to St Mark.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,”’ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

After the reading this collect is said.

Let us pray.

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 for ever.

Amen.

After the Collect, the water is poured into the font.

God in Christ gives us the water welling up for eternal life.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

Lord, give us this water, and we shall thirst no more.

Standing at the font the priest says

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, for your gift of water in creation

we give you thanks and praise.

For your Spirit, sweeping over the waters, bringing light and life

we give you thanks and praise.

For your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, baptized in the river Jordan

we give you thanks and praise.

For your new creation, brought to birth by water and the Spirit

we give you thanks and praise.

For your grace bestowed upon us your children, washing away our sins

we give you thanks and praise.

So, Father, accept our sacrifice of praise. By the power of your life-giving Spirit bless these waters of your new creation.

Lord, receive our prayer.

May we your servants who have been washed in them be made one with your Son, who took the form of a servant.

Lord, receive our prayer.

May your Holy Spirit, who has brought us to new birth in the family of your Church, raise us in Christ, our anointed Lord, to full and eternal life.

Lord, receive our prayer.

For all might, majesty and dominion are yours, now and for ever.

Alleluia. Amen.

The Renewal of the Covenant

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to his steadfast love by finding delight in the law. The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ our Lord, in his life, work, death and resurrection. In him all people may be set free from sin and its power, and united in love and obedience. In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God. We meet, therefore, as generations have met before us, to renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God. Let us then seek forgiveness for the sin by which we have denied God's claim upon us.

Let us pray.

God of mercy, hear us as we confess our sins. For the sin that has made us slow to learn from Christ, reluctant to follow him and afraid to bear the cross: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has caused the poverty of our worship, the formality and selfishness of our prayers, our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace, and our hesitating witness for Christ: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has led us to misuse your gifts, evade our responsibilities and fail to be good stewards of your creation: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has made us unwilling to overcome evil with good, tolerant of injustice, quick to condemn and selfish in sharing your love with others: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

Silence is kept.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness; according to the abundance of your compassion blot out my offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin. Make in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Give me again the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your gracious spirit.

The priest says.

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw us to himself, and cleanse us from all our sins that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The people remain standing and the priest says

Beloved in Christ, let us again claim for ourselves this covenant which God has made with his people, and take upon us the yoke of Christ. This means that we are content that he appoint us our place and work, and that he himself be our reward. Christ has many services to be done: some are easy, others are difficult; some bring honour, others bring reproach; some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests, others are contrary to both; in some we may please Christ and please ourselves; in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ, who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own. Let us give ourselves to him, trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Eternal God, in your faithful and enduring love you call us to share in your gracious covenant in Jesus Christ. In obedience we hear and accept your commands; in love we seek to do your perfect will; with joy we offer ourselves anew to you.

**We are no longer our own but yours.
I am no longer my own but yours.
Your will, not mine, be done in all things,
wherever you may place me,
in all that I do and in all that I may endure;
when there is work for me and when there is none;
when I am troubled and when I am at peace.
Your will be done
when I am valued and when I am disregarded;
when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking;
when I have all things and when I have nothing.
I willingly offer all that I have and am
to serve you, as and where you choose.
Glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.
May it be so for ever.
Let this covenant now made on earth
be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.**

Silence is kept. Then the priest says.

As we have entered this covenant not for ourselves alone, but as God's servants and witnesses, let us pray for the Church and for the world. Loving God, hear us as we pray for your holy catholic Church:

make us all one, that the world may believe.

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world:

establish justice and peace among all people.

Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness, grief or trouble:

deliver them from their distress.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered your eternal glory:

bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Silence is kept.

Lord our God, you have helped us by your grace to make these prayers, and you have promised through Christ our Lord that when two or three agree in his name, you will grant what they ask. Answer now your servants' prayers according to their needs; in this world, grant that we may truly know you, and in the world to come, graciously give us eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The water will be sprinkled over the people, as these words may be used

Remember your baptism into Christ Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

The procession moves back to the front of the church as the choir sing.

'A Present for the Future' by Forbes L'Estrange

The Prayers

Prayers may be offered here for the ministry and mission of the Church, and for the world which the Church is called to serve.

Believing the promises of God, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

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.

May God the creator, the rock of our salvation, who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and forgiven all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, keep us faithful to our calling, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Blessing and dismissal

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing

May God the Father, who led the wise men by the shining of a star to find the Christ, the Light from light, lead you also in your pilgrimage to find the Lord. **Amen.**

May God the Son, who turned water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana, transform your lives and make glad your hearts. **Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit, who came upon the beloved Son at his baptism in the river Jordan, pour out his gifts on you who have come to the waters of new birth. **Amen.**

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

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

1 O PRAISE ye the Lord!
Praise him in the height;
Rejoice in his word,
Ye angels of light;
Ye heavens adore him
By whom you were made,
And worship before him,
In brightness arrayed.

2 O praise ye the Lord!
Praise him on the earth,
In tuneful accord,
Ye sons of new birth;
Praise him who has brought you
His grace from above,
Praise him who has taught you
To sing of his love.

**3 O praise ye the Lord!
All things that give sound;
Each jubilant chord,
Re-echo around;
Loud organs, his glory
Forth tell in deep tone,
And sweet harp, the story
Of what he has done.**

**4 O praise ye the Lord!
Thanksgiving and song
To him be out-poured
All ages along:
For love in creation,
For heaven restored,
For grace of salvation,
O praise ye the Lord!**

H. W. Baker (1821-77)

A collection is not taken at this celebration. If you don't have cash or are not part of our planned giving scheme and would like to support the ministry costs of St Thomas', please scan the QR code on the back of the chair in front of you, to be taken to the online donations page where you can easily donate to support the work of St Thomas' and complete the details allowing the reclamation of Gift Aid on your donation.